

African and Japanese Civil Society Statement<sup>1</sup>  
at the  
10th Session of the Africa Partnership Forum

FULL TEXT OF STATEMENT

7 April 2007

Tokyo, Japan

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Your Excellencies,

Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda,

Minister of Foreign Affairs Masahiko Koumura,

Acting CEO, NEPAD, Ambassador Olukorede Willoughby

Secretary General of the OECD , Angel Gurría

Representatives of African Regional Economic Communities and other APF Members,

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

*Preamble*

I am indeed honoured to present to you today, on behalf of my colleagues, some of the views, perspectives and concerns that have emerged in the dialogue between members of civil society in Africa and in Japan regarding the African development focus of the Africa Partnership Forum (APF) and the Group of Eight nations, otherwise known as the G8.

First, we would like to begin by expressing our gratitude to our hospitable hosts, the Government of Japan, particularly the Africa Directorate of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs who

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<sup>1</sup> Presented by 'Dapo Oyewole, Executive Director, Centre for African Policy and Peace Strategy, Nigeria & UK, on behalf of the CSO delegation from Africa. The African CSO Delegation includes Ms Bineta Diop, Executive Director, Femme Africa Solidarite, Geneva and Senegal, Dr Akinyi Nzioki, Executive Director, the Centre for Land, Economy and Rights of Women, Kenya and Madame Khady Fall Tall, President, National Civil Society Association, Senegal. The Japanese NGO groups 2008 Japan G8 Summit NGO Forum and TICAD IV NGO Network provided invaluable intellectual, administrative and logistical support in the processes that led to the production of the document.

also hosted us to a workshop on 4th April at the ministry to deliberate on some of the issues we will be highlighting today. We are grateful for Mr. Kidera's inspiring keynote address when he opened this workshop last week.

We are aware that the Japanese government will also be hosting the 4th Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) next month, and we hope that the leadership role played by Japanese government in the G8 , APF, and in TICAD processes will result in its greater commitment to development in Africa, and that all these processes reinforce one another.

We should also point out that Japan has made history today in the APF process by being the first APF host to allow civil society groups to officially attend a segment of the APF meetings and to deliberate with you in an interactive and open session. We thank the government of Japan for their leadership in this regard, and we sincerely hope that the next APF Co-Chair in recognition of the value we in civil society can bring to your deliberations and the consistent commitment we have demonstrated since the inception of the APF, will go the extra step to give us not only a speaking slot in your programme, but also grant us Observer Status in keeping with the inclusive and transparent processes that underpin the principles of global governance today and as exemplified by the United Nation's and the Africans Union's ECOSOCC mechanisms for civil society engagement.

We would also like to thank the leadership of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and the Africa Partnership Forum (APF) Support Unit for facilitating civil society participation in the APF process. We hope we can build further on this partnership to design a more structured and more effective civil society engagement mechanism that will become an integral part of the APF.

Finally, we would also like to thank our partners in Japanese civil society, particularly the 2008 Japan G8 Summit NGO Forum and TICAD IV NGO Network who have been extremely supportive and made it possible for us to be here to participate robustly in this process. We thank you most sincerely.

The role played by our international partners, here represented, is also crucial in our continent's development and we would like to thank you also for committing yourselves to being our partners in our journey towards peace, stability and development on our continent.

Your Excellencies, Africa is at a crucial cross-road. We are at a point in history where we can turn towards a more peaceful, progressive and rewarding future or towards the pains and challenges that characterised our recent past. You, our policymakers, are in a unique position to decide which way our continent will turn, as you are the ones we in civil society have elected and entrusted with the mantle of leadership of our continent. As you deliberate today, we trust that you will keep our mandate in mind and take us in the right direction. And, you, our international partners, in recognition that the future of Africa is crucial to the future of the world, we trust that you will use this opportunity to listen more, to understand more and to know how best to support we Africans as we take charge of the destiny and direction of continent with a shared objective of making Africa a peaceful, progressive, democratic and prosperous continent that can guarantee human security for its inhabitants and contribute substantially to global development.

*Good Governance, peace and stability are essential for economic growth and poverty reduction*

As we come towards the end of the first decade of what one of our leaders dubbed the “African century”, there is much scope for optimism. We are no longer the ‘hopeless continent’ as some have referred to us. Instead, in the past decade, ladies and gentlemen, paradigm-shifts have taken place that have redefined the African political and economic landscape creating changes that many thought would have been impossible. This shows what we can achieve if we are focused, confident and determined.

We have seen the unprecedented proliferation of democracy across the African continent – a far departure from just a few years ago when our continent was awash with dictators who took power through the barrel of a gun as opposed to the ballot box. However, much more needs to be done to complete the process of the kind of democratisation that meets African needs, reflects African priorities and aspirations while still at par with international standards. Though we in Africa have now embraced democracy as the core principle of governance, it is obvious that there are fundamental problems that need to be addressed in terms of the practice, the processes and the institutions of democracy.

For example your Excellencies, we in civil society would like to see more urgent attention paid to ensuring that our electoral processes are less volatile and are more effective and

immune from manipulation. We also implore you to ensure that our constitutions are safeguarded from modification, especially regarding the elongation of the terms of incumbent governments. We implore you to ensure, not only in words but in practice, that you tackle the scourge of corruption that leaks the lifeblood of our economies and societies and that our judiciaries are allowed to be independent; that our media are unsilenced, that our human rights are held as sacrosanct; that our security forces effectively guard our lives and property. We know you are striving to achieve the above, we can see the fruit of your efforts and we appreciate that there maybe some limitations, but we implore you to please do more, faster because we count the costs of inaction in the loss of lives and livelihoods. That is too high a cost.

Today we have fewer conflicts now than at any other time in recent African history and where they flare up we have seen African institutions and the continent's leaders being more proactive and effective in finding African solutions to African problems. Your Excellencies, we would like to recognise and commend efforts by African governments through the African Union and the Regional Economic Communities (RECS) in taking the lead to resolve conflicts and disputes on our continent. We are aware of the limitations and paucity of resources to respond as swiftly and effectively as our governments may ordinarily desire and it is in this light that we urge our international partners in the G8 countries to make good their promises at several G8 summits to provide additional resources for African

peacekeeping. Equally, we strongly request more urgent attention to redress the deplorable conditions and situation in Darfur, Sudan which remains a scar on our continent's conscience. We also urge that resources are made available for increased security sector reform and capacity building to ensure that there is our security forces are more capable in carrying out their roles and responsibilities in the democratic era and also to ensure that there is greater involvement of women in peacekeeping operations.

The need to strengthen the capacity of our police forces in tackling crime is also primary for the safety of citizens and to create an enabling environment for local businesses to thrive and to attract Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). We also encourage our international partners to ensure that arms sales especially to theaters of conflict in Africa are ended and the current volume of trade and expenditure on arms be re-directed to meet basic needs and for fostering human development. What we need is human security not military security. Africa wants development not conflict.

However, as we seek to foster peaceful and crime-free continent, we must not only focus on the symptoms of conflict and crime but more on the root causes that trigger these conflicts in the first place. It is therefore critical that we look more closely at the issues of the management of natural resources, and the need for greater attention to be paid to the frustrations and disenchantment of mostly unemployed youths who have been left

economically disempowered, politically marginalised, socially silenced and incapable of shaping their futures. If we are to stem crime, conflict and inordinate migration as well as the growth of violent militias, we need to provide our youth with the empowering alternatives that can provide them a better path to shaping their futures and enabling them to participate more substantially in the political and economic spheres, so that they can become agents of peace and development on the continent.

Recent events in Kenya serve as a reference point of how we Africans can take the lead in solving our own problems. We however would implore our leaders to ensure that these kinds of problems that result in decimation and destruction are avoided in the first instance. We very much hope that as our leaders displayed extraordinary leadership in intervening in the situation in Kenya, they will also display the same wisdom in resolving the tense political situation in Zimbabwe through urgent and proactive intervention that reflect our leaders' commitment to peace and democracy in our continent. As members of the African Union and the United Nations, you all have agreed that you have a responsibility to protect. Your Excellencies, protect us.

Your Excellencies, we are aware that your forum will be focusing on the themes of Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction as well as Environmental Issues and Climate Change, we however wanted to highlight these issues and concerns we raised above as we strongly

believe that good governance, peace and security are the fundamental basis for effectively, substantially and sustainably addressing the issues on your agenda for this APF meeting.

The topics of your thematic focus today are aptly chosen as they reflect some of the pressing issues on Africa's table. In this light, allow us make some brief statements that reflect our hopes, concerns and expectations regarding these issues.

#### Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction

Poverty remains the bane of Africa's development. Its impacts are far-reaching and if we are to have peace, stability or make any sustainable progress, this needs to be tackled as a key priority. We members of civil society who have been following the African development agenda and its attendant processes since Monterey right to last year in Berlin, will have to express our concern that the ODA target of 0.7% is becoming more and more of an impossibility and according to the OECD most donors are not on track to meet their stated commitments to scale up aid and will need to make unprecedented increases to meet the targets they have set for 2010 at Gleneagles. Furthermore, it seems to us that there is an increasing shift of focus away from the ( Millennium Development Goals) MDGs as the focal point for poverty reduction and human development in Africa. We would thus entreat our development partners to make good their promise on aid to Africa as this is crucial for achieving the MDGs, but also to ensure that it does not come with externally imposed

conditions but mutually agreed ones between governments and the civil society in their respective countries. This way, it will not distort the chain of accountability as governments should be accountable to their citizens first, before other external parties. Besides this allows civil society to work with government in the effective usage of funds and delivery of objectives. This takes us to the crucial issue of aid effectiveness and predictability as noted in the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness – which will be reviewed next September at the Third High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Accra, Ghana. We would like to encourage our development partners to ensure that Africa gets more predictable and flexible aid to address our own priorities as we see them, and also aid that does not come with huge administrative and bureaucratic burdens that further weigh down our already over-stretched civil service.

We would also like to note that while several African countries are fast reaching and some even surpassing the 6% growth rate required to meet the MDGs, this does not automatically translate into poverty reduction if growth is not centered on pro-poor growth. We thus urge both our government and our development partners to :

- a) Mainstream pro-poor growth in all development processes
- b) Ensure that adequate and predictable funds are provided for activities that will boost economic development e.g. investing in SME, providing micro and marco finance etc
- c) Keeping women and youth, especially in the rural areas, as a focal point of all poverty reduction efforts as they make up a high percentage those who suffer from

the impact of poverty the most

- d) Pay more attention to the informal economy as well as agriculture as these represent the bulk of Africa's 'real' economy
- e) Remove the trade barriers and subsidies that continue to stifle and strangle the profits of African agricultural producers
- f) At all levels, civil society participation, especially grassroots community based organisations should be ensured if the voices and concerns of the people are to be reflected in efforts to tackle poverty and promote pro-poor economic growth

## Infrastructure

Your Excellencies, Africa needs an effective machinery to translate its hopes, skills and potential into reality and that vehicle is infrastructure. Without regular and ample electricity supply, good and well maintained road networks, effective mass transportation systems as well as ample public facilities such as hospitals and schools, our potential will remain trapped in the realm of ideas and not realities. We implore our government and our international partners to provide adequate resources and build skills capacity and systems for the building and maintenance of adequate and well distributed infrastructure and facilities that will help to optimally unleash the entrepreneurial spirit of we Africans, increase our production capacity and thereby increase the standard of living and the quality of life of the marginalised and the poor, especially those in our rural areas.

## Information Communication Technology

For far too long Africa has been left behind in the rapid pace of global technological advancements. If this remains the same, how can we bring our continent not only to enjoy the benefits afforded by technology to the more developed nations of the world, but also to become part of this ever contracting global village? ICT will enable us leapfrog several aspects of the development process by making knowledge and information accessible and affordable as well as empower our people to be more effective in all our social, economic and political processes. ICT can make government more transparent, can ensure more efficient electoral processes that are immune from manipulation, can assist the police in responding to crime s more rapidly and most importantly, it can provide education to a continent in that is hungry for knowledge. ICT can also help in the delivery of more efficient health and banking services, particularly in the rural areas as well as bridge the communication divide between urban and rural areas. We therefore implore you to invest in the development of ICTs because of its multiple and multi-sectoral benefits, but we ask that you do so in a manner that responds to the articulated needs and priorities of African communities.

Your Excellencies, Africa is ready for ICT. We have seen the social, economic and in some cases political revolutions that have taking place since the introduction of mobile telephony in Africa, just about a decade ago. Today Africa is one of the fastest growing markets for the

mobile telephone industry in the world. Your Excellencies, focusing on ICT will not only bring Africa to the world, it will bring the world to Africa.

## Gender

Your Excellencies, through all the issues we have raised and recommendations we have made, addressing the plight of African women remains a key aspect of ensuring economic growth, reducing poverty, peace and security and good governance. Our women are the backbone of our communities and our economies, yet they remain the most marginalised and suffer the impacts of policy failure the most. We would therefore like to see greater participation of women in the political, economic and social spheres in a manner that removes the burden that they carry and empowers them to unlock their potential for political, economic and social leadership. To this end we ask that ring-fenced budgets and targeted financial support at local, national and international levels are provided to support women's development initiatives.

## Climate Change and Environmental Issues

Africa is highly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change which will impact every aspect of life and living in Africa. From food security, to poverty reduction or conflict prevention, the impact of climate change will have an encompassing impact on social, political and economic life in Africa. If unchecked it will derail the AU/NEPAD vision of

achieving economic growth and sustainable growth as well as global efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Climate Change should be seen as key threat to development as we must muster all our efforts to prepare Africa for this and to address this challenges that come with climate change. We must also begin to review all our policies, processes and activities to ensure that the promote not only adaptation, but also mitigation.

Developed countries, who are the main polluters should carry the financial burden of ensuring effective mitigation and adaption in the poorer countries. It's a moral responsibility and a matter of integrity. However the poorer countries also need to compliment these international efforts by mainstreaming environmental conservation and climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies in all their policies and economic activities. In doing all the above, we encourage you to see civil society not only critics, but as stakeholders and partners in addressing the challenge of climate change.

We specifically would like the APF members to:

- develop clean energy as a priority – We recognize that, African societies need adequate access to energy for social and economic development, including, renewable energy technologies. We thus urge you to focus on developing clean energy options for Africa and create a careful balance between the need for energy and the need to conserve the

environment.

- provide finance for supporting adaptation separate from and in addition to the already-existing commitments for ODA. Funds should be responsive to the diverse needs at the grass roots level – accessible to civil society partners. The G8 countries must pay the largest portion of this finance as compensation for the past and current responsibilities of industrialised countries as the major emitters. There is also a need for a clear roadmap and targets.
- mainstream climate change and environmental issues at the local , national and international policy levels. We recommend the integration of climate change adaption and mitigation into all policy processes and development plans.
- establish and monitor international environmental standards that apply to both industrialised G8 countries and to Africa to stop ensure that we are not promoting economic interests at the expense of environmental sustainability. This should include controls over biofuel plantations that deprive food production and degrade biodiversity.

*Need for well Structured CSO engagement in the APF*

Finally, Your Excellencies, as representatives of democratic governments, we know that you recognise the importance of civil society in democratic governance. It is in this light that we ask again, as we did in our recommendation at the APF CSO meeting in Moscow and Berlin that structured civil society participation becomes an integral part of the G8 and APF

processes. Greater, continued, consistent and well organised CSO engagement should be ensured between an independent CSO Coordinative Mechanism that works closely with NEPAD, the APF Support Unit, the host government of the host country and civil society groups in these countries. We need you to recognise that we in civil society come to the table with technical, contextual and practical knowledge that can help to achieve the goals of the APF. In this light, while we jealousy guard our independence, we are willing to work with you to achieve the goals of the APF and we have demonstrated this from the outset. We have agreed amongst ourselves to present to you, a proposal which will highlight how we can independently support the APF process in a manner that could work optimally in achieving shared goals, in a collectively beneficial manner. We hope that our proposal will be favorable received.

## Conclusion

Your excellencies we are not saying new things to you today but merely reiterating requests that we made to you at previous APF meetings. We thus encourage you to review the recommendations that we made to you at the APF in London, October 2005, in Moscow, October 2006 and in Berlin, May 2007. Some of these documents have been made available here.

Our objective as civil society from Africa and Japan is not to criticize you or to obscure your deliberations with impractical demands but to help you to better understand the needs and priorities of those who you seek to assist and to encourage you as you turn our continent in the right direction by making the right decisions.

Your Excellencies, at this Forum, we know that you can decide to shift the gear of development into drive and accelerate the pace of Africa's development or you can decide to shift the gear into reverse and plunge us into the darkness of underdevelopment. Our trust is that you will use the APF as that tool and platform for positive change in Africa and greater maturity in its partnership with the more developed nations of the world. We trust that as Africa reaches the cross road, you will take the right turn and avoid the pit falls and potholes that have hindered journey towards peace, growth, stability and development in times.

We thank you most sincerely for providing us an opportunity to share some of the civil society's views with you and thank you for listening to us. We wish you fruitful and successful deliberations. END.