

## Press Release

### **Africa, G8 and OECD send key messages on action for development in Africa ahead of Hokkaido Toyako G8 Summit**

**- *Special focus on climate change and poverty reduction* -**

*Tokyo, 8 April 2008* – More than 150 high-level representatives from Africa, G8 and OECD countries met in Tokyo this week to discuss key issues affecting Africa, ahead of the G8 Summit in Hokkaido on 7-9 July.

“African development is a global issue that the international community must unite to address,” said Japanese Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda in a message delivered to participants of the 10<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Africa Partnership Forum, held on April 7-8 under the theme of “Making a Vibrant Africa a Reality through TICAD IV and G8 Hokkaido Toyako Summit”. Mr. Fukuda said that the APF meeting, which was hosted by Japan as G8 Presidency, would play “a particularly crucial role” in the preparations for the G8 Summit.

APF co-Chair H.E. Ambassador Newai Gebreab of Ethiopia noted that during its two days of deliberations, the APF had discussed at length the AU/NEPAD Action Plan, boosting economic growth and poverty reduction, and environmental issues and climate change. “A consensus has been reached to work together to accelerate growth, reduce poverty and collectively tackle the adverse consequences of climate change globally,” he said.

In his remarks to participants, OECD Secretary-General Angel Gurría said that while many African economies were growing at a faster rate than OECD countries, new challenges were emerging that knew no borders, such as disease, climate change, migration and water scarcity. “It is vitally important to create ‘space’ for dialogue, sharing knowledge and experience, and – perhaps most importantly – for building trust.” He said that the Africa Partnership Forum offered a valuable opportunity in this regard, and that its messages needed to be delivered to other important upcoming international meetings such as TICAD IV, the July G8 summit, and to ongoing UN climate change negotiations.

African Union Commissioner of Economic Affairs, H.E Dr. Maxwell Mkwezalamba, underscored the importance of the AU/NEPAD African Action Plan and urged participants to have a candid discussion on the Plan, with a view of its implementation.

“Economy and ecology are synergetic,” said Swiss APF co-Chair Remo Gautschi, who emphasised that economic growth can be combined with an environmental agenda. He also underlined that governance is a critical element for successful climate change mitigation and adaptation.

H.E Bafour Adjei- Barwuah, Ghanaian Ambassador to Japan and APF co-Chair, stressed the fact that to achieve pro-poor growth in African countries, more attention should be given to the prioritization of, and support for, productive sectors such as agriculture, infrastructure, ICT, as well as developing an enabling environment for women’s empowerment.

The key messages from the meeting were:

- **Urgent action is needed to combat climate change**, which is a major threat to development in Africa. Although Africa is the continent least responsible for climate change – contributing a mere 3.6% to global carbon dioxide emissions – it is acutely vulnerable to its adverse effects, which can hamper economic growth and poverty reduction and threaten human health and security. More needs to be done to reduce global greenhouse emissions – all the while helping Africa meet its legitimate development needs – and to help the continent adapt to the new risks that climate change engenders.
- **Current strong growth in Africa must be harnessed to reduce poverty.** Although recent growth rates in Africa are unprecedented – registering at over 5% annually over the past four years – poverty rates have remained virtually unchanged (44.4% in 1990 and 44% in 2004). Strong political will on the part of both development partners and African governments is essential for focusing on the sectors that are critical for achieving pro-poor growth: agriculture, infrastructure, information and communication technologies (ICT). Women’s economic empowerment and strong buy-in from the private sector are also essential to ensuring that growth will benefit all of the continent’s citizens.
- **The AU/NEPAD African Action Plan (AAP) outlines current priorities for Africa**, particularly those with high potential impact on regional integration and requires co-ordination at the continental level. The Plan embodies the AU/NEPAD principles of ownership and responsibility and good governance. The African side undertook to mobilize the relevant institutions to update the status of the projects under the AAP, clarifying which projects are already underway, where key critical bottlenecks exist, and what needs to be done to unblock these bottlenecks. Development partners noted that they are already supporting elements of AU/NEPAD AAP in their current programmes. It

was agreed that the reviewed AAP and its constraints will be discussed at the next APF, to be held in autumn 2008.

African and Japanese civil society representatives also took part in the meeting. They challenged African leaders to take the African continent in the “right direction” and asked international partners to use the opportunity to “listen more, to understand more and to know how best to support the Africans as they take charge of their destiny”.

*Meeting documents, speeches and photos will be available at [www.africapartnershipforum.org](http://www.africapartnershipforum.org)*

**For further information contact:**

Africa Partnership Forum Support Unit: [Vanessa.Vallee@oecd.org](mailto:Vanessa.Vallee@oecd.org)

NEPAD Secretariat: [ThaningaS@nepad.org](mailto:ThaningaS@nepad.org)