

African Development

Why Is Support for African Development So Important Today?

If pressed for a candid opinion, it is likely that many Japanese citizens would offer the view that because Africa is so far away, the situation there does not directly affect Japan. With Africa appearing so remote, it is important to think more deeply about why Japan needs to be at the forefront of international initiatives to support African development.

Challenges in Africa: Poverty Reduction through Economic Growth and the Consolidation of Peace

The Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) was the turning point that shifted the attention of Japanese Official Development Assistance (ODA) to Africa. Prior to the first TICAD in 1993, the amount of Japanese aid allocated to all of Sub-Saharan Africa was roughly equivalent to that directed at a single ASEAN nation. Yet today, as the Japanese government prepares to double its support for Africa by 2012 in its follow-up to TICAD IV, there really is the sense that a generational shift has occurred. So, again, why is support for Africa such an important issue? Why is it necessary?

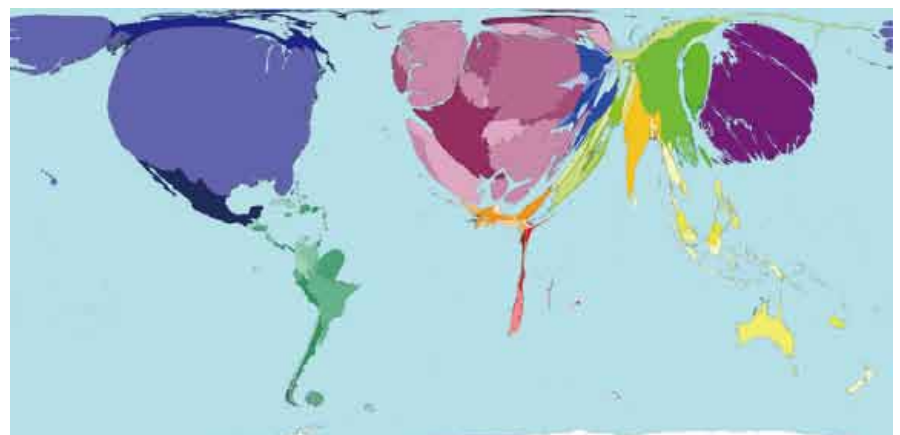
In the recent context of ever-advancing globalization, Japan—which is particularly dependent on the trade and communication it maintains with other countries—needs to continue building healthy relationships with the international community. From this perspective, there is no questioning the importance of supporting partner coun-

tries in their difficulties against any variety of issues they may face.

Of the 49 nations designated as least developed countries (LDCs), 33 are located within the African continent. Furthermore, approximately 40% of people in Sub-Saharan Africa live below the absolute poverty threshold, subsisting on less than one dollar per day. Unstable political and social conditions, including domestic conflicts, are among the many reasons cited for Africa's stagnation in the decades following independence. Since the 1990s, 19 countries in Africa have fallen victim to internal conflict, displacing more than four million refugees. Sub-Saharan Africa is considered to be the most difficult region in which to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), while also being the region in which poverty reduction through economic growth and peace consolidation is the most essential.

Naturally, for Africa to overcome its current difficulties it is essential that Africa itself be at the center of development efforts and proposed solutions. Sub-Saharan Africa's rate of annual

GDP Worldwide by Amount (area shown in proportion to amount) (2002)



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A woman selling fruit in a market (Angola)



Toward a "vibrant Africa" (a woman in Mozambique)

economic growth since the beginning of this century has hovered at around 6%. With the exception of certain regions, many African nations have put an end to their internal conflicts and are making progress toward reconstruction. Additionally, cooperative efforts among African nations seem to be effective in quelling new conflicts. On the other hand, owing to a slowdown in Africa's economic growth since the onset of the global financial crisis in 2008 and ensuing recession, Africa's post-conflict regions are at risk of instability.

Africa: The Continent of Hope and Opportunity

Thanks to advances in information technology and transportation, the distance between Africa and Japan has much less impact than in the past. At the same time, Africa is well on the way to becoming a key resource provider for Japan. Moreover, the upcoming FIFA World Cup 2010, to be hosted by South Africa, will provide an excellent opportunity to showcase Africa's attractions as a tourist destination for the Japanese public.

Meanwhile, the effects of climate change and the spread of infectious diseases are accelerating at an alarming rate. Such global-scale issues are having a particularly severe impact on Sub-Saharan Africa. Furthermore, the economic slump in the developed world is leading to decreased African exports and lower foreign direct investment in Africa. In light of these circumstances, as the world's second-largest economy Japan must work to meet its responsibilities by promoting African development and stability. Doing so not only benefits Africa but is ultimately in Japan's own long-term interest.

There is a common misconception that Japan's cooperation in Africa is a one-way relationship based on aid flowing from Japan to Africa. In reality, though, Japan can gain an abundance of knowledge and insights as well as learn new values through this collaborative process. Many Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCVs) have reported feeling that they had learned more than they contributed during their time in recipient countries. Moreover, it is important to remember that Japanese society benefits greatly from the experiences of ex-volunteers, who

share much of what they have learned after returning to Japan. Africa is not just tropical jungles and wild savannahs with many animals. It is a land of people with rich cultures and abundant wisdom accumulated over millennia. Africa has been called the cradle of human beings. The heat rising from this vast land is included not only with the scent of the earth but also the very hopes, vibrancy and potential of the African people.

As Africa—the continent of hope and opportunity—undergoes a major transformation, it looks to Japan as an important development partner that respects African ownership of African issues. Japan has responded with its unique approach to development cooperation, exemplified by its follow-up to TICAD IV, which is yielding tangible results. As JICA works to realize its vision of "inclusive and dynamic development," JICA continues to deliver Japanese assistance to the African people who need the cooperation.

African Development via the TICAD Process

In addition to the summit-level conference held once every five years, TICAD also holds periodic ministerial-level meetings, preparatory meetings and working-level consultations.

The overriding concept of the TICAD process is to aid Africa in building partnerships of trust with the international community and thereby allow it to take independent ownership of its development policies. TICAD also emphasizes links between Asia and Africa and Asia's development experience as an example for realizing development in Africa.

1993 TICAD I

Adoption of the Tokyo Declaration on African Development (Japan's first comprehensive policy in support of African development)

1998 TICAD II

Adoption of the Tokyo Agenda for Action, a set of comprehensive goals to reduce poverty in Africa and to more fully integrate Africa into the global economy

2003 TICAD III

Adoption of the TICAD Tenth Anniversary Declaration, designating the consolidation of peace, human-centered development and poverty reduction through economic growth as the three pillars of the TICAD process

2008 TICAD IV

Under the fundamental message "Towards a Vibrant Africa: A Continent of Hope and Opportunity" adoption of the Yokohama Declaration in concert with the announcement of the Yokohama Action Plan (YAP) focused on accelerating economic growth, establishing "human security", and coping with environmental and climate change issues

The Japanese Government's Commitment: To Offer Support in Three Priority Areas in Order to Realize a "Vibrant Africa"

"Towards a Vibrant Africa: A Continent of Hope and Opportunity" was declared as the cornerstone message of TICAD IV that was held in Yokohama, May 28–30, 2008. In conjunction with this message, Japan's policy toward development in Africa was clarified through the Yokohama Declaration and its accompanying roadmap, the Yokohama Action Plan. Adoption of this plan prioritizes Japan's African development efforts into the following three areas: boosting economic growth; establishing "human security" (achievement of MDGs, consolidating peace, practicing good governance); and addressing environmental and climate change issues.

TICAD IV has additionally set a goal of doubling Japan's ODA funding to Africa by 2012, which, over the five-year period from 2003 to 2007, averaged US\$900 million annually.

Accompanying this target, the Japanese government also made clear its intention to strengthen support aimed at doubling Africa's rice production. (For further details, see "Issue-Specific Activities and Initiatives: Rural Development" on page 110.)

JICA's Initiatives

Through the fulfillment of the TICAD IV Yokohama Action Plan commitments, JICA aims to conduct timely assistance vis-à-vis Africa that achieves increases in both the scale and quality of operations. JICA's activities throughout the continent will focus on development programs that bring tangible, sustainable results. In planning and implementing cooperation projects with partners in Africa, JICA will pay particular attention to the three TICAD IV pillars: accelerating growth, establishing human security and addressing climate change and environmental issues. Specifically, JICA is working to rapidly implement the following types of effective assistance programs.

Initiatives to Accelerate Economic Growth in Africa:

1. Building a broad, international infrastructure, including electricity networks and economic corridors such as highways linking multiple countries; expanding support for the One Stop Border Post (OSBP) in Africa to facilitate smoother border crossing processes. (For further details, see "Issue-Specific Activities and Initiatives: Economic Infrastructure Development" on page 80.)

2. Supporting the Coalition for African Rice Development (CARD) to increase food supply and improve food crop production, particularly through the cultivation of rice. JICA also helps promote rice cultivation through the expansion of New Rice for Africa (NERICA). (For further details, see "Issue-Specific Activities and Initiatives: Rural Development Environment" on page 114.)
3. Assisting infrastructure and human resource development as a means of promoting trade, investment and tourism as well as public-private partnership (PPP). (For further details, see "Issue-Specific Activities and Initiatives: Industrial Development" on page 116.)

Establishing "Human Security":

1. Focus on achieving the MDGs by providing assistance for the development of educational, healthcare and community services. This includes building schools, undertaking infectious-disease prevention programs and assisting the provision of safe water. JICA is striving to bring freedom from fear and famine to impoverished people in Africa and improve their basic standards of living. (For further details, see "Issue-Specific

- Activities and Initiatives: Human Development" on page 96.)
2. Development and reconstruction assistance conducive to consolidating regional peace and stability (with special focus on the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan, Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda, Sierra Leone and Liberia and so on). (For further details, see "Issue-Specific Initiatives: Public Policy" on page 86.)

Addressing Climate Change and Environmental Issues

JICA is planning and implementing projects that contribute to the Cool Earth Partnership. Since Africa is particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change such as droughts and floods, JICA is working in partnership with the countries of Africa to address this global-scale issue. (For further details, see "Issue-Specific Activities and Initiatives: The Global Environment" on page 104.)



Africa: A continent of hope and opportunity (scene from an Ethiopian festival)