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Thank you very much Mr. Tatsuo. I am now moving on to the Africa workshop. It started by drawing up some of the main challenges at stake on the African continent. We identified three of them.

On the one hand, there is obviously providing more opportunities of employment to the growing young population of Africa. The population is getting younger and younger and this should be considered because otherwise it will have consequences that I will mention later on. There is also the issue of managing the economic sovereignty of the state and the need for a greater economic integration on the regional and the continental level. On the economic aspect, some of the main challenges that remain is that Africa as a continent is still quite fragmented. We can see that because most of the inter-African trade only represents a small share of the global trade. African states do not trade enough with each other because there are some barriers. Those barriers need to be lifted so that African countries can start trading with each other. In addition to that, we also pointed out that most of the trade between African states is composed of manufacturing and agricultural. Outside the continent, it is mainly industry and natural resources. So African countries need to put their efforts together in order to increase African trade.

The solution to that would be better integration but there are some hiccups that block that regional integration. As Prime Minister Zinsou has explained, the transaction costs for integration are still very high in Africa and undermine the potential of African states to trade between each other. They are the highest in the world and this is still a main challenge.

Recently, the African continental free-trade agreement was brought up, it was praised as a great initiative to address the need for greater integration. However, there are some technicalities that block this agreement from being properly implemented. This was pointed out by Dr. Dadush who explained that there are three main challenges to that agreement. First of all, the need for more inclusiveness because all countries have not signed the agreement, only 45 or 46 countries. Nigeria for example has not signed it yet, whereas it is one of the biggest economies of the continent. Although it said that it will implement it, it still has not done so. And Nigeria still has some complex political economy, so we are waiting to see what would happen out of this. The second technicality of this agreement is that they need to better explain what they mean by liberalizing 90% of trade. Do they mean 90% of the volume of trade - which is fine – or do they mean 90% of the tariff lines? In that case it could be problematic because countries could find ways to navigate around it and skip some of the terms of the agreement. Finally, the other issue of this agreement is the rule of origin. We see that very often at the WTO, many FTAs are abused because people change the origin of the product. This rule should be really strictly regarded in order for the AfCFTA not be abused. Those are some of the economic challenges that still exist on the continent.

We also had the perspective of Europe with former Minister Elisabeth Guigou who explained us where Europe stands in the middle of this. She stressed the need for Europe to rethink its partnership together with Africa so that it becomes more of a win-win partnership, more collaborative. And she also stressed the responsibility of the European continent to rethink its perception of Africa. Europe has to counter the populist discourse because it is gaining more importance and would lead to Europe closing its borders to Africa. If Europe does so, Africa will have to seek new partners to address its needs for infrastructure development and this could be really problematic if the populist fear dominates on the European continent.

Another very important point is migration: the human mobility capital. This has been addressed as well during the workshop because an increasing growth will also necessarily increase the human mobility. People will seek new opportunities abroad and the continent should be ready to welcome those people who can contribute to the growth of their continent as well. We need to understand that migrants should not be perceived as a threat but rather as an opportunity to contribute to the growth of the European continent but also to the African continent.



Moving on to an example of how African countries can work together. I would like to bring up a concrete example explained to us by Chairman and President Mostafa Terrab from the involvement of OCP Group in Africa. OCP Group is involved with different African partners and countries and beyond soil and fertilizers, it works with the locals in order to adapt the products to meet the benefits and specificities of African soils. This comes with some work that has been done on the field with many fertility maps conducted in order to understand the specificities of arid soils and produce fertilizers that are adaptable to their needs. With this, they brought up very innovative ways to collaborate with African countries depending on the different natural resources of every country. For example, the Moroccan experience comes with phosphates and fertilizers where the others come with different components that are brought together in order to present adaptable products. It is a great example in which African countries cooperate to address the needs for their agriculture instead of going abroad and seek products from outside the continent.

A final point about the AfCFTA, Prime Minister Lionel Zinsou also pointed out the fact that in Benin, 7,5% of the GDP come from taxes on exports, and this is huge. This undermines the local production and prevents the production from going outside of the country. This is also something that the continent has to address.

Finally, I would like to end up on a note that was brought up by former Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn from Ethiopia who said that Africa is not a battleground for the other powers. We should stop with this dichotomy of Africa-Europe, Africa-China, Africa-United States. Africa is a growing power, it has its place on the global scene and should be considered as a partner like the others. It is not a battlefield for the foreign partners. Thank you very much.