

REPUBLIC OF KENYA

OFFICE OF THE NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISOR

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

BY

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**AT THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE SYMPOSIUM ON THE FREE AND
OPEN INDO-PACIFIC FOR PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT IN EASTERN
AFRICA TO HELD BE ON FEBRUARY 28, 2023 AT THE KEMPINSKI
HOTEL, NAIROBI**

**Excellency Hon. Hayashi Yoshimasa, Foreign Minister of Japan,
Hon. Dr. Alfred Mutua, Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Foreign and Diaspora
Affairs,
Co-hosts Brig. Dr. Robert Kabage, Executive Director, GLOCEPS and
H.E. Ken Okaniwa, Ambassador of Japan
Excellencies Ambassadors and High Commissioners and other members of the
Diplomatic Corps,
Distinguished presenters and facilitators,
Senior representatives of other institutions
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Good morning, *Ohayo Gozaimasu* to all!

I congratulate the Co-hosts of this Joint Symposium, GLOCEPS and the Embassy of Japan for organizing this signature event and thank them for inviting me to deliver this keynote address at this historic meeting, which is among the curtain events, marking 60 years of diplomatic relations between Kenya and Japan.

Our two nations continue to nurture a valued relationship characterised by growing cooperation across key areas of national development and the exchange of support at the international level. Many new areas of development have been opened by the Kenya-Japan cooperation, including environmental sustainability, technology development, higher education, port development and renewal, renewable energy and in particular our development of geo-thermal power, institutional development including in higher education and the development of our coast guard capabilities, amongst other areas. It is therefore not a surprise that Kenya stands today as the largest recipient of Japanese government official development assistance on the continent.

At the international level, Kenya and Japan have worked closely together because we share in the values of multilateral actions and cooperation. I recall my working with the Government of Japan towards the hosting of TCAD IV, the first on the continent in 2016 that opened the way to increased growth in

Japanese investment on the continent. Then came the path breaking work that provided critical markers to the world on blue economy. Our cooperation and support enabled us to deliver the High Level Sustainable Conference on Blue Economy in 2018. There is no doubt that that meeting set the standards and mobilised the world towards this new frontier of human development. In many aspects, the scope of this symposium sit well within the context of our growing interest in the maritime domain.

**Excellencies,
Distinguished Participants,**

This symposium could not have been organised at a better time. Today we are at a world that is at an inflexion point. Attempting recovery from the effects of the global COVID 19 pandemic, the effects of collapsed and constrained logistics and supply chain systems, a war in Europe and sharply shifting and changing geostrategic alignments marked by intensifying contestations that are reshaping global politics and international relations. Yet these developments are taking place in a context of an accentuating climate crisis that imposing enormous stress especially on developing countries like Kenya.

Undoubtedly, our world today is more complex, fragile, perhaps dangerous, and uncertain. While the reaction especially in the initial moments of the COVID 19 crisis was to turn to narrow nationalisms and unilateral action, it is becoming increasingly clear to all that the level of complexity demands more, not less, cooperative and collective action, more not less, multilateralism, more not less sharing of humanity's aspirations for peace, security and sustainable development. In fact it is becoming clearer today that no one country, or region of the world can be secure without security of the rest of the world. This in my view must be the aspiration that frames the discussion on the Free and Open Indo-Pacific and its role in driving the aspirations for human development in the next epoch.

Distinguished delegates,

For Kenya, and like other countries in our region, the Indo-Pacific concept must be seen from the prism of our interconnectedness with the rest of the Indian Ocean neighbourhood. Commanding more than 66% of global economic activity, the Indo-Pacific is a nerve centre of global trade. It also means that it is a sphere of interests of even countries further afield. The Indo-Pacific is also at the heartbeat of inter-state relations between many key players on global affairs particularly within the large Asian continent! The geostrategic importance of the Indo-Pacific concept is therefore at the fore of the global diplomacy of the future.

It is therefore not a surprise that amongst the spheres of influence is the Indo-Pacific. Unsurprisingly, every country that has a claim on global affairs has or is engaged with preparation of an Indo-Pacific Strategy. Indo-Pacific affairs are also a standing agenda of world groupings beyond the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (The Quad; Australia, India, Japan and USA), a strong proponent of the concept. Same goes for AUKUS (Australia, United Kingdom and USA).

Placing the Indo-Pacific concept in a strategic context means more than the geographic extends of the inter-state relations in the Indo-Pacific region to include the interaction/ and interests of many countries around the world. In this context, the interconnections between the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean creates what is assessed as an **inseparable strategic system**. Our discussions here today could do well to reaffirm the constitutive elements of this system and articulate the imperative for an Indo-Pacific approach in which nations can advance their individual interests in full adherence to established international laws, and customary practices that allow for safe passage. The United Nations Law of the Sea should act as the fulcrum of such conformity. More importantly, there is need for countries to advance global common goods of peace, security and sustainability of our environment, including our maritime domain.

Excellencies

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Defining the Indo-Pacific concept is to geographically unite vast spaces to create a global construct in which the whole world interacts. The correct definition must necessarily, therefore, go beyond any delimitation of the waters that tie the Asian, African and Pacific continents to allow for a wider portion, which is at the centre of global affairs. Off course, we should expect that such delimiting of the extends of Indo-Pacific concept would be determined by the strategic coordinates of a country's national interests. It is, therefore, important to appreciate how each country perceives the interests of others as determines its inclusion or exclusion of that country in the Indo-Pacific conidium of things.

The value of the discussions laid out here today lies in the need to create a shared understanding of the context, objective of such a construct, which in this case, can borrow from Prime minister Modi's definition of of Indias vision of the Indo-Pacific, as an enabler for "a Common pursuit of progress and prosperity... not directed against any country... based on principles commitment to the rule of law." It is critical to acknowledge that the understanding of the Indo-Pacific concept has varied from country to country, along three axes: a) we have seen differing attitudes, with some countries taking more confrontational posture than others b) there are different emphasis on priorities i.e. diplomatic. Economic and scientific cooperation, aimed at forging closer ties with the region, or whether they focus on military engagement, thus following a balance of power logic or c) we have also seen difference in the preferred means of implementing their policies towards the region. While some have channelled their strategies through multilateral frameworks, others have taken to cooperation with key partners, or varied degrees of unilateral action.

This is why this discussion is critical to situate the value proposition for global concert of action that creates a space of less competition and more cooperation; less securitization and more openness; less controls for more interdependence. Indeed, our new world demands more inclusivity, which

underwrites the true spirit of multilateralism. After all, the Indo-Pacific subject as we know is a geostrategic construct of our globalized world. It is a concept that some closely associate with idea that may be termed the '*middling (or middle-rization) of global power politics.*' This means building a new middle in the power equation between the dominant global powers. The Indo-Pacific Concept is at the heartbeat of the emerging multi-layered diplomacy driven by a growing like-mindedness among nations.

**Excellencies,
Fellow facilitators,
Distinguished participants,**

Why is the Indo-Pacific concept of strategic relevance from Kenya's perspective?

The surge in geostrategic positioning within the Indo-Pacific relations, has inspired proliferation of arrangements between several countries and African Union. The Eastern Africa region, which is an expanding geographical sphere, finds itself amidst the quest for increasing external interests in the continent.

Kenya's geographic location at the Eastern Africa coast line establishes a strategic global position for the country. Kenya's infrastructural comparative advantage makes the country a regional hub for global sea-freight economic activities on the Indian Ocean and beyond. It is for obvious reasons therefore that Kenya actively participates in the 22 members Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA). Kenya is also a strong collaborator on keeping safe our neighbourhood which is a subject of priority for IORA with its 10 dialogue partners. These commitments affirm that it is a strategic imperative that the Eastern Africa countries to see the Indian Ocean as part of its expansive and highly interconnected region as articulated in the free open Indo-Pacific concept.

Granted this position, it serves the Eastern Africa countries to play an active role in ensuring safety of sea routes serving the regional maritime hubs. Addressing security challenges such as terrorism and violent extremism that

fuel piracy in the Indian Ocean and other transnational crimes such as the rising concerns over the cyber security, becomes of paramount importance for all. Equally important, it the need to for Eastern Africa region to continue to invest on the democratic dividend, contortionism and rule of law, which is a a mark of standardization of human values in our interconnected world.

Furthermore, our region must play a more active role in the global debate on Blue Economy with focus on promoting international partnerships that uphold the prism of laws governing the identification of international boundaries and utilization of international water bodies and the vast underneath resources. Our convictions in this regard must go beyond sustainability of Blue economy as a beneficiary to human prosperity but also to include the good for nature and its diversity underneath of the Oceans. Towards this end, the safe exploration and sustainable use of Oceans must seek to protect the ecological diversity of our maritime heritage.

Distinguished Delegates,

The unprecedented growth of interest and footprint within the Horn of Africa points to the resurgence of the strategic value attached of our region. This has translated into the internationalization of the Horn of Africa, growing competition for control of some bits of the Red Sea, the Gulf of Aden and the Western Indian Coastline. Today, this small region is witness to the securitization that has more than 12 different militaries in station. This region occupies the historic trade links between the Arabian Peninsula and the Mediterranean Sea and so doing draws attention of other additional countries (Egypt, Eritrea, Sudan and Yemen, among others) to the direct relevance of the Indo-Pacific concept. Subsequently, this has drawn sharp attention to the Bab Al Madeb (Choke point) and ignited a stiff competition for the control of the ports and coastline in this region.

More and more, the Eastern Africa region is engulfed in a growing conversation on the Western Indian Ocean as a primary sphere of Africa's eastwards coast line. This region comprising of 10 countries; Comoros, France (Re-Union and Mayote), Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique,

Seychelles, Somalia, South Africa and Tanzania is a focus area for the blue economy resources including fishes, and other resources, including Coelacanth (*Latimeria Chalumnae*), a crossopterygian; a rare genus order of fish (vertebrates) that is unique to its waters.

Furthermore, the important agenda on climate crisis and the rise in the sea levels has a particular accent for our region. The Small Island States of Comoros, Mauritius and Seychelles bring in a new dimension on the implications of the Indo-Pacific Concept on Small Island States around the world. These includes the many Pacific Islands states confronted by the challenge of increasingly harsh climate change related natural disasters.

We also are keen to have cooperation in the maritime domain because of its value in addressing security challenges. The strengthening of joint efforts under the Djibouti Code of Conduct (DCoC) which coordinates action between 21 countries to deal with piracy in the Gulf Aden and the Western Indian Ocean, points to the growing importance of Eastern African coastal region in the global security agenda which is at the heart of the Indo-Pacific Concept.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The complexity and multiplicity of issues in the Western Indian Ocean including the emergence of a scramble for resources, demands concerted efforts to advance global maritime quest for a safe and stable region. Along these lines, the opportunities for contributing to the development agenda in the Eastern Africa region are immense. From ports and shipping yards, large scale infrastructural networks (roads, railways, pipelines) that links the harbours to Africa's ever promising hinterland, and investment in the continent's thirst for technology and innovations, beacons real potential for exploration through the free open interconnectivity concept. In all these endeavours taking place from Durban in South Africa, Beira in Mozambique, Bagamayo in Tanzania and Doraleh in Djibouti, the Port of Mombasa remains at the centre of Africa's future infrastructural system. Towards this end, Dongo Kudu Special Economic Zone is the heart of Africa's hub for the much-desired global interconnectivity.

Moreover, the expansion of the Eastern African Community towards Central Africa and potential for more members joining, presents opportunities for more investments. To imagine that the EAC would initiate discussions on new working frameworks with regional blocs across the Indian Ocean such as the Association of South East Asia Nations (ASEAN) and South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). Such new frameworks have the potential to build bridges that would help actualise the free open Indo-Pacific prosperity agenda.

Excellencies

Distinguished participants,

As we embark on our discussions on the leveraging the free open Indo-Pacific concept for peace and development in Eastern Africa, I wish to draw my summary as follows;

- i) The need for a shared understanding of the Indo-Pacific Concept that extends and applies beyond the geographical coordinates to include the strategic implications of the expansive Indo-Pacific region to national interests and collective aspirations of human society;
- ii) Reflections on the imperative to adhere international laws in delimiting international boundaries and utilization of international waters; and in this regard a candid assessment of conformity to the United Nations Law of the Sea is paramount;
- iii) Collaring efforts to create an interconnected strategic system that rests on the foundation of globalization and interdependence build on mutual interests for safe seas and open opportunities for investments across all regions;
- iv) Pulling together (or simply put effecting the Harambee spirit) to reduce vulnerability of peace and security in highly fragile regions. For its prevailing realities, the Eastern Africa region finds itself classified as such; and
- v) Redefining the extent of the Eastern Africa region within the context of globalization and particularly trends in East African Community (EAC), Western Indian Ocean, Red Sea and Gulf of Aden, and what

- prospects are there for strategic partnerships in sustainable development.
- vi) Modalities for the access, exploitation and management of the resources within the maritime domain - for shared prosperity.

Finally, this symposium should be part of the ***Moment of Action*** to advance an Indo-Pacific approach that best advocates the common good for all nations to interact in a free open world where multilateralism truly prevails!

There is no doubt in my mind, Ladies and Gentlemen, that Kenya-Japan cooperation offers a tested collaborative leadership framework to help elaborate the value proposition for the concept of a Free and Open Indo-Pacific as a vehicle for driving the pursuit of shared international public goods, that would guarantee stability and prosperity for every country and secure peace and prosperity for all humanity.

I wish you all happy participation and a successful outcome.

And Thank you for your kind attention.

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OFFICE OF THE NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISOR