

Press Release

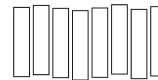
Civil Society Reaction to The Draft TICAD Yokohama Declaration, the Action Plan and the Appendix

African, international and Japanese civil society received the May 28th draft Yokohama Declaration, the Action Plan and the proposal for the follow up process with the mixed feelings.

If adopted as they stand, it is a step forward . We see the reinsertion of individual issues that were completely omitted or undermined in the previous drafts; the importance of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs, democratization, infectious diseases, and the participation of civil society in the TICAD process. There are some signs of the Government of Japan's commitments to the existing initiatives by African Governments such as the Maputo Declaration.

But there are holes yet to be filled before the Heads of the States adopt these result documents.

1. The interrelation between the macro economic growth and the persistence of the house-hold level poverty is still not adequately recognized. The causes and the negative impacts of the non pro-poor economic growth strategy must be analyzed and addressed in the Action Plan. The pro-poor-isation of Trade Policies is a must.
2. In this regard, the role of the Japanese Private Sector in Africa should be recognized and emphasized in the Declaration. The GoJ should commit to work with the Private Sector so that the latter's activities will contribute to enhancing social development and economic growth of African countries rather than adding to the social inequity or further impoverishing them.
3. The involvement of the civil society was acknowledged in the Declaration, but the action plan or the follow up mechanism does not include it – except one action owned by .
4. The appendix to the Action Plan includes the commitments from the other governments (ex: UK), UN organizations (Unicef, UNESCO, etc), and multilaterals. It is a welcome move to map the Government of Japan's efforts in the larger development agenda. However, the TICAD outputs/commitments are ambiguous. A clear distinction should be made between TICAD-specific commitments and commitments outside of TICAD process. Furthermore, most of commitments out of TICAD do not address the need to support the implementation of African governments' policies to reach the MDGs. Instead they continue with the comfortable business-as-usual aid modalities.
5. In order to ensure a credible and effective follow-up, the implementation framework of the Yokohama Action Plan (the Appendix) should be country-specific..
6. The Yokohama Declaration recognizes the importance of the skilled human resources in Africa, but it does not acknowledge the extent of the gap neither does it commit necessary resources to address it.



7. Furthermore, while it mentions the training of health workers, it underestimates the numbers required to meet the need and does not acknowledge the retention of trained health workers.
8. HIV/AIDS is one of the biggest threats to human security in Africa. However, the Yokohama Declaration is not explicit about Japan's contribution to the globally agreed target of achieving Universal Access to treatment, care and prevention by 2010. Furthermore, it ignores the gap between the reality and the target of universal access in HIV/AIDS care and treatment, though they are the crucial part of comprehensive approach against HIV/AIDS especially in Sub-Saharan Africa, which faces the situation of generalized epidemic.
9. Democratisation is mentioned, but only in relation to peace-building and economic growth. The example of recent South Africa crisis demonstrates that the macro economic growth does not automatically guarantee peace without redistributive democracy. The Government of Japan's commitment for peace consolidation, good governance and democratization should be further emphasized and integrated with policies to alleviate poverty and reduce inequality.
10. The Japanese government has committed to double its ODA to Africa for the next five years. This commitment should reflect the spirit of the Paris Declaration. Further, the ODA should be well-targeted to ensure that it benefits the vulnerable women, men and children small holder farmers in rural areas and tackle social injustices.

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