

# Visit of the Foreign Minister of Japan to ECA

## Response by

**K. Y. Amoako,**  
**Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa**  
**to the Address by H.E. Yoriko Kawaguchi, Foreign Minister of Japan**

**Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**  
**August 26, 2002**

Your Excellency, Ambassador Daniel Antonio, Acting Interim Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union,  
Your Excellencies, Ministers of the Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia,  
Your Excellencies, Members of the Diplomatic Corp,  
Distinguished Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like you all to join me in thanking Foreign Minister Kawaguchi for her encouraging words and expression of the Government of Japan's firm commitment to supporting Africa's development.

Madame Foreign Minister,

Your presence amongst us here in Addis Ababa is indeed a singular honour and privilege, and you are most welcome.

On behalf of the Economic Commission for Africa and in my own personal regard, I would like to thank Japan for its strong and consistent commitment in support of Africa's quest for poverty reduction and sustainable development. We have followed the TICAD process with great interest, and I myself was privileged to attend TICAD II in Tokyo. The TICAD process demonstrates the enduring commitment that Japan has to Africa's development, and we very much look forward to next year's conference.

Madame Foreign Minister,

In your address, you have raised a number of key issues that are the crux of Africa's quest for economic growth and sustainable development. Key among these is war, which continues to plague the continent.

Conflict renders development a pipe dream. We are encouraged that peace efforts in Angola, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Sudan are beginning to bear fruit. We are thankful that the civil war in Sierra Leone is over. We are especially pleased to see that African countries - such as Kenya in the case of Sudan and South Africa in the case of Burundi - are taking strong ownership of the peace processes in their own sub-regions. It is this kind of leadership and ownership that Africa needs to move beyond the spectre of conflict, into a new era of reconstruction and development.

Madame Foreign Minister,

Two years ago, and as you rightly mention, ECA collaborated with a number of leading development institutions on a major research project which resulted in the publication of "Can Africa Claim the 21st Century". At the time, our answer to the question was a qualified yes. The prerequisites, we said, were: improving governance and resolving conflicts; investing in our people; increasing the

competitiveness and diversification of our economies; and reducing our dependency on aid and strengthening partnerships.

As you know, a consensus has emerged on what Africa needs to do to fulfil its promise. This consensus is clearly articulated in the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). NEPAD constitutes a framework for effective partnership between Africa and its development partners. Ownership, as you have identified it, is key to Africa claiming the 21st century. An important challenge is to see how best we can strengthen African ownership.

We are pleased that Japan fully endorses the G8 Action Plan, and salute you for the role your country has played in recent years to establish the agenda and ensure that the G8 sustains its engagement with Africa. The commitment of Japan is evidenced by the fact that much of the content of the G8 Action Plan is in line with Japan's view of the priorities as articulated in the TICAD process. We are also gratified at the priority that Japan has attached to human-centred development, as evidenced by the 63 billion yen so far disbursed to critical areas such as education, health and the provision of safe water.

Madame Foreign Minister,

These are issues that will demand all our attention at the forthcoming World Summit on Sustainable Development, and we look forward to the personal participation of Japan's Prime Minister in this important summit. Indeed, the stakes for Africa are highest in the upcoming Summit because our sustainability issues are more acute than in other regions. Your Government's support will be critical in ensuring a set of outcomes that favour our sustainable development.

Let me end by thanking you once again for your incisive address and for the unequivocal manner in which you have re-stated Japan's commitment to the cause of African development. Your great country will be an important ally as Africa seeks to implement NEPAD. You can help us make a difference, and we know we can always count on your support and the friendship of Japan.

We look forward to 2003 as the "Year of Soaring Cooperation with Africa", and pledge to work with your Government in making the initiative a success.

Thank you.

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