



Closing Statement by Kemal Derviş

Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme

On the Occasion of

**The Fourth Tokyo International Conference on African Development,
(TICAD IV)**

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Your Excellency, Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda of Japan,
Prime Minister Mori,
Presidents,
Excellencies,
Colleagues,
Dear Friends,

It is an honour to deliver these closing remarks on behalf of all the TICAD co-organizers—the World Bank, the United Nations and UNDP. I would like to begin by sincerely thanking the Government and people of Japan for the kind and generous hospitality accorded to us in this beautiful port city of Yokohama.

All of us remember the time when Japan was one of the countries that showed the way for rapid growth and development. In the last fifty to



sixty years it was one of the leaders, a country that was able to grow at 8-9 per cent for a sustained period of time and make itself one of the most prosperous and one of the strongest economic societies in the world. Japan is now one of the most generous and leading economies in the world. So the Africa-Japan partnership, which we in the United Nations contribute to, has this background of this Japanese success.

The partnership with Africa and the partnership for development is an old one. It started in the 1990s, and the United Nations and UNDP were associated with that partnership from the beginning. I am very grateful to have the opportunity to share some thoughts with you today.

The global context: challenges and opportunities for Africa

Looking at Africa, this century actually started rather well. In terms of overall economic progress, average annual economic growth in sub-Saharan Africa has been above five percent since 2004, reaching 6 percent in 2007– one percentage point higher than the world average. For the first time in decades, sub-Saharan Africa is growing faster than the world economy – a significant achievement. In addition to these economic gains, across the continent serious efforts are underway to put in place the policies and resources needed to reduce poverty and



achieve sustainable development, advance peace and security, and strengthen democratic governance so that it delivers the tangible benefits its citizen's desire.

So the theme of this Conference – “Towards a Vibrant Africa: A Continent of Hope and Opportunity” – is, indeed, a very appropriate theme. Africa started the 21st Century well; it is now time to build on this success to accelerate the progress and to mobilize in support of Africa.

It is true, however, that in the last 12-18 months new dangers have emerged. The world economy as a whole is slowing down. The financial crisis in the advanced economies has been a big problem and has slowed down overall growth in the world economy, which may also affect Africa. We have also had, somewhat paradoxically, sky-high energy prices, and now very high food prices. So while the world economy is slowing down, energy and food prices have gone up a lot. Now some commodity prices do of course benefit the African economies, but it is true that some of the key African products, tropical products, have not risen in price as fast as some of the products that Africa imports. So the food price situation is a serious concern for Africa.

As the session on environment and climate change issues discussed, these challenges are exacerbated by the long-term risk that



climate change poses. While many of the predicted and more serious effects of climate change are in the long-term, we know that global warming is going to affect Africa. Some of these effects are already being seen in areas such as agriculture, water, and health. We do, therefore, have to mobilize to help on climate adaptation and slowdown the global warming process, and to climate-proof infrastructure and help African agriculture deal with this problem.

So while there is progress, while Africa has reformed a lot and put much more growth-supportive policies in place, it is also true that there are these challenges: The world economic challenges, the climate challenge, the energy and the food challenge. So we have to redouble our efforts. We have to keep our eyes on the 2015 target date for achieving the Millennium Development Goals. If we all work together, if Africa persists in the great efforts it has already undertaken over the last 6-7 years, and if the international community really does come through in support of Africa, then I believe we can get very close to achieving the objectives of the MDGs in Africa and the promises to the people of Africa can be kept.

On all these issues, what was clear from the deliberations we have had during TICAD IV on boosting economic growth, ensuring human



security, achieving sustainable development and expanding partnerships, is that Africa is determined to meet these challenges, seize the opportunities that exist to accelerate growth and human development, and that a strengthened partnership with the international community is vital for success in achieving these objectives.

In this regard, we very much welcome the steps Japan is taking as a partner in Africa's development, including the pledge Prime Minister Fukuda has made that Japan will double its ODA to Africa over the next five years.

An important framework for Africa's development

Since its inception in 1993, TICAD has become a major global framework for Asia and Africa to collaborate in promoting Africa's development. And Japan has approached this partnership not just in a bilateral way, but including the whole international community. This is particularly important as Japan this year chairs the G8 and I am sure that many of the discussions that have taken place during TICAD IV will also be debated and taken forward for action during the Hokkaido-Toyako G8 Summit.

In this context, I wish to acknowledge UN Secretary-General Ban's leadership in convening the MDG Africa Steering Group. This Group



brings together the leaders of multilateral development organizations to identify the practical steps needed to achieve the MDGs in Africa with scaled-up assistance from international partners. Deputy Secretary-General Asha-Rose Migiro, who is here with us, chaired a meeting of the Working Group during this Conference, and I think she has really brought a new energy through this Working Group on the efforts to achieve the MDGs in Africa.

As we celebrate the 15th year of the TICAD process, we can recall the influential role it has played in the development discourse through advancing concepts such as ensuring Africa's ownership of its development, strengthening international partnerships, achieving human security, and in particular, the crucial Africa-Asia cooperation.

In addition to the high-level policy dialogue between African leaders and development partners, there have also been real achievements on the ground. As one of the co-organizers of TICAD, UNDP has been a partner in the operationalization of many TICAD initiatives. These include the UNDP-Japan NERICA, "New Rice for Africa", partnership to spread a new high-yield drought-resistant rice variety for Africa, as well as a programme to empower rural women in Northern Ghana by promoting the local shea butter industry.



Under the auspices of TICAD, nearly \$90 million has been implemented between TICAD III in 2003 and TICAD IV in technical cooperation projects that are making a real difference to lives on the ground. On this, I hope many of you will have been able to watch the film UNDP has produced on the occasion of TICAD IV.

It encapsulates the stories of ordinary people in Africa whose lives have been transformed through interventions by TICAD -inspired projects. Indeed, one young woman in Sierra Leone whose life has drastically changed through the 'Arms for Development' project personified this when she said: *"I do not want to look back but want to study hard and become a lawyer; I see a bright future in front of me and I believe that I can achieve my goals"*. I am confident that TICAD is not only a high-level global forum, which of course it is very successfully, but also and more importantly, about improving the lives of Africa's people so that they can live with dignity, hope and opportunity for the future.

An agenda for action: the Yokohama Declaration

It is in this context that the co-organizers of TICAD are determined to actively follow up on the outcomes of this Conference as spelled out in the Yokohama Declaration action plan. This covers all three pillars of the TICAD IV priority areas: Boosting Economic Growth; Ensuring Human Security; and addressing Environment and Climate Change-- key issues



which are also very much in line with the recommendations of the MDG Africa Steering Group.

The follow-up mechanism to be set up as a result of TICAD IV is designed to also ensure the continued active involvement of the African Diplomatic Corps in Japan, which has played an unprecedentedly active and admirably forward-looking role in the preparation of TICAD IV. The UN co-organizers of TICAD, together with the World Bank, have also worked to ensure that the “Delivering as One” framework -- aimed at enhancing the coherence and effectiveness of the UN’s development activities-- was a central element in the preparatory discussions for TICAD IV, one that will also be applied in following up on the outcomes of this conference.

On behalf of all the co-organizers, I want to thank you all for being here and for making this meeting such a big success. Again, I would like to express my deep gratitude to Japan for their really impressive organization of this conference.

We look forward to continuing to work together for Africa’s peace and development. The world economy is full of dangers but also of



opportunities and we have to work together to manage the dangers and seize the opportunities.

Many thanks.

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