



**United Nations
University**

*2007 Africa Day Symposium
Financial Instruments for the Promotion of
Infrastructure, Trade and Investment
between Japan and Africa
Tokyo, Japan
25 May 2007*

Welcome Remarks

by Rector Hans van Ginkel

Your Excellency, Yoshiro Mori, Former Prime Minister of Japan, Member of the House of Representatives, and President of the Japan-African Union Parliamentary Friendship Association,

Your Excellency, Midori Matsushima, Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan,

Your Excellency, Ambassador Salah Hannachi, Dean of the African Diplomatic Corps,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is a great honor and pleasure to welcome you all to the 2007 Africa Day symposium on “***Financial Instruments for the Promotion of Infrastructure, Trade and Investment between Japan and Africa***”.

First, I would like to thank all the people who accepted our invitation to speak at the forum. On the occasion of the 2007 Africa Day, we have assembled a very distinguished group of experts around His Excellency Mr. Yoshiro Mori, with representatives of the government of Japan, both from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Finance, the African Diplomatic Corps in Japan, as well

as the Japanese business community, UN agencies and the World Bank. We are certain to benefit from their wealth of experience.

Let me begin with a message: I would like to read to you the message of the Secretary General of the United Nations on the occasion of 2007 Africa Day:

The message of the SG is being distributed to the audience, UNIC has kindly arranged for the document translation and printing.

UNITED NATIONS



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THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

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MESSAGE ON AFRICA DAY

25 May 2007

Every year, Africa Day provides an appropriate opportunity to reflect on Africa's prospects, take stock of its problems, and acknowledge its achievements.

Through such initiatives as the New Partnership for Africa's Development and its Peer Review Mechanism, you have helped focus our collective efforts on key priorities for the continent's renewal. And through such institutions as the Pan-African Parliament and the African Union Peace and Security Council, the governments and peoples of Africa are demonstrating increased commitment to take effective and concrete actions to address the immense challenges at hand. Recent sustained economic growth in many African countries is another encouraging development.

But I also share Africa's pain and frustration at the persisting and widespread suffering on the continent. Extreme poverty -- together with lack of access to basic

education, health care and adequate nutrition -- continues to prevent millions of talented, promising young people in Africa from fulfilling their potential. At the same time, the devastation being inflicted by HIV/AIDS is reversing past development gains.

We welcome the important steps made towards consolidating peace in Africa, including the historic, democratic elections held in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the progress achieved in the Côte d'Ivoire peace process. However, armed conflicts continue to have tragic consequences for civilians in Africa's remaining trouble spots. In Darfur, despite the joint efforts of the United Nations and the African Union to reinvigorate the peace process and strengthen peacekeeping, the violence is taking an intolerable toll on human lives. Somalia, too, is again in the midst of upheaval, underscoring the urgent need to find a political solution to the protracted crisis afflicting the country.

As we strive to make real progress in our fight against poverty, disease and illiteracy in Africa, let us strengthen our global partnership to reach the Millennium Development Goals, including through more and better aid, debt cancellation and fairer trade. Let us also do all we can to resolve the continent's destructive conflicts, by making full use of Africa's institutional mechanisms for the promotion of peace and security. Finally, we must all work diligently to improve respect for human rights, particularly by empowering Africa's women.

On this Africa Day, I applaud the continent's many contributions to the United Nations, and I reaffirm the support of this Organization for the work of the African Union. I also pledge the strong commitment of the United Nations to serve as

Africa's partner in our efforts to bring peace where there is war, prosperity where there is poverty, and hope where there is despair.

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This, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen was the message of secretary general Ban Ki-moon. Let me add a few remarks:

This year's Africa Day Symposium focuses on **“The Financial Instruments for the Promotion of Infrastructure, Trade and Investment between Japan and Africa.”**

Since 2000, when we held our first Africa Day Symposium and when Africa was first acknowledged as an important item on the agenda of the G8 Summit, in Okinawa, much progress has been made. Africa remains an important item on the political agendas, African leaders are regularly invited to contribute to the G8 summits and six African Presidents will be attending this year summit in Heiligendamm, Germany. I am most grateful today to our German partners for having accepted our invitation to deliver some remarks on their views on African Development.

It is important to note that the coming months will be very important as the forthcoming TICAD IV is now quickly approaching, and will take place in the spring 2008. TICAD IV provides us with a great opportunity for cementing and enhancing the partnership between Africa and Japan. I very much hope that today's symposium will further contribute to this process. Next year also, the G8 Summit will return to Japan, in Toyako, Hokkaido. The summit will take place soon after TICAD IV, and this will create additional opportunities for the adoption and implementation of good policy recommendations regarding African development, for the next years.

We, at UNU, have been working closely with the African Diplomatic Corps in Tokyo in seeking solutions to Africa's development challenges in the past years. We always emphasize the importance of the triangle "infrastructure, regional integration and capital flows."

If you look at the policy brief we prepared four years ago for the third TICAD, UNU was advocating that infrastructure, regional integration and capital flows are all important elements of the African development equation, as highlighted by the NEPAD. The fact that infrastructures and poverty reduction are closely interlinked stresses the importance of having an accurate definition of infrastructure. We advocated, and still do, that such a definition of infrastructure must not include only hard infrastructure, such as railways, roads and bridges, but also soft infrastructure, such as education, health, information and communication technology (ICT), organization and good governance. In our views, the adoption of such a definition can help reverse the tendency to allocate very low budgets to sectors such as education and health.

What I want to add to this today, is that in our opinion, even though the focus of today's symposium is on financial infrastructures, in line with policies developed by the ADC, we think at UNU that it is now time to go beyond the traditional concept of Capacity Development and to move on to a better fostering of intellectual abilities and capacities. Only adequate **intellectual infrastructures** can enable the African people to take the lead in shaping their own future and development process. The available infrastructures are far from adequate which reflects negatively on all development efforts. The issue of the ownership process in development is crucial for success.

At UNU, we will further develop the theme of **intellectual infrastructure**, that goes beyond Capacity Development, in the coming months. It is important that we carry on in depth analysis of the actual impact of the overemphasis that was given to primary education in the past years at the detriment of secondary and higher education. The other levels of education, and not only primary education, do certainly need the utmost attention and support, both at the expertise and financial level, in the coming years, as they enable younger generations to build up their capacities that will in turn enable them to participate and contribute fully to their societies' development. The need to rebalancing the focus on the whole column of education, from basic education to higher education, rather than focusing on some components only, rather than "forgetting" some level, is urgent, if Africa and its people want to have a future that provide them with opportunities and free choices rather than to limit them to a life of survival. Africa needs a balanced development of its education systems.

I would like to take advantage of today's symposium to thank the Dean – Salah Hannachi – as well as the chairperson of 2007 Africa Day Symposium – Ambassador Biriggwa- who have been instrumental in the organization of this year's Africa Day Symposium. I would also like to thank the African Diplomatic Corps for their continuous support in organizing this symposium and for providing us today with coffee and tea during the break as they have done in the past. We very much appreciate this long standing relation-ship which is based on mutual respect and trust. When I look back at the past ten years, I think that the African Diplomatic Corps and UNU have succeeded in developing a strong partnership. I very much hope that this partnership will enable us to provide a high quality input into the TICAD process, by

joining our efforts and energies we can foster creative thinking, which in turn can benefit the African continent.

I would also like to specifically thank the Government of Japan - the host country of the UNU Headquarters. African development is one of the areas on which we are working very closely with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as well as the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology. I would like to mention specifically our high appreciation for the contributions, today, by H.E. Yoshiro Mori, Former Prime Minister of Japan, Member of the House of Representatives, and President of the Japan-African Union Parliamentary Friendship Association, by H.E. Koji Omi, Minister of Finance, and Member of the House of Representatives who will be joining us later this morning, by H.E. Midori Matsushima, Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs and by Shuichiro Megata, Director-General of the Sub-Saharan African Affairs Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for their on-going co-operation in hosting this annual event, as well as in all the other areas where we are working together. I think it is a very good signal to see four representatives of the Japanese government contributing actively to today's event. I wish to express my gratitude to each of you.

As I do often reiterate, we are very much convinced, here at UNU, that substantive meetings on African Development, such as the annual "Africa Day Symposium" have a great potential to foster innovative ideas and creative thinking, to come up with new approaches and appropriate effective policies. I do hope that today's event will enable such creative thinking.

Finally, I hope you have noticed on your way to U Thant Hall earlier this morning, the posters presentation that has been set up next to the African Symbol on the

second floor of the UN House. These posters present some of UNU's activities in and on Africa, they are a sampling of the scope and variety of UNU activities in and on Africa. The handouts "Focus on Africa" that were distributed to you do provide further information, but please keep in mind that the list presented to you today is neither exhaustive nor indicative of the overall breadth or depth of UNU's work in and on Africa.

UN is increasingly delivering as one. I am therefore happy to introduce to you the document on the work of UN in Africa. The first ever of this kind, indicating our strong wish to cooperate and deliver as one. The document is listing some samples of activities of the UN Agencies in Africa; again, I wish to say that these are just a sample of UN activities. You can easily understand that it is almost impossible to summarize the activities of UN Agencies in Africa within the limit of 150 words, however this document does provide us today with a little idea of what the UN agencies are trying to achieve in the African Continent, and it further contributes to presenting the diversity of the UN agencies contribution in one unique document.

Finally, I would like to thank all of you for coming here today. I am sure you will find the issues addressed in this year's symposium stimulating.

Thank you very much.

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