

Opening Remarks by Mr. Akio Okawara, President and CEO, Japan Center for International Exchange (JCIE) at TICAD7 official side event “Towards Population Ageing in Africa-Current Approach to Elderly Care, and Lessons to be Shared Across Continents” August 29, 2019, At Pacifico Yokohama

Your Excellences, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, Good afternoon. On behalf of the co-organizers, it is my great pleasure to welcome you to the TICAD7 official side event “Towards Population Ageing in Africa -Current Approach to Elderly Care, and Lessons to be Shared Across Continents”. Today’s event is jointly organized by the KAKENHI Project Team for “Future Population Ageing in East Africa”, the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA), Nagasaki University, and the Japan Center for International Exchange (JCIE), with support from the National Institute of Population and Social Security Research. It is my honor to welcome Her Excellency Dr. Awa Marie Coll-Seck, former Minister of Health for the Republic of Senegal, and Her Excellency Dr. Natalia Kanem, Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund.

JCIE as a non-profit organization has been undertaking programs to address various global health issues, playing a catalytic role to facilitate international coordination. In this context, the population aging issue has been one of JCIE’s important project scopes. In 2017, we launched the program on Healthy and Active Aging in Asia in cooperation with ERIA, and in close consultation with the Japanese government’s Asia Health and Wellbeing Initiative commonly known as AHWIN. As is well-known, Japan is the most aged country in the world and there are many lessons that could be drawn from Japan’s experience in tackling aging-related challenges. Under AHWIN, we aim to promote regional cooperation that fosters sustainable and self-reliant healthcare systems, and work towards the goal to create vibrant and healthy societies where people can enjoy long and productive lives.

Today at TICAD7, in collaboration with Dr. Masuda’s KAKENHI project team, we are extending our scope to Africa. There are over 150 official side events this week during TICAD7, but as far as I know this is the only forum dealing with the topic of population aging in Africa. So, I believe this is a significant event, introducing us to the challenges that Africa will face with respect to aging in the very near future. As the sub-title of this event suggests, the purpose of this session is to bring together key experts from Asia and Africa, to discuss healthcare, social protection and welfare issues, exploring the potential for sharing experiences and lessons across continents.

With the contribution from speakers from various sectors, including policymakers, civil society representatives, and academicians, I am sure that today’s dialogue will provide new insights and raise awareness that population aging is a challenge that Africa, just like Asia will be facing in the coming years.

In closing, I sincerely hope that today’s event will bear fruitful discussion, and provide important steps towards information sharing and cooperation between Africa and Asia.

Thank you very much.