



## **Unleashing opportunities for African Women in Agribusiness**

### **– Cornerstone of Japan-AUC Cooperation**

On the occasion of the historic launch of the 2015 African Union theme of “Women Empowerment and Development towards Africa's Agenda 2063” and looking ahead to the 2016 Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) – the first to be convened on the African continent – Japan expressed its commitment to accelerate cooperation with the African Union Commission (AUC) in order to support fostering AU Member States-Regional Economic Community linkages, by co-investing to build at transformational scale, the dynamic dimensions of unleashing opportunities for African women in Agriculture and Agribusiness. Japan and the AUC agreed to intensify cooperation in the following seven areas: building food value chains, strengthening the gathering of gender disaggregated statistics, mechanization of agriculture, preservation of Africa’s food culture, increasing volume traded on Africa’s regional commodity exchanges, building resilience in African rice production, and processing, to link with African market development.

“Women empowerment is one of the top priorities of the Abe administration,” H.E. Mr. Takashi Uto, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs, stated in a meeting held at the African Union Commission headquarters on Thursday on the margins of the 24th AU Summit Meeting, January 2015. He continued, “The AU’s initiatives are pivotal to Africa’s Regional Economic Communities, and Member States, together achieving the continent’s vision of integrated, peaceful, and prosperous economies for Africa and, as a dynamic force in the global arena.” H.E. Mrs. Rhoda Peace Tumusiime, AU Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture, remarked, “Partners, such as Japan, who support African determined goals for a dynamic future, which build on the demonstrated resilience of Africans, benefits not only Africans, but also, the rest of the world.” Continuing H.E. Mrs. Tumusiime added, “Africa’s women are lauded for, and proud of, their informal contribution to socio-economic development through farming. However, embedding their dynamism in the formal economy through empowerment throughout the agribusiness value-chain -- from inputs and storage, processing, logistics and marketing -- benefits everyone.”

The landmark meeting between the Japanese Prime Minister H.E. Mr. Shinzo Abe and the Chairperson of the AUC, H.E. Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma on 14 January 2014 at the AUC headquarters, highlighted Africa’s prioritizing agriculture, food and nutrition security for the purpose of achieving the Continent’s vision of an integrated, prosperous and dynamic force in the global arena. With the AU 2014 theme of the “Year of Agriculture and Food Security in Africa, marking the 10th Anniversary of the adoption of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP),” where gender is a cross-cutting issue of the 10-year implementation plan of the Malabo Declaration<sup>1</sup>, H.E. Mr. Abe and H.E. Dr. Dlamini Zuma agreed to cooperate closely on African women’s empowerment, especially in the field of agriculture as agribusiness.

This month, the AU Summit launches its 2015 theme of “Women Empowerment and Development towards Africa's Agenda 2063,” underscoring the many industrial opportunities shaping the Continent’s future. Women’s economic empowerment through agriculture/agribusiness – especially food and nutrition security – is an prioritized area that is a building block for an integrative approach to engagement with a broader

---

<sup>1</sup> The Malabo Declaration is shaped by seven (7) African Accelerated Agriculture Transformation Goals (3ATGs). Among the 3ATGs are mammoth goals for the next 10 years, such as ending hunger by 2025, upholding the principles of the CAADP, increasing finance and investment in agriculture, tripling intra-African trade, building resilience, and ensuring mutual accountability.

segment of the population and investment resources, for an inclusive, prosperous Africa. The inclusion of Agriculture/Agribusiness in the 2015 AU theme as an emphasis area, accentuates the many contributions of Africa's women in feeding the majority of Africa's growing population, and the rest of the world.

It should be noted that Japan has co-invested in 35 agricultural projects that directly support empowering women in 15, diverse Africa Union Member States (see attached factsheet). The Yokohama Action Plan 2013-2017 adopted at the 2013 TICAD describes Japan's commitment to supporting Africa's vision, including promoting transitioning from subsistence to commercial agriculture with rural smallholder farming, especially with Africa's women at the center; promoting private sector involvement in a manner that develops value-chains in Africa; promotes practical agricultural technology related to improving agricultural processing and reducing post-harvest losses in Africa; supports the development of infrastructure, storage and connecting markets, with particular attention to women entrepreneurs; and strengthening the financial technical capacity of the Fund for African Women.

**Embassy of Japan**  
**Addis Ababa**  
**30 January 2015**