

VOICES

OF AFRICAN AND JAPANESE CIVIL SOCIETY TOWARDS 2008 TICAD IV

Preamble

We African, Japanese and other Asian civil society organizations, meeting in Hiroo, Tokyo, Japan, 24th -26th October 2007,

Acknowledge that on average Africa has been experiencing positive economic growth, we however further recognize that these positive developments are yet to translate into full benefits for all the peoples of Africa,

Considering that African peoples and societies continue to bear the burden of poverty resulting from trade injustices, social inequalities and the debt burden.

And aware that African peoples and societies still experience political and governance challenges, conflict, environmental degradation, climate change; as well as marginalization of groups such as women, indigenous peoples, differently-abled persons and people living with HIV and AIDS;

Acknowledging that the institutional capacity of civil society organizations on the continent needs to be substantially enhanced;

Realizing that despite the tremendous steps taken, the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) face serious financing challenges,

Convinced that by working together in the spirit of solidarity, equality, mutual accountability and responsibility we are determined to redress this state of affairs;

We therefore present our concrete suggestions and actionable recommendations to the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) and its stakeholders with a plea to quickly move from mere policy proposals and pronouncements to action based on genuine and equal partnerships among all concerned stakeholders.

Guided by genuine concerns for:

- 1- People centered; ownership and bottom-up approaches
- 2- Community empowerment for sustainable impact
- 3- Capacity enhancement for governments and CSOs
- 4- Involvement of CSOs throughout TICAD as equal partners

1. INVESTMENT AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Overview:

The evolving positive economic growth Africa is experiencing now makes the continent a viable investment destination and is an indicator that development efforts are bearing fruit on the continent. These positive developments are a result of both external and internal factors some of which are outlined below:

Internal factors:

- Emerging democracies
- Improving peace and security
- Prudent economic policies

External factors:

- ODA support
- Private-led investments
- New raw material interests triggering increased capital inflow.

The positive economic developments however, are slowed and can be completely halted unless the bottlenecks outlined below are addressed:

Bottlenecks to African economic progress:

- Growth has neither been pro-people nor pro poor.
- To some extent current growth has promoted gender and income disparities for instance among urban and rural communities.
- Economic growth has not been evened with human development.
- Growth is slowed by unfavourable international trade instruments such as farm subsidies and other tariff and non tariff barriers which make African productive uncompetitive.
- Corruption
- ODA while anticipated to trigger, cushion and enhance African economic performance has not met these expectations :

ODA has been progressively decreasing. For instance, between TICAD I and TICAD III Japanese ODA has both been unstable and constantly dropped.

In addition ODA has tended to be tied to restrictive conditionalities and hence not been flexible enough to allow governments to creatively respond to specific development challenges.

Ultimately ODA continues to be driven more by external/OECD interests and less by the real concerns such as poverty eradication, expressed by African governments and people.

While many countries in Africa have been struggling to release themselves from the debt bondage and whereas ODA is expected to play a significant role, instead it has been mainly delivered in form of loans. Paradoxically such ODA is reversing the gains of debt relief that followed the Gleneagles G8 summit. HIPC are slowly falling back into the debt burden.

TICAD one of very few proactive interventions aimed at keeping African development central to global development agendas, has had very limited impact

Recommendations:

(a) Investment and sustainable economic growth

- Providing clear milestones towards increasing ODA to 0.7% of GNI by 2015
- Increasing the proportion of Japanese ODA apportioned to grants and reducing the proportion to loans.

- Ensuring that ODA responds to the spirit and intent of the Paris declaration.
- Concerted efforts to fight corruption.

(b) Fair Trade

- Expedite growth of RECs and AU in order to promote and strengthen Intra-Africa trade *and in particular ease cross boarder movement of people and goods*
- Extend investment incentives to local investors and Japan to reciprocate through establishment of preferential trading conditions for African traders
- Respond to African concerns such as subsidies and damping of cheap products raised around the stalled Doha talks.
- Support entrepreneurship development in Africa and particularly African enterprise development and capital accumulation

(c) Promote local women’s and men’s participation in and benefit from economic growth

- Increasing funding to institutions that promote micro enterprise and savings among the poor
- Investing in pro-poor rural infrastructure
- Ease/streamline migration and tax restrictions so as to enhance the capacity of Africans in the Diaspora to freely remit funds back into Africa.
- Increase role of CSOs in national and international policy agenda setting

(d) Make economic growth and development visible in people’s livelihoods

- Delivering basic needs – basic steps for poverty reduction.
- Infrastructure development should respond to both social/livelihood needs as well as broad economic considerations.
- Enhancing peoples productive capacities
- Addressing/righting social distortions.

2. HUMAN SECURITY

Overview:

Human Security is thoroughly linked to Economic Growth- Investment – Environment and Sustainable Human Development. In addition Human security is tightly linked to State National Security, is dependant on Human Rights and Dignity and human Rights in its comprehensive global and indivisible meaning is based on Fundamental Human Rights with its Social-Economical-Cultural-Political Civic and digital ramifications.

Human Dignity can only be achieved if human basic rights are satisfied.

Recommendations:

- Basic Health services for preventive and reproductive health combat HIV/AIDS and maternal and children health.
- Decent housing and decent work for all
- Combat all forms of discrimination and violation and sexual and domestic violence
- Ensure gender balance services and women empowerment by capacity building mainly in needy and rural areas.
- Protect minority groups and vulnerable categories such as disabled- elderly-children and women through positive discrimination and affirmative actions
- International Donors should involve Civil Society in planning, implementing and evaluating donations to the target population and the grass root people.
- Civil Society should work in partnership with government and in representation of the voice of the people and the grass root.
- International Aid should not cause further harm.
- Civil Society role in TICAD should be as equal partners.

3. ENVIRONMENT

Overview:

Africa is currently confronted with environmental Issues such as :

- Depletion of agricultural, fishery, forest and water resources;
- Desertification;
- Air and water pollution
- Soil degradation;
- Loss of biodiversity; and
- Natural disasters including flood.

Environment challenges among other things are caused by :

- Population pressure;
- Climate change;
- Armed conflicts;
- Inappropriate technologies including GMO-GE;
- Government policies oriented towards economic growth only;
- Corruption;
- Inadequate capacity of government and CSOs;
- Pressure from developed countries to exploit natural resources.

Recommendations:

(a) National Governments in Africa

- Strengthen government policies in favor of poverty reduction and effective family planning
- Mainstream environmental concerns in all government policies;
- Strengthen government and CSO capacities on environmental management;
- Rediscover and apply local/traditional knowledge on environment conservation;
- Enact and implement policies to address GMO-GE concerns; and
- Enforce anti-corruption policy and improve government transparency and accountability

(b) International Community

- Mainstream environmental concerns into trade and investment and address concerns of GMO-GE technology;
- Reorient official development assistance (ODA) in favor of poverty reduction and environmentally sustainable development;
- Cancel the debts of poorest countries and increase grant element in ODA.

(c) TICAD

- Enhance the institutional, financial and technical capacity of governments and CSOs in Africa;
- Increase the processing of raw materials & value added in Africa;
- Increase the support to innovative and appropriate technologies & mechanisms in the utilization of environmental resources, while addressing the concerns of GMO-GE;
- Mitigate GHG through ecosystem restoration (reforestation, CDM, etc) and increase adaptation funding in favor of the poor and vulnerable groups and,
- Mobilize all countries in support of TICAD.

(d) G8

- All the G8 and other developed countries must achieve the targets set for GHG emission reduction under the Kyoto Protocol;
- The United States and Australia which have not ratified the Kyoto Protocol are urged to join the other signatories to implement the Kyoto commitment; and
- Explore feasible global mechanism involving all countries for climate change mitigation and adaptation beyond the Kyoto protocol.