

UNU/UNESCO 2009 International Conference “Africa and Globalization: Learning from the Past, Enabling a Better Future”

Your Excellency Mr. Matsuura, Your Excellency Professor Osterwalder
Your Excellency Mr. Nujoma, Your Excellency Mr. Konare,
Your Excellency Mr. Eaná, Your Excellency Mr. Obasanjo,
Your Excellency Mr. Kufor,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am Tetsuro Fukuyama. I was just appointed as Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs under the Hatoyama Cabinet.

I wish to express my heartfelt congratulations on the seventh meeting of this conference, which started as an effort to make globalization bring happiness to all the people in the world. I feel it is very meaningful that each year Japan has offered a venue for this international conference where those who have expertise in various fields join together to discuss important issues.

I understand that in this conference you will look back on the past fifty years of African development and discuss development assistance for Africa in today's globalized world.

In comparing Africa with South East Asia, it was the majority opinion fifty years ago that Africa had a higher potential for development. The abundance of natural resources in Africa and its appropriate size of population attracted attention. The African economy indeed experienced steady development in the 1970s, but it became stagnant later. I believe that you will examine the reasons from a variety of angles. But I think I can safely point out such factors as the lack of capital allocation for re-investment, tardy improvement

in infrastructure and basic education, the sluggish growth of agricultural productivity, and the frequent occurrence of conflicts.

At the outset of the new millennium, Africa resumed its economic growth and recorded an average annual growth rate as high as 5.3% in the past ten years. This achievement was made possible by the strong leadership that African leaders at that time, some of whom are present here, exercised to realize political and economic reform. The robust growth can also be ascribed to the strong world economy, in other words, the benefit of globalization.

It was when Africa was experiencing a remarkable growth that Japan hosted the Fourth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD IV). Although Africa was still facing various challenges such as poverty, infectious diseases and food insecurity, Japan regarded Africa as “a continent of hope and opportunity” with a view to achieving a genuine and sustainable growth in the continent. Japan announced that it would double its ODA for Africa by 2012 and that it would assist in doubling Japanese private investment there by then. At the same time, TICAD IV issued the “Yokohama Action Plan” in order to advance “Towards a Vivrant Africa”, which encompasses a host of assistance measures in the following areas: ①Boosting Economic Growth, ②Achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), ③Promoting the Consolidation of Peace and Good Governance, and ④Addressing Environmental /Climate Change Issues.

Since last autumn, the global financial and economic crisis has affected the economies of both industrial and developing countries, and drastically changed conditions surrounding Africa. Africa is now confronted with the negative side of globalization such as declines in demand, prices of primary commodities, and foreign direct investment.

What kind of development assistance should we provide for Africa in today’s globalized world, where external changes have a significant influence on Africa? Japan still believes that Africa will continue to provide opportunity and hope for the world. It is, thus, important to have a vibrant Africa in seeking to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in Africa as well as to revive the world economy.

Based on this recognition, Japan believes that Africa’s development partners should not cut back on their assistance for African development. Japan is determined to carry out its

commitments made at TICAD IV in a steady manner and to continue its strong support for Africa.

At the same time, it is important to restore the soundness of the world economy, which constitutes the external environment of Africa. Therefore, Japan will continue to work on global challenges, and will promote the reform of the global financial system, the combat against protectionism, and the early conclusion of the WTO Doha Round based on outcomes at G8 summit meeting held in Laquila, Italy, as well as G20 summit meeting which was just held in Pittsburg, the United States.

I am encouraged by the fact that both the United Nations University (UNU) and UNESCO, the co-organizers of this conference, have given priority to assistance for Africa. I understand that the UNU is planning to promote collaborative research education in Africa based on the partnership it has fostered with advanced educational institutions there. As part of such efforts, the UNU has established twin institutes, consisting of the Institute for Natural Resources in Africa (UNU-INRA), which is located in Ghana, and the Institute for Sustainability and Peace (UNU-ISP), which was launched in Tokyo this past January.

UNESCO, for its part, has emphasized assistance for Africa as a priority area and played a leading role among UN organizations in various fields, especially in the field of education such as Education for All. The UNU and UNESCO share the same characteristics of making intellectual contributions to the issue of globalization. As a major supporter for these organizations, Japan hopes that the UNU and UNESCO will make the most of their expertise.

The Hatoyama new Cabinet, embodying the dynamism of democracy, will exert all efforts to address various foreign policy challenges. Our Prime Minister Hatoyama clearly stated at the General Assembly of the United Nations that Japan, as a 'bridge' for the world, will tackle the issues of peacebuilding, development and poverty. In his speech, he stated that Japan will work in partnership with international organizations and NGOs and strengthen its assistance to developing countries in terms of both quality and quantity. He also presented his intention that the new Cabinet continues and strengthens TICAD process, and redoubles its efforts towards the achievement of the MDGs and the promotion of human security. Under those initiatives, the Hatoyama Cabinet will continue to take up the issue of African development. I sincerely hope that you will have a fruitful discussion for

the better future of Africa and show the desirable direction of development in Africa.

Thank you very much.

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