

# A Vibrant Land on the Ascent

Southern Africa is overcoming racial discrimination and taking advantage of rich mineral resources and tourist attractions to develop, while simultaneously fostering a sense of regional unity.

Today, as various countries in the region step on the path of mutual prosperity, Japan is providing support in accordance with individual strengths and challenges while respecting the ideals of the region which value mutual cooperation.

*Editorial assistance: Yoichi Mine, Professor, Graduate School of Global Studies, Doshisha University*

*Photography: Mika Tanimoto (Mozambique)*

## Transitioning to an Era of Mutual Prosperity among the countries in the Region

With the equator running through it, the African Continent lies astride the northern and southern hemispheres and accounts for around a fifth of the world's land area. The region features diversity that cannot be properly expressed by using only "Africa." For Japanese people, Southern Africa is a region that is becoming more popular as a tourist destination, owing to its attractions such as the wildlife habitat Kruger National Park, the spectacular Victoria Falls, and the ethereal dunes of the fantastical Namib Desert.

When talking about this region, its history of apartheid or racial segregation cannot be overlooked. Apartheid was a policy of racial discrimination implemented in South Africa from 1948 until 1991. Laws divided citizens by race in all areas of politics, economics, and society, and the rights of non-whites were restricted. The late Nelson Mandela dedicated his life to ending apartheid and became president in the first general election open to all races, which was held in 1994. His work promoting racial reconciliation and cooperation is very well-known.

The Southern African Development Community (SADC) was formed in 1992 by various countries in the region to alleviate poverty and improve living standards, but its precursor, which was formed in 1980, had actually been launched without the Republic of South Africa. Professor Yoichi Mine of the Graduate School of Global Studies, Doshisha University in Japan explains that "The white government in South Africa under apartheid subjugated neighboring countries through economic and military control, and these countries came together to break free from that."

South Africa joined the SADC in 1994 as democracy progressed following the end of apartheid. Professor Mine says, "The year of 1994 was a turning point for the Southern African region. South Africa was no longer an 'enemy,' so the SADC could now pursue a path for promoting development as a unified economic zone." Partly due to its historical background of colonization by white people, South Africa had strong ties with European and American enterprises and became a major power for driving economic growth, not only in Southern Africa, but in the whole African Continent. Leveraging that momentum to achieve mutual pros-

perity in the region requires the comprehensive cooperation of developed countries talking regional development into consideration.

## Cooperation Respecting Diversity and Consensus

One of the distinguishing characteristics of Southern Africa is that, overall, manufacturing and industrial infrastructure is relatively advanced. At the same time, when you turn your attention to the individual countries comprising the region, their respective strengths and characteristics become apparent. For example, the strengths of Zambia, Botswana, and Angola lie in their abundant mineral resources. The key to their future economic growth is the acquisition of technology and expertise for promoting sustainable resource development. Namibia, Madagascar, and Mauritius have become popular travel destinations, so they need a system that ties the growth of their tourism industry to local development. South Africa has a significant presence when it comes to business. Many Japanese companies have also set up operations there, and South Africa acts as a business hub in the region.

To empower each country in the region to leverage its

strengths, Japan has been providing support by dispatching experts and offering various training programs in Japan through Official Development Assistance (ODA). At the same time, cooperation is also essential for solving specific challenges. The large-scale starvation that occurred in Malawi, Zimbabwe, and other areas due to the drought that persisted from 2015 is still fresh in people's minds. Southern Africa still bears the serious burden of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Improving the "quality of development" will become increasingly important in future cooperative endeavors. This includes promotion of agriculture in areas where rainfall is not guaranteed, solving health and urban problems, and others which are not expressed in terms of economic indicators.

The 7th Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD 7) will be held in Yokohama City next year. Observe how the dialog between Japan and African countries will unfold, and learn about the regional characteristics and diversity of Southern Africa and other parts of the continent.