



Press Release

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TICAD IV: Development by Exclusion?

27 May 2008, Yokohama, Japan: A group of 55 African, Japanese and international civil society organisations today expressed disappointment at the process which led to the exclusion of significant voices of civil society from the main TICAD IV dialogue spaces. This goes against the stated spirit of TICAD to build ownership of African people and their organisations in the process of shaping the future of their development.

“The exclusion of large segments of African and Japanese civil society casts huge doubts on the legitimacy and accountability of this ‘*People’s*’ conference. We demand that civil society participation be an integral part of the entire TICAD process, and that all outcome documents explicitly mention this” noted Gustave Assah of Civic Commission for Africa, on behalf of the NGOs who are gathered at Yokohama this week.

The group also expressed concerns about the potential outcomes of the current agenda. There is a need to go beyond seeking technical solutions to the political challenges of development. Also, the focus on economic growth without a proportionate investment in social development and redistribution is not sufficient to tackle the poverty in Africa. This undermines the little progress made so far, and says very little for millions of African women and girls trapped in its vicious grip.

The NGOs pointed to the looming food catastrophe facing the continent in the face of poverty, HIV/AIDS, the lack of education, and growing energy costs. There are already signs that the high food prices could push Africa back into conflicts and political instability, unless urgent and sustainable solutions are implemented to tackle the core symptoms of the failing economic model for the poor.

The group also called on African governments to act urgently with one voice through the African Union to assert their right to development for their people, taking the lead on policy choices. Pursuing narrow interests in a spaghetti bowl of bilateral processes could accelerate the systematic expropriation of African people’s resources.

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