

Speech by Ambassador Kaoru ISHIKAWA,
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Japan
to the Arab Republic of Egypt,
on the Occasion of the Opening Ceremony of the Final Seminar
“Asia-Africa Knowledge Co-Creation Program (AAKCP);
Total Quality Management for Better Hospital Services:
A Holistic Approach to Utilizing Existing Resources”

Fayoum University, Wednesday 29th October 2008

Dr. Ahamed El- Gohary, President of Fayoum University,
Distinguished guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is indeed a great honour and pleasure for me to attend this opening ceremony of the Final Seminar “Asia-Africa Knowledge Co-Creation Program (AAKCP);Total Quality Management for Better Hospital Services: A Holistic Approach to Utilizing Existing Resources”.

First of all, I would like to pay my regards to all participants of this seminar. High-ranking government officials of medical sector and heads of hospitals from 8 countries in Africa gathered here today in order to further enhance medical conditions in your countries.

And, I would like to thank Dr. Ahamed El- Gohary, President of Fayoum University, not only for his valuable cooperation for this seminar but also for his strong leadership to enhance the partnership

between Africa and Japan in this important sector of health. He contributed to our cause by holding the 1st course of Quality Management of Concurrent Infection Control of TB/HIV for Africa (Nile Basin Countries) in May this year, when he was Vice-President of Suez Canal University. He also supported Ms. Minegishi, a senior volunteer who started her career as a nurse, then later became a teacher (professor) for training nurses, and a secretary of a senator of Japanese parliament, and Ms. Fukuda, a junior volunteer who is a specialist of computer training in that university from Japan. It is great pleasure for me. In addition, I would like to introduce Ms. Nagata, who is working as a nurse in Tameya health center, Fayoum. In this context, I would like to ask him to encourage and support her.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Now, this year 2008 is very important for the partnership of Africa and Japan. "Forth Conference of Tokyo International Conference on African Development" or TICAD IV, was held in May in Japan, and the Japanese Prime Minister promised to double the support from Japan to Africa in five years. Health sector, Water and Sanitation are among high priority sectors in this commitment.

I, who love and respect Africa, know the tragic history since early 16th century. In 21st century, I sincerely hope that Africa will get back in their hands their own history and the glorious days and that 21st century will become Africa's century.

This sincere hope of mine inevitably leads me to speak and share my humble opinion about nation building. Please look at the chart of

the last page in the handout. I would like to say that the traditional notion of state has changed a lot due to the rapid globalization. The role of state has been changing through the rapid progress of technology and diversification of players. We learnt at school that a state consists of three basic elements: (1) people, (2) authority and (3) territory. Under the current wave of globalization, this traditional notion of state is somehow changing rapidly, but there is one element which remains. That is people. And, Japan believes that the basis of nation building is securing human resources. A state where people participate in nation building will certainly take off and fly high. But people need motivation to participate. I believe that, when people have hope that tomorrow can be better than today, they will become very strong engine for nation building. At the same time, they need knowledge, good health, warm family, and inflow and outflow of information. That is to say there are four pillars to materialize potential human resources to concrete power. They are; education, health, gender and information technology.

Now, let me have this key word; health. The very basic of power and resilience of a person is, without saying, physical strength. Even if a person is well educated, if he or she has no good health, it will rarely bring hope. Especially, in the vicissitudes of life, when a person is fallen in a crisis, without resilient body people cannot survive.

So let us first have a look at health and disease situation in the world.

As you know better than me, for African countries and other developing nations, one of the most critical challenges in development

is to address health issues, including infectious diseases and public health. And I must say that, in all aspects of health issues, it is of my humble opinion that team spirit is crucial. Team spirit between patients and doctors, team spirit among medical services, team spirit between those working in the field and decision makers. And the field of battle is often hospitals.

People fighting against diseases, promoting public health and enhancing people's awareness are very important teammates of sick people. Thus, I praise you all here. I must also say that you are also at the very core of nation building. That is why I believe that you are indeed what in my country's centuries' long proverb describe as the castle. In my country, the proverb says, "people are the stone wall of a castle, and people are the castle itself after all".

Ladies and gentlemen,

This year, 2008, is Japan-Egypt science and technology year. We, Japan and Egypt, have held approximately 30 events and seminars concerning the science and technology. One of the objectives, of this science and technology year is to improve life of people living in other developing countries by joining scientific knowledge and experience of Japan and Egypt. That is why this seminar is added to the list. I sincerely hope you will bring much back to your countries from this seminar. In this way, cooperation on science and technology between Japan and Egypt can contribute to your countries in various fields.

I thank you for your very kind attention.