

The Role of NGOs for Intensifying AIDS Prevention

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Opening Remarks from Ms. Kaori Ishii

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Professor Lan Young Moon Park, President of WFPW International, Mrs. Motoko Sugiyama Vice President and Director of UN Office, Women's Federation for World Peace International, Ms. Alexa Ward, President of WFPW USA, distinguished speakers at the workshop, distinguished members of the delegation of Women's Federation for World Peace, Japan, Excellencies, dear colleagues, ladies and gentlemen, I am pleased to be here today to join the distinguished guests to celebrate the successful conclusion of the 53rd session of the Commission on the Status of Women parallel event cosponsored and organized by the Women's Federation for World Peace International and Bridgeport International Academy two days ago. This event's topic centered on successful strategies for prevention of HIV/AIDS and the responsibility for care giving shared equally between women and me. I am also pleased to welcome so many delegates from Women's Federation for World Peace Japan and other countries around the world.

I would like to thank Mrs. Motoko Sugiyama for giving me the opportunity to open this auspicious luncheon with the daunting task of speaking both English and Japanese. I also thank her for allowing me to touch on the TICAD initiative that I have been working on from the side of UNDP for the past six years as UNDP being one of the four co-organizers of the initiative. TICAD stands for Tokyo International Conference on African Development. The first summit was held in 1993 in Tokyo which was one year after your federation was established. Thereafter, the summit was held every five years. The objective is to engage in high level policy dialog among African and International leaders to mobilize international support for African development. It is supported by twin underlying priorities of African ownership and international partnership. It recognizes the importance of cooperation, specifically Asia-Africa cooperation and triangular cooperation. The TICAD initiative is led by the government of Japan, however, differs from other bilateral initiatives for African development as all the TICAD conferences are co-organized by four co-organizers including Japan, UNOCHA (UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs), World Bank and UNDP (UN Development Program). UNDP has led the TICAD related initiatives on the ground. The theme of last May 2008 summit was A Vibrant African Continent of Hope and Opportunity. African leaders and heads of international organizations deliberated on three themes: securing economic growth, enhancing human security and addressing the environment and climate change. It was reported as the largest policy forum, with forty one African heads of state, with participation of more than 3000 individuals and more than 1300 journalists. The TICAD summit was chaired by the Prime Minister of Japan and the outcome was carried forward to the G8 Summit held in Hokkaido, presided over by the chair. Japan made new commitments at TICAD 4 which we have been assured by the Prime Minister of Japan at the Davos conference in January of this year that Japan will honor the commitment despite the current global economic downturn. In addition to support for infrastructure development in the private sector investment, government of Japan will boost its support in the areas of community development, education, health, water and the environment. UNDP is currently implementing around ten projects as an outcome of the recent TICAD 4. Three outcome documents and the summary were issued at TICAD 4 and as a follow up to TICAD 4, we are currently monitoring the achievements made against the Yokohama Action Plan which established the concrete actions to be taken after TICAD 4. For example, in the area of HIV/AIDS, UNDP in close cooperation with the government of Japan and other partners is fostering support for HIV/AIDS research, policy dialog

and care. Collaboration is made in support of a pilot initiative creating an enabling policy and institutional framework for effective home based care of HIV/AIDS patients.

Throughout the process of TICAD 4 signing, the representatives of African civil society and the consortium of Japanese civil society organized a parallel event and presented their consolidated views on the intergovernmental preparatory meetings as well as the TICAD 4 summit itself. Ten months after the unprecedented organization of TICAD 4, we are currently preparing for a TICAD ministerial follow up meeting to be held in Botswana this month from the 21st to 22nd of March where we expect His Excellency Nakasone, the former Prime Minister of Japan to chair the meeting. UNDP will support the participation of African civil society so they can participate in this important meeting. Africa, representing more than 20% of the world's surface and holds 13% of its population and endowed with abundant natural and mineral resources but it is still fragile with millions of people who continue to live below the poverty level, the effects of climate change, such as global warming, the associated drought and floods is taking on alarming proportions, pandemics such as HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis have not abated. Despite these numerous and diverse challenges, the continent was better poised for prosperity at the time of TICAD 4 and has for many years, witnessed by the economic growth rate. However the global impact of the economic downturn has yet to be determined and this requires careful monitoring and putting into place interventions that will minimize the impact on the social fabric of Africa, which is vulnerable to external shock than that of more robust economies.

In my six years of work with TICAD, through my work with African societies I have noticed that African tribal chiefs, who are entrusted with the decision making of the community, when they are faced with complex or difficult decisions, they will sleep on it and postpone the decision, literally, to the next day. This expression comes from the fact that the chiefs require time to ponder on the solutions. However, on such difficult cases, I also learned that the chiefs also consult their wives before making the final decision. As with the traditional Japanese wives, their counterparts in African villages do have the final say when it comes to important decision making. However these wise traditions are not codified or set into legislation; instead it is dependent on individuals' wisdom and respect of their partners to be sustained. It is in this context that I appreciate the mission and achievements of WFWPI to ensure equal partnership between men and women at home, at workplace, schools and society at large and wish to seek how the TICAD initiative can closely work in partnership to the activities of WFWPI in the future.

Last but not least, those distinguished guests, who came all the way from Japan, Korea or Taiwan; I wish you a pleasant stay in snow clad New York City and a safe journey home. Thank you for your kind attention.