

Keynote Speech at Africa Day Symposium

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Dr. Hans Van Ginkel,
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Distinguished guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure to have an opportunity to talk about development in Africa at this symposium celebrating Africa Day. Just a week ago today, I attended the G8 finance ministers' meeting in Potsdam, Germany. There, I had a chance to speak with the finance ministers of Cameroon, Ghana, Mozambique, Nigeria and South Africa as well as the President of the African Development Bank (AfDB). Today's symposium is the best time for me to share my fresh ideas with you on how we can approach development issues in Africa. In this context, I would like to emphasize the following points in order to achieve sustainable development over the long term.

First, the financial aspect of good governance, including effective and efficient tax policy and administration, and public expenditure and debt management, is important for making effective use of financial resources including aid flows, debt relief and revenues from natural resources.

At the G8 finance ministers' meeting last week, good financial governance in Africa was one of the main topics of discussion. We reaffirmed its importance and endorsed the G8 action plan which outlines areas where we can lend support.

In bilateral meetings with several finance ministers of African countries, I also emphasized the importance of strengthening public financial management and showed my strong expectation that they improve their debt management capabilities.

Needless to say, Japan is determined to strongly support their efforts toward sound financial governance.

Second, the development of the private sector is crucial to Africa's sustainable economic growth through accumulation of capital and promotion of external trade.

In Potsdam, I was told by the finance minister of Ghana that high value added industries such as parts manufacturing for automobiles and aircraft have been developed in his country. He said that he was active in promoting trade with Japan.

I believe that Japan should deliver aid in a way that assists the efforts of African countries toward private sector development.

From this viewpoint, Japan initiated EPSA for Africa (Enhanced Private Sector Assistance for Africa), a joint initiative with the African Development Bank (AfDB) focusing on private sector development. Under this initiative, Japan supports AfDB's private sector development operations by providing ODA loans.

Third, while welcoming the increasing role of new donor countries, I believe it is imperative that all donors share information and take account of debt sustainability issues in their lending practices. In this context, the G7 urges all borrowers and creditors to share information on their borrowing and lending practices. I would also like to ask African countries to cooperate with our efforts.

Finally, I would like to highlight the importance of cooperation in science and technology. The rapid progress of science and technology has brought prosperity and raised our standard of living. On the other hand, the advancement of science and technology raises important ethical, safety and environmental issues, such as the threat of chemical weapon, ICT-related privacy issues, and the global warming. I call these the lights and shadows of science and technology. In this regard, we must all learn to use science and technology to our best advantage while overcoming those negative aspects. Opportunities need to be taken, but the risks must also be controlled. In other words, science and technology should not control humankind; humankind must control over science and technology.

Africa has huge potential to develop in the near future, endowed with abundant natural resources. However, in order to achieve sustainable, long-term development, human power development is the key. To this end, I would like to further deepen our cooperation with Africa by utilizing the benefits of science

and technology.

Joint research and development in science and technology field between African countries and Japan, and capacity building effort in Africa will make a crucial long-term contribution to the prosperity of humankind. In order for Africa to achieve sustainable development, it is necessary not only to utilize the developed countries' economic power but also to develop Africa's potential human power.

Therefore, I believe it is worthwhile to utilize a part of official development assistance (ODA) for cooperation in research and development activity and capacity building in science and technology field in Africa. Japan is willing to contribute to the realization of sustainable development in Africa by using its experience and knowledge in science and technology. I am convinced that such an approach will provide a win-win solution to both Africa and Japan from the longer perspective.

In this context, I would like to touch upon the Science and Technology in Society forum (STS Forum), of which I am the founder and the chairman.

This is a Forum to gather not only professional scientists but also policymakers, business leaders, and media leaders from all over the world, in order to discuss how to deal with lights and shadows of science and technology from the standpoint of the long future of humankind.

The STS forum had its inaugural meeting in November 2004, and annual meetings each year since then in Kyoto, Japan. I chaired these meetings, and they were attended by approximately 600 participants from 70 countries, regions and international organizations, including Nobel laureates and university presidents. From Japan, then-Prime Minister and Chief Cabinet Secretary participated.

This forum is an opportunity for real dialogue among people of different backgrounds and from different fields. The questions raised by science and technology have an impact on all of us, whoever we are and wherever we live. We want people to start thinking about science and technology issues as their own, as responsible individuals concerned about the future of humankind. The STS 4th annual meeting this year will be held in Kyoto on October 7th through 9th. I sincerely hope that as many distinguished participants as possible could come and join the discussion at this year's annual meeting.

I would like to add that there exists another important association of scholars in science and technology field from the developing world, the TWAS (the academy of science for the developing world). I would like to closely coordinate with its executive director, Dr. Hassan, in our efforts to enhance science and technology cooperation.

(Concluding Remarks)

I believe that stability and prosperity in the world in the 21st century are impossible without achieving sustainable development in Africa. To that end, Japan continues to work actively with African countries, making full use of our experience, knowledge and ideas.

Especially, I sincerely hope that Japan will build win-win relations with African countries not only through financial instruments, but also through utilizing the power of science and technology.

Thank you.