

TOKYO INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE FOR
AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT (TICAD III) TENTH
ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION TOKYO, JAPAN

PRESENTATION BY

H. E. PRESIDENT J. A. KUFUOR AT THE
PLENARY SESSION TITLED 'POVERTY
REDUCTION THROUGH ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT'

Mr. Chairman,
Yr. Majesty,
Your Excellencies, Heads of State and Government,
Hon. Ministers,
Members of the Diplomatic Corps,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is my pleasure, indeed an honour, to have this opportunity to say a few words on the occasion of the 10th Anniversary of the Tokyo International Conference for African Development, TICAD III.

give a big thank to Japan
I must first express our gratitude to the Government and People of Japan for the excellent preparations made towards hosting this conference and for the usual esteemed Japanese hospitality that make visits to Japan memorable occasions. We thank you sincerely.

Mr. Chairman, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, we all recall that during the United Nations General Assembly of 1991, when the New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990's, UN-NADAF, was adopted, the Government of Japan, with vision, launched the TICAD process by announcing the organisation of TICAD I.

This visionary idea culminated in TICAD I in 1993 and TICAD II in 1998 platforms that have kept the debate on African Development alive and at a very high level.

The TICAD process is now 10 years old. During the period, Japan has shown great commitment to the process through the various types of assistance she has given to African countries. In the case of my own country, Ghana,

Japan has advanced an US\$80 million grant aid this past year towards the rehabilitation of one of our major roads. Considering that this road is part of the trans-African highways, one could view it as an index of Japan's contribution to the development of the whole West African sub-region. Japan has also been very helpful in the medical area in terms of her continued support throughout the decade, to the Noguchi Memorial Institute, which has become a center of excellence in Africa in the field of bio-medical research. And there are other important sectors of our society and economy receiving growth – ^{including} support from Japan. Trade and Investment are also in the upswing between the two nations. People-to-people exchanges through the enhanced activities of the Japan Overseas Volunteers Corps ^{in Ghana} and the increasing number of Ghanaian businessmen and students coming to

Japan, are consolidating an organic and functional partnership based on mutual respect.

The theme for this plenary session – “Poverty Reduction through Economic Development” – is, therefore, most timely. It gives us an opportunity to stand back and reflect on how far the TICAD process has enhanced Africa’s development effort.

African leaders have consistently pledged to work towards the eradication of poverty and, hence, place our countries, individually and collectively, on a path of sustainable growth and development. This is based on our common vision and firm conviction that it is our pressing duty and responsibility to extricate the continent from the malaise of underdevelopment and exclusion in a globalizing world.

We have also learnt from our experiences that peace, security, democracy, good governance, human rights and sound economic management are necessary conditions for sustainable development, and therefore a successful attack on poverty. We have, accordingly, pledged to work both individually and collectively to promote these principles in our countries, regions and the continent as a whole. This is the significance of our commitment to NEPAD.

Mr. Chairman, Excellencies, ~~Ladies~~ and ~~Gentlemen~~, this explains Ghana's total commitment to the search for peace in the West African region, wherever there is conflict and instability. This it does through the aegis of the ECOWAS, the regional organization of West African States of

which I have the honour to be the current chair. It is gratifying to note that our efforts have not been in vain and that peace and security are gradually returning to those conflict areas like in Sierra Leone, Liberia, La Cote d'Ivoire and Guinea Bissau in our region. I would like here to pay tribute to my fellow Heads of State in ECOWAS and the rest of Africa who in diverse ways are contributing to the peaceful resolution of these conflicts.

I would also like to thank our development partners, in particular this great nation of Japan, for their unflinching support in the search for peace and security in our region and in the continent.

Long term conditions for ensuring peace and security in Africa require policy measures to redress

the political and social vulnerabilities on which conflicts are premised. We ^{also} urge our partners in the TICAD process to support our efforts to build Africa's capacity to manage all aspects of conflict, especially in the areas of early warning, prevention and post conflict reconciliation, rehabilitation and reconstruction. On that score, we would like our partners to extend support towards efforts at reconciliation, rehabilitation and reconstruction in the post-conflict areas in our region.

There is no doubt
Africa's development requires dedicated and informed leadership. There is today, on the continent, bold and imaginative leadership that is genuinely committed to a sustained effort of human upliftment and continental progress. Significantly, the numbers of democratically elected leaders are also on the increase. Through their

actions they have declared that the hopes of Africa's peoples can no longer depend on the magnanimity of others. What they require now is self-reliant development as well as partnership based on shared responsibility and mutual interest. And here, I see a convergence with the guiding principles of TICAD which are OWNERSHIP and PARTNERSHIP.

The emergence of this new African leadership is a reflection of the determination of the African peoples, after the massive disappointments of post-colonial Africa, to chart a new path of development based on the values of democratic accountability, respect for human rights and the rule of law. This is the new African paradigm.

It would thus be appropriate, in this tenth year of the TICAD process, to find a synergy between the democratic aspirations of the African people, the emergent political will of African leaders and a genuine partnership of the international community that would ultimately drive Africa to sustainable economic development which will be the main agency to eradicate mass poverty.

I thank you.