

Japan-AfDB Forum at Gandhinagar in Gujarat

Speech by Mr. Kenji Hiramatsu, Ambassador of Japan to India

-24th May, 2017-

● Distinguished guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

(Introduction)

● It is my great pleasure to be given the opportunity to present my closing remarks at this event, Japan-AfDB (African Development Bank) forum. Thank you for enormous efforts made by all organizations, JICA, JETRO, JBIC and AfDB to make this excellent seminar. This created the opportunity for greater triangle cooperation among Japan, India and African countries.

● As African countries continue to grow against the background of their abundant resources and growing population, their presence in the international community is becoming increasingly visible, and they are becoming

important partners for Japan and India to deepen relations politically and economically.

(Japan's cooperation for African Development- TICAD)

● Japan launched the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) in 1993. Last August, TICAD VI was held in Africa for the first time.

(Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy)

● At TICAD VI, Prime Minister Abe announced "Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy" to improve "Connectivity" between Asia and Africa, and to promote stability and prosperity of the region as a whole.

In synchronization with Prime Minister Modi's promotion of India's "Act East Policy", PM Abe's "Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy" will lead to the strategic partnership between Japan and India getting further strengthened.

We expect a great synergy to emerge between Japan's technology and capital, and India's strong network and experience in Africa.

● During Prime Minister Modi's visit to Japan in November last year, the two Prime Ministers emphasized in their joint statement that, improving connectivity between Asia and Africa through the realization of a free and open India-Pacific Ocean is vital to achieving prosperity throughout the region. We appreciate PM Modi's speech yesterday in this regard.

● Especially, Japanese companies are interested to effectively channelize African countries in the coastal areas of the Indian Ocean as gateways to the African market. In this respect, we think there is much room for Japan-India cooperation. For example, we expect more synergies between Japan and India, such as obtaining the participation of Indian companies in the development of economic zones at Mombasa port, jointly promoted by Japan and Kenya. In this regard, it is worth mentioning that, on April 18th and 19th, 40 Japanese companies and 10 Indian companies joined a public / private business delegation to Kenya.

● The two leaders also expressed their intention to work jointly and cooperatively with the international community, to promote the development of industrial corridors and industrial network in Asia and Africa.

Today, the intermediate report of 'Asia-Africa Growth Corridor Initiative' was announced, based on continuous discussion.

I would like to congratulate ERIA, IDE-JETRO and RIS for their efforts to make the progress in this initiative. I expect further synergies between efforts by India and Japan in the development of industrial network, and we hope to continue our partnership with India in this plan.

(Cooperation between Indian and Japanese companies)

● Cooperation in the private sector is also important for boosting economic development in Africa. The business cooperation among Indian and Japanese companies is being enhanced every year.

For example, Japan's Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) to India increased to USD 2.6 billion in FY 2015, and moreover,

expanded to USD 4.7 billion in FY 2016.

Now, Japan ranks as the biggest investor in the manufacturing sector in India and is extensively contributing to the 'Make in India' and 'Skill India' initiatives.

● Recently, Japanese companies in India are increasingly considering not only the importance of the Indian market but also the idea of "Act West", and are contemplating to expand their businesses in the Middle East and African countries, through India as a base of their operations.

● In practice, some Japanese companies have already delegated, to a large extent, the decision-making authority to their Indian bases in matters such as sales, product development and marketing. In this case, India serves as a central base for deployment in South Asia, the Middle East and Africa. Through this approach, such companies are spreading the reach of their products developed in India, to Africa.

● I am extremely hopeful that the collaboration among Japan-India enterprises will be enhanced furthermore.

(Conclusion)

● Events such as this seminar are extremely important for exchanging information and deepening discussions. Efforts by companies getting together here will contribute to strengthening the relationship with Africa, and also lead to enhancing of the Japan-India economic relationship.

● I am not interested in dialogue for the sake of dialogue, not discussion for the sake of discussion. We hope that based on the discussion at today's seminar, specific and tangible corporation between Indian and Japanese companies, with the help of JICA, JETRO, JBIC and African Development Bank, will materialize as concrete outcomes.

Thank you very much.