

**Foreign Minister Osman Saleh's statement
At TICAD Conference**



Mr. Chairman

Honourable Ministers

Distinguished Delegates

Allow me first to join previous speakers to extend our profound gratitude to the Governments of Tunisia and Japan for organizing this International Conference.

Almost thirty years have elapsed since the launching of the TICAD Forum in 1993. In this respect, this is an auspicious time to undertake a comprehensive, objective and factual appraisal of the progress achieved by the Forum so far on the basis of the following key pillars and matrices: i) the extent of TICAD's contribution in tackling Africa's developmental challenges; and, ii) its enhancement of the principle of African ownership within the matrix or framework of international partnership.

This assessment is critical in our current consultations as we ponder on ways and means for moving forward to expand our shared values and common objectives. Indeed, it behooves on us to draw appropriate lessons from past experiences in order to bolster our future progress.

The defining features of the past thirty years in the post-Cold War era can be summed up in the emergence and prevalence of the following phenomena. As it happens, the hallmarks of the tumultuous epoch have included: gross violation of international law and the attendant trampling of the independence and sovereignty of peoples and nations; unconscionable exploitation of the resources of “undeveloped” countries; unfair distribution of income and wealth; prevalence of unbridled culture of saber-rattling, intimidation, military interventions, and imposition of illicit and unilateral sanctions; preponderance of terrorism, spiraling crises, corruption, displacement and organized human trafficking; and, the paralysis and marginalization of international and regional organizations.

All these tools were employed to advance and maintain the hegemony and narrow interests of the tiny few or miniscule special interest groups.

The marginalized African continent – which reportedly possesses 60% of the natural resources in our global village and with an estimated population of 1.2 billion – has remained the primary victim of these perilous policies. The people of Africa continue to be portrayed in very pejorative terms and depicted as the poster-children of poverty, hunger, interminable crises and pandemics.

Various media outlets routinely misconstrue African events as raw input for their condescending and patronizing propaganda and PR stunts. Ludicrous as it is, Africa is these days portrayed as if it is enmeshed in intractable hunger because of its inaccessibility to Ukrainian Wheat. The COVID-19 pandemic; natural disasters and climate change; and, subsistence economics have all combined to exacerbate the preoccupying African reality.

To map-out Africa’s developmental challenges – both in sectoral and quantitative formats – is a relatively straightforward task that does not require laborious work. By the same token, the principle of African ownership is crystal clear that does not pose ambiguity in terms of abstract notions. But the reality on the ground remains starkly different.

Genuine ownership of policies and programmes are supplanted by dependency and aid-recipient mind-sets. Fostering of enabling environment continues to be

replaced by debilitating conditions. On the other hand, genuine and sustainable partnerships are cultivated only through equitable, fair and enabling ties.

In the prevailing and unfavourable international climate, overarching global agendas are certainly exacerbating Africa's precarious reality. Still, we cannot deny the fact that ultimately, responsibility for this sad state of affairs rests on Africa's shoulders.

Distinguished Delegates

In these precarious times of transition in the prevailing global configuration, the respect of international law; the protection of the independence and sovereignty of peoples and nations; the deterrence of pillage and robbery; the nurturing of mutual respect, complementarity and partnership; guarantying national security and stability, and, the achievement of development and prosperity will be crystallized when, and only when, we earnestly review, with the requisite seriousness, the shared values and objectives that we collectively cherish.

In the event, we must proceed, beyond pledges and political goodwill, to chart-out much more articulated, impacting and measurable programmes in infrastructure, energy, water and agriculture, industry, appropriate modalities of trade and investment, as well as in education and health in the social services sectors. These programmes must also be accompanied by effective mechanisms of implementation.

In conclusion, I express my sincere hopes for this Conference to adopt important resolutions that would incorporate the modest notions cited above and other recommendations made by all the distinguished participants.

I thank you.

27 and 28 August 2022