

Speech made by Mr. Nobuhide MINORIKAWA, Parliamentary Vice-Minister
for Foreign Affairs of Japan
at the 12th Africa Partnership Forum on 10th June 2009

Mr. Chairman,

Your Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am greatly honoured to have an opportunity to make a few remarks at this 12th APF. As G8 chair of the last year, I also participated in the 11th APF held in Addis Ababa. I am pleased to see here some familiar faces with whom I exchanged views at the previous APF.

When the financial crisis started last September, the impact of the crisis on Africa was assumed to be partial. As the representative of the AU mentioned, however, the impact of the global recession has become more and more evident, for example, in the forms of increasing current account deficits and decreasing remittances from the African diaspora. Moreover, many people are concerned about the possibility that Official Development Assistance (ODA) from donor countries, which has been playing an important role in African development, may also decrease.

Taking into account all these direct and indirect impacts, it is predicted that the annual economic growth rate of Africa, which had a splendid record of over 5% in pre-crisis years, is to drop to 2% this year. The last thing we would like to see is that all our previous endeavors for Africa's continuous development turn out to be in vain, and that the MDGs become even more difficult to achieve for African countries. We must do all we can to avoid it. Assistance in all and any form from donor countries is needed more than ever before.

Against this backdrop, Japan hosted the TICAD follow-up ministerial meeting in Botswana this March. At the meeting, participants discussed the progress in implementing various measures of development assistance promised at the TICAD IV. The meeting also gathered African voices on the impact of the global financial and economic crisis. Japan conveyed

these messages to the London Summit and they were reflected in the leaders' statement.

Just before my speech, the representative of the AU reiterated Africa's strong needs for assistance. In response to that appeal, I would like to emphasize the following two points.

First, development partners should faithfully implement their existing commitment. Second, the measures agreed on at the London Summit should be materialized urgently.

To facilitate today's discussion with some concrete images on the next steps to be taken by both African and partner countries, I would like to explain how Japan has been working to address this issue in recent months in the follow-up of TICAD IV.

The first pillar of our endeavor is ODA. Japan is resolved to double its ODA to Africa by 2012 as promised at TICAD IV. As clearly explained in Botswana we have already provided, in total, food aid worth 300 million dollars to African countries which face food crisis for the past several months. We also aim to expedite the implementation, as early as possible, of 2 billion dollars of grant and technical assistance. Many fact-finding mission teams have been sent to African countries in a concentrated manner in such fields as infrastructure, agriculture, health, education, water and sanitation, so as to identify specific projects in the countries concerned.

The second pillar is promotion of trade and investment. For this purpose, the "JBIC Africa Investment Facility" was created in April. We believe that a comprehensive approach where the private and the public sectors work in partnership is needed to promote trade and investment to Africa. We sent joint missions for promoting trade and investment to Africa last autumn. We are in the process of discussing with the business circle to send another mission by the end of this year again.

The last pillar is the field of tourism. Tourism is one of the most promising businesses in Africa in coming years. From this point of view, Japan is going to organize the fifth Africa Asia Business Forum in Uganda next week to promote tourism in Africa and to encourage Asian tourists to

visit Africa. I am convinced this Forum will be a significant step and new steps toward the promotion of tourism in Africa.

In addition to the efforts made by partners' side, African countries' efforts are much needed in maintaining sound economic and development policies and establishing good governance. It is only when Africa displays its ownership that assistance from the international society in its real sense would be effective.

To conclude, I hope that we can have active discussions as indeed we have had at the last APF and share various ideas and approaches of African and partner countries as well as related institutions, and that, by doing so, this forum could send clear messages to L' Aquila Summit in coming July.

Thank you for your attention.

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