

**SPEECH BY H.E. THE AMBASSADOR DURING THE POST LECTURE  
RECEPTION BY MILNNIUM PROMISE JAPAN, 4<sup>TH</sup> DEC, 2013**

**Professor Akihiko Tanaka, President of JICA;**

**Professor Kitaoka, President, International University of Japan & Emeritus Professor  
of University of Tokyo;**

**Ms. Rieko Kitaoka, Chair Millennium Promise Japan;**

**Excellencies;**

**Distinguished Guests;**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

At the outset I wish to thank Millenium Promise Japan (MPJ) for the kind invitation to today's lecture, the 23<sup>rd</sup> in a series organized under the Global Leadership Studies(GLS) programme by the Faculty of Law, University of Tokyo. I feel honored to make a few remarks at this reception on behalf of my colleagues from the African Diplomatic Corps.

I also wish to thank Professor Tanaka, President of JICA for the very insightful lecture on the world system and Japan's international cooperation in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. I am sure that most of the participants feel as inspired as I am. The successful transition by Professor Tanaka from academia to the tangible international cooperation & development industry, is no doubt a motivation to many young minds and talents keen to follow a similar path.

Indeed the role of JICA in promoting Africa's growth cannot be overemphasized. JICA has been a major development partner to many nations in Africa. The Agency has been on the forefront of promoting African ownership through projects that support the type of cooperation appropriate to individual countries' sustainable growth.

These efforts are now complemented by the TICAD process which advocates for Africa owned development initiatives and global partnership. Under the objective to foster a vibrant Africa, this year's TICAD V adopted the Yokohama Action Plan (YAP) which focuses on three African development priorities of: boosting economic growth; ensuring human security in all its aspects and addressing environmental issues including climate change.

Under the priority aspect of boosting economic growth, the forum identified private sector-economic growth, trade and investments as engines of development in Africa. The Japanese Government further commitment to providing increased support to Africa's private investment both financially and through training. Accordingly, last August, the Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry led a large investment and trade delegation of senior government officials and top business executives to Africa; specifically to Kenya and Tanzania to follow-up on the TICAD V discussions.

On their part, African countries' commitment to accelerated economic development has been well demonstrated in the areas of improved political governance, economic reforms that promote foreign investments, development of functional institutions, human resource development, and enhanced regional integrations. It is no wonder Africa is poised to be a future growth pole in the world, with significant investment potential. It is our hope that many Japanese companies will seize this investment opportunity and be part of this game changer.

Kenya has positioned itself as a preferred investment destination in the Eastern Africa region with key reforms in several areas. The country is also implementing its vision 2030, a development blue print that aims at making Kenya a globally competitive and prosperous nation with high quality of life by the year 2030. The Blue print sets development benchmarks for a number of priority sectors ranging from infrastructure and energy development, industrialization of agriculture, tourism, and manufacturing among others. The developments open a myriad of investment opportunities to all potential investors across the globe. This is further complemented by Kenya being a member of both the EAC and COMESA economic regional blocs which both gives a combined market population of over 400 million.

I also wish to recognize the good works of Millennium Promise Japan (MPJ) of supporting community development projects in Africa, under the umbrella of the Millennium Village Project (MVP). The interventions to facilitate poverty reduction; improve quality of life, levels of education and gender equality, have significantly promoted self sustenance economic growth amongst low income communities in concerned areas.

In Kenya, the Millennium Village initiatives in Sauri and Dertu which were started in August 2004 have seen remarkable results in terms of improving the communities' crop production both for food and sale in nearby markets.

The MPJ initiatives are akin to some of the JICA projects such as Smallholders Horticulture Empowerment Project, popularly known as (SHEP). The project was introduced in Kenya in 2006 in the Rift Valley region to provide technical assistance to farmers' organizations to embrace market oriented farming. The project resulted in doubling average incomes of respective individual farmers from horticultural products. The SHEP project is now strengthened through a follow-up 5 year programme to support similar developments across the country.

As I conclude, I wish to once again emphasize that Africa is growing, Africa is modernizing, Africa is the next consumer market, and Africa's influence is rising. The time to engage with the continent for mutually profitable partnerships is now. Japan's own future economic and social advancement on the global front will also depend on how fast the Japanese private sector positions itself vis-a- vis other competitors. We therefore earnestly encourage the Japanese companies to take up their rightful position on this platform.

May I now ask you all to raise your glasses and toast for a future of brighter prospects and stronger partnerships between Japan and Africa, and indeed the rest of the developing world. *“Kampai “*

**Thank you**

