



REPUBLIC OF KENYA

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY HIS EXCELLENCY HON.
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THE REPUBLIC OF KENYA AND COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF
OF THE DEFENCE FORCES, DURING THE TICAD 9
SESSION 3 PLENARY SUMMIT ON SOCIETY PILLAR**

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YOKOHAMA, JAPAN

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. It is my singular honour to address this distinguished forum of the 9th Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD), here in this historic and vibrant city of Yokohama.
2. Over the years, TICAD has remained faithful to its founding principles of African ownership, inclusivity, openness, and genuine partnership. We commend the Government of Japan and the co-organisers for sustaining this unique framework.
3. Kenya deeply values Japan's consistent support in critical sectors: education, health, agriculture, energy, infrastructure, and security. These partnerships have been central to Africa's socio-economic progress.
4. Excellencies, even amid relentless and overlapping global crises, Africa's economies are among the fastest-growing in the world. In 2025, Sub-Saharan Africa's GDP is projected to grow by 4%, compared to a global average of 3%.
5. Yet these impressive numbers have not sufficiently translated into meaningful poverty reduction, substantive employment creation, or enhanced fiscal space for domestic resource mobilisation.



6. This is why the theme of TICAD 9, 'Co-create Innovative Solutions with Africa', is both timely and fitting. It reminds us that growth must be translated into real impact on people's lives, moving from macro-economic numbers to grassroots' transformation.
7. Excellencies; resilient, adaptive, and inclusive societies form the foundation of Africa's transformation. The Society Pillar challenges us to invest deliberately in people, including their health, education, and their well-being. Only then can Africa unlock its vast potential through holistic human capital development.
8. Africa is richly endowed with natural resources and a youthful population of nearly 400 million, bursting with energy, creativity and innovation. Yet, systemic social challenges persist. To close this gap, we must champion programmes aligned with global, regional, and national priorities, but tailored to build inclusive and resilient societies that leave no one behind.
9. In Kenya, for example, we are implementing the Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda, anchored on building a fair and inclusive society, where every citizen has a stake in our nation's success. By expanding opportunities, enhancing access to services, and empowering communities at the grassroots, we are bridging divides and ensuring prosperity is shared equitably.



10. Ladies and Gentlemen, shared prosperity is the tide that lifts all of society. Africa's urgent challenge is to accelerate the pace of inclusive wealth creation to eliminate poverty, create jobs, and restore dignity. This requires correcting the entrenched imbalance in global trade, where Africa exports raw materials and imports finished goods at a premium—a structure that locks our people out of opportunity and stifles our industrialisation aspirations.
11. Partners like Japan can help remedy this skew by investing in local manufacturing and industrialisation, supporting local agriculture value chains, and financing renewable energy systems to power industry. Africa has abundant resources: land, minerals, renewable energy, and a young, tech-savvy workforce. By adding value to what we produce, whether it is coffee, tea, minerals, textiles or services, we build industries, create local wealth and, therefore, empower our people. This is how Africa stops being the world's supplier of unprocessed raw materials and extractives, and becomes a global hub of high-value production, innovation, and prosperity.
12. Excellencies, the COVID-19 pandemic exposed the fragility of economies without robust health systems. That is why, over the past year, Kenya has embarked on reforms directed toward attaining universal health coverage by strengthening primary healthcare, prioritising prevention, upgrading infrastructure, training personnel, and securing vaccines, diagnostics, and medicines, all funded through locally mobilised resources.



13. In less than a year, over 25 million Kenyans have registered with the Social Health Authority, up from about 8 million under the former scheme. Millions of families can now seek quality medical care without impediment, either due to lack of access or prohibitive costs.
14. Yet these robust health systems demand significant resources to actualise. We welcome Japan's support through contributions to the Global Fund, training, facilities development, and the African Vaccine Manufacturing Accelerator. These interventions must be scaled up to guarantee universal access across Africa.
15. Ladies and Gentlemen, the Fourth Industrial Revolution is reshaping economies. Education and research must therefore form Africa's response, equipping our youth to seize opportunities in artificial intelligence, biotechnology, robotics, and digital innovation.
16. We appreciate collaborative initiatives to promote science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). We call for scaling up exchanges under the African Business Education Initiative, the Timbuktoo Initiative, the Africa Youth Programme 2025, and joint research linkages between Japanese and African universities.
17. Excellencies, Africa contributes barely 4% of global emissions, yet suffers disproportionately from climate change.



Addressing this injustice requires equitable climate finance, predictable support for adaptation and mitigation, and urgent implementation. We urge Japan to champion climate justice and advance this agenda at COP30.

18. We welcome Japan's pledge to support UN reforms, including expanding the Security Council to grant Africa permanent representation. The quest for peace in Africa is inseparable from the demand for equity in global governance. We look forward to progress under the UN80 initiative.

I thank you.

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