

For Immediate Release

## FOURTH TOKYO INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT (TICAD IV) SETS AGENDA FOR HOPE AND OPPORTUNITY

**Yokohama, Japan, 26 May 2008:** More than 40 African heads of State will gather in Yokohama, Japan for the Fourth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD IV) on May 28 to 30, hosted by Japanese Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda. The summit-level event is this year's largest international conference on African development.

The conference comes at a time when Africa's average economic growth rate has reached 6 percent, peace-building and democratization are taking hold, and countries are tackling climate change and environmental concerns. The theme of TICAD IV is: "Towards a vibrant Africa: A continent of hope and opportunity."

The conference will focus on three priorities: 1) boosting economic growth; 2) ensuring Human Security, including the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and consolidation of peace and democratization; and 3) addressing environmental issues and climate change. These themes will be discussed both in the plenary and in breakout sessions.

"The time has come for TICAD to make a significant leap forward," said Japanese Foreign Minister Masahiko Koumura. "TICAD IV will hammer out a mechanism to help us keep focused on mid and long-term issues five or ten years into the future."

TICAD IV is scheduled to conclude with the adoption of the "Yokohama Declaration", outlining guiding principles and approaches to African development among TICAD stakeholders, as well as the "Yokohama Action Plan and the Yokohama Follow-up Mechanism", laying out a road map for action-oriented initiatives with measurable targets.

The co-organizers are the Government of Japan, the United Nations Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the World Bank. The United Nations will be represented by Deputy Secretary-General Dr. Asha-Rose Migiro, UNDP by Administrator Kemal Derviş, and the World Bank by its President, Robert B. Zoellick. Also participating will be high-level representatives from countries in Asia and other regions, as well as heads of international agencies and international non-governmental organizations.

### Looking to the future

On the first priority, the conference will discuss ways to make Africa's robust economic growth self-sustaining and inclusive, so that the poor communities share benefits. Focus areas include expanding trade and investment, infrastructure development, and increasing agricultural productivity.

To advance the second priority, the conference will discuss ways to strengthen "Human Security", a key concept of Japan's foreign policy, to enable people to live in dignity, with freedom from fear and want, by protecting and empowering individuals and communities. This includes accelerating efforts to achieve the MDGs by 2015, and consolidation of peace and democratic governance.



Africa needs to strengthen efforts to reach the MDGs. These globally agreed commitments aim to reduce extreme poverty and child deaths, educate all children, improve maternal health, empower women, combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other deadly diseases, and ensure environmentally sustainable development. Economic growth has helped reduce poverty, but more than 40 percent of Africans still survive on less than a dollar a day, and education and health systems need upgrading.

On the third priority, climate change poses great risks to socio-economic development in Africa, with recurrent droughts parching farm fields and grazing lands, and flooding in other areas threatening communities. TICAD IV will explore ways to strengthen responses to climate change and other environmental issues.

The conference will also include a wide range of seminars and symposia covering topics such as the role of the private sector in accelerating growth in Africa, corporate social responsibility, enterprise development and microfinance, infrastructure and women's economic empowerment, and climate change and security. Other activities will include a trade fair and a dialogue with civil society on African development.

### **The TICAD process**

Launched in Tokyo in 1993 (TICAD I), the TICAD process initiated a high-level policy dialogue between African leaders and development partners. The process continued with TICAD II, held in 1998, and TICAD III in 2003, and has evolved into a major global framework to facilitate initiatives for African development, guided by the concepts of African ownership of its development and fostering partnerships to promote development.

The main feature of the TICAD process is Asia – Africa cooperation. Japan has encouraged this South – South cooperation out of a conviction that Asia's development experiences can be useful for Africa. This has resulted in initiatives to facilitate trade and investment, as well as technical cooperation, between the two regions.

Preparations for TICAD IV have included wide ranging consultations with African leaders, the African Union Commission, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UN-ECA), African regional economic commissions, TICAD Co-organizers, major international and regional organizations, partners among developed countries, Asian and other developing countries, as well as civil society and non-governmental organizations and the private sector.

To build momentum, Regional Preparatory Meetings for TICAD IV were held in Lusaka, Zambia for Southern and Eastern African countries in October 2007, and in Tunis, Tunisia for North, West and Central African countries in November 2007. The Ministerial Preparatory Meeting took place in Libreville, Gabon in March 2008.

The Hideyo Noguchi Africa Prize established in 2006 to recognize outstanding achievements in the field of medical research and services will be awarded for the first time during TICAD IV. Dr. Noguchi was a famous Japanese researcher who died some eighty years ago in Ghana, where he lived and carried out research on yellow fever.

The results of TICAD IV are expected to be fed into the G-8 Hokkaido Toyako Summit scheduled to be held from 7 to 9 July, 2008, chaired by the Japanese Prime Minister, to bring African priorities to this meeting of world economic powers.

### **For further information please contact:**

**Nicholas Gouede** (communications contact for the co-organizers)

TICAD/UNDP Africa Bureau

email: [nicholas.gouede@undp.org](mailto:nicholas.gouede@undp.org)

telephone: +1(212) 906-5954

mobile at TICAD IV: (+81) 802-610-6316