

May 24, 2008  
Prime Minister of Japan  
Yasuo Fukuda

I would like to congratulate Millennium Promise Japan on its establishment. The African Millennium Villages Project aims to help communities develop by supporting investments in areas such as food production, water and sanitation, energy etc., which in turn increases agricultural yields, important for African economic growth. Moreover, the project has the potential to perform a great role by showing how poverty can be eliminated in Africa.

I am very pleased with the establishment of Millennium Promise Japan, a non-profit organization, which supports this project and promotes the elimination of poverty in Africa and also helps to educate Japanese people. During TICAD IV, which starts the day after tomorrow, and the upcoming G8 Summit at Lake Toya in Hokkaido, the topics of development and Africa will be discussed extensively. I think Millennium Promise Japan's establishment is therefore quite timely.

The African Millennium Villages Project coincides with the ideology of Human Security, which attaches importance to the empowerment of individuals as well as communities by working in multiple sectors. From this point of view, in 2005, the Japanese government agreed with the approach of Professor Jeffrey Sachs, Director of The Earth Institute at Columbia University, and began supporting the project in 9 villages in 8 countries. We are ready to announce the expansion of our support to four more countries, capitalizing on the opportunity of TICAD IV.

I anticipate that Millennium Promise Japan will expand public support in Japan for the African Millennium Villages Project, promote the achievement of Millennium Development Goals, and increase momentum toward supporting Africa.