

Opening address of H.E. Mr. Toshihisa TAKATA, Ambassador of Japan to Eritrea  
(Unofficial translation)

1. First of all, I would like to express my appreciation for the solidarity and assistance extended from the government and the people of Eritrea at the occasion of the Great East Japan Earthquake. I also would like to express my condolence to the damage of volcanic eruption and earthquakes in Eritrea in June.

Despite the damages of the earthquake and tsunami, Japan maintains its commitment to assist Africa, and will continue to push the TICAD IV (fourth Tokyo International Conference on African Development) process, in order to promote peace and democracy, as well as self reliance and development in Africa. At the UN MDGs summit meeting in September 2010, then Prime Minister Naoto Kan introduced “Kan Commitment” with \$5 billion for health and \$3.5billion for education sectors for the 5 years between 2011 and 2015 to achieve MDGs. Meanwhile, at the 3<sup>rd</sup> TICAD Follow-up ministerial meeting in Senegal in May after the disaster, our Foreign Minister Matsumoto reiterated that Japan maintains the TICAD IV commitment and thus will continue its strategic and effective development assistance for Africa.

2. As a result of on-going ODA reviews in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Japan, we defined three priority areas of development cooperation as “poverty reduction (contribution to attain MDGs)”, “investment for peace,” and “support for sustainable economic growth (including issues of climate change)”.

With recommendations to implement development assistance effectively and efficiently, Japan will select development objectives through bilateral “economic cooperation policy dialogues”, and move towards concentrative approach with various schemes, positioning assistance projects in order to achieve these objectives.

3. The objective of the economic cooperation policy dialogue this time is for the officials from both countries to deepen understanding of the current circumstances surrounding economic cooperation between the two countries, and to confirm the basic policies, and exchange views in order to implement future cooperation, following the transfer of the ODA liaison ministry back to the Ministry of National Development.

Japan has strong interests in peace and stability in the Horn of Africa region. We hope the State of Eritrea will further its dialogues with international community including its neighboring countries and play an active role to stabilize this region. We would like to encourage the efforts by the Government of Eritrea to help its people

overcome their challenges, making them beneficiaries of our cooperation.

Japan respects the spirit of self-reliance expressed by the Government of Eritrea. Japan's basic policy of economic cooperation with Eritrea, which emphasizes the ownership of the Eritrean Government, consists of "food security", "water, health and sanitation", and "higher education" as the priority areas. Concerning higher education, we are reinforcing our cooperation in this area in response to the request from the Eritrean Government. We would like to hear your policies on these priority areas.

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