

Eminent Persons Meeting on Sustainable Development and International Partnership for Africa

Hakone, Kanagawa, Japan | 22–24 July 2025

Statement

We convened at the Eminent Persons Meeting on Sustainable Development and International Partnership for Africa – Towards Enhancing Food Security and Promoting Sustainable Blue Economies, held in Hakone, Kanagawa, Japan, from 22 to 24 July 2025. The meeting was organized by the Sasakawa Peace Foundation in cooperation with the Nippon Foundation and the Sasakawa Africa Association.

We commend the Government of Japan for carrying forward the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) process over the past 32 years and continuing to demonstrate its commitment to fostering the Africa–Japan partnership in pursuit of sustainable development in Africa. We also recognize that the international community is navigating complex and turbulent geopolitical relations and that international partnerships supporting Africa are at a critical juncture, with a looming withdrawal from some activities. We consider the upcoming 9th Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD9), to be held from 20 to 22 August 2025 in Yokohama, as a timely opportunity for Japanese and African leaders to reaffirm the significance of the Africa–Japan partnership and the TICAD process, and to refine policy directions to enhance their effectiveness, as well as their mutual and global benefits.

Our discussions focused on strategies, approaches, and proposed actions to facilitate the effective implementation of the recommendations outlined in “Toward the Promotion of Sustainable Development in Africa: Strengthening the Japan-Africa Partnership and Enhancing the Effectiveness of the TICAD Process.”

Among other salient points, we recommend the following actions to advance a meaningful and effective partnership between Africa and Japan, aimed at enhancing food security, promoting sustainable blue economies, and elevating the effectiveness of the TICAD process:

1

Mainstreaming Food and Nutrition Security as a Priority Policy Goal

Food security must be prioritized through the implementation of enabling policies and partnership activities. It is essential to enhance the productivity of agriculture, livestock, fisheries, and aquaculture by ensuring the availability, accessibility, affordability, and sustainability of food and

its production systems. The activities to improve food and nutrition security and food systems foster creating job, employment and income, and creation and enhance people's livelihood.

2 Reinforcing Holistic and Integrated Approaches

A holistic and integrated approach is vital to improving food and nutrition security and promoting blue sustainable blue economies. This includes considering the socio-economic and environmental conditions of countries and local communities, and implementing measures to adapt to climate change impacts—such as heatwaves, droughts, floods, and seawater warming—as well as addressing anthropogenic pressures like coastal and marine ecosystem degradation and marine plastic pollution.

3 Prioritizing Support for Fragile States and Vulnerable Communities and Small Island Developing States

Support should be prioritized for countries and communities affected by resource scarcity, inadequate infrastructure, social fragmentation, and weak governance, as well as small island developing states that face fragility and vulnerability challenges. Policies and assistance must aim to reduce fragility and vulnerability while enhancing resilience and self-reliance. A multi-dimensional vulnerability index can be referred to in this regard.

4 Fostering Exchange of People, Youth, and Knowledge

People are the drivers of change. In order for people to acquire the knowledge, information, and skills necessary to promote sustainable livelihoods, education is indispensable. Access to education and enrollment in elementary school must be ensured for all. Secondary and tertiary education should be tailored to help people gain the knowledge and skills needed to pursue and contribute to the improvement of sustainable livelihoods, including the advancement of food security and food systems. Scholarship and fellowship programs should be expanded and tailored for African youth and professionals to build capacity in food production systems, including sustainable blue economies. Japanese practices in food production and marketing, especially seafood, should be shared through study and training programs in Japan and Africa. Knowledge exchange should include best practices such as satoyama-satoumi (socio-ecological landscape and seascape management), umigyo (sustainable ocean economy), and innovative initiatives. Promising areas for collaboration include seaweed, shellfish, and other marine invertebrate farming. Inclusive stakeholder engagement, especially of women and disabled persons, should be promoted. Pragmatic, interdisciplinary, and cross-sectoral training and leadership programs should be developed. Experimental initiatives may be undertaken between institutions already engaged in partnerships. Research, development, and innovation promotion should be supported

as a critical component of capacity development.

5 Establishing and Operationalizing the Africa–Japan Blue Innovation Fund

Improved access to financing is needed to support start-ups, entrepreneurship, and social business models. Fiscal support and investment should be enhanced to support academic studies and research in the pursuit of improving food and nutrition security, advancing food systems and promoting sustainable blue economies. Public and philanthropic organizations are encouraged to provide initial support as part of blended financing strategies, leading to scaled-up investment by private and commercial banks. The modalities of the Fund should be explored in cooperation with the African Development Bank, the Japan International Cooperation Agency, and other existing financing organizations, building upon past and ongoing efforts. Funding should foster innovation and transformation in food systems, including sustainable blue economies.

6 Institutionalizing Multi-Faceted Dialogues

While TICAD has facilitated substantive dialogue between the Japanese and African governments, further progress requires diversifying engagement channels. Civil society organizations, private sector actors, research institutes, universities, NGOs, philanthropic organizations, eminent persons, and experts should be actively involved to deepen and broaden the Africa–Japan partnership.

7 Monitoring and Evaluating Partnership Progress

It is essential to monitor, assess, and share information on partnership activities and their impacts. Periodic reviews should be conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of recommended actions and ensure alignment with evolving needs and conditions relevant to the Africa–Japan partnership.

We respectfully request the Sasakawa Peace Foundation, in cooperation with the Nippon Foundation and the Sasakawa Africa Association, to convey this statement to the heads of government attending the upcoming TICAD9 in August 2025 in Yokohama, as well as to other relevant stakeholders committed to advancing the Africa–Japan partnership. We also request that the Sasakawa Peace Foundation, in cooperation with the Nippon Foundation and the Sasakawa Africa Association, encourage Japanese and African leaders attending TICAD9 to convey to other relevant leaders and stakeholder representatives the importance of reinvigorating international support for Africa, for the benefit of both Africa and the global community.

List of the signatories to this Statement:

- H.E. Mr. Ibrahim Hassane Mayaki, former Prime Minister of the Republic of Niger and African Union

Special Envoy for Food Systems

- H.E. Mr. Olusegun Obasanjo, former President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, UN Special Envoy to the Great Lakes Region and African Union High Representative to the Horn of Africa
- H.E. Dr. Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete, former President of the United Republic of Tanzania and Chair of the Board of the Global Partnership for Education
- H.E. Mr. Jorge Carlos Fonseca, former President of the Republic of Cabo Verde and Founder of the JCF Freedom and Democracy Initiative
- Dr. Donald Kaberuka, former President, African Development Bank and AU High Representative for Financing the Union, the Peace Fund, and COVID-19 response, and former Minister of Finance and Economic Planning, Republic of Rwanda
- Dr. Geraldine Fraser-Moloketi, Former Minister of Public Service and Administration and former Minister of Welfare and Population Development of the Republic of South Africa, Chancellor of the Nelson Mandela University, Chairperson, Thabo Mbeki Foundation
- Mr. Yohei Sasakawa, Honorary Chair, Nippon Foundation and Sasakawa Peace Foundation
- Dr. Atsushi Sunami, President, Sasakawa Peace Foundation
- Dr. Amit Roy, Chair, Sasakawa Africa Association