

Remarks by H.E. Ambassador Ito

On the Occasion of the Handover Ceremony for

“The Project for Construction of Tokar Women’s Vocational Training Center, Tokar Locality, Red Sea State”

at Tokar Women’s Vocational Training Center on the 6th of November, 2017

Mr. Mekki Abdulla Mohamed, Commissioner of Toker Locality

Mr. Abdelaziz Saudi, Representative of the Ministry of Social Affairs

Mr. Ahmed Abdulla Ahmed, Representative of Humanitarian Aid Commissioner

Mr. Abdelgadir Omer Ohag, Chairperson, Abu Hadia Society for Women and Community

Development,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning,

It is my honor to be here in Tokar Locality today, to celebrate the completion of “The Project for Construction of Tokar Women’s Vocational Training Center, Tokar Locality, Red Sea State” funded by the Government of Japan. I would like to express my sincere appreciation for your warm welcome and my respect to the people of Tokar Locality, in cooperation with the State Ministry of Education, the locality and all other stakeholders, especially Abu Hadia Society for Women and Community Development, for bringing this project to a successful completion with the aim of providing practical vocational skills and knowledge for women.

On 24th of March, last year, Mr. Abdelqadir Omer Ohaj, Chaiperson of Abu Hadia Society for Women and Community Development and I exchanged the Grant Contract at my residence in Khartoum with the presence of Mr. Mustafa El Rady Ahmed, Secretary General of Supreme Council for Vocational Training and Apprenticeship to construct this vocational center. This is the very first project of women’s vocational training center which I was committed to from the beginning to the completion of the project. I would like to share this happiness with you today. It’s worth mentioning that Abu Hadia Society for Women and Community Development has successfully implemented the Project for Improvement of Educational Environment at South Deim El-Nour Primary School in Port Sudan funded by the Government of Japan and we handed it over on November 2012. I am happy to know that the school is still in good condition and providing good educational environment.

Japan has always attached great importance to vocational training for both men and women. Japan does not have many natural resources and the most notable resources it has are human resources. Education and hard work are the keys to the rapid economic development of Japan after the devastation of the Second World War. Therefore, people of Japan are happy and proud to be given the opportunity to assist the people of Tokar to provide their women with such valuable learning opportunities for socio economic development.

However, it was the strong commitment of the people of Tokar to improve the training environment for both male and female in your community that made the Embassy of Japan respond to your application. I would like to emphasize my appreciation to all the stakeholders who have made tireless efforts and great contributions towards the completion of this project.

Meeting basic human needs and promoting capacity building is one of Japan's focuses in its development assistance to Sudan. And Japan has been supporting the vocational training sector in Sudan, as it provides opportunities for better livelihood and human resources development.

The aim of this project is to provide women with tools and training in three fields: food processing, baking, as well as sewing and handicrafts. These three fields have the potential to re-vitalize the local market and improve the local standard of living.

One of the main issues often highlighted by locals in this part of Sudan is the sharp fluctuations in the market prices of local products. With the experience and training in food processing and packaging that this centre aims to provide, we hope to see a stabilization of these prices, which will benefit all stakeholders, producers and consumers alike.

As such, with the completion of this project, we hope to see all of Tokar's population benefiting from greater economic stability. This centre will go a great way to re-establish Tokar locality as "the breadbasket of Sudan" as it was referred to in the 1960s, and return it to its former place as a hub of agricultural activity and production.

In the words of President Omar Elbashir: *“Women are half our society, it is with their contribution that we complete our true independence”*

This is especially true in Tokar, where women are taking the lead in organizing social activities and seeking better livelihoods. This centre will seek to empower women of Tokar, and by doing so, greatly benefit their society as a whole. I hope the entire society in Toker will witness a positive change as a result of having this project completed.

I would like, finally, to renew my appreciation to each of you who gathered today for your concerns and enthusiasm, and sincerely hope that all the stakeholders will continue to work hard to complete this project successfully.

Thank you once again for your heartfelt hospitality. It was worth traveling all the way to the land of Toker to be inspired by your determination.

Thank you very much.