

Welcome Remarks by Amb. E.E.E. Mtango, Dean of African Diplomatic Corps
at the Africa Day Symposium 9th September 2008

On behalf of the African Diplomatic Corps in Japan, I would like to express our deep gratitude to the United Nations University and the Rector, Dr. Konrad Osterwalder, for accepting to co-organize this important Symposium. We are equally grateful to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan for supporting the Symposium and for the continued cooperation and support to our diplomatic work in general. I would like also to avail myself of this opportunity to applaud the role of the Japanese Government, the Members of the Diet, Japanese media and the Civil Society during the TICAD IV and Toyako G8 Summit. We attribute the success achieved to their great efforts.

The African Diplomatic Corps wishes to thank most sincerely our three Key Note Speakers, Honourable Yuriko Koike, Member of the House of Representatives and former Minister of Defense and Minister of Environment, Hon. Shintaro Ito, State Secretary of Foreign Affairs and Hon. Noritoshi Ishida, Senior Vice Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries. We appreciate in particular the sacrifice Hon. Yuriko Koike has made to be here this morning despite the obvious priority demands on her precious time. I would like also to thank the Vice President of JICA, Mr. Oshima and all the Panelists for their very valuable contribution to the success of this Symposium.

The topic of this Symposium is chosen because we are currently in the midst of a major food crisis which threatens to destroy many years of economic progress in Africa. You all know the remarkable 6% average GDP growth achieved in Africa in 2007. Africa is also bearing the brunt of climate change with severe drought destroying agricultural production while the continent emits the least amount of Greenhouse gases. But with these challenges there could also be opportunities. Japan's financial and technological resources could be deployed in Africa, in order to produce food for domestic consumption and for export. Africa has abundant land, favourable weather conditions and low cost labour. The TICAD process has emphasized on effective partnership between Japan and Africa. Our commitment

to this partnership should manifest itself to meet the challenge of food production and to take advantage of the existing opportunities.

Another reason for this Symposium is to promote and accelerate the decisions reached during TICAD IV regarding agricultural development of African countries. We are now in the fourth month since the conclusion of TICAD IV. We agreed on an Action Plan and Follow up mechanism. African countries and the relevant sectors of the Japanese Government should do their best to implement agreed actions.

On behalf of the ADC, I would like to extend a warm welcome to all the participants to this Symposium. We hope we will together contribute to a fruitful and enjoyable discussion.

Thank you very much.