

**Remarks by H.E. Mr. Koichiro Gemba,
Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan,
at the Reception Hosted by the TICAD Co-organizers
on the Occasion of the 4th TICAD Ministerial Follow-up Meeting
(Saturday, 5 May 2012, from 19:00)**

Honorable ministers, distinguished ambassadors, excellencies, and delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Thank you all for participating in the 4th TICAD Ministerial Follow-up Meeting. It is a great pleasure for me to visit Morocco for the first time. I was looking forward to this meeting. I thank Minister El Otmani and the Government of Morocco for hosting the meeting and for their warm hospitality.

We were able to conclude the first day of this Ministerial Follow-up Meeting successfully. Thank you for your cooperation and constructive contributions.

According to an ancient African proverb, “Smooth Seas do not make a skillful sailor.” This means that challenges improve our capacities.

Africa is certainly “the continent of hope and opportunity”. However, the path it has traveled until now has not been smooth.

Through the TICAD process, Japan and Africa have been tackling a number of development issues, in cooperation with the TICAD co-organizers and development partners.

Japan and Africa have shared hard times. That is why the TICAD process has developed this far. That is why Japan-Africa relations

are now more robust than ever before.

Even now, Africa faces difficult development challenges, including the social and economic disparities, achievement of the MDGs, and the consolidation of peace.

Japan takes African Development seriously, and we want results. We will continue to value the “kizuna” - which means, the bonds of friendship and solidarity - that have been cultivated through the TICAD process.

We gained valuable input to TICAD V from all of you today. Japan intends to bring TICAD V to an even greater level of success than at TICAD IV.

We will elevate Japan-Africa relations to a new stage. I look forward to your continued cooperation to make this a reality.

In closing, I would like to extend my best wishes for the further development of both Africa and TICAD and for the health and happiness of everyone participating here today.

Thank you very much for your attention.