

**Statement by H.E. Mr. Koichiro Gemba, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan,
at the Opening Session of the Fourth TICAD Ministerial Follow-up Meeting**

5 May 2011, Marrakech, Morocco

Your Excellency Dr. Saad Dine El Otmani, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Kingdom of Morocco,
Honorable ministers and ambassadors,
Heads of delegations and distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I am Koichiro Gemba, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan.

As I begin my remarks, I would like to extend a heartfelt welcome on behalf of the Government of Japan and also the TICAD Co-organizers: the United Nations (Office of the Special Advisor on Africa), the United Nations Development Programme, the World Bank, and the African Union Commission.

I also wish to express my cordial appreciation to His Excellency Dr. Saad Dine El Otmani, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, and to all those officials of the Government of the Kingdom of Morocco for their extensive cooperation in hosting this meeting.

This Ministerial Follow-up Meeting marks the starting point of the process leading up to TICAD V in June 2013 in Yokohama. I am excited to be able to work with all of you towards the success of TICAD V, which will be convened in the year commemorating the twentieth anniversary of the launch of TICAD.

Since 1993, the TICAD process has heightened global awareness of African development while leading the way in the international community's efforts for African development.

Africa, which suffered from poverty and conflicts in the 1990's, is now attracting the world's attention, not only as an aid recipient but as an economic partner. Africa is currently experiencing a transformation to "the continent of hope and opportunity."

And yet, the path to attaining hope and opportunity is not a smooth one for everyone living on the African continent. There are regions on the African continent where conflicts and political turbulence still hinder growth and development, and some young people have been left out from the benefits of growth. The European credit crisis is also casting a shadow on Africa. We encourage African countries to make their own efforts to resolve them.

Achieving the Millennium Development Goals is another important challenge, since the target date for attaining them is now close at hand. Japan hosted the MDGs Follow-up Meeting in Tokyo in June of last year to discuss effective methods for achieving the goals. Moreover, I myself chaired a ministerial-level side event regarding the MDGs on the occasion of the 66th United Nations General Assembly in September. Japan will faithfully implement its international commitments, including the “Kan Commitment” in contributing to maintaining and strengthening the momentum towards the achievement of the MDGs.

At TICAD V, Japan hopes to forge a new direction for African development, in light of Africa’s current circumstances and the international situation, both of which are changing significantly. At today’s meeting, I hope that in addition to reviewing the status of implementation of the Yokohama Action Plan, we come to share an understanding of what TICAD V should aim to achieve through our candid discussions, thereby making this meeting one that leads up to TICAD V.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Last year’s Ministerial Follow-up Meeting was convened soon after the unprecedented great earthquake disaster struck Japan. The Japanese people became vividly aware of the solidarity between Japan and Africa through the support and the messages of sympathy that came from Africa.

Over this past year, Japan has devoted its utmost efforts to reconstruction from the earthquake disaster. We have at the same time lived up to the solidarity extended to us from Africa by faithfully implementing the pledges Japan made in the Yokohama Action Plan in the 2008 TICAD IV.

Japan has provided approximately US\$260 million of support over the past year to the Horn of Africa region, which has faced its worst drought in 60 years as well as, West Africa, centered on the Sahel region, where droughts are intensifying. In addition, we have provided more than US\$1.3 billion as fast-start finance up to 2012 in the area of climate change.

Furthermore, Japan has also decided that, for 2012, we will make a contribution of US\$340 million to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

Japan is supporting Africa’s own efforts to achieve peace and stability in Africa, the key to success in this area. We are also dispatching an engineering unit of our Self-Defense Forces to the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS).

Japan is determined to take the lead in the international community for African

development as we prepare for TICAD V. Towards that end, Japan will act in partnership with a broad range of stakeholders, including private sector entities, Civil Society Organizations, and others, while making the most of its capabilities and resources.

I will close my remarks with my hopes that next year's TICAD V serves as an opportunity to elevate Japan-Africa relations to a new stage.

Thank you very much for your kind attention.