

**Statement by Taro Aso**  
**Deputy Prime Minister and AfDB Governor of Japan**  
**At the Fifty-Fifth Annual Meeting of the African Development Bank and**  
**the Forty-Sixth Annual Meeting of the African Development Fund**

August 25, 2020

**1. Introduction**

Madame Chairperson of the Board of Governors, Mr. President, Governors, Ladies and Gentlemen.

On behalf of the Government of Japan, I am honored to address the 55th Annual Meeting of the African Development Bank and the 46th Annual Meeting of the African Development Fund.

First of all, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the AfDB staff for its efforts in preparing for these virtual meetings under the leadership of President Adesina. It has been a great challenge for the AfDB and member countries to hold these unprecedented virtual Annual Meetings amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

**2. The Achievements of AfDB and Japan's Cooperation with AfDB**

Since taking office in September 2015, President Adesina has made remarkable achievements, such as progress in the High 5s agenda, the AfDB general capital increase which more than doubled the capital base, and two AfDF replenishments. Specifically, we welcome that the 7th AfDB General Capital Increase and the 15th AfDF replenishment agreed upon last year incorporated three key priorities Japan had proposed, namely: (1) promoting Quality Infrastructure Investment, (2) ensuring debt sustainability, and (3) improving the business environment.

Due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, African economies are expected to experience negative real GDP growth in 2020, and there are concerns about a rise in poverty. Under such circumstances, Japan appreciates the AfDB's rapid financing support to African countries through the COVID-19 Rapid Response Facility.

In addition, under President Adesina's leadership, cooperation between the AfDB and Japan has been further developed with EPSA3 and EPSA4. We have made remarkable

achievements by funding through JICA on preferential terms which supported various high quality infrastructure projects including roads and electricity. Also, technical assistances through the trust fund FAPA have been provided to various projects, such as providing management guidance to SMEs.

At the previous election of the President in 2015, Japan consistently voted for Mr. Adesina. I believe that we elected the right person as a leader of the AfDB, considering President Adesina's significant accomplishments during his first term as I have just mentioned. We strongly support his re-election at these Annual Meetings again.

### **3. Expectations for the African Development Bank for the future**

When President Adesina is re-elected, we look forward to continued and enhanced actions for the following agenda.

First, support for sustainable growth.

With regards to infrastructure investments, the G20 Principles for QII should be fully reflected as the Bank group implements relevant GCI-7 and AfDF-15 commitments.

In addition, in light of the growing debt vulnerability of LICs, the AfDB's fast-track budget support should be in line with other international organizations, and its impact on the debt sustainability of borrowing countries as well as on the AfDB's own financial soundness should be carefully assessed. Also, I would expect the AfDB to work with the IMF and the World Bank to promote efforts to enhance debt management capacities and debt transparency of African countries.

Second, the governance of the AfDB.

Japan has been highlighting the need to strengthen the governance of the AfDB including through efforts to fill staff vacancies. Regarding the recent whistleblowers' allegation, various challenges to the Ethics Committee have been identified in the process of handling it. I would expect President Adesina to take the leadership in the governance reform of the AfDB, in light of such recent lessons.

The third point is the cooperation between the AfDB and Japan.

Japan would like to continue to strengthen its support for infrastructure development, based on the G20 Principles for QII, as well as for the business environment and health sectors, through co-financing between the AfDB and JICA under EPSA.

In addition, we will continue to make active use of JBIC to promote private sector investment in Africa. We welcome that the AfDB and JBIC, in collaboration with export credit agencies of six countries, provided financing for the LNG project in Mozambique in July.

As for business cooperation, Japan looks forward to the upcoming 3rd Japan-Africa Business Forum as well as the continued excellent performance of the External Representation Office for Asia.

#### **4. Closing**

I expect that the AfDB, as a transparent and trusted international organization, continues to play a leading role in supporting African countries amid the COVID-19 crisis.

I would like to conclude by expressing my expectation that the next Annual Meetings will be held face-to-face in Accra, Ghana next year.

Thank you.