

**Statement by H.E.Ms. SUZUKI Takako,
State Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan
At the Opening Ceremony of the 7th Dakar
International Forum on Peace and Security in
Africa
(Dakar, 6 December 2021)**

His Excellency Mr. Sall, President of the Republic of Senegal,
Excellencies,
Distinguished participants,

It is my great honor to have this opportunity to deliver a speech at the opening of the Seventh Dakar International Forum on behalf of the Government of Japan. At the outset, I would like to pay tribute to President Sall and the Senegalese government for holding this forum. I am delighted that Japan has continued to support this important forum since its inception.

Japan has been supporting Africa's positive efforts to maintain and strengthen its peace and stability through TICAD, which is an inclusive platform that advances African ownership and international partnership. NAPSA, a New Approach for Peace and Stability in Africa that we introduced in the last forum, is one example. Japan has been promoting some specific projects under NAPSA, such as human resource development in the field of criminal justice for West African countries including the G5 Sahel, border control capacity enhancement to strengthen counterterrorist measures, and capacity building for PKO personnel in African countries through assistance for PKO training centers and the UN Triangular Partnership Project.

In addition, based on the principle of human security, Japan has been promoting efforts to achieve Universal Health Coverage (UHC) in Senegal and other countries, where all people can receive effective and quality health care services at affordable cost. In response to the spread of the COVID-19, we will continue to implement measures to support African health systems in the medium and long term.

The COVID-19 epidemic has had a tremendous impact on African economies and societies, and has highlighted a variety of development challenges. In order for Africa to build back better and enjoy prosperity, it is important to ensure regional peace and stability as a prerequisite. To achieve

this, employment and educational opportunities are also necessary to prevent young people from being inclined toward violent extremism. Japan is promoting NAPSA, which addresses such root causes of conflicts and terrorism.

Moreover, Japan intends to support the consolidation of the rule of law and democracy in Africa. The Government of Japan, setting "green" and "digital" as new driving forces for growth, would like to boost the activities of the private sector in Africa, a region with great potential, in order to expand local employment and develop the local economy.

Excellencies,

Japan is working toward the realization of a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)" as the world becomes more complex and volatile. In this vision, let me underscore the importance of strengthening intra-African trade and connectivity. Japan will therefore support efforts to strengthen connectivity and regional integration in Africa through infrastructure development and other measures. In addition, under this vision, Japan will continue to work to maintain and strengthen maritime order based on the rule of law, and to ensure peace and stability, including through measures against terrorism and piracy.

Before closing, let me share that Japan is running in the election next year for becoming a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council. Japan is willing to listen to the voices of African countries and play a greater role for the peace and security of Africa. Moreover, Japan would like to strengthen our partnership with Africa to advance Security Council reform and redress the historical injustice done to Africa.

Next year's TICAD 8 will be an opportunity for Japan to enhance international cooperation in order to strongly support development led by Africa itself.

I would like to conclude my remarks by wishing that the discussions in this forum will further strengthen cooperation for peace and security in Africa.

Thank you.