

【Side event of TICAD7】

Unleashing the Power of Women and Girls in Africa - Social Business and Social Entrepreneurship to Achieve Transformative Change -

On Aug. 28, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), together with City of Yokohama and Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), co-hosted a symposium as an official side event for TICAD7, focusing on the roles and potential of social business and entrepreneurship to tackle gender barriers at PACIFICO Yokohama. Ms. Toshiko Abe, the State Minister for Foreign Affairs, and Ms. Fumiko Hayashi, the Mayor of the City of Yokohama, welcomed over 300 participants representing government and local bodies, civil organizations, private companies, and international organizations.

The event was convened to promote businesses that will help solve social issues affecting women and offer them new ways of working and living. The keynote speech was delivered by Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, who served as Managing Director at the World Bank and was successively appointed to Nigerian Minister of Finance. She said that while women and girls are finding their voices today more than ever and progress has been made in many areas, the journey of women's empowerment is far from complete. She claimed that men's more active involvement and participation in addition to women's access to greater economic and political power is a key to unleash further African women's agency, power and entrepreneur spirit.

In the panel discussion that followed, both African and Japanese social entrepreneurs were invited as panelists who have worked on the ground to tackle gender barriers and discrimination against women and girls. Their businesses include production of eco-friendly and low-cost sanitary pads for school-aged girls, provision of training for Africa's next generation of women in technology, development of online network that connects expectant mothers with doctors, and providing comprehensive support for single mothers for their economic security and independence.

Dr. Yumiko Tanaka, Senior Gender Advisor of JICA, who moderated the panel, concluded that it is significant to make the issues faced by women and girls in the

society more visible and further promote businesses which aim to contribute to combat the gender inequalities, creating new values and opportunities for women and girls to achieve transformative change in our society. For that purpose, she called for further partnerships and collaborations of stakeholders including civil society organizations, donor agencies and the private sector for unleashing the power of women and girls.

■ Participants

[Opening Remarks]

Fumiko Hayashi, Mayor, City of Yokohama

Toshiko Abe, State Minister for Foreign Affairs, MOFA

Hiroshi Kato, Senior Vice President, JICA

[Keynote Speech]

Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, Board Chair, Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance

[Panelists]

Regina Honu, CEO, Soronko Solutions/Soronko Academy (Ghana)

Adeloye Olanrewaju, Co-founder and CEO, Babymigo (Nigeria)

Aryanyijuka Noel, Co-founder and CEO, EcoSmart (Uganda)

Tsuyoshi Mori, CEO, Polaris Co.,Ltd.

Jennifer Blanke, Vice-President, Agriculture, Human and Social Development, African Development Bank

[Moderator]

Yumiko Tanaka, Senior Gender Advisor, JICA

[Commentator]

Susanna Moorehead, Chair, Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)

■ Related SDGs

