

TICAD Ministerial Meeting 2024: Opening Session
Statement by H. E. Ms. KAMIKAWA Yoko, Minister for Foreign Affairs
(tentative translation)

1. Introduction

It is a great pleasure to host the TICAD Ministerial Meeting here in Tokyo today and to welcome so many African ministers, co-organizers and other participants.

I visited Madagascar, Cote d'Ivoire, and Nigeria in April and experienced firsthand dynamism and high potential of Africa, which convinced me that Africa is an important partner for Japan.

While envisioning a splendid future for Africa, I also recognized there are issues that need to be resolved for Africa to develop. I also learned that it is important to listen carefully to the voices of Africa in resolving these issues.

I would like to invite all participants to actively share good practices, ideas, and hints for solving problems at the TICAD Ministerial Meeting starting today. Your voices will change the future of Africa.

2. TICAD at 30+

Japan has been working with African countries through the TICAD process over its 30-plus-year history. In doing so, Japan has promoted cooperation based on the basic concepts of African ownership and partnership with the international community, with particular emphasis on fostering human resources, in the hope of supporting Africa's development.

During this three-decade-plus TICAD process, Japan has continued to pursue a variety of initiatives emphasizing investment in people and high-quality growth since TICAD 8 in 2022. We have distributed to all of you a progress report that mainly summarizes good practices, and you should regard the case studies therein as common property. Let's share successes and challenges as evidence, learn from each other, and create even better examples as we look ahead to cooperation at TICAD 9 and beyond, and together create the future.

At this ministerial meeting, we would like to build on the results we have achieved so far and discuss the future of Africa as a global growth center where people can shine. We hope that the outcomes of our discussions at this meeting will set the course for not only next year's TICAD 9 but also for the UN Summit of the Future and next year's G20 Summit to be chaired by South Africa.

3. Theme of TICAD Ministerial Meeting

I believe that one key to maximizing Africa's attractiveness and opening up new possibilities is the use of science and technology. An in-depth dialogue will be necessary to change social attitudes with the help of science and technology as well.

I am excited just to think about how the potential and dynamism of Africa that I saw firsthand will develop in the future. I am extremely pleased to be involved in the process of building on past Japan-Africa cooperation to shape the future of Africa together.

The theme of this ministerial meeting is "Co-creating Innovative Solutions Together with Africa" and, with TICAD 9 in mind, we would like to discuss this theme from three perspectives.

The first is future-oriented problem solving. Japan attaches great importance to Japan and Africa together taking up the challenge of resolving issues to realize the sustainable future for Africa envisioned by Agenda 2063. Back casting from the future we are aiming for, we would like to discuss issues that should be addressed over the short and medium term at TICAD 9 and in subsequent processes.

The second perspective is a focus on youth and women. In preparation for TICAD 9, we will be pursuing initiatives that incorporate the perspectives of the young people and women who will be responsible for transforming Africa's economy and designing its future. Let's expand the examples of "Made with Japan" where people-to-people encounters create businesses that generate productivity and employment in Africa.

The third perspective is strengthening the roles of connectivity and knowledge platforms that join up isolated efforts into coordinated initiatives. This will entail sharing and improving solutions to specific issues such as health, human resource development, waste disposal, and demining as well as knowledge and technology across Africa, and contributing further to solving global issues. We hope to establish such knowledge platforms between Japan and Africa.

4. Key topics for each session

These three perspectives will broaden the scope of discussions in the individual sessions dealing with TICAD's three traditional concerns: society, peace and stability, and the economy.

Session 1 will focus on training the young people who will lead Africa in future

and on expanding co-creation between Japan and Africa through human, intellectual, and cultural exchange.

With an eye on TICAD 9, we would also like to compile innovative solutions to social issues such as health, education, climate change, food problems, and the blue economy and disseminate from Japan and Africa to the rest of the world.

Next, in Session 2, we would like to discuss with you the challenges of assuring that youth and women have greater roles in ensuring human dignity and human security, especially in increasingly dominant agenda, Women, Peace and Security (WPS).

We also wish to discuss ways of preventing conflicts and addressing their root causes, forming humanitarian development, and peace partnerships, boosting Africa's own efforts, achieving good governance, strengthening the rule of law, and cooperating on UN Security Council reform.

Finally, Session 3 will be our first attempt at combining a panel discussion with a networking session. With the participation of startup representatives and other business community members, we hope to discuss how to strengthen startup ecosystems and improve business environments.

5. Conclusion

This ministerial meeting will feature six simultaneous thematic meetings attended by youth and other members of civil society as well as delegates from international organizations. This involvement of various stakeholders in co-creation is another proud feature of TICAD.

I invite you all to participate in the dialogue by actively sharing your ideas and knowledge. Let me conclude my opening remarks by expressing my high expectations for our discussions as we paint a vision of Africa's future together.