

Event: Tunisia - Japan Investment Seminar

Theme: Road to Tunisia, Investment Opportunities for Japan

Date: 21-12-2021

Keynote address: Mr. Abdelbasset Ghanmi, General Manager of "FIPA-Tunisia"

OPENING REMARKS

Thank you, **Dr. Henry Loewendahl**, for this introduction and for giving me this welcome opportunity to address managers, investors and corporate executives from Japan participating in "**Tunisia - Japan Investment Seminar**"

- Excellency Mr. Mohamed Elloumi, Ambassador of Tunisia in Japan
- Excellency Mr. Shinsuke Shimizu, Ambassador of Japan in Tunisia
- Mr. Alvarez De La Campa, Resident Representative of International Finance Corporation
- Mr. Yuko Yasunaga, Head of UNIDO ITPO Tokyo
- Distinguished speakers from African Development Bank, Saraya, Toray Industries and JICA
- Dear Japanese and Tunisian participants,

Very good morning,

It is my biggest honor to welcome you today and so many investors and corporate leaders from Japan to the online Conference "**Road to Tunisia: Investment Opportunities for Japan**" jointly organized by Invest in Tunisia Agency and the Embassy of the Republic of Tunisia in Japan alongside our esteemed key partners: the IFC World Bank Group, the European Union, the Swiss Federation and Wavteq; A collaborative approach, that I value very highly and very much look forward to continuing it going forward, with the ultimate aim of realised FDI projects, eventually from Japan.

As we have long believed that expanding Investment relations between Tunisia and Japan is an affective and collaborative approach, I am perfectly convinced that this conference is a remarkable opportunity to introduce Japanese Business Circles to the favorable business climate in Tunisia, one of the most dynamic economies in the Mediterranean region.

TUNISIA is an investment destination with significant potential, and many Japanese companies are perfectly positioned to become part of it, because they have a keen understanding of Tunisia's opportunities as a profitable business location at Europe's and Africa's doorsteps.

In that sense, **TUNISIA** has seen the participation of Japanese companies in the productive sectors of our economy and we are constantly keen to support those pioneering firms looking to grow their business by providing assistance services at

their entry and during establishment, operation and expansion, covering site selection and investment facilitation and to provide aftercare services to help solving problems faced by existing investors.

It is with this vision in mind that I would like to point to the significant role that Japanese companies have played and are playing in the development of Tunisia's economy, as these companies have greatly contributed to the growth of several industries. **16** Japanese players are an important part of the Tunisian ecosystem and share a strong partnership with our country based on many years of corporation. Some of them have picked Tunisia as a platform for their research efforts, setting up R&D and engineering centers that employ Tunisian competencies.

Recognizing such contributions and commitment, two Japanese companies are indeed with us today to showcase their success stories as an important part of the Tunisia's transformation and development performance.

Furthermore, **Japan is the 4th among the TOP 5 of leading issuing countries of FDI's in the first 9 months of 2021.** Because we are proud of this partnership, our sincere hope is to see it grow still further in the years to come and even more to create openings in new investment areas where there is a real potential in Tunisia, particularly in mechanical, electronics and Automotive supply chain, as well as in technical textiles, Software & IT and Pharmaceuticals.

I leave specific presentation of these opportunities to the member of FIPA team to cover, but I would like to convey the message to the Japanese business leaders and investors participating today. The timing really could not be better to delve into the pool of opportunities offered by **TUNISIA** for an access to new markets and a better regional integration through a **triangular cooperation.**

Once again, I seize this opportunity to thank our valued co-organizers for this timely initiative and all the participants!

I am ready and willing to answer questions and enlighten our Japanese guests on the practical steps to carry out investment projects in Tunisia.

Thank you for your attention.

Introductory Words of

H.E. Mr. Mohamed ELLOUMI, Ambassador of Tunisia to Japan

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure to meet, even virtually, such a distinguished audience and participants and I would like to warmly thank Mr. **Abdelbasset GHANMI**, the General Manager of the Foreign Investment Agency/FIPA and his team, and all the key partners who actively contributed to hold this important event, namely the **International Finance Corporation, Wavteq**, the **Swiss Federation** and the **European Union**.

I would like also to express my heartfelt gratitude **to Mr. Yuko YASUNAGA, Head, UNIDO ITPO Tokyo**, for his continued cooperation and for being the moderator of our discussion panel, and to H.E. Mr. **SHIMIZU Shinsuke**, Ambassador of Japan to Tunisia, for being with us today.

My heartfelt gratitude and sincere thanks go also to our strategic partners the **JICA** and the **African Development Bank** for their valuable contribution by participating in this Webinar, and to the **SARAYA** and **TORAY** for giving Their Testemonies as success stories in Tunisia.

Finally I would like to thank Mr Masao KUMORI, President of **KWBS Marketing & Trading**, for his precious collaboration with the Embassy.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As you might recall, on July 16, 2020, the Tunisian and Japanese governments officially and jointly announced the holding of the TICAD8 summit in Tunis in 2022, giving hence the kick-off of its preparatory process. Since that date, the Tunisian Embassy in Tokyo has set an ambitious program as part of the preparatory process and to highlight the opportunities to build a fruitful and win-win partnership not only between Tunisia and Japan, but also a triangular partnership Tunisia-Japan-Africa.

Geographically located at a very strategic position at the heart of the Mediterranean, near the Arab, African and European markets, Tunisia is considered as a regional hub offering many advantages and incentives for business and investment, with a privileged access to these markets, including Africa.

Our webinar today is part of a cycle of promotional events towards TICAD8. Such kind of events gives opportunity to the private sector representatives from Tunisia and Japan to explore new opportunities for business, investment and partnership in Tunisian market but also to initiate trilateral cooperation with African countries.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to take this opportunity to give you an overview on the evolution of the TICAD8 preparatory process.

Until today, six (6) preparatory Senior Official Meetings were held via Video-conference, bringing together the high officials representing the Tunisian and Japanese Governments and the co-organizers; namely the African Union Commission, the United Nations, the World Bank, and the UNDP.

During these S.O.M. meetings, logistical and security arrangements and preventive health measures against Corona were discussed. The Co-organizers made sure the readiness of Tunisia to host TICAD8 summit and ensure all the conditions for its success, thanks to its recognized experience in organizing such major international and regional events and capacity to provide all the requested facilities for participating delegations and organizing the side events.

Regarding **the Agenda of the TICAD8 Summit**, several questions were discussed with particular emphasis on the following:

- Including the issue of "coping with the Covid-19" and its economic and social impacts as one of the main topics in the agenda of TICAD8.
- The capital importance of a strong participation of the private sector in the economic events during the TICAD8, to support development efforts in Africa and promote the economic cooperation, the investment and the infrastructure development through building a Japanese-African partnership in accordance with the Yokohama Declaration 2019 and its Action Plan.
- Engaging youth and the gender issue: the role of African youth on managing the health crisis through creative initiatives, digital and technological skills, and startups.
- Continue working to eliminate all forms of discrimination against African women to be a force for change and development.
- Enhancing Digital transformation in Africa, which means reducing the digital gap with developed countries through the use of modern technology, such as robots and artificial intelligence, to create job opportunities and reduce poverty.

Discussions will continue between the co-organizers and all the stakeholders concerning the agenda of the summit, its program and the side events including in particular the Japan-Africa Business Forum and Expo, but also any event offering the possibility for networking to the participants.

Ladies and Gentlement,

With this, I come to **Tunisia-Japan relations:**

As you know, Japan is a strong, reliable and longstanding partner that has always been on the side of Tunisia:

- ◆ Established in 1956, the year of our Independence, the Bilateral relations are excellent and while we are celebrating this year the 65th anniversary of our diplomatic relations, we are enjoying and cherishing a multi-layered partnership.
- ◆ Many infrastructure projects in Tunisia were financed by Japanese ODA.
- ◆ We are witnessing a remarkable dynamic of cooperation during last years with a constant exchange of high-level visits, the organization of Joint Bilateral Committee, the last one was held in Tokyo on February 7th 2019.
- ◆ 22 Japanese companies are investing currently in Tunisia in the different sectors. And we are working hard to widen the investment field with the strengthening of legal framework, which could give more incentives and more low-risk environment for businesses.
- ◆ Tunisian Community in Japan: Almost 1200, a great number of whom are high competencies contributing the enhancement of the bilateral cooperation.

Lastly, ladies and gentlemen, the TICAD 8 in Tunisia

Our expectations, as a host country, are many;

- ◆ first of all, this extremely important political and business Summit will give an unprecedented momentum for further strengthening the relationship between the two countries as it will be the first ever visit of a Japanese PM in office to Tunisia, who will be chairing a strong Japanese Public-Private delegation.
- ◆ We do hope also that the African brotherly countries will be represented at the highest level and with strong business delegations. Hence the Summit could be the best opportunity to establish a triangular relationship between Tunisia, Japan and Africa.
- ◆ As a business Summit, we expect that it will be an opportunity to establish B2B discussions to initiate cooperation and partnership in the key sectors according to the needs of African countries and on the base of the Japan expertise. These promising sectors will be further developed by Mr. GHANMI and Mr. LAHBIIB from the FIPA.
- ◆ We hope that TICAD8 will be a new milestone on the path of strengthening partnership and synergy between all stakeholders, public, business, academia and civil society and particularly enhancing PPP.

We will have the pleasure to meet you at similar events during the next period to talk more and in detail the preparations of TICAD8 and its program.

I would like to conclude by inviting you to participate in TICAD8 and reiterating the pleasure and readiness of Tunisia to welcome you to this important business gathering.

Thank you for your attention.