Africa's Economic Policy Challenges toward 2050

On August 26, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) co-hosted a seminar with the Centennial Group International (CGI), a US think tank for economic development, at the Hilton Nairobi Hotel, on the theme of the long-term economic potential and challenges in Africa.

JICA and CGI invited Ms. Nialé Kaba, Minister of Planning and Development of Côte d’Ivoire, Mr. Célestin Monga, Chief Economist of African Development Bank as panelists. Event speakers affiliated with the co-organizers included Mr. Harinder Kohli, President and CEO of CGI, Mr. Theodore Ahlers, Senior Associate of CGI, and Mr. Hiroshi Kato, Vice-President of JICA.

For his keynote presentation, Mr. Ahlers reviewed six policy research papers recently issued by JICA and CGI: “Africa 2050 update,” “The impact of commodity terms of trade in Africa: Curse, blessing, or manageable reality,” “Africa's inclusive growth challenge: Reducing deprivation and creating jobs,” “Infrastructure in Africa,” “Economic diversification of African economies” and “Regional economic integration in Africa.” He stressed that political commitment is necessary for achieving economic growth.

To start the ensuing panel discussion, Mr. Kato, as moderator, raised the following three key questions:

i) How have economic conditions changed for Africa since 2013?

ii) What policy responses are needed to restart the process of African economic convergence with the rest of the world?

iii) How best can development partners assist their African partners in this process?

Ms. Kaba and Mr. Monga responded that an economic transformation is needed, including diversification to the current economic structure, which has a heavy reliance on resource development and agricultural products. They also pointed out the necessity of infrastructure and human resources development and creating jobs, while they mention the experience and potential of African development such as the change in population structure and the advantage of population growth.

Following that presentation, Mr. Kato explained that those papers had been reformulated by JICA and CGI in the light of “Africa 2050,” a policy research report issued to coincide with TICADV held in June 2013 in Yokohama, Japan, and published by the Oxford University Press the following year. Mr.
Kato concluded the discussion by pointing out that, in addition to appropriate development policies and institutions, the people's attitude in the country is important.

At the end of this event, Government of Japan and Africa Development Bank announced to expand the initiative of "Enhanced Private Sector Assistance for Africa (EPSA)".

**Speakers**

**Keynote Presentation**
- Ahlers, Theodore, Senior Associate, Centennial Group International (CGI)

**Panelists**
- Kaba, Nialé, Minister of Planning and Development, Côte d'Ivoire
- Kato, Hiroshi, Vice-President, JICA
- Célestin Monga, Vice President and Chief Economist of African Development Bank (appointed)

**Moderator**
- Kohli, Harinder, President and CEO, Centennial Group International (CGI)