

The Third Edition of
the International Conference on the Emergence of Africa
Speech by Mr. Kenji YAMADA, Parliamentary Vice-Minister
for Foreign Affairs (17 January 2018)

Your Excellency Macky SALL, President of the Republic of
Senegal,

Distinguished participants,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

(冒頭)

First of all, I would like to express my gratitude for the kind
invitation to the Third Edition of the International
Conference on the Emergence of Africa.

It is my great honor to participate in the conference on
behalf of the Government of Japan, together with esteemed
representatives of African and non-African countries,
international organizations, as well as those from private
entities from various countries and regions.

This Conference offers an important opportunity, not only for African countries, but also for development partners as we can receive updates on the current status of social and economic development plans implemented by African countries and also get to discuss avenues for future cooperation.

I would like to pay my respects to the Government of Senegal and the relevant institutions for their diligent efforts to organize this conference.

(日本の経験)

In engaging in economic cooperation, Japan has made full use of its unique background as an established donor with a history of being a recipient of international aid itself.

After World War II, Japan received grant and loan assistance from the international community, and in the spirit of self-help, Japanese people devoted themselves completely to reconstruction and development of the country.

This formed the foundation of our current economic strength.

Based on this experience, Japan began supporting the self-sustaining development of other countries, mainly in Asia, by promoting not only the improvement of basic infrastructure such as roads, railways, schools and hospitals, but also human resources development through sharing working practices known as KAIZEN and 5S, which aim to optimize activities and improve productivity.

These initiatives have contributed to the rise of many emerging countries in Asia.

Malaysia, represented today by His Excellency Dr. Mahathir Mohamad, is an excellent example of such a country.

(対アフリカ協力)

Since TICAD was launched in 1993, Japan has led the discussion on the challenges for African development and has demonstrated strong leadership in addressing these issues in close coordination with African countries, international organizations, the private sector and civil society.

We will continue to support African countries' initiatives to become emerging economies.

(民間セクター推進)

Following up on TICAD VI hosted by Kenya in August 2016, which was the first TICAD summit meeting held on the African continent, Japan held a TICAD Ministerial Meeting last October.

At the time, I myself co-chaired a plenary session on Economic Transformation for Inclusive Growth.

The participants in that plenary shared their understanding of the critical role played by the private sector in socio-economic transformation toward inclusive economic growth.

They also agreed on the importance of improving the business environment, including human resources development and effective governance, as well as of reinforcing connectivity through quality infrastructure development.

Before becoming a politician, I worked at a private bank where I engaged in corporate revitalization as well as loans for Small and Medium Enterprises.

Such work experience has convinced me that robust development of the private sector is indispensable for national economic development.

As I mentioned earlier, improvement of the business environment is a key element for companies when it comes to deciding on a new investment destination, and the government plays an important role in this area.

With this understanding, to enhance development of human resources, the Government of Japan has invited more than 1,200 trainees to participate in the Africa Business Education Initiative, or ABE Initiative.

Some former participants are now already working actively as entrepreneurs in their home countries.

In addition, we have trained over 800 persons for work in the field in positions such as plant managers.

Moreover, in order to reinforce connectivity and enhance logistics networks between inland and coastal states, Japan has been supporting regional infrastructure development such as 'the East Africa-Northern Corridor' in Kenya as a gateway to East Africa, 'the Nacala Corridor' connecting Mozambique, Malawi and Zambia, as well as 'the West Africa Growth Ring.'

In this context, Senegal also plays an important role as a hub in West Africa.

Furthermore, in order to encourage Japanese companies to invest in the African market, we are working on deepening mutual understanding of business opportunities as well as challenges in Africa.

For example, the Government of Japan organized the 'Japan-Africa Public-Private Economic Forum' in Johannesburg in May last year with the participation of more than a hundred Japanese companies and 400 African companies.

Japan also dispatched the 11th 'Public and Private Sector Joint Mission for Promoting Trade and Investment in Africa' to Rwanda and Zambia in July last year.

In order to make Africa a more attractive investment destination, it is essential that African countries work toward good governance, including by fighting against corruption, in addition to ensuring sound financial management and debt sustainability.

It is also necessary to actively pursue agendas such as concluding bilateral investment treaties and tax treaties, establishing efficient administrative systems, and fostering regional peace and stability.

Ladies and gentlemen,

TICAD7 is going to be a Business TICAD.

TICAD7 is going to serve as a great occasion for the Japanese private sector to establish and strengthen business ties with Africa, which offers rich investment opportunities with its abundant natural and human resources.

Heads of state and business executives will discuss ways to foster effective cooperation between governments and the private sector.

Through various side events including a business exhibition, we will support Japanese companies to expand their businesses in Africa.

We look forward to wide participation from the African public and private sectors in TICAD7.

(結語)

I understand that this conference is also aimed at promoting networking among companies from Africa and other regions, under the initiative of the Government of Senegal, which emphasizes the role of the private sector in development.

I would like to conclude my remarks by expressing my wish that this conference will serve as an opportunity for participants to deepen their knowledge in order to realize their policies and explore business opportunities.

Thank you.

(1,047 words)