

Statement by H.E. Mr. KONO Taro,  
Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan,  
at the Thematic Session of TICAD 7 on Blue Economy  
on August 29<sup>th</sup>, 2019 in Yokohama

Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure to welcome distinguished African heads of state and ministers, representatives of international organizations and colleagues to this thematic session on Blue Economy.

The concept of Blue Economy has attracted widespread international attention, particularly in Africa as the region faces challenges in safeguarding marine resources, protecting its people from natural disasters, and maintaining maritime security. It is clearly stated as a priority target in the AU Agenda 2063 and its 10-Year Implementation Plan, the Lomé Charter, Africa's Integrated Maritime Strategy and the Nairobi Declaration of TICAD VI in 2016.

The Sustainable Blue Economy Conference, held in Nairobi last November and co-organized by Kenya, Japan and Canada, was a great opportunity to consolidate our commitment to promoting Blue Economy in the international arena. I would like to commend President Kenyatta of Kenya for his leadership in launching this first ever international conference on Blue Economy.

As the Chairperson of this session, I hope to exchange views on challenges in promoting Blue Economy and share good practices, providing an impetus to achieve Blue Economy in Africa and beyond.

Excellencies,

As Blue Economy comprises both aspects of economic prosperity and maritime security, I am convinced that Blue Economy is in complete accordance with Japan's vision of a free and open Indo-Pacific, as announced by Prime Minister Abe at TICAD VI. Japan, as one of the leading maritime nations endowed with rich maritime resources, has been intensively supporting African countries in their efforts to take advantage of the potential of Blue Economy.

Let me briefly introduce the outline of Japan's contributions to promote Blue Economy in Africa.

First focus areas are fisheries and tourism. We support Africa to promote fisheries by developing fishing ports and fish markets. This is not limited to sea fishery. Japan mobilized its expertise to support inland aquaculture.

Japan will also continue its contribution to enhancing Africa's capacity to combat Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing, and will start a new project in East Africa in collaboration with the UN Food and Agriculture Organization.

Marine and fishery resources attract more visitors. Japan will continue to provide capacity building on tourism toward further prosperity of the local economy.

Secondly, Japan focuses on enhancing both physical and institutional connectivity, which is the key to sharing the dividends of Blue Economy across the region and beyond. Japan has helped to expand the capacity of African ports, such as Toamasina, Nacala, Namibe, Abidjan and Mombasa, based upon our principle of quality infrastructure. Also in

Mozambique, a natural gas project off the coast is jointly invested by Japanese public and private sectors.

Thirdly, Japan focuses on enhancing maritime security which is a precondition for a sustainable blue economy. Japan's Self-Defense Forces dispatch about four hundred personnel, an escort vessel and P-3C patrol planes to the international anti-piracy operations off the coast of Somalia and in the Gulf of Aden. Bilaterally, we have provided patrol vessels to the Djibouti Coast Guard, along with the capacity building of the personnel to secure maritime safety.

We should also not forget the environmental aspect of the ocean.

In Osaka, the G20 leaders issued the “Osaka Blue Ocean Vision” to reduce marine plastic litter. To pursue this Vision, Prime Minister Abe launched the “MARINE Initiative” to advance effective actions to curb marine plastic litter on a global scale by supporting developing countries in the area of waste management.

Last but not least, Japan will support Blue Economy in Africa through the development of human resources for

1,000 people in fishery, port facility management and maritime security over a three-year period. I now look forward to learning your perspectives and best practices as well as having productive and engaging discussions.

Thank you.