

**Video Message by H.E. Mr. MOTEGI Toshimitsu,
Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan
At the 20th International Economic Forum on Africa**

February 22, 2021

H.E. Mr. Macky Sall, President of the Republic of Senegal,
H.E. Mr. Angel Gurría, Secretary-General, Organisation for Economic Co-operation
and Development,
H.E. Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat, President of the African Union Commission,
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to offer my heartfelt congratulations on the 20th International Economic Forum on Africa co-organized by the Government of Senegal, the OECD Development Centre and the African Union. I would also like to express my deepest respect for President Sall, who has demonstrated strong leadership in organizing this forum. It was an honor for me to meet you during my recent visit to your country.

I visited Tunisia, Mozambique, South Africa and Mauritius in December last year, and Senegal and Kenya during my latest visit this January. Throughout my visits to African countries, I made clear Japan's determination to strongly back Africa's development even in the midst of the challenging times of the global COVID-19 pandemic.

Japan has been supporting Africa's development through the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) for many years. In fact, we are witnessing concrete results of such longstanding efforts in the COVID-19 response. For example, Japan has provided support for the establishment of the Noguchi Memorial Institute for Medical Research in Ghana, which currently serves as a hub for tackling COVID-19. Based on the principle of human security, Japan will continue to support the development of resilient health and medical systems in Africa with a view to realizing Universal Health Coverage.

Under the theme of “Investing for a sustainable recovery in Africa,” today’s discussions on how Africa can overcome COVID-19 and achieve sustainable development will be in line with the following three priority policies that Japan has been working on.

First, promotion of business. At TICAD7 held in 2019, Japan announced its strong will to promote investment in Africa. In reality, the number of Japanese companies operating in Africa has nearly doubled from 520 to 910 in the past decade. Japanese companies are continuously expanding their investments in Africa, creating a number of local job opportunities and transferring technology. Examples of Japanese businesses in Africa include an LNG project in Mozambique and the construction of an automobile assembly and production plant in Ghana. Looking ahead to the post-COVID-19 era, Japan will further contribute to the development and economic transformation of African countries, including the digital sector, through public-private partnership.

Second, enhancement of connectivity by promoting quality infrastructure development under the vision of a “Free and Open Indo-Pacific.” For instance, the Mombasa Port Development in Kenya and the Project for Rehabilitation of the Wharf in Dakar Port in Senegal are part of such initiative.

Third, addressing debt vulnerabilities worsened by COVID-19. All G20 members need to fully implement the “Debt Service Suspension Initiative.” Japan will actively engage in the G20 discussions and steadily implement the initiative, and will firmly support African countries’ efforts to address debt issues, including through the dispatch of experts.

Japan is determined to lead international efforts so that Africa, which is described as the frontier of the 21st century, can overcome this unprecedented crisis and find concrete steps towards its development. Looking ahead to TICAD8 to be held in Tunisia in 2022, we would like to continue to closely work with the countries and institutions concerned, including the attendees of this forum.

I wish all of you an active and fruitful discussion today.