

**SPEECH BY:
DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION
H. E. ERASTUS MWENCHA**

**TICAD IV
MARRAKECH, MOROCCO
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- H. E. Dr Saad Dine El Otmani, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Morocco,
- H. E. Koichiro Gemba, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Japan,
- Honorable Ministers,
- The African Ambassadors based in Japan
- Representatives of International Organizations
- Members of the Diplomatic Corps
- Ladies and Gentlemen

This is the first time that TICAD is taking place in North Africa, notably in this iconic and touristic city of Marrakech, the city of the '*seven saints*'. Our gratitude as Africa goes to the Kingdom and people of Morocco for the warm welcome and hospitality that has been accorded to the TICAD delegations since our arrival and for the excellent logistical arrangements. Upon our landing, one could easily observe the growth and development that the Kingdom of Morocco has achieved in infrastructure, energy, and tourism.

Since our last TICAD gathering in Dakar, Senegal, the world has experienced unprecedented dynamism: from dramatic political changes such as witnessed under the Arab Spring, fuel and drought crises, the climate change negotiations in Durban, political unrests in the Sudan and South Sudan following secession, a series of onslaughts by terrorists, to the accelerated recovery of Japan's economy following the tragic visitation of the tsunami and earthquake, nuclear accident and to six of the African countries registering the fastest growing and most encouraging economic growth rates in the world. The continued

strengthening of the TICAD process inspires hope to maintain this trend and even bring more African countries on board. We are grateful to the important role of the African Ambassadors in Japan and for incorporating the AUC as a co-organizer.

We pay tribute to Japan for the relentless commitment to Africa's cause as demonstrated under the TICAD process now close to twenty years since its inception inspite of many natural and social-economic crises. The institutionalisation of the ministerial meeting is important in sustaining and expanding the dialogue and partnership to ensure that it embraces the Paris Principles and the Accra Agenda for Action. As we look forward to TICAD V in 2013 this will give us an opportunity to re-align the process so as to maintain and maximize its impact.

With a demographic dividend of 1 billion people, and a number of African countries showing resilience the continent is poised to become the global growth pole in this millennium. The youthful population will be the driving force behind economic prosperity in future decades, but only if policies and programs are in place to enhance their opportunities. There is notable achievement in the Millennium Development Goals, but that the food, fuel, and financial crises over the past few years, coupled with the instability in North Africa in 2011, impacted on the pace of advancement. This has called for efforts to be redoubled to preserve gains and ensure success; In particular, declines in labor productivity, increasing youth unemployment, and rising numbers of working poor are worrisome trends for the continent. Monitoring and taking remedial measures is central to assessing performance on the MDGs; but effective monitoring requires

more substantial investments in data collection, analysis, and dissemination than is currently the case in Africa.

The potential for highly profitable investments in Africa is enormous, but many investors including, Japanese private investors remain unaware of the past record and current opportunities. Africa's profitability is one of the best-kept secrets in today's world economy. Pooling economies and markets through regional integration will boost and provide a sufficiently wide economic and market space to make economies of scale possible for African to industrialize and attract private investment and technology transfer.

In addressing the various challenges, Africa is aware that global and regional challenges call for global and regional solutions respectively and has thus articulated key priorities and put in place necessary institutional mechanisms. As we visualize the course that TICAD V will take, it should be borne in our minds that Africa's priorities is the key determining factor. These priorities, which are, clearly identified in the African Union programmes, include;

- a) Implementation of African Peace and Security Architecture in order to deepen peace as a crucial ingredient for social economic development.
- b) Implementation of Program for Infrastructure Development in Africa which seeks to put in place the essential networks to underpin African integration.
- c) Concretization of Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Program with a few for providing food security and nutrition for Africa's growing population
- d) As well as The Campaign for Accelerated Reduction of Maternal Mortality in Africa (CARMMA) is an African Union Commission (AUC) and UNFPA

initiative to intensify the implementation of the Maputo Plan of Action for the reduction of maternal mortality in the Africa region.

- e) Realisation of the Accelerated Industrial Development for Africa which seeks to equip the continent with an operational industrial capability
- f) African Governance Architecture, the implementation of which will underpin Africa's on-going democratization process and exploitation of natural resources;
- g) Establishment of Pan African University, aiming at integrated research and education in Africa and
- h) The establishment of the Continental Free Trade Area.
- i) Global agenda such as the reform of the UN and addressing challenges of climate change.

Accordingly, the TICAD process, as it continues to evolve should come up in support of Africa's realization of our mutual interests and priorities. One of the most pressing challenges facing Africa today, and which remains at the core of the concerns of African leaders is, arguably, fragile peace, security and stability in parts of the continent. Thanks to the progressive implementation of the African Peace and Security Architecture, Africa is irreversibly reigning in various threats to peace on the continent with zero tolerance to unconstitutional change of government. Africa remains grateful for the engagement of Japan to provide that support, as evidenced by the investments it is making towards the development of the African Stand-by Force, capacity building in various areas and the sustenance of the African Mission in Somalia (AMISOM).

Agricultural development is the most effective strategy for boosting economic growth in Africa. The potential for agriculture to disentangle Africa from its cycle of poverty and turn it into the world's breadbasket is evident. Africa has 60% of the world's uncultivated arable land and more arable land than any other continent. Conservative estimates position Africa's current agricultural output to increase from \$300 billion a year today to \$500 billion by the year 2020 and would reach \$ 1 trillion by 2050. Africa's own agrarian expertise - a combination of the science of agriculture, indigenous knowledge and the African farmers' entrepreneurial spirit - must become the channel for agricultural productivity and growth. The African Union through its Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Program has brought together diverse key players - at the continental, regional and national levels - to improve co-ordination, to share knowledge and to promote joint and separate efforts to achieve the CAADP goals.

The structural gap in African infrastructure is considered a serious handicap to competitiveness, growth and poverty reduction. The Program for Infrastructure development seeks to promote socio-economic development and poverty reduction in Africa through improved access to integrated regional and continental infrastructure networks and services. The PIDA platform which brings together key stake holders including, RECs, DFIs, is an important tool for coordination, prioritization and resource mobilization.

Africa has come a long way and continues to 'speak with one voice' on global issues of common concern. Our continent continues to register growing unity and common purpose around the process of integration. The prospects of all African

countries, without exception, finding common cause in this process has never been so bright as it is today.

To Africans, climate change is a defining challenge of our times. By 2020, between 75 and 250 million people are projected to be exposed to increased water stress; yields from rain-fed agriculture could be reduced by up to 50 percent in some regions; agricultural production, including access to food, may be severely compromised. Climate change could increase the likelihood of civil war in parts of Africa by over 50% within the next two decades. If climate continues to warm in Africa and little is done to help its countries better adapt to high temperatures, the human costs are likely to be staggering.

Through its programs, Africa has embraced the changes taking place and continues to work with partners to strengthen on-going sustainable economic and social development including the smooth and gradual integration into the world economy. With the foregoing, implementation of outcomes and commitments of the Yokohama Action Plan with time bound and monitorable proposals, is crucial.

Until recently, Japanese companies and the government have had a fairly modest involvement in investing in Africa. As the statistics show, Japan's trade with Africa stood at US\$ 34bn around 2006, but thereafter faced some decline. It is gratifying to note that Japan's trade with Africa is again in the upward trend. As Africa and Japan continue strengthening this partnership, it is essential that Japan inject an even larger momentum in its investment in the continent. The current upward swell in its investments must be consolidated.

Furthermore, the initiatives like the Accra Agenda for Action needs to be adapted to different country circumstances - including middle-income countries, island, small states and countries in situations of fragility. Many countries have found that an aid policy, aid-effectiveness strategy or action plan is a useful tool for adapting the Paris agenda to their needs and circumstances.

Your Majesty, Your Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen I thank you for your kind attention.