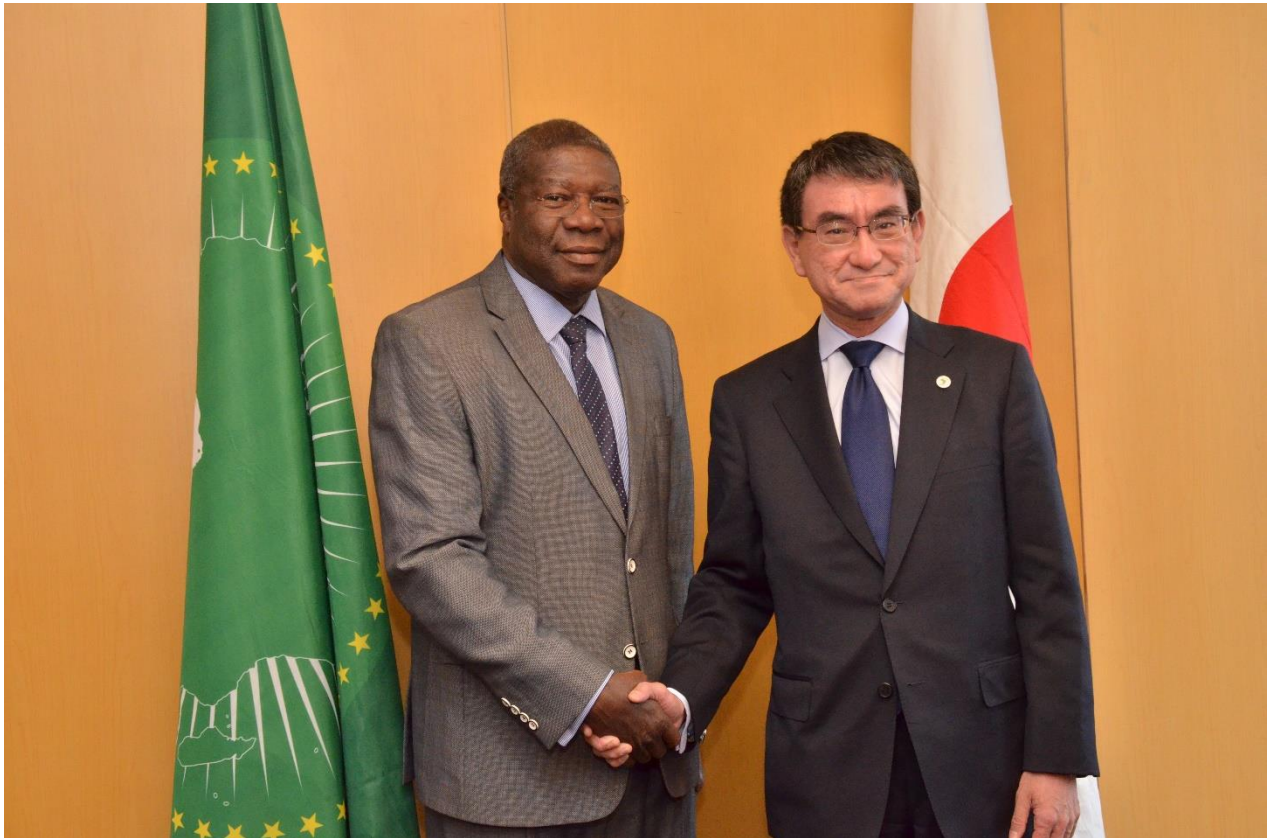


Press Release No N°075/2019**The African Union Commission Deputy Chairperson Amb. Kwesi Quartey receives the Japanese Foreign Minister, Mr. Taro Kono**

Addis Ababa, 5th May 2019: The African Union Commission Deputy Chairperson Amb. Kwesi Quartey today held bilateral talks with the Japanese Foreign Minister, Mr. Taro Kono.

Amb. Quartey welcomed Mr. Taro Kono courtesy visit to the African Union (AU) headquarters. The meeting acknowledged the importance of advancing the collaboration between the African Union and Japan. Amb. Quartey noted African Union's keenness to enhance its partnership ties with Japan in a number of areas, including cooperation on business initiatives with African countries as well as capacity building initiatives related to infrastructure development, which is a key element to make economic integration possible in Africa. The two sides discussed issues related to peace and security in the two regions.

The Deputy Chairperson of the Commission briefed the Mr. Taro Kono on the priority focus of the AU Commission, highlighting the ongoing institutional reforms of the Union, the integration agenda and domestic resource mobilization policy implementation, all aimed at

driving the realization of equitable and inclusive socio-economic transformation and development of the continent. Amb. Quartey appreciated Japan's efforts in supporting the efforts of the AU related to peace and security, infrastructure and health.

During the meeting issues of importance were discussed. Amb. Quartey observed the continent's heightened emphasis on human capacity development as the driver of sustainable economic growth, especially in S&T, education for boys and girls. He underpinned the linkages between leveraging on education and the skills revolution and accelerating development.



Amb. Quartey noted the progress made regarding African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and incentive mechanisms to advance the economic integration in the continent. The Deputy Chairperson informed the Japanese Foreign Minister about the entry into force of Agreement, on 30th May, 2019 and the launching of the operational phase of AfCFTA during the AU Niamey Summit, in July 2019.

H.E. Mr. Taro Kono appreciated African Union's efforts in peace and stability and economy. The Japanese Foreign Minister noted the efforts of the AU in finding peaceful solutions in the Horn of Africa. He encouraged the AU Commission to resume the High Level Policy Dialogue between the AU and Japan to discuss concrete measures to enhance cooperation between Africa and Japan.

The Japanese Foreign Affairs Minister briefed Amb. Kwesi Quartey about the aim of his visit that is promoting investment in Africa, which is expected to be a key theme of the Seventh Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD 7) Summit, scheduled to be held from 28th - 30th August, 2019 in Yokohama, Japan.

Both sides discussed the regional and international areas of common concern, including the promotion of peace and security, and the cooperation and investment opportunities in Africa for Japanese investors. The meeting agreed to develop modalities and substance for TICAD 7 Summit to bring the business communities from both sides on board. The Senior Official Meeting preceding TICAD 7 Summit will be held in Addis Ababa.

The meeting was attended by representatives/ experts from AU Commission as well as High Japanese Officials.

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