

# PRESS RELEASE



21 March 2008 Evening

## Africa and Japan Civil Society challenges the Draft Yokohama Declaration and the Draft Action Plan at TICAD Ministerial Conference in Gabon

**Libreville, Gabon** –African and Japanese Civil Society invited to the Ministerial Conference of the Tokyo International Conference on African Development IV (TICAD IV)<sup>1</sup> acknowledge the efforts to date by African and Japanese governments in working towards a cooperation framework in the interests of the development of the continent and the people of Africa. Civil society delegates also recognise the efforts of the Japanese Government to facilitate the participation of civil society actors in the Conference and in the processes preceding the Conference.

The Civil Society has been working hard to influence the Yokohama Declaration and the Action Plan within its limited status as observers in the meetings. The purpose was to bring in its knowledge and experience with working with people in Africa into the content. The Ministerial Conference held in Libreville, Gabon, was the final opportunity to influence the content of the Declaration.

Even though the first draft of the Declaration was not completely satisfactory, the Civil Society delegates, as well as the African Governments, UN and other international agencies hoped the Declaration would improve as it would taken in the feedback from different actors. The Declaration that was revised in the course of the 2-day conference, however, deceived this hope. There was a general feeling among the participants that the revised version became even weaker in many areas than the first draft.

The gravest setback took place in the part of situation analysis (2.0-2.8). The revised Declaration scratched off some important analysis of the negative impact of economic growth on the people of Africa, for example. It further lacks the recognition that the sustainable economic growth could only be achieved on the basis of sound social foundation (i.e. healthy and educated people). As a result, there is no inter-relation or integration between TICAD IV's approaches to boost economic growth and to support the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. The analysis of the current status toward MDGs in Africa is no way near the level of existing development discussions today.

Other areas that suffered undermining in the revised Declaration include, but not limited to, the reduced attention to democratisation and the infectious diseases such as TB and Malaria.

There was an uncertainty at the end of the Conference what the consensus was. With many pleas from the floor to reinsert the deleted paragraphs or to further improve the document, it was rather perplexing that the Chair adjourned the meeting by the remark that there was a general consensus that the Declaration should be as short concise, and dignified as possible.

There are no more open forums to discuss the content of the Declaration. The civil society network in Japan and Africa such as TNnet and Civic Commission for Africa:C-CfA, however, will continue its lobbying with co-organisers to reinsert the important contents that had been cut, and to have the role of the civil society in development clearly stated in the final draft of the Yokohama Declaration. The civil society also intends to monitor the contents of the Action Plan. With predictable weakness of the final Declaration, the Action Plan must, then, be really strong with specific actions with targets, indicators, roles of each stakeholder and timeframe.

The civil society hopes that the outcome of the TICAD IV be genuinely beneficial to the people it intends to support.

**Contact: Secretariat of TICAD IV-NGO Network (TNnet): TICAD Civil Society Forum (TCSF)**

c/o Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies, Waseda University, Rm 613-6, 7F Sodainishiwaseda Bldg. Nishiwaseda Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo 169-0051 Japan Tel&Fax : + 81 – (0) 3-5286-8261 e-mail: [office@ticad-csf.net](mailto:office@ticad-csf.net) URL: [www.ticad-csf.net](http://www.ticad-csf.net)

### Note to editors:

<sup>1</sup> TICAD IV will be held in Yokohama, Japan between May 28<sup>th</sup> - 30<sup>th</sup>, 2008. For more information on TICAD, please visit UNDP website <http://www.undp.org/ticad2/index.shtml> Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs website <http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/africa/ticad/index.html>