

The 10th Meeting of the Africa Partnership Forum (APF)
Message to Participants from Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda

April 7, 2008

Ladies and Gentleman,

It is my great pleasure to extend a heartfelt welcome to you here today. On behalf of Japan, I would like to offer a few words of greeting.

In my general policy speech to the Diet in January of this year, I made it a goal for Japan to become a 'peace fostering nation', which proactively contributes to peace and development in the world, and toils for the common interests of the region and the world. African development is a global issue that international community must unite to address, and as a 'peace fostering nation', Japan will continue to strive to play our part in facing these challenges.

The year 2008 will be a pivotal year for Japan as we work to fulfill this role. From May 28th to 30th, Japan will hold the Fourth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD IV) in Yokohama. With the basic message, "Towards a Vibrant Africa," the conference represents a place to turn the efforts of the international community to promote future development in Africa into concrete action. Later this year, Japan will host the G8 Hokkaido Toyako Summit in July. Development and Africa will be high on the agenda of the meeting, which will also include outreach sessions related to African development. In the history of Japan's policies in relation to Africa, this year will be a major turning point.

Many meetings on development and Africa have already taken place here in 2008, such as the Fourth Annual Meeting of the Infrastructure Consortium for Africa and the G8 Development Ministers' Meeting. The APF meeting will play a particularly crucial role in the preparations for the G8 Summit, as delegates from African nations and the G8, as well as non-G8 OECD countries, and international and regional organizations gather to monitor commitments to African development, discuss challenges facing the continent, and build better solutions for Africa.

I look forward to the lively discussions that are sure to take place here, and I am very hopeful that the Tenth Meeting of the Africa Partnership Forum will produce meaningful results for African development.

I thank you for your kind attention.

Prime Minister of Japan
Yasuo Fukuda