

【Side event of TICAD7】

Africa's Socio-economic Transformation through Innovation

On Aug. 27, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) held a side event at the InterContinental Yokohama Grand on the topic of two types of innovation taking place in Africa; incremental innovation such as *Kaizen* and radical innovation. More than 170 participants attended the event, including government officials from African countries and Japan's private sector.

The event started with the opening remarks by Mr. Ito Tadahiko, a member of House of Representatives, and H.E. Dr. Ibrahim Assane Mayaki, CEO of AUDA-NEPAD. Then the panel discussion proceeded moderated by Professor Ohno Izumi, Director of JICA Research Institute.

During the panel discussion, Mr. Nakamura Toshiyuki, Director General of JICA's Industrial Development and Public Policy Department, stressed that both radical and incremental innovation are necessary for a company's growth as most of the successful companies conduct both.

Dr. Célestin Monga, Vice President of the African Development Bank, pointed out that the economic transformation cannot be achieved only by radical innovation, but sectors such as manufacturing that can absorb the increasing population needs to be promoted. He commented that promoting incremental innovation is significant.

H.E. Mr. Bezabih Gebreyes, Commissioner of Civil Service Commission of Ethiopia, stressed that *Kaizen* is more than tool for productivity improvement but philosophy and way of life. In Ethiopia, *Kaizen* is implemented not only in manufacturing sector but also in other sectors such as social service sector. Mindset change for all actors is important for socio-economic transformation.

Mr. Fuwa Naonobu, JICA expert for BDS project (*1) in Ethiopia, explained that venture capitals value entrepreneurs' grit so that they can produce a minimum viable product by relentlessly refining their prototype. He commented that *Kaizen* is significant in this process.

Representatives from the two awardee companies of the first African *Kaizen* Award (*2) (MAA Garment of Ethiopia, and A to Z Textiles and Mills of Tanzania) also gave presentations on in-house innovations and achievements made through implementation of *Kaizen*.

As a conclusion of the panel discussion, Professor Ohno summarized the discussions into three points; 1) Incremental innovation is not in conflict with radical innovation but rather the former is integral for promoting radical innovation. 2) *Kaizen* is not only effective in a workplace, but also a way of life and the philosophy is embedded in the society. 3) To promote both types of innovation, government and private sector need to work together.

■ Participants

[Opening Remarks]

- Ito Tadahiko, member of House of Representatives
- Ibrahim Assane Mayaki, CEO of AUDA-NEPAD

[Panelists]

- Bezabih Gebereyes, Commissioner of Civil Service Commission of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
- Célestin Monga, Vice President, Economic Governance & Knowledge Management of African Development Bank
- Fuwa Naonobu, JICA expert for BDS project in Ethiopia
- Nakamura Toshiyuki, Director, Industrial Development and Public Policy Department, JICA

[Moderator] Ohno Izumi, Director, JICA Research Institute

■ Notes

*1. Project on Business Development Services (BDS) Enhancement for Enterprises Growth

*2. In 2019 June, JICA held “Africa *Kaizen* Award” in Tunis, Tunisia for the first time in the African continent in order to support implementation of *kaizen*. At the event, two companies are selected as awardees of “Outstanding Award” among 16 candidates from 8 countries

■ Photos



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