

Opening Remarks

By

H.E. Ato Hailemariam Dessalegn

**Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic
Republic of Ethiopia and Chairperson of
the African Union**

At

**The 5th TICAD Ministerial
Preparatory Meeting**

**16 March 2013
Addis Ababa**

Excellency Mr. Fumio Kishida, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Japan,

Excellency Mr. Erastus Mwencha, Deputy Chairperson of the African Union Commission,

Honorable Ministers,

Heads of Delegations,

Representatives of International Organizations,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you all to Addis Ababa for the Ministerial Preparatory Meeting of the 5th Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD V).

Ethiopia has been an active participant in the TICAD Process since its initiation in 1993. Therefore, it gives us great pleasure and we truly feel honoured to host this TICAD Ministerial Preparatory Meeting in Addis Ababa, during this special year when we are celebrating the 20th anniversary of TICAD.

As you all know, 2013 also marks the 50th Anniversary of the establishment of the OAU, which Ethiopia has the great privilege to host over the last half a century. The fact that these

two major events coincide will certainly serve as a unique opportunity to take stock of the progress we have made so far in our partnership and strategize for a better future.

Since its establishment in 1993, TICAD has no doubt provided an important platform for dialogue on issues of Africa's development. When TICAD was launched 20 years ago immediately after the end of the Cold War, Africa was marginalized and most of our economies were weak and fragile. Political stability also eluded most of our nations and some states were on the brink of collapse. We, therefore, appreciate the initiative Japan took at the time to draw the attention of the International Community towards Africa by establishing TICAD as a forum of policy coordination in support of Africa's development.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today, Africa has come a long way from where it was in the early 1990s. The dynamic socio-economic growth that is taking place in our continent cannot go unnoticed. Over the last decade, Africa has been registering an average GDP growth rate of more than 5% and recent reports indicate that currently 6 out of the 10

fastest growing economies in the world are in Africa. Ethiopia, for instance, has been registering a double-digit economic growth rate for almost a decade now. This is indeed one of the fastest and most sustained growth rates in the world.

Undoubtedly, our continent has emerged as a new pole of global growth. Africa has also started speaking with one voice on global issues of concern such as climate change and the reform of the United Nations. This has certainly increased Africa's prominence on the international scene. Therefore, it will not be wrong to say that Africa is drawing attention from all corners of the world.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We in Africa understand the critical importance of forging international partnerships to achieve sustainable socio-economic development and prosperity. This is precisely why, during its Chairmanship of the African Union, Ethiopia will endeavour to make sure that the partnerships Africa has established with different members of the international community will deliver concrete results, among others, in terms of employment creation

for our youth, transfer of technology and know-how as well as agricultural and infrastructural development.

As we are all aware, TICAD – Five is being held 2 years ahead of the 2015 target date for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and few months before the UN General Assembly's Special Event to follow-up on efforts made towards achieving the MDGs.

It is true that we have made encouraging progress towards achieving these Goals. This is the result of bold reforms and prudent macroeconomic management in most of the countries in our continent. The support of our International Parties has also been critical. It is, therefore, gratifying to note that most development indicators have improved in the last decade and today, a large part of our population have better access to education, health, potable water and other social amenities.

It is indeed imperative to sustain the gains thus far made, and I believe the new global targets after 2015 should take into account African's development priorities. The African common position on the Post-2015 Development Agenda is expected to be adopted during the 21st Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the

African Union Heads of State and Government in May 2013. I earnestly hope that TICAD – Five would serve as a useful platform to seek a common understanding with our international partners on the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As we all know, the theme of the African Union Summit this year is “Pan Africanism and African Renaissance”. However, we recognize that our aspirations for Africa's Renaissance cannot be realized without our partners joining hands with us to ensure that future development goals not only target the reduction of poverty but also bring about sustainable development and prosperity.

In this connection, I would like to express my profound appreciation to the Japanese Government for its overall development assistance to Africa, within the framework of TICAD particularly in the areas of trade, education, health as well as agricultural and infrastructural development.

Of course, Japan has been one of Ethiopia's dependable partners and I wish to seize this opportunity to express my

heartfelt gratitude to the Japanese Government for its generous assistance to Ethiopia especially over the last two decades. I am also very grateful to the Japanese Government for its commitment to support Ethiopia in the implementation of its ambitious Growth and Transformation Plan, which will be instrumental in realizing our vision of joining the rank of middle income countries by 2023.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Before concluding my remarks, I would like to express my conviction that TICAD, which has so far served as an excellent platform to promote Africa's development agenda at the international level, should be able to evolve with the changing times and transform itself into a solid partnership between Japan and Africa on the principle of equality and mutual benefit. We all know that there is indeed enormous potential to forge a strategic partnership between Africa and Japan.

In this connection, I am confident that the TICAD – Five Outcome Documents, which your meeting is going to discuss today, will move our partnership forward in a way that reflects

the mutual interests of both Africa and Japan. I also trust that you will seriously consider the need to set up a strong follow-up mechanism that will enable us to closely monitor and evaluate the concrete deliverables expected from this partnership.

Finally, I would like to wish you all successful deliberations and a pleasant stay in Addis Ababa.

I thank you