

Remarks by H. E. Mr. HAYASHI Yoshimasa, Foreign Minister of Japan
At TICAD 30th Anniversary Event -TICAD's 30-year history and prospects-

“Towards establishing a strategic partnership with Africa”

August 26, 2023

Distinguished guests,
Thank you very much for attending today's event.

The international order faces serious challenge, and we are at a historic turning point where the international order which has supported the peace and prosperity is undermined.

Against this backdrop, Africa's position has drastically changed in the international community. Africa is now a major player in the international community, and its importance and influence have increased. The world is now facing complex crises including pandemics and the Russia's aggression against Ukraine, and it is true that the countries called “Global South” including Africa have been significantly affected by these crises. In this situation, showing our commitment to cooperation on a wide range of issues through a “people-oriented” approach becomes more and more important to fully defend the free and open international order based on the rule of law.

Japan, as the G7 Presidency this year, is placing great importance on directly listening to the “voices” of Africa. Following Prime Minister Kishida's visit to African countries in May and Comoro's participation to G7 Hiroshima Summit as the Chairperson of the African Union, I visited South Africa, Uganda, and Ethiopia in the beginning of this month and strengthened cooperation with these countries.

Since the establishment of TICAD, Japan has supported the sustainable development of Africa. Based on this friendship, the question is how Japan can develop the relationship with Africa. Founding strategic partnership with Africa, and working and bringing wisdom together to solve various issues of the international community; I believe this is an answer to the question on what the future Japan-Africa relationship should be. TICAD should be the foundation of Japan's diplomacy with African countries.

In August last year, I attended the TICAD 8 as the Special Envoy of Prime Minister KISHIDA. At the TICAD 8, I presented the guidepost for sustainable growth of Africa

in the post-COVID-19 era, while stating that Japan will be “a partner growing together with Africa” and work hand-in-hand with Africa to tackle the issues in Africa.

TICAD is a continuous process. Aiming at TICAD 9 in two years and even beyond, I will touch on what Japan will do in the coming years.

(1) Things to remain: investment in people

First of all, one of the strengths of TICAD is “investment in people”. Development primarily depends on people and that the rewards of this development are for the people. This has been and will be the unchanged Japanese position. Respecting individuals, nurturing abilities to open up the future, and embracing interaction among people, these are the spirits which have been inherited by now.

It is important to entrust TICAD spirits and activities to younger generations who will lead the future of Japan and Africa. African Business Education Initiative for Youth, so called ABE initiative, is a flagship program of Japan. This program provides opportunities for African youths to study and intern in Japan and fosters future leaders to contribute to the future foundation of Africa. The number of ABE initiative participants and alumni has already exceeded 6,700 people.

In today’ event, we also have participation of African students and graduates. Also, I myself visited Ethiopia to see the program to strengthen company competitiveness through capacity building of individuals by KAIZEN Initiative. Also, last year, Japan launched AfIF (Africa-Japan Industrial Human Resource Development Initiative for the Future) to introduce 5S/ KAIZEN initiative in Africa and to provide training courses for fostering practical skills on automobile related technology.

Another important pillar is human resource development in agriculture for Africa to be able to increase food production by themselves, amid the soaring food and energy prices that shakes the foundation of growth of Africa. Japan promotes CARD (Coalition for African Rice Development) in various areas in Africa to provide wide range of human resource development program including production technology transfer and educating technical assistance staff who can provide technical guidance.

(2) Things to promote: involvement of various stakeholders

Secondly, involving various stakeholders has become more important than ever. Africa deeply desires more Japanese companies to start business in Africa. As stipulated in the Development Cooperation Charter revised this June, further

collaboration between public and private sectors, including private companies and institutions gathered in this event today, is needed.

Another important element is to support enabling environment for start-ups to increase in Africa, in order to create innovation to contribute to solving social challenges in Africa. Through Project NINJA (Next Innovation with Japan), Japan has provided capacity building training in Africa, and has already supported more than 100 start-up companies.

In addition, it is indispensable to cooperate with international organizations and civil society to tackle the issues in the areas of global health, food security and energy. At the G7 Hiroshima Summit, Japan announced the contribution of approximately 7.5 billion dollars in total to achieve universal health coverage, including a new pledge for the GHIT Fund (Global Health Innovative Technology Fund). Also, the G7 launched MCM (Medical Countermeasures) Delivery Partnership for equitable access (MCDP). We are closely working with relevant countries and international organizations to develop this partnership.

Furthermore, Japan provides support on measures concerning the global issues in Africa through “Japan’s Green Growth Initiative with Africa”. As part of the initiative, the renewable energy projects by Japanese companies are already in progress. Moreover, Japan is expanding the partner countries of Joint Credit Mechanism (JCM) in Africa, aiming at promoting private companies’ investment.

(3) Things to change: TICAD as a strategic process

Thirdly, in addition to the strengthening partnership on development and economy as I stated so far and given the turbulent international situation, it is important to see TICAD as a process to strategically place Africa in Japan’s diplomacy.

It is important to frame TICAD as a forum to share with African countries a basic policy of maintaining and strengthening the free and open international order based on the rule of law that Japan is aiming to realize, and to discuss issues in the international community. These issues include takeover of governments and conflicts in Africa which have been rapidly increasing recently. Also, we need to discuss issues such as economic security and climate change, in light of current situations both in Japan and in African countries.

In particular, peace and stability in Africa is indispensable not only for sustainable growth of Africa but also for creating virtuous circle to promote Japanese companies' business in Africa as well as public private partnership. With regard to this, assuring security of Japanese overseas citizens, such as evacuation of Japanese citizens from Sudan and Niger, is our highest priority. Furthermore, it is important to support improving the governance of Africa through institution building support, such as support for human resource development in the police system and in the area of criminal justice.

When I took the office as Minister for Foreign Affairs, I pledged to open a new frontier of Japan's diplomacy. Strengthening relationship with Africa is one of my utmost priorities.

I hope that today's event provides an opportunity to look back on the achievements of TICAD in the past 30 years, and to discuss for the future of Japan and Africa based on the current challenges.

Bearing in mind TICAD 9 which will be held in Yokohama in 2025, I will build upon today's discussions to establish a strategic partnership with Africa.

Thank you for your attention.

(End)