

The 10th Meeting of the Africa Partnership Forum  
Speech by Minister for Foreign Affairs Masahiko Koumura  
(Making a Vibrant Africa a reality through TICAD IV and the G8 Hokkaido Toyako  
Summit)  
(At Mita Kaigisho)  
(Date and Time: April 7, 09:40-09:55)

**1 The Importance of Africa**

Thank you for the kind introduction.

I'm very pleased to have the opportunity to speak to all of you today on the occasion of the Tenth Meeting of the Africa Partnership Forum (APF).

As you are all aware, in May, Japan will be organizing the Fourth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD IV) in Yokohama, and in July, the G8 Summit at Toyako in Hokkaido. We are very excited by the growth in interest in Africa in the Japanese government and among the country's citizens as these meetings draw closer.

This is a sign of the increased importance that Africa has in Japan's foreign affairs. My recent trips to Africa are also part of this change.

In January of this year, I had the opportunity to visit Tanzania, and I returned from Gabon just two weeks ago. As the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, I have gained a new sense of the proximity that Africa has to us.

In Gabon, I had the pleasure of jointly chairing a preparatory meeting for TICAD IV with Foreign Minister Gondjout, which brought together cabinet-level officials from all over Africa. I'll touch on this meeting again in a moment. Prior to the preparatory meeting, I had the opportunity to meet collectively with delegates from the diplomatic missions of African countries in Tokyo, who have been engaged in enthusiastic talks to prepare for TICAD IV. I was able to directly hear the needs and expectations they have for TICAD IV and the G8 Summit.

These activities have brought us here today for the APF meeting. With TICAD IV and the G8 Summit just over the horizon, these meetings are all part of a river that will lead us through Yokohama and on to Toyako. I am sure that all of us who have

been involved cannot help but feel a sense of excitement as we see flow of this river growing faster.

## **2. TICAD IV and the G8 Hokkaido Toyako Summit**

The talks which will take us to the G8 Hokkaido Toyako Summit have already begun in earnest. For the past two days, the Development Ministers of the G8 have been meeting in Tokyo under my chairmanship to discuss issues of development from a variety of perspectives. Africa has been a major focus of these talks. Today and tomorrow, Africa will be the only topic of discussion. The outcomes of both the APF and the Development Ministers' meetings will lead firstly into TICAD IV in May.

The central themes of the APF meeting are "Boosting Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction" and "Environmental Issues and Climate Change," and these will remain the areas of focus at TICAD IV. The African heads of state who have been invited will continue the exploration of these topics that will begin here.

This APF meeting is being attended by a very diverse group of delegates from Africa, the G8 and donor countries, and international organizations. This openness will be carried over to TICAD IV, which will make that meeting an extremely inclusive event with high-level participation not only from African heads of state, but also from donor countries, and international organizations. It will be a major forum to discuss issues of African development, and I'm confident that TICAD IV represents an excellent chance to build and expand on the debates that will be taking place here at the APF meeting.

Under the basic message of "Towards a Vibrant Africa", we want to define concrete action plans for the international community to support African development at TICAD IV and support recent efforts to promote positive political and economic changes in Africa.

Prime Minister Fukuda will take the results of TICAD IV to the Hokkaido Toyako Summit in July. Japan will assume the responsibility of taking the voices and messages from Africa that will be heard at TICAD IV to the leaders of the G8. At the summit, we will also be holding outreach sessions for Africa. Our vision is for the energetic debates on African development at the APF meeting to come together in a

river that will flow to Lake Toya, and enrich the G8 Summit talks taking place on its shores.

We may also look at this process as a river and also as a roadmap. Since last year, when the real preparations for TICAD began, we have worked to smooth the road to Hokkaido and make sure that the path is not obstructed. I hope that we can all share these hopes and aims for the meetings.

### **3 This APF Meeting**

At this APF meeting, some of the main topics of discussion will be the areas of focus that need to be considered as we work “towards a vibrant Africa.” I would like to touch on a few of these areas today, beginning with action on climate change.

The continent of Africa is said to be particularly vulnerable to changes in climate. We must find ways of reducing the output of greenhouse gases while adapting to their negative effects, without sacrificing economic growth. Through the “Cool Earth Partnership”, Japan is engaged in detailed policy discussions with developing countries including African countries to construct an effective framework for dealing with climate change beyond 2012, based on ten of billions of dollars of support.

Another major area of focus is boosting economic growth and poverty reduction. We believe that boosting economic growth is an effective strategy for ending poverty, and that it holds the key to building a vibrant Africa. If African economies are to become more resilient to rising prices for natural resource and become able to develop in a sustainable fashion, we cannot ignore the need for industries to diversify or for effective infrastructural and agricultural foundations to be put in place to attract private investment. I’m optimistic that there will be many fruitful talks at this APF meeting in these areas.

I am grateful to have had the opportunity to speak about our roadmap “towards a vibrant Africa”, and my views on the debates that need to take place for us to reach our destination together. Thank you.