



**ASIA-AFRICA TRADE AND INVESTMENT CONFERENCE (AATIC)
Tokyo – Japan
1-2 November 2004**

**Statement by Mr. Zéphirin Diabré
UN Under-Secretary General,
UNDP Associate Administrator**

**Your Excellency Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi
Excellency, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and Chairman
of the African Union,
Excellency Mr. Mwai Kibaki, President of the Republic of Kenya,
Excellencies, Distinguished Participants,**

It is not without some emotion that I visit Tokyo again in the context of this important TICAD Asia-Africa Trade and Investment Conference. True, Tokyo has now become a major hub for African development, with the generous hospitality of Japan for which we are grateful.

On behalf of the UNDP Administrator, I wish to commend the Government of Japan under the wise leadership of Prime Minister Koizumi for its commitment to improving the conditions for international cooperation, South-South cooperation and African development through the important TICAD process. The sustained efforts made by Japan are already widely acknowledged by institutions such as UNDP. We also extend our warm congratulations to Japan on the occasion of their assumption early next year of a non Permanent Seat in the UN Security Council. We wish them continued success in this regard.

UNDP is equally grateful to their Excellencies President Obasanjo and President Kibaki for their strong support to the TICAD process as evidenced again by their presence today.

I commend the African leaders for their relentless promotion of NEPAD and their commitment to strengthen strategic partnerships for Africa's development. Most of the African Heads of State were here one year ago taking time off their busy schedules to share their views, draw directions and mobilize further support for Africa.

In the one year that has elapsed since the successful TICAD III held in Tokyo, the AATIC no doubt constitutes the most important TICAD international forum on Africa in 2004.

For UNDP, the promotion of global partnerships in support of development constitutes a central practice area and is part of our mandate to coordinate efforts for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and monitor the progress made. The commitments renewed during TICAD III, as well as the long standing, rich,



multi-faceted partnership that so happily links UNDP to Japan have helped focus and reinforce our action in that sense.

Building global partnerships against poverty with the private sector as an active stakeholder for the creation of sustainable and widely shared growth is one of the challenges that have been identified in the MDGs, emphasized by the African Union and NEPAD, and constantly addressed by UNDP as a critical condition to achieve a positive contribution of Africa to global wealth. The TICAD Asia Africa Public Private Joint Forum organized in May 2004 in Kuala Lumpur has provided an opportunity for reviewing the situation of partnerships in support of Asia-Africa Trade and Investment, tracking achievements and capturing valuable inputs from Asian and African public and private sector representatives on the question.

We have also taken some concrete steps in close collaboration with sister UN agencies and other development partners to facilitate Asia-Africa cooperation for Trade and Investment through initiatives such as the Africa Asia Business Forum series (AABF), Africa-Asia SME Network Programme (AASMENP), and the Africa-Asia Chamber of Commerce (AACC) due for launching in a few months from now. In these endeavors, we have privileged an action-oriented approach, building ownership and partnership with the private sector through a very instructive consultative process. In this specific context, I wish to draw your kind attention to the comprehensive document entitled “Enhancing the Contribution to Development of the Indigenous Private Sector in Africa: Challenges and Opportunities for Asia-Africa Cooperation” that we have issued for this conference as a result of our broad consultative work during the last year. We invite you to read it and look forward to your views on the diagnosis made therein and the strategy proposed and would be honored to see you join us on concretizing some of the actions recommended.

We have the firm conviction that increased mutually beneficial business partnerships between Asia and Africa is prone to open the way to immense potentialities for both sides. This conviction strengthens our firm commitment to TICAD as one of the most appropriate frameworks to create the necessary conditions through its pillar principles of Ownership and Partnership.

However, for that to come about, gaps need to be filled in terms of information management, skills and knowledge development, business and partnership practices and venture engineering. We are working at identifying the critical actions that will lift the constraints in each of those areas. We are particularly encouraged by the bold steps that several African States are now taking to create investment friendly conditions. UNDP is reinforcing the impact of its support to Asia-Africa partnership for Trade and Investment by increasing the leading role of the private sector, promoting Public-Private partnerships and ensuring the involvement of African and Asian specialized institutions and caucuses in pilot activities. For example, the NEPAD Business Group is associated to the incubation process of the Africa-Asia Chamber of Commerce, which is included in the short term action plan of NEPAD.

We look forward to the rich outcome of this important and timely conference with regard to Asia-Africa Trade and Investment which will be used to enhance the momentum by refining ongoing initiatives, reinforcing their consistency and synergies in order to ultimately improve their effectiveness to African development.

Thank you.