

Video message by State Minister for Foreign Affairs YAMADA Kenji,
FOIP SYMPOSIUM The Free and Open Indo-Pacific for Peace and
Development in Eastern Africa

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Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, Habari ya Azubuhi, good morning. I am YAMADA Kenji, State Minister for Foreign Affairs. On the 60th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Japan and Kenya, it is my great honor to speak at this event, which brings the knowledge of our two countries together.

The theme of today's symposium is "Free and Open Indo-Pacific," or FOIP, which was proposed by Prime Minister Abe for the first time at the 6th Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD VI) in Nairobi in 2016. It was the Kenyan Government that endorsed the vision of FOIP ahead of others, and a few years later, Kenya hosted the first international Blue Economy conference, supported by Japan. The FOIP vision calls for a free and open international order in the Indo-Pacific region based on common principles, including the rule of law, to ensure peace and prosperity throughout the region and the world.

At the TICAD VI, Prime Minister Abe passionately said, "Japan wants to work together with you in Africa in order to make the seas that connect the two continents peaceful and governed by the rule of law." This passion remains the basis of the Japanese Government's foreign policy to this day.

The international community is now at a historical turning point as the post-Cold War era comes to an end.

We are facing various challenges, such as economic and social disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, challenges to the international order based on the rule of law, including attempts to unilaterally change the status quo by force, and maritime security.

In this context, it is important that Japan and Kenya, as like-minded countries that have long stressed the importance of maintaining and

strengthening the international order based on the rule of law, work closely together to address common challenges.

Japan intends to further promote cooperation with like-minded countries to realize FOIP. Kenya is in a pivotal point in the East African region, as a regional power, playing a leading role in peace and stability in Africa; Kenya is indeed one of our key partners.

Let me give you a few examples of our strong partnership, in the field of maritime security. Japan provided 17 patrol vessels to the Kenyan Coast Guard in 2019, and will provide 6 fisheries surveillance vessels to the Kenya Fisheries Service this year. In addition, to enhance “connectivity” between Africa and Asia with Kenya as a gateway, Japan is currently implementing infrastructure development related to the Port of Mombasa, including the Dongo Kundu Special Economic Zone.

This year marks the 60th anniversary of the diplomatic relations between Japan and Kenya. I hope that our bilateral cooperation will further flourish in realizing the vision of FOIP. I also hope that all of you here today will continue to cooperate with us in this endeavor. I would like to conclude my message by wishing you fruitful discussions today.

Asante Sana. Thank you very much.