

30 August 2019

Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO)
Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

JETRO, JICA and UNDP sign a tripartite partnership agreement to promote Sustainable Development Goals through successful business in Africa

The Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO), the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) signed a tripartite partnership agreement to promote solutions through collaboration and business between the private sectors of Japan and Africa on Friday. They aimed to achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Africa.

JETRO is a public-sector agency that assists business, and has helped Japanese companies expand their operations in Africa, leveraging its expertise accumulated over six decades and its network in Japan covering the entire area (with 48 domestic offices). JICA, a Japan development cooperation agency, has also supported the promotion and success of business in Africa. It has helped solve local problems in Africa using its diverse, robust support portfolio centered on business feasibility studies and demonstration projects. JICA also has connections with governmental agencies and other stakeholders developed over the years in the field of development assistance. UNDP, an international organization, has strong networks with government agencies and commerce/industry associations, as well as local information and expertise, gained through its network of 53 offices spanning the whole continent of Africa.

The three signatories of the partnership agreement, which was concluded at the margin of the Seventh Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD7), have started to offer a platform to respond to the needs of Japanese companies, including SMEs, and to provide seamless support for various business activities ranging from the exploration of business opportunities to the expansion of business, by combining their existing support schemes and networks. The tripartite agreement will contribute to the economic and social development of Africa through support for Japanese companies to expand their operations in Africa, as they have high expectations for overseas markets amid the changing domestic market environment.

Highlights of the partnership agreement

1. Connect Africa's opportunities and challenges with the technologies and services of Japanese enterprises, especially SMEs

2. Promote innovation by Japanese and African entrepreneurs/start-ups and provide business-based solutions to the social challenges in Africa
3. Jointly organize communications and advocacy activities such as seminars, symposiums and workshops to promote business in Africa
4. Convene regular dialogues, consultations and information exchange to promote the tripartite partnership

Expected outcomes of the collaboration

1. Contribute to an accelerated private sector development in Africa through Japanese private sector's enhanced engagement, with focus on SMEs
2. Contribute to the development of Africa's economy and society through enhanced support to promote innovation and start-ups

As part of this partnership, the three signatories co-organized five seminars on business in Africa across Japan in June and July in the run-up to TICAD7. During TICAD7, a side event entitled "Africa/Japan Start-ups Pitch: Innovation & New Partnership for SDGs" is also being held on 30 August. This event will provide an opportunity for start-ups (17 from Africa and 7 from Japan) to showcase business models which leverage technology for innovative solutions to social problems, for Japanese companies to obtain information on potential partners and investments.

Going forward, the three signatories will develop and distribute practical guides on the combined business support menu, collaborate to organize business seminars across Japan to encourage more Japanese companies to engage in Africa, and provide enhanced support with individual companies to increase successful business cases in Africa. The three agencies will also work to align their programs to promote innovation in Africa and facilitate partnerships between local start-ups and Japanese companies.