



KAIZEN Newsletter



Quality and Productivity Improvement Project in Ethiopia

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Message from the Japanese Ambassador for the launch of Kaizen project

I have been long awaiting the day when a “Kaizen” project would be started on the ground in Ethiopia. Ethiopian and Japanese experts have now just begun their collaborative work to implement the project here. My dream is that select companies will emerge to introduce the “Kaizen” system at the pilot phase in the near future and that some of them will be from among the world’s top companies in their respective sectors. I also dream that the results of the efforts of the companies through the “Kaizen” exercise will be visible to everyone; managers, workers, customers and the society as a whole. Thus, finally, “Kaizen” will be widely applied to the whole industrial sector and beyond in Ethiopia, just as in Japan, and leave a real impact on the path of industrialization in the country.



It has already been more than a year since the first intellectual dialogue between a group of Japanese top development economists and Ethiopian Government officials and economists was held here in Addis Ababa. The whole idea was to exchange views and ideas for supporting Ethiopia’s efforts in implementing a development strategy and industrialization policy by way of sharing Japanese and Asian experiences. So far, through this intellectual discourse, issues such as ADLI (Agricultural Development-Led Industrialization), DD (Democratic Developmentalism) export-oriented industries as well as an Import Substitute Industries’ Support Policy, industrial aggregation such as

“growth corridors”, “industrial parks” etc. have already been fully discussed. Ideas and proposals coming out of the dialogue have started influencing policies and programs on both sides of the dialogue, including the Japanese side’s development cooperation program implemented by JICA.

The “Kaizen” project is just one of the proposals emanating from the dialogue. Another is to mobilize a JOCV program (Japanese Overseas Cooperation Volunteers) for skill promotion on the factory floor. “Kaizen”, like benchmarking and business process reengineering (BPR), is a method for changing structures and mind-sets in the manufacturing sites to improve quality and increase productivity. These methods, however excellently put in place, cannot produce the expected results without the accompanying skills on the part of engineers, technicians and workers. JOCV Japanese junior experts, now deployed throughout the country, are engaged in sharing a wide range of expertise, including personal computer instruction, and science and mathematics education. We are discussing how best these young professionals could better contribute to the development efforts underway in this culturally rich land that has a curious similarity to the country of the “Rising Sun” in the Far East, similarities such as bowing to show respect to others and coffee and tea ceremonies, to mention just a few.

To conclude, therefore, I have every reason to offer my congratulations on the launch of the “Kaizen” project and pray for a real success in its implementation.

H.E. Mr. Kinichi Komano, Ambassador of Japan to Ethiopia

Message from the Head of Kaizen unit

Recent years economic records indicate that Ethiopia scored a continuous double digit growth. This growth is attained due to the policies, strategies and development programmes pursued by the government which created conducive environment for investment.



Such a beginning has to be supported to make it continuous, sustainable and scale up to increase its domain. Major support areas may include to increase capacity utilization, productivity and production volume. To this effect, different support schemes were provided to industries particularly those exporting their products and certain improvement has been witnessed.

In order to scale up achievements so far attained, the government of Ethiopia has requested Japan to extend its support in area of productivity improvement scheme which is famously known as “Kaizen”. With immediate and positive response of Japan an agreement is concluded and soon Japanese consultants will be deployed in Ethiopia to run the project with their Ethiopian counter part.

Ministry of Trade and Industry has already established “Kaizen” team and I have the confidence that we will make a difference. I want to kindly call up on all stake holders in this project to join us and benefit from this project.

Mr. Getahun Tadesse, Head of Kaizen Unit, Ministry of Trade and Industry (MoTI)

Arrival of the Japanese consultant team and the Kick-off seminar

The Japanese consultant team will arrive on the 26th of October, 2009 to officially start the Quality and Productivity (Kaizen) Project. The project will be conducted from coming one and a half year and the consultants will intermittently stay in Ethiopia, cooperating with Kaizen Unit in MoTI.

As a kick-off meeting to publicly launch the project, a seminar will be held on the 4th of November, 2009.

The seminar will be held at the Conference room of MoTI and will be chaired by the head of kaizen unit, Mr. Getahun Tadesse. High officials from the government of Japan and Ethiopia are supposed to make opening speeches.

There will be presentations by Prof. Keiji Otsuka and Prof. Tetsushi Sonobe from National Graduate Institute of Policy Studies (GRIPS) in Japan about the basic concept of Kaizen and the impacts on economic development. Subsequently, Mr. Motokazu Kanokogi, Head of the JICA Consultant Team will present the implementation plan and schedule of the project, including explanation of criteria and process of selection for 30 companies that will have direct consultation and training of Kaizen methods as Pilot Project.

The 30 companies will have much benefit from the project, but the beneficiaries will not be only the 30 companies but all Ethiopian industrial companies that will benefit from this kind of seminars and coming dissemination phase.

It is expected that around or over 100 company managers and high level government officials related to the sector participate in the seminar. Invitation letter will be sent to the invitees by the end of October, 2009

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