

**SPEECH BY HIS EXCELLENCY PRESIDENT J. A. KUFUOR AT THE
YOKOHAMA CITY COUNCIL ASSEMBLY HALL**

Your Excellency, Mr. Hiroshi Nakada, Mayor of the City of Yokohama,
Your Excellency, Mr. Kouichi Fujishiro, Chairman of the Yokohama City Council,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen and
All of you beautiful school children who are attending this meeting.

It is indeed a great pleasure for me to be in Japan and the beautiful and historic city of Yokohama, to attend the Tokyo International Conference on African Development. I wish to take this opportunity to thank the people of Yokohama for the very warm welcome accorded me and my delegation since our arrival here.

Our two countries have long been drawn to each other. In recent times, my predecessor in government visited Japan three times. In the past seven years, I have also visited Japan three times. Ghana has also had the honour of receiving Japanese dignitaries including our host, Mayor Hiroshi Nakada 10 years ago, when he was a member of the Japanese parliament. In 2006, our country was honoured by a visit from Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi, who used the occasion to announce the launch of the Hideyo Noguchi Africa Prize to be awarded for outstanding work in medical service, including medical research. The first award ceremony is taking place here in Yokohama tomorrow as part of TICAD IV.

Dr. Hideyo Noguchi was a young man when he arrived in Ghana in 1927. He was a medical scientist researching the causes of Yellow Fever. He died in Ghana in the course of his work. But the people of Ghana have never forgotten him. Indeed, Noguchi is a household name. His statue adorns the frontage of Korle-Bu Teaching Hospital which is the largest referral hospital of Ghana. The main Medical Research Institute at the premier University of Ghana is also named after him.

The Noguchi Memorial Research Institute is engaged in work that he would have approved. Its mandate includes investigation of tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS, other noxious viruses and fevers including malaria. I am naturally excited to be visiting the city of Yokohama where Noguchi began his career as a medical scientist. Japan gave birth to Noguchi, and he gave his life to humanity and died in Ghana.

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, the Government of Ghana has made impressive achievements especially in restoring macro-economic stability and pursuing prudent programmes of action under the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS), without compromising its commitment to the pursuit of good democratic governance and respect for human rights. The priority areas of my Government within the medium-term framework are vigorous infrastructure development, rural development, modernization of agriculture and enhanced social services with particular emphasis on health and education as well as private sector development.

In these areas also, Ghana has received immense assistance and support from Japan. I wish to mention Japan's generous decision to convert into grants, loans for the construction of a major highway, Accra-Yamoransa Road when Ghana opted for the HIPC Initiative. Ghana appreciates her selection by Japan as one of the three (3) African countries to receive Priority attention for:

- i. future development cooperation and technical support and
- ii. assistance of the Japanese Overseas Cooperation Volunteers in the execution of socio-economic projects in the remotest parts of Ghana.

Naturally, Ghana attaches a great deal of importance to her relations with Japan and to the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) which is a major global framework for Asian-African collaboration in promoting

African Development. TICAD has contributed immensely to promoting African ownership of the development process and strengthening links between Africa and its development partners since the first TICAD in 1993. The second and third Conferences ensured that the regional priorities were fully addressed. Emphasis is now being placed on the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, Asia-Africa cooperation, the need to address conflicts on the continent and the consolidation of peace and good governance there with the full involvement of the private sector and civil society.

With assistance from Japan and other development partners, about 240 million Africans have experienced improvement in health conditions. About three million people have been provided with safe water supply and about 2.6 million children are receiving formal education. Support has especially gone to maternal and child health measures, family planning, education, the empowerment of women and combating HIV/AIDS. In the agricultural sector, food security for African countries has been given a boost with the introduction by Japan of a special breed of Asian and African rice strains, New Rice for Africa (NERICA).

With respect to peace and human security, the African Union's mechanism for conflict prevention, management and resolution, has been assisted to build early warning systems, and to hold conflict resolution conferences through the establishment of the UN Trust Fund for Human Security in 1999. TICAD also provided support in the clearing of landmines, providing aid for landmine survivors as well as rehabilitating refugees and internally displaced persons.

A TICAD initiative to support information and communication technology, policy formulation and capacity building has been established in Cameroon, Nigeria, Tanzania and Zambia. A regional computer server centre has also been established in Benin to promote business information exchanges between Africa and Asia.

It is my expectation that TICAD IV will strengthen and boost Africa's economic growth as well as enhance education, health and human security. It is also my expectation that this Conference will impact positively on issues of the environment and climate change and create a plan of action to enhance the mutually beneficial cooperation between Africa and Japan.

Mr. Mayor, City Councillors, Ladies and Gentlemen, students present here, it is with a sense of pride and honour that I have had this opportunity to address and interact with you.

Thank you.