

Statement by H.E.Mr. HORII Iwao,
State Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan
At the Opening Ceremony of the 9th Dakar International Forum
on Peace and Security in Africa
(Dakar, 27 November 2023)

His Excellency Mr. Sall, President of the Republic of Senegal,
His Excellency Mr. Ghazouani, President of the Islamic Republic
of Mauritania,
His Excellency Mr. Martins, Prime Minister of the Republic of
Guinea-Bissau,
Excellencies,
Distinguished participants,

It is my great honor to have this opportunity to deliver a speech at the opening of the Ninth 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 honored that Japan has continued to support this important forum since its inception.

Japan launched the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) in 1993, immediately after the end of the Cold War, to reinvigorate the international community's interest towards Africa. Since then, Japan has consistently advocated the importance of African ownership and partnership of the international community in African development. Today, this has become a fundamental development principle for the international community.

And now, as TICAD celebrates its 30th anniversary, Africa has increased its importance and voices as a major player in the international community. Moreover, Africa's potential for dynamic growth, with its young population and rich natural resources, is attracting the world's attention more than ever.

Meanwhile, the international situation continues to be turbulent, including the deterioration of the situation surrounding Israel and Palestine. Africa is strongly affected by various challenges, such as food and energy price hikes due to Russia's aggression against Ukraine and climate change. It must also be emphasized that these factors are contributing to social instability and sparking terrorism and conflict.

In response to the recent situation in the Sahel region, Japan values and encourages the efforts of Africa towards solving the issues together as a whole region, led by ECOWAS, based on a strong conviction in democracy. Prime Minister Kishida visited African countries in May this year, and announced that Japan will provide approximately 500 million US Dollars over the next three years in order to contribute to peace and stability and to promote sustainable growth in the Sahel region and the neighboring coastal countries of the Gulf of Guinea. Japan has been cooperating with West African countries to contribute to regional stability. Japan's words are accompanied by concrete actions.

I am convinced that Africa can overcome the many difficulties it faces, such as sporadic military takeovers of power, conflicts, terrorism, and violent extremism, by mobilizing Africa's own wisdoms. Japan is always glad to cooperate with Africa whenever our support is needed. Japan would like to be a partner in thinking together with Africa and co-creating solutions to African and global challenges. Japan's support for PKO training centers in Africa is our investment in African "people" for co-creating solutions.

As the G7 chair this year and as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council for 2023 and 2024, Japan has been earnestly engaging in discussions with a view to bringing about better solutions, while listening to the voices of African countries.

Japan also supports the increased African representation in various international fora, given the growing role of African countries in the international community. As one example, Japan once again welcomes the formal decision of the African Union to be a permanent member of the G20 as determined in the G20 New Delhi Summit in September. In addition, believing that the UN Security Council should reflect current global realities, Japan supports the Common African Position and will work together with Africa to reform the Security Council.

Excellencies,

Japan intends to continue to implement fine-tuned and unique Japanese initiatives from a long-term perspective. These include international cooperation based on human dignity, such as further contributions to improve humanitarian situations and the investment in people, especially in young people.

Looking ahead to the TICAD Ministerial Meeting to be held in Tokyo next year and TICAD9 to be held in Yokohama in 2025, we will further promote partnership and cooperation with the people of Africa to achieve peace and stability in Africa.

Thank you very much.