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TICAD 8 Special

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The Al-Zaytuna Mosque overlooks the Tunis skyline. GETTY IMAGES

Chance for Japan and Africa to build a sustainable world

FUMIO KISHIDA
PRIME MINISTER OF JAPAN

Japan will host the eighth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) in Tunisia on Aug. 27 and 28.

TICAD is a conference Japan launched in 1993 to assist self-supporting development in Africa against the backdrop of the declining international interest in the continent following the end of the Cold War. The conference, with a history spanning over a quarter century, is a pioneering forum on the development of Africa.

Today Africa is a "treasure trove of possibilities" where population growth led by youth is expected. For our part, Japan aims to be a "partner growing together with Africa" and do all it can to help the continent's efforts to achieve sustainable development.

The entire international community, not just Africa, now faces many social issues. Japan and Africa need to work hand in hand to overcome them for our future. For example, the COVID-19 pandemic and Russia's aggression against Ukraine have destabilized energy and food prices around the world, seriously impacting Africa's economy and society. Furthermore, unclear and unfair development financing is undermining the prospects for sustainable development there.

Through TICAD 8, Japan aims to work with the continent to help realize a strong, sustainable Africa, using an approach that focuses on people. For instance, the Noguchi Memorial Institute for Medical Research in Ghana and the Kenya Medical Research Institute are each playing a central role in their respective regions in tackling the COVID-19 pandemic, showing that Japan's long-standing efforts to develop human resources in Africa have borne fruit. Going forward, in addition to health



and medical care, Japan will focus on green investing, supporting startups to help young people launch businesses, human resource development, and measures to strengthen free and open economic systems, including assistance in building quality infrastructure to improve the quality of life. In addition, we will work on specific initiatives that can contribute to making Africa's economy strong.

TICAD 8 is a major international forum where high-level delegations from Japan and Africa will be able to discuss matters for the first time since the pandemic began. It therefore provides a very important diplomatic opportunity. I hope to make this an opportunity to clearly show that Japan is a reliable partner to Africa, as well as for Japan and Africa to have in-depth discussions on specific measures to even more closely work together to create a sustainable world, with the post-pandemic era in mind.

Africa remains key priority for investment, assistance

In 1878, the famed British explorer Henry Stanley dubbed Africa the Dark Continent, a term that quickly spread and saddled Africa for more than a century with a public image that included poverty, backwardness, corruption, famine, damage from colonial exploitation, disease and other woes. And sadly, while the picture is always more complex, it cannot be denied that such problems frequently plagued the continent in historical reality as well as in distorted global attitudes.

But times change, and fortunately so do monikers. In global business circles today, the new catchphrase for Africa seems to have become "the last investment frontier," reflecting a much more upbeat perspective. And indeed, the facts speak for themselves: From 2002 to 2011, sub-Saharan average real gross domestic product growth rates were an eyebrow-raising 5.8%, and on balance, direct investment to Africa soared 400% from 2003 to 2013. The world is sitting up and taking notice, and although Africa faces serious headwinds, there is much burgeoning optimism about future economic development and consumer market growth.

Japan is among the nations that have significantly stepped up involvement in



Africa, but as we shall see, it is taking a tack that differs in a number of important ways from the moves of other major actors.

The power of conferences

To grasp the nature of Japan's complex involvement in Africa and how it is unique, a good place to start is to examine the Tokyo International Conference on African Development, founded in 1993. It is led by the Japanese government, and more specifically, it takes place under the auspices of the Foreign Ministry. To get a sense of its reach, in the 2019 TICAD, the 10,000 participants included 42 African leaders, 108 heads of international and regional groups, and numerous private-sector luminaries. Co-hosts included the United Nations itself, as well as specific U.N. bodies.

A singular vision

While China, the U.S. and the EU have also established similarly impressive conferences, for the most part these have focused tightly on trade and economics. These are important aspects of the TICAD agenda as well, but TICAD's concerns have always included social and human issues, an emphasis on partnership and other goals. TICAD's unique vantage has its roots

in the distinctive view of Africa that arose in Japan during the early post-Cold War era. During this period, Africa itself suddenly no longer seemed geopolitically vital to most of the developed nations. Japan, however, stood out from the pack, insisting on the importance of Africa and founding TICAD in response. The early days of TICAD saw an emphasis on grant aid and technical assistance.

However, as the 21st century dawned, China became a potent new presence in Africa, emphasizing investment and business rather than "aid" or "assistance." Chinese-African import-export volume increased a staggering 1,000% between 2003 and 2013, while the figure for Japan "merely" tripled in the same period. By 2013, Korea had also surpassed Japan in terms of to-Africa export value.

Japan began to understand that a new approach to Africa would be required in response. In 2013, professor Mitsugi Endo of the University of Tokyo noted, "We must look at Africa not only as a continent to extend assistance to, but also as a business partner and an area for investment." Both public- and private-sector actors in Japan concurred, and a shift in TICAD's perspective began.

TICAD's scope expands

The last half-decade or so has seen many changes in TICAD's approach, and yet this has in no way meant the abandonment of Japan's more altruistic goals for Africa. During the most recent period, TICAD has combined the new private-sector focus with its commitment to social issues. Cleverly realizing the mutual benefits that can accrue from leveraging the former in service of the latter, TICAD has been achieving win-win outcomes for all involved.

A close examination of the upcoming TICAD 8 event, to be held in Tunisia on Aug. 27 and 28, is quite instructive in a

number of ways. Naturally, the conference will be overshadowed to some extent by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the conflict in Ukraine. Although these are global issues, they both have particular impact on Africa.

Africa continues to be haunted by the impact of the coronavirus due to challenges facing its health care infrastructure and systems. Health care has been specially singled out as an agenda item for TICAD 8,

with efforts to solve problems by creating robust, durable networks of African facilities, pushing for universal health care and addressing the issue of inclusivity. Human resource development is also a subject of TICAD initiatives and concrete results are already emerging.

Africa faces a number of challenges that have yet to be solved. In particular, another marquee issue on the agenda for TICAD 8 is exploring ways to ameliorate the mas-

sive food shortages expected in Africa later this year. The forecasts are grim, potentially disrupting the food security of millions of Africans, and the situation is a direct result of the Ukrainian conflict. Because of food supply destruction, the bombing of grain silos, trade route blockades and the lacing of cropland with land mines, Ukraine's food exports for 2022 are expected to plunge precipitously. This could lead to

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We Support TICAD 8

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Economic progress

Ownership and partnership growing rapidly in 'last frontier'

The Japan Times recently interviewed the Ambassador for the Tokyo International Conference on African Development Jun Shinmi, prior to TICAD 8, which is to be held in Tunisia on Aug. 27 and 28.

Shinmi spoke about the progress in advancing inclusive and sustainable development on the African continent based on the three main pillars of economy, society and peace and stability, as highlighted in the Yokohama Declaration after TICAD 7 in 2019. He shared concrete examples of support for African countries and Japanese firms collaborating with African partners or entering the African market.

He also shared his view that better recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic will be one of the key issues on the various agendas at TICAD 8.

The following are edited excerpts of the interview.

What's your general view of Africa's current situation? How do you feel the COVID-19 and Ukraine crises affected the region both socially and economically?

Africa's population is currently just over 1.3 billion, or 17% of the world's population. According to statistics, this is expected to reach 2.5 billion, accounting for more than 25% of the world's population by 2050. Furthermore, by 2100, 40% of the global population will be African. The real economic growth rate of sub-Saharan African countries is about 4.4% over the past decade through 2021. Compared to the world's overall economic growth rate of about 3.5%, you can see how the African economy is very actively growing. This is why some people describe Africa as the last frontier.

However, even in the sub-Saharan countries, the economic growth rate fell into the negative in 2020, likely due in part to the impact of the pandemic. This is estimated to have recovered to a range of 3% to 3.5% in 2021. As far as the situation in Ukraine is concerned, North and East Africa especially are highly dependent on food imported from Ukraine and Russia. I believe that the spiraling prices of food and energy are having an impact on Africa's economy and society, too.

At TICAD 7, the Yokohama Declaration 2019 noted that the TICAD process will continue to support inclusive and sustainable development on the African continent via the three pillars of economic, social, and peace and stability. Three years later, can you tell us of any specific progress or targets successfully attained?

There are many examples of development focusing on the three pillars. In terms of the economy, one of our focuses is human resource development, and we have already trained more than 200,000 people, exceeding our goal of 140,000, through various projects such as the Africa Kaizen Initiative and other activities of vocational training. As for the improvement of the investment climate, we have set a goal to collaborate with the African Development Bank to provide \$3.5 billion in assistance over a three-year period, and so far we have provided at least \$3 billion.

In the social area, we are on track to achieve our goal of training 26,000 people to ensure the provision of access to basic health care and improvement of hygienic environment for 5 million people. On the environmental front, a project to monitor

and warn of changes in the forest environment, such as destruction of rainforests, is underway in 43 African countries with assistance from Japan. In the area of peace and stability, we are on track to train more than 40,000 people, which accounts for two-thirds of our target, in the fields of security and justice.

What do you think should be the main focus of TICAD 8?

For TICAD 8, the three pillars will remain unchanged, and so will the consistent principle of TICAD, which is "ownership and partnership" — an approach to place importance on the ownership of Africa and the partnership with Africa. From that standpoint, various agenda items will be discussed with consideration for how Africa and the international community can address the impact of the pandemic.

Encouraging more Japanese companies to do business in Africa seems to be an important and ongoing focus of TICAD. Have there been any changes since the last TICAD?

In 2010, the number of Japanese companies operating in Africa was about 500. In 2018, the number had increased to about 850, and the latest confirmed this year is about 930. Although there are some restrictions due to the pandemic, the number is on the rise.

Can you tell us about any new examples of successful Japanese businesses in Africa?

There are so many small businesses now trying to go to Africa actually, but just to name a few, Sucrecube Japon Inc. has provided portable solar power generators

and internet access devices to rural villages without electricity in Senegal, enabling telemedicine and online education. Castalia Co. has been participating in a project to develop a maternity information-sharing app for Tanzania. The project aims to reduce maternal mortality rates by facilitating information-sharing among expectant mothers and midwives. Wassha Inc. is renting LED lanterns powered by solar batteries in Tanzania.

Some Japanese companies, especially small and midsize companies and startups like these, see great future potential in the African economy. But at the same time, I also believe that the very human security approach with empathy toward the feelings of African people, which is what Japan has been emphasizing, is manifested in these businesses.

Investment in African startups has risen dramatically in recent years, especially in the fintech and digital-transformation fields. What kind of support system is available to foster more matchmaking between Japanese companies and African startups?

Project NINJA (Next Innovation with Japan) run by the Japan International Cooperation Agency supports startup companies and promotes collaboration with Japanese companies to solve social issues and create new businesses. As a result of a business plan competition held in 2021 under this project, a company called M-Scan in Uganda won the grand prize. Their business plan was to enable the use of portable ultrasound systems in examinations provided at home. Some startups who won these business competitions either received funding from or



TICAD Ambassador Jun Shinmi talks with The Japan Times in an online interview on Aug. 2.

formed business partnerships with Japanese companies, such as Toyota Tsusho and Rakuten.

The Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry's J-Partnership project provides support to Japanese companies that collaborate with African partners to develop businesses that help solve social issues in Africa. One of the companies that received a subsidy under J-Partnership is Sunda Technology Global that uses technology to solve the problem of abandoned wells in Uganda. Their system enables the collection of small fees in mobile money from

the users of wells, which is used to maintain and manage the wells.

How do you define the goal of TICAD 8?

The approach we are taking is not necessarily built on a donor-recipient relationship. We are working together with Africa to address Africa's challenges, with an emphasis on the quality of growth, in particular on human resource development as a foundation. We aim to recover better from the COVID-19 pandemic and work together with Africa to create a sustainable Africa and a sustainable world.

Major progress made via new approaches

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particularly horrific results for North and East Africa, vast portions of which depend directly on Ukraine for much — if not most — of their basic food supply. With few seeming alternatives, this difficulty will be hard to resolve.

Strong track record

In addition to the major focal points noted above, Africa faces a number of thorny problems too numerous to list comprehensively here. Important issues on the table in Africa range from energy scarcity to agricultural development, cultural preservation, wildlife protection, global warming, the development of the African fintech and information technology sectors, heavy industry and beyond. Since it is impossible for any actor to take on every problem, in 2019 TICAD 7 identified several areas of particular emphasis. "(1) Accelerating eco-

nom transformation and improving business environment through innovation and private sector engagement; (2) Deepening sustainable and resilient society; and (3) Strengthening peace and stability."

TICAD's track record in helping Africa to solve these and other problems on its own with Japanese partnerships has been extremely encouraging — again, so much so that a total list of all the projects underway would fill many pages. To consider just a few success stories, Japan has used online seminars and webinars (a common COVID workaround) to expand Africa's digital economy and boost innovation. It has matched Japanese and African startups working toward similar goals. Japan has helped boost African productivity by providing vocational training for 157,000 Africans, focusing on areas such as intellectual property and general business training. In terms of agriculture, Japan has used cross-

border cooperation to boost African rice production and general foodstuff capacity building. It has used the digital skills of Japan's private sector to improve African food value chain development, farm mechanization and irrigation. These are just a few of the ways Japan's new approach has resulted in massive improvement over the past several years alone.

The TICAD way

Achieving real results is not only a matter of problem identification and solution: It must include ways of seeing and acting. TICAD began in uniqueness, and it has continuously nurtured unique perspectives that allow it to thrive.

For example, TICAD has chosen to focus on quality over quantity as a way to respond to the massive scales of other countries' projects. It is multilateral, in that it is not a closed system involving only



National leaders and other participants pose together ahead of TICAD 7 in Yokohama on Aug. 28, 2019. KYODO

Japan and Africa, but a forum that welcomes partnership with and participation by organizations, governments, companies and individuals from all over the world. Why limit your options?

Furthermore, TICAD places value on African ownership and African participa-

tion in plan creation. This ensures that while Japan may certainly benefit from its work, it never slides into neocolonialism. This approach earns great respect for TICAD in Africa.

While challenges will always remain, TICAD's flexibility, altruistic roots, ability

to turn ideas into results and open-ended, flexible approach provide a scalable system that in theory is limited only by human effort and ingenuity. The Earth's problems may be endless, but our species has never stopped demonstrating that solutions can be endless, too.



for the future children of Africa

Will Africa of the future be full of cheerful smiles?



Through its business operations, Toyota Tsusho remains a partner of Africa. We endeavor to resolve today's social issues so the children of the future will keep on smiling.



Industry Transformation



Green Economy



Global Health



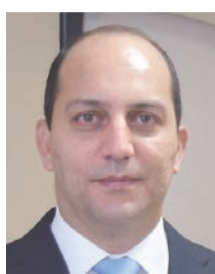
Capacity Building

WITH AFRICA FOR AFRICA

Ongoing cooperation

Tunisia: Africa's business hub and bridge to Japan

MOHAMED ELLOUMI
AMBASSADOR OF TUNISIA



I would like to express my deep gratitude and sincere thanks to The Japan Times for highlighting the eighth Tokyo International Conference on African Development being hosted

by Tunisia on Aug. 27 and 28, with the participation of a high-level Japanese delegation headed by Prime Minister H.E. Fumio Kishida.

I would like also to thank your esteemed newspaper for giving me such precious tribute to promote this historic summit, the second to take place in Africa since Kenya hosted TICAD VI in Nairobi in August 2016.

Tunisia has the great honor to welcome its guests, from Japan and Africa as well as the co-organizers of TICAD, namely the United Nations, United Nations Development Programme, World Bank and African Union Commission, alongside private-sector executives and civil society.

This summit, which Tunisia has the privilege to host, comes in a sensitive international context characterized by a period of economic stagnation resulting from the continuing effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, in addition to the disruption to economic systems and supply chains caused by the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

These challenges make the TICAD 8 summit in Tunis an important framework for studying ways to advance Japanese-African partnerships within an approach based on mutual benefit and to ensure human security and sustainable development for all

the peoples of the African continent, who are still facing serious development and economic challenges. In this regard, TICAD remains one of the major instruments for implementing the U.N. 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as well as African Agenda 2063 with an emphasis on people and quality growth.

Japan has always been a strategic partner for us, and the choice of Tunisia to host TICAD 8 is evidence of the Japanese government's confidence in Tunisia and its ability to host such major events.

Tunisia and Japan established their diplomatic relations in 1956. We are proud of the long-standing partnership and strong economic, cultural and political ties between our countries. While our relations are witnessing a remarkable dynamic, we believe that the TICAD 8 summit constitutes an unprecedented opportunity for our countries to further deepen their cooperation and promote it to high levels in different sectors of common interest.

As the host country, Tunisia started preparing for TICAD 8 several months ago, including the creation in January of the National Organizing Committee. Tunisia will spare no efforts to provide all necessary conditions for the success of the summit in terms of logistics, organization, health protocols and substance.

In my capacity as the TICAD committee chair within the African Diplomatic Corps in Tokyo, I would like to highlight the great contribution of the ADC in the preparatory process for TICAD 8, as has been the case in previous summits. In this regard, several online and in-person conferences and meetings were organized with the major stakeholders of TICAD in the past two years.

Holding TICAD 8 in Tunisia is an extraordinary opportunity to show the country's



The town of Sidi Bou Said offers fantastic views of the Mediterranean Sea.

NATIONAL OFFICE OF TUNISIAN TOURISM

potential. Situated at the northern tip of the African continent, with a strategic position at the heart of the Mediterranean, Tunisia is well-positioned as a regional hub offering many advantages and incentives for business, investment and knowledge.

Our expectations, as the host country, are many: First, that TICAD 8 will constitute a major milestone in strengthening cooperation and partnership between African countries and Japan. Second, we are expecting the active participation of the Japanese and African private sectors. Last but not least, we believe the Afro-Japanese partnership will not be limited to economic aspects, but will also cover all the human dimensions based essentially on knowledge, solidarity and the values of peace and security.

Indeed, TICAD 8 will be an ideal framework to discuss ways and mechanisms to raise the level of the African-Japanese partnership. It should be also an event to promote Africa, "the shining continent," as former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe described it, and the one that all experts predict will be the most attractive economic destination for foreign investment in the world by 2050.

We are certainly sharing with Japan our high ambitions for TICAD 8 and looking forward to a successful event that would mark a new milestone in the process of strengthening the Japan-Africa partnership.

I would like to conclude by inviting you to participate in TICAD 8 and reiterating the readiness of Tunisia and its honor to welcome you to this important summit.

A new development path for Africa

AHUNNA EZIAKONWA
UNDP ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR
AND REGIONAL BUREAU FOR AFRICA
DIRECTOR



The eighth Tokyo International Conference on African Development comes at a moment of profound global change. The COVID-19 pandemic is still with us, reversing development gains and ravaging government balance sheets. At the same time, the global climate emergency continues unabated, and the ongoing war in Ukraine threatens to unleash a combined global food, energy and financial crisis. For millions across the continent, the food they could afford yesterday is no longer attainable today. As a new report by the United Nations Development Programme shows, 71 million people in developing countries fell into poverty in the first three months of the Ukraine war — a much faster rate than during the pandemic.

For the first time in 25 years, most African countries face the prospect of protracted financial and socioeconomic hardship. This



UNDP staff member Yoko Reikan (right) hands over keys to vehicles that will be used by the Ghana Health Service to support remote communities. UNDP

is extremely concerning, given that the continent was witnessing remarkable progress in economic growth and human development in recent years. This year, over half of African countries were categorized as high- or middle-income, and the continent's return on foreign direct investment was 11.4%, well above the global average of 7.1%.

While the socioeconomic ramifications of the pandemic and the war in Ukraine are already substantial and the situation remains unpredictable, we have the opportunity to turn the current crises into opportunity. Africa can rechart its development trajectory by deepening and strengthening strategic partnerships and breaking away from its cycle of dependency.

To navigate this new course, the continent needs a new lens that illuminates "development blind-spots." Human security, an approach championed by Japan, could provide such a lens. The United Nations and key partners like Japan are using the human security concept to bring about positive action. Overall, a renewed focus on human security could provide a new path for Africa's development that would enable African countries to capitalize on the opportunities presented by the current exogenous crises. Inexorably, this would move the continent toward "future-smart human security," which UNDP has redefined in the Anthropocene era, and address the various insecurities and inequalities that persist in African communities.

Certainly, the private sector will be pivotal. Indeed, more and more businesses are looking for concrete ways to make a positive impact. This includes delivering quality jobs, expanding access to health care, driving climate action and promoting much-needed green and digital transformations.

An important lever in transforming Africa's economies is leveraging private finance and investment through the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). African countries and their partners must take

advantage of the world's largest free trade area, which is expected to offer \$2.5 trillion in combined gross domestic product. The AfCFTA provides a platform to raise the area's low productivity, accelerate industrialization and promote higher investments.

Another key transformer is the rise of startups and innovations from Africa. Funding to these topped \$1.2 billion in 2020, a sixfold increase in five years. This has created thriving regional firms, such as Kenya's mobile money solution M-Pesa and online retail giant Jumia, which represent what the continent's vibrant business sector is capable of. Startups and innovation can boost access to digital technology for Africa's budding entrepreneurs and accelerate the attainment of the sustainable development goals across the continent. Young Africans are a potent and dynamic force for change, accounting for over 60% of the continent's population. Africa's digital economy could contribute nearly \$180 billion to the region's growth by the middle of the decade.

With TICAD 8 and Japan's G7 presidency on the horizon, Japan's role as a global tech leader is vital to support countries in rolling out crucial digital solutions — from finding innovative ways to strengthen health systems and resilience to boosting financial inclusion and tackling climate change.

TICAD 8 could play a vital role in coalescing action to support a development trajectory for African countries that is sustainable, robust and equitable. The summit is an essential catalyst at this critical juncture to promote multilateralism and public-private partnership through development cooperation, finance, trade and investment across the continent, calling for global solidarity.

Today, more than ever, Africa, Japan and their partners must seize and create new opportunities. TICAD 8 will be a timely occasion for African leaders and their Japanese counterparts to scale up existing partnerships by building a stronger, smarter, fairer and more sustainable Africa.

Sponsored by the city of Yokohama

Yokohama: Integral partner in contributing to Africa's growth

Thanks to plentiful and abundant natural resources and significant population increases, Africa has enjoyed a period of dynamic growth in recent years. Yokohama served as the host city for the three Tokyo International Conferences on African Development in 2008, 2013 and 2019, which were the fourth, fifth and seventh conferences, respectively. Through the three TICAD events, the city has been able to actively share its experiences and technologies in urban development. Yokohama has also worked closely in partnership with various African countries in their efforts to develop high-quality urban infrastructure, helped them develop human resources and promoted exchanges between the people of Yokohama and Africa. These are just few of the reasons why some call Yokohama the closest city to Africa.

Technical cooperation

Over the years, Yokohama has continued to grow by overcoming a variety of obstacles across a wide range of urban issues. Yokohama has addressed infrastructure that became inadequate following the city's rapid population growth. It has also had to squarely face environmental concerns. Despite the multiple challenges, Yokohama's journey has been a worthwhile process of growth that has provided valuable experience in developing technologies and solutions. To take advantage of this, the city has worked with the Japan International Cooperation Agency on projects to dispatch staff from the city's waterworks bureau to Malawi, provide training on water systems in other African countries and provide technical assistance to others in various areas ranging from waste management to port infrastructure development and operation.

In terms of providing assistance on waste management, the city has put much effort into collaborating with African countries, staying at the forefront of these initiatives as the only Japanese municipal government participating in the African Clean Cities Platform.

The ACCP was established in 2017 by representatives from 24 African countries together with the Environment Ministry of Japan, JICA, the United Nations Environment Programme, the U.N. Human Settlements Programme and Yokohama. The platform aims to realize African countries that can develop clean and healthy cities and achieve the sustainable development goals for waste management by 2030.

In 2018, the city launched its training



A Yokohama Waterworks Bureau employee shows a worker a new water meter in Malawi in 2019. YOKOHAMA MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT

programs on waste management, which have taken place in the form of online sessions for the past two years amid the COVID-19 pandemic. A total of 118 participants from 36 African countries have completed the program to date.

Female empowerment

At TICAD V, the city proposed the idea of working with JICA employees to develop a network of women in Japan and Africa in a session titled "Driving African Development Through Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment." Following this, Yokohama launched the Japan-Africa Businesswomen Exchange Program, under which the city annually invites female entrepreneurs from nations across Africa to join training seminars to discuss the challenges they face, share best practices and expand their business networks. The program also provided online opportunities to

promote exchanges between female entrepreneurs from both Yokohama and Africa.

TICAD growth

TICAD has seen steady growth since its launch in 1993, with more countries and organizations participating in subsequent events. More than 10,000 people took part in TICAD 7 in 2019, with 42 African leaders and more than 100 heads of international and regional organizations attending. Business promotion was front and center, with the number of companies taking part in the conference more than doubling from TICAD VI. The latest Yokohama gathering also marked the first time private companies were admitted as official partners. Approximately 240 seminars, symposiums and exhibitions took place, showcasing TICAD's viability as a base for promoting relationships with the goal of furthering African development.

Cultivate future generation

The One School, One Country program was launched following TICAD IV. So far, more than 200 elementary and junior high schools have participated in the program. Even amid the COVID-19 pandemic, heart-warming exchanges have been maintained between children who will shape the future of Yokohama and young people from countries across Africa. In addition, Yokohama hosted nine Olympic teams to promote local interaction during the coronavirus-delayed Summer Games in 2021. Of the nine teams, six were from Africa: Tunisia, Benin, Botswana, Cote d'Ivoire, Morocco and Algeria. Yokohama and its residents will remain committed to working with African countries to help them realize clean and healthy cities as they work to achieve the U.N. sustainable development goals on waste management. Yokohama will do all it can to assist in furthering this important mission.

Welcoming you with open arms

TAKEHARU YAMANAKA
MAYOR OF YOKOHAMA



Yokohama is Japan's closest city to Africa — that is why we have hosted the Tokyo International Conference on African Development three times.

We have fostered heart-warming exchanges with the people of Africa in various ways. For example, the One School, One Country program has helped deepen our elementary and

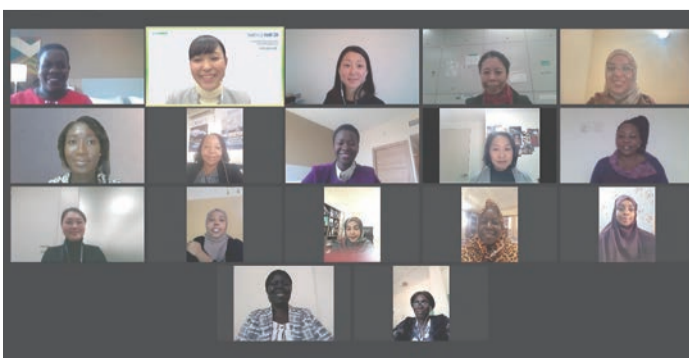
junior high school students' understanding of African countries.

In another recent example, we promoted exchanges with African people by participating in Japan's Host Town initiative, under which residents of participating municipalities interacted with people of other countries and regions that participated in the 2020 Tokyo Olympics. Furthermore, we have been engaged in projects to provide technical assistance in a wide range of fields, including waste management, water supply and sewerage systems.

We remain committed to deepening our bond with the people of Africa. Our wish is for both Yokohama and all of Africa to develop further into the future.



Children from Shirahata Elementary School in Yokohama cheer for Tunisian Olympians in an online session in July 2021.



A screen grab shows an online meeting of the Japan-Africa Businesswomen Exchange Program in January.

Innovative solutions

Three factors key to conquering crises

AKIHIKO TANAKA
PRESIDENT, JAPAN INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AGENCY



Today, the world confronts multiple crises, including those brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine and climate change. African societies and their economies

have been severely impacted by these crises. The international community must support and work together with African partners so that the continent can "Build Back Better." To this end, I would like to share three concepts that I believe are key to Africa's development. They are resilience, development and solidarity.

The first concept is resilience. We cannot entirely avoid future crises nor predict when they will occur. However, we can better prepare for them by enhancing our capacity to

withstand external shocks, mitigate damage and build back better in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, adopted by the U.N. in 2015.

These ideas of resilience are closely linked with the Japan International Cooperation Agency's guiding principle of human security. Human security envisions a world where everyone can live in security and with dignity, free from fear. To achieve this goal, it is critical that we empower individuals, organizations and societies so that we can not only survive crises, but also emerge stronger from them.

In the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, Africa has demonstrated tremendous strength. As a leader in public health, the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) exercised leadership in responding rapidly to the pandemic and building capacity across the continent. Several medical research institutions, including the Noguchi Memorial Institute for Medical Research in Ghana and the Kenya Medical Research Institute, played a crucial role in containing the virus and strengthening

regional surveillance and infection control.

A number of African startups and young entrepreneurs are applying innovative approaches and digital technologies to social issues, including the COVID-19 pandemic. In Tunisia, for example, a data analytics firm has developed a system to analyze the genome of COVID using artificial intelligence, supporting the Tunisian Ministry of Health's response to COVID-19. We will continue to assist these emerging businesses across Africa in their expansion.

These are just a few of the many examples of Africa's strength and resilience. But a key question is how to continually enhance that strength and resilience to meet new challenges.

This leads to the second concept – development. When a crisis happens, humanitarian action is the first response to meet urgent needs. However, to prepare for and better cope with future crises, a long-term development approach to build resilient societies and economies is required. Regarding COVID-19, several African medical institutions played important roles in

responding to the pandemic. Their successful interventions were the result of many years of hard work, capacity building and cooperation with development partners.

The recent food crisis in Africa also highlights the importance of this kind of long-term, comprehensive development approach. While the disruption of food supply chains from outside of the continent seems to be the direct cause of the crisis, weak domestic agricultural production also underlies this problem. Improving food production cannot be achieved overnight – it requires a long-term vision and continued effort toward that vision. The Coalition for African Rice Development is an admirable example of how concerted efforts by various actors toward a common vision can bring tangible results. CARD, launched on the occasion of TICAD IV in 2008, is a comprehensive initiative to support the efforts of African countries in doubling local rice production within 10 years. CARD has achieved its first target and is aiming for further goals. To achieve this commendable feat, CARD supported the establishment of national strategies and mobilized resources to invest in people, technologies and infrastructure.

As those examples show, development efforts play a critical role in enhancing resilience. My third and final point is solidarity. Confronted with the crisis in Ukraine, the international community has demonstrated strong solidarity in protecting and supporting those who are affected by the war.

While supporting Ukraine, we must not forget about Africa. Now is the time that we, as an international community, must also come together to help Africa build back better from multiple crises and progress toward meeting the U.N. sustainable development goals.

In strengthening our partnership with Africa, we should center our solidarity on Africa's own vision for the future and the role played by African institutions in mak-



The Noguchi Memorial Institute for Medical Research is Ghana's leading biomedical research facility. AKIO IIZUKA, JAPAN INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AGENCY

ing this vision a reality. Agenda 2063, Africa's long-term development vision, as well as such institutions as the African Union Development Agency-New Partnership for Africa's Development and the Africa CDC are all prime examples of African-led development. The international community should respect Africa's leadership and ownership of its own development process. The solidarity we foster should not be underpinned by an antiquated "aid" model, but rather by "cooperation" based on mutual trust between African countries and the international community. To build that mutual trust, development partners should deepen their appreciation of African history, traditions and perspectives. An open, productive and respectful dialogue can be continued in a variety of fora, including the eighth Tokyo International Conference on African Development taking place on Aug. 27 and 28 this year.

In respect of solidarity, I would like to touch upon my recent trip to Africa. I selected South Sudan as my first destination for a visit following my reappointment as the president of JICA in April, because I was eager to see the final result of our peace project, a bridge across the Nile, named the

Freedom Bridge.

The Freedom Bridge connects the east and west sides of the Nile River in Juba. This project began 10 years ago with financial support from JICA, and was completed this year. During that 10-year period, work on the Freedom Bridge had to be suspended as many as three times; twice due to political turmoil and once due to COVID-19.

Despite encountering such difficulties, our staff, consultants and contractors showed unwavering determination to complete the project, and thereby built a lasting symbol of peace and independence in South Sudan.

As I attended the bridge completion ceremony with President Salva Kiir and First Vice President Riek Machar, I again realized that it is national solidarity upon which a peaceful society is founded. Also, I was reminded that Japan and JICA can, and should, take the lead in making efforts to build a peaceful and sustainable world through global solidarity.

To conclude, I would like to emphasize that TICAD 8 will provide a significant opportunity to demonstrate solidarity between Africa and the international community in today's world of multiple crises.



With assistance from the Japan International Cooperation Agency, farmers in African countries doubled rice production between 2008 and 2018. JAPAN INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AGENCY



South Sudan President Salva Kiir (left), JICA President Akihiko Tanaka and First Vice President Riek Machar (right) speak at the opening ceremony of the Freedom Bridge in Juba on May 19. JAPAN INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AGENCY

Sysmex diagnostics bring hope in fight against malaria

Malaria has plagued mankind for thousands of years and remains a global health problem with billions of people at risk of contracting the disease. Children under the age of 5 in sub-Saharan Africa bear the brunt. Substantial gains in decreasing the global malaria burden over the past decade have recently been eroded, partly due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and the number of cases increased from 229 million to 241 million, resulting in 627,000 deaths in 2020, according to the latest report from the World Health Organization. WHO Director-General Tedros Ghebreyesus noted that "the critical 2020 milestones of WHO's global malaria strategy have been missed, and without immediate and dramatic action, the 2030 targets will not be met." Sysmex Corp. has joined the fight against malaria in Africa by introducing a new and innovative diagnostic tool, the automated hematology analyzer XN-31.

To understand what this advanced technology brings to the table, some background on malaria is useful and provides context. Malaria is caused by five species of *Plasmodium* parasites, which are transmitted to victims through the bite of infected female Anopheles mosquitoes. The presence of parasites in the blood of a malaria patient was first discovered in 1880 by Alphonse Laveran,

a French physician working in Algeria. In 1897 Ronald Ross, a British physician, identified the mosquito vector in India. Both seminal discoveries were rewarded with Nobel prizes. A third Nobel prize for research on malaria was awarded in 2015 to Youyou Tu from China for her discovery of artemisinin, the active ingredient in the sweet wormwood plant, *Artemisia annua*, which is the recommended treatment for malaria together with a partner drug. An effective vaccine has eluded scientists for more than 50 years, but a partially effective vaccine was approved by WHO in October 2021 for use in children living in highly endemic regions. In addition to the humanitarian toll, the disease has also had a major impact on our human genome through evolutionary pressure, resulting in the selection of defective disease-causing genes because they protect individuals from dying of malaria. Red blood cell disorders, such as sickle cell anemia, are thus the most common single gene disorders in the world today.

Despite the increased availability of diagnostic tests, such as microscopy, and curative drugs, malaria remains a killer. Its recent resurgence highlights the need for increased and multifaceted efforts, including new tools, to attain the goal of eliminating the disease.

Renewed philanthropic interest, in particular the donation of \$140 million over four years by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, has underlined the sense of urgency. This was announced by Melinda Gates on June 23 at the Kigali Summit on Malaria and Neglected Tropical Diseases, which was attended by several African heads of state and health ministers. Sysmex Corp., based in Kobe, supports this effort with its automated hematology analyzer XN-31, which detects and accurately quantifies malaria parasites in the red blood cells of infected individuals and is superior to routine microscopy, as shown by several studies conducted in Africa and elsewhere.

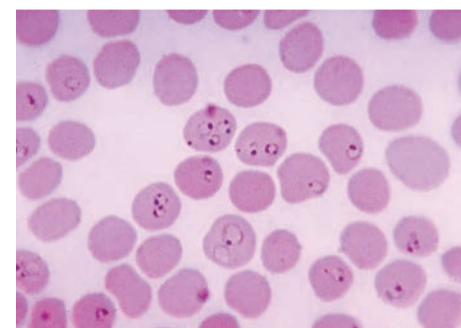
In addition to supporting the diagnosis of malaria in the clinical context, one of the most promising settings for the XN-31 is in blood transfusion services in sub-Saharan Africa.

These services are essential, as encapsulated in the anonymous saying, "The tears of a mother can't save her child, but your blood can."

However, adults in malaria-endemic areas develop semi-immunity and may harbor parasites even though they are apparently healthy and can donate blood. Screening for malaria parasites is often not performed,



Top: Mosquitos are the main transmitters of malaria. Above: Red blood cells infected with malaria. ISTOCK; SYSMEX



either because the tests aren't good enough or are too expensive.

A recent study at the Malawi Blood Transfusion Service using the XN-31 to screen donors concluded the analyzer is a powerful tool that would enhance transfusion safety and could provide valuable complementary surveillance data for malaria control.

Using the XN-31 to test donors for asymptomatic malaria parasitemia would serve multiple purposes.

First, it would improve the safety of blood transfusions by facilitating informed choices in allocating units to recipients. Pregnant women and young children, about half of whom receive blood transfusions to address malaria-induced anemia, are most vulnerable, and may be protected by transfusing them with malaria parasite-negative units or units with very low parasitemia to minimize the risk of transfusion-transmitted malaria. Second, blood donations are limited and data from the XN-31 will empower staff to maintain a balance between safety of transfusions and blood supply.

Additionally, each whole blood measurement on the XN-31 produces a concurrent complete blood count, and the hemoglobin level can be used as an indicator of anemia in the donor. Blood donors are heroes in the community and their health and safety are important. Finally, identification of the reservoir of asymptomatic carriers of malaria on a daily basis in real time will serve as an important additional and complementary surveillance tool to guide authorities in their malaria control programs. The importance of surveillance has been highlighted



Top: The National Blood Transfusion Centre operates in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire. Above: A person donates blood at the Malawi Blood Transfusion Service in Blantyre, Malawi. SYSMEX

in the 2021 update of the WHO Global Technical Strategy for Malaria 2016-2030, where one of the three pillars of the strategy is to transform malaria surveillance into a key intervention.

In his preface to World Malaria Report 2021, Tedros stated that "although malaria has afflicted humanity for millennia, we have the tools and strategy now to save many lives — and with new tools, to start to dream of a malaria-free world."

A malaria-free world is but one of many goals Sysmex is pursuing in support of African development. As an example, Sysmex recently initiated a cross-industry co-creation project to improve maternal and child health and nutrition in the Republic of Ghana with The Ajinomoto Foundation (TAF) and NEC Corp.

In Ghana, malnutrition and malaria are serious health issues, and are considered the most significant risk factors for death and disability. Malnutrition is a leading factor in stunting the growth of unborn children and infants and also causes anemia, which enhances the risk of severe malaria. Additionally, children under 5 and pregnant women are especially vulnerable to malaria, making it particularly important to take an integrated approach to the prevention of malnutrition, anemia and malaria.

Since 2019, the World Food Programme and TAF have implemented activities with the Ghana Health Service (GHS), part of the

Ministry of Health, to promote maternal behavior change and recommend the nutritional supplement Koko Plus as a specific solution to improving nutrition. By further developing this initiative and combining high-quality blood testing with information and communication technology from Japan, Sysmex will collaborate with NEC, TAF and GHS to accelerate activities aimed at improving maternal and child nutrition. Sysmex will contribute to this project by improving access to complete blood count and malaria testing utilizing XN-31. In addition, health system enhancement through educational activities for medical professionals would contribute to the early detection and treatment of anemia, malnutrition and malaria through human resources development, academic symposiums and other activities.

Yoshihide Hiruta, director of international cooperation at Sysmex, hopes that "companies from different industries can work together to work out a solution to maternal and child health issues, anemia and malaria through a comprehensive approach. ... With tools like the XN-31, we can make a significant contribution to realize this dream, a malaria-free world."



Technicians are able to test blood for malaria using the Sysmex XN-31 analyzer. SYSMEX

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Japan's contributions

(Sponsored content)

Pikotaro takes 'PPAP' schtick to Africa to battle COVID

Pen-Pineapple melody deployed to promote hand-washing to kids

The eighth Tokyo International Conference on African Development will be held in Tunisia from Aug. 27 to 28. Since 1993, the Japanese government has been leading this conference, which is hosted with the United Nations, the United Nations Development Programme, the World Bank and the African Union Commission.

TICAD is unique in that its main agenda is not limited to investment and trade, but also incorporates various social and political issues facing Africa. Along with financial assistance, Japan has been providing grassroots support, and measures to combat COVID-19 are a significant part of these efforts.

Popular Japanese entertainer Pikotaro, who was appointed by the Foreign Ministry in 2017 to be a goodwill ambassador for promoting the U.N. sustainable development goals (SDGs), released a hand-washing video titled "PPAP-2020" during the pandemic in 2020. It went on to become a worldwide hit and has been used by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) to support health and hygiene education in Zambia as part of efforts to fight COVID-19 there.

Raising awareness of SDGs

That hand-washing video was based on his novelty video "Pen-Pineapple-Apple-Pen," abbreviated as "PPAP," which went viral on YouTube in 2016, bringing him global recognition. It subsequently went on to be recognized by the Guinness Book of Records as the shortest song to enter the Billboard Hot 100 chart. Pikotaro's work as an SDGs ambassador involved performances at state

functions, including a reception hosted by the Japanese government at U.N. Headquarters in New York in 2017.

"I thought that the first step was to have people understand what the SDGs are," Pikotaro said. There are 17 goals, ranging from "no poverty" to "partnerships for the goals," but Pikotaro thinks many people tend to associate the SDGs with environmental issues.

'At that time, I felt that all the measures against COVID-19 were very serious, and I wanted to come up with something lighthearted. If it isn't fun, children won't respond to it.'

Inspired by the positive reaction the original "PPAP" video drew from children, he is particularly interested in the fourth goal — quality education. "PPAP-2020" was created as something that would be easily accessible and enjoyable for children around the world, regardless of country, culture or language.

Connecting with a smile

Pikotaro points out that the early days of the pandemic were difficult, with people being told to stay home and daily activities severely limited. Thinking about what he could do as an entertainer, Pikotaro hit upon the simple idea of encouraging young children to wash their hands.

Using the familiar tune and choreogra-

phy from "PPAP," the 2020 version has Pikotaro repeatedly singing "wash" in a heavy Japanese accent while playfully demonstrating the health ministry's rigorous hand-washing procedure.

"PPAP-2020" was conceived and completed at home in just five days. After Pikotaro released it on YouTube in April 2020, the video received over 10 million views in about a month, reaching more than 150 countries around the world.

One of the core philosophies that inspire Pikotaro is world peace. Tapping into the wide recognition garnered by the original "PPAP" video, he came up with "Pray for People and Peace" as the catchphrase behind the 2020 version. "When it comes down to 'What is peace?' I really believe it means having an environment where people can sing, dance and enjoy entertainment."

Inspiration in Zambia

"The original 'PPAP' was very popular in Africa," Pikotaro recalled. "Then very soon after the release of 'PPAP-2020,' JICA approached me about using the new video for their efforts in Zambia."

More than 6,000 Zambian children from shantytowns in Lusaka, where many homes don't have sufficient water infrastructure, participated in some 120 sessions for the hand-washing campaign, which included a basic classroom lecture on COVID-19 and a well-known Zambian comedian performing "PPAP-2020."

The rhythm, actions and simple lyrics were easily understood even by children who did not yet understand English. Follow-up interviews with families of the participants revealed a heightened awareness of the importance of hand-washing and positive feedback from the parents.

While Pikotaro visited Uganda when he was appointed tourism ambassador in 2017, he hasn't yet been to Zambia. He says he would really like to go.

"I'm interested in finding out more about issues surrounding water and sanitation. For example, it would be great if there was some way to use Japanese expertise in terms of technology and infrastructure to provide clean water for everyone. Everything in our lives starts with water, after all," Pikotaro said.

Health care for all

The COVID-19 vaccination rate in Africa is rising but is still low compared with developed countries. Vaccination remains focused on adults over 18, and only 7% of doses administered in 23 countries were given to children and adolescents. The median coverage among adults over 18 who completed their primary series is 34%.



Since June 2020, Japan has been providing support for new COVID-19 infection controls in many African countries through bilateral and international organizations. Japan has long positioned the health sector as a priority area for TICAD, and continues efforts to build resilient and inclusive health and medical systems. This includes the promotion of universal health coverage — a term that means all individuals and communities are receiving the health services they need without suffering financial hardship.

Having built its own national health care system, Japan is using that experience to promote international cooperation on achieving UHC based on the principle of "leaving no one's health behind" in the global fight against COVID-19. Japan's support for COVID-19 countermeasures in Africa includes the provision of medical supplies, equipment and technical cooperation, help with developing human resources, and contributions of \$1 billion to the vaccine distribution program COVAX and additional pledges of up to \$500 million for future efforts.

Building on a legacy in Ghana

Japan established the Noguchi Memorial Institute for Medical Research in Ghana as a



Pikotaro's video "PPAP-2020" shows children proper hand-washing techniques. Left: Participants in a hygiene education campaign in Zambia dance to "PPAP-2020" to help combat COVID-19 under guidance from the Japan International Cooperation Agency. YOSHIAKI MIURA/JICA

core research center for Ghana and its neighbors, and has been providing technical cooperation and grant aid for the past 50 years.

The institute has been conducting about 20,000 PCR tests per week, accounting for 80% of all COVID-19 testing in Ghana. The center is named in honor of Japan's Hideyo Noguchi (1876 to 1928), a doctor who dedicated himself to the study of infectious diseases around the world, including Africa.

The strong bond between Japan and Africa is also manifested by the Hideyo Noguchi

Africa Prize, an award that recognizes medical research and medical services in Africa and honors change-makers — both individuals and organizations — at the forefront of efforts to combat disease and improve lives. The awards ceremony for winners of the fourth Hideyo Noguchi Africa Prize will be held in Tunisia during TICAD 8.

See the official TICAD 8 promotional video at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cFgR1_9YOo



The Noguchi Memorial Institute for Medical Research in Ghana, established in 1979 with Japan's help, serves as the hub for Ghana's response to COVID-19 and processes about 80% of the country's PCR tests. AKIO IIZUKA/JICA

Initiative offers African youth valuable skills

As part of Japan's efforts to enhance relations with African nations, the African Business Education Initiative for Youth, run by the Japanese government and the Japan International Cooperation Agency, has provided opportunities for more than 1,500 people from 54 countries to pursue master's degrees at Japanese universities and experience internships at Japanese companies.

The ABE Initiative was announced by the Japanese government at the fifth Tokyo International Conference on African Development in 2013. With the International Labour Organization noting that youths in Africa were facing labor issues such as unemployment and unequal opportunities, the Japanese government — recognizing that stable development of industry and business in Africa would benefit not only the continent, but also the world — created the ABE Initiative.

Gaining new perspectives

Zanele Phiri from the Kingdom of Eswatini (formerly known as Swaziland) participated in the ABE Initiative from 2019 to 2021. In addition to studying at the Graduate School of International Management of the International University of Japan in Minamiu-

onuma, Niigata Prefecture, she participated in an internship program at a rice and strawberry farm. She was also able to take part in short-term intensive entrepreneurship training provided by JICA.

Her achievements to date and her ongoing journey to make a difference in her society are a perfect embodiment of the aims of the ABE Initiative, as she works to develop African industries and be a potential "navigator" for Japanese firms operating in Africa.

After earning a degree in agriculture at the University of Eswatini, Phiri started working at Southern Africa Nazarene University. But she also had a desire to study business. Unfortunately, many of the business management courses she found in Africa were too expensive. After hearing about the ABE Initiative from her supervisor, she jumped at the opportunity and immediately applied.

In Niigata, she studied mainly Japanese agriculture policies and business development, spending time between and after classes visiting rice fields and vegetable farms near the IUJ campus. From interacting with area farmers, she learned that Japanese agriculture is similar to that in her own country, where many farms are relatively small and run by families or small and mid-

size enterprises. Based on these similarities, Phiri said, "Eswatini can learn from Japan on how to manage supply and demand of their main staple of rice, and apply it to white maize, Eswatini's main staple." She also noted that learning how Japan systematically implemented policies to improve productivity and support farmers, protect their land rights and put in place water infrastructure for agricultural use would help Eswatini improve its self-sufficiency in maize.

Phiri said there were many values and perspectives that inspired her through her interactions with local farmers and companies. "There was a lot to learn from the way of life of the Japanese people — the way they exhibit a strong work ethic, respect and empathy for others and respect for nature," she said. She was also impressed to learn that many companies, even small and mid-size enterprises, incorporate the ideas of the U.N. sustainable development goals (SDGs) in their business practices.

Transferring solutions

Another novel perspective she thought could be applied to local businesses in Eswatini is the idea of turning environmental disadvantages into something useful.

"For example, Minamiuonuma has a lot of snow in winter. But instead of saying that there is not much they can do in the winter, they use the snow and cold weather for various things such as storing products that taste better cooled or preserved," Phiri said. She felt that this kind of thinking could turn local factors, including those that may seem like disadvantages, into new values that could contribute to the branding of local products.

"What is not happening in Eswatini is the implementation of an effective strategy to promote local brands. A combination of innovation, passion for the local community and strong leadership is important to develop and promote local brands. This was something I could see in how Minamiuonuma's Koshihikari rice is promoted across the nation," she said.

Phiri said the JICA entrepreneurship program is useful for her and other young Africans with entrepreneurial aspirations. "It helped me to think more about my business concept and redefine my business model based on which of the SDGs are achievable and whose problems it can solve," she said.

Another benefit of the program is that it helped her connect with ABE Initiative participants across Japan. "Because of this opportunity, we were able to meet like-minded people and learn about each other's businesses and innovative ideas. It's nice that we continue to communicate online," she said.

Using everything she gained in Japan, Phiri has been working practically nonstop since returning to Eswatini in June 2021. "The moment I came back home, I launched my own start-up called Makwandze Organica, an agribusiness focusing on growing organic vegetables in a sustainable way and promoting farmers' brands in my local community," she said, explaining that *makwandze* means "I'm wishing you fruitfulness and prosperity." The phrase is interchangeable with thank you. On her farm,



The 2019 ABE Initiative participants pose at their welcome to JICA's headquarters in Tokyo. JICA

she grows indigenous vegetables, a variety of spinach and lettuce as well as strawberries, which she learned how to grow during her internship in Japan. "I keep in touch with the company... They give me advice and we are talking about the possibility of doing something together in the future."

Changing mindsets

She also began work to get her government involved in identifying and promoting local products, while addressing social problems at the same time.

"For example, we have several tourist spots in our community, including the biggest dam in Eswatini. I want to engage farmers and the government in an agritourism project, for which I applied for a grant from the United Nations Development Programme," Phiri said. Through this project, she believes that she can promote the area, bring in more tourists and create more jobs while contributing to improving food self-sufficiency.

Upon her return to Southern Africa Nazarene University, Phiri was reinstated to her former position as head of the Department of Business Management and Entrepreneurship. In addition to teaching, she is part of the university's curriculum development committee. She thinks the fastest way to effect change in society is to raise people's awareness through education and convince

them that their actions matter. "I could have not done all of this without the knowledge and experience I gained from IUJ, the JICA entrepreneurship program and my internship in Japan," she said. Now Phiri is more innovative in her business practices and more conscious of achieving the SDGs through her business and academic activities.

She encouraged young people in Africa to study in Japan.

"There are many things that developing countries can learn from Japan. You should have clear professional and personal goals on what you want to achieve when you return to your country and try to learn beyond the classroom by taking advantage of opportunities such as the JICA entrepreneurship program and internship program."

The Japanese government will continue supporting human resource development in Africa in various fields such as industry, agriculture and health and medical, as well as strongly push for development that is led by African ownership.

This page is sponsored by the government of Japan.



Far left: Strawberries are grown on the top troughs while lettuce is cultivated below at Makwandze Organica in Eswatini on Dec. 23. Left: Zanele Phiri poses during her farming internship in Niigata Prefecture in 2020. ZANELE PHIRI

Growing economy

Fostering Japan-Africa business growth

NOBUHIKO SASAKI
CHAIRMAN AND CEO,
JAPAN EXTERNAL TRADE ORGANIZATION



The eighth Tokyo International Conference on African Development will be the first TICAD held since the world was struck by the COVID-19 pandemic. The military invasion of Ukraine

by Russia has severely affected the global economy in areas such as food and energy. Furthermore, Japan has seen a decline in investment due to the rapid depreciation of the yen. Under such turmoil, Japanese companies need strategies to achieve sustainable growth. Africa's growth, in terms of both population and economy, is spectacular. Considered a frontier, Africa has entered a stage where it should be considered an important partner for Japanese companies seeking to go global.

At TICAD 7 in Yokohama in 2019, the Japan External Trade Organization hosted the Japan-Africa Business Forum & Expo in response to the changing relationship between Japan and Africa, where interest is shifting from aid to business. The expo was attended by 156 Japanese companies and institutions that introduced products, technologies and services to contribute to sustainable growth in Africa. This was the largest number of exhibitors for an Africa-related exhibition ever held in Japan, and the enthusiasm for Africa in Japan has never been higher. To maintain this momentum, JETRO conducted a number of online business meetings during the coronavirus crisis to bridge the gap between Japanese and African companies and achieved positive results.

At TICAD 8, JETRO will again host the Business Forum, only the second to be held in Africa, following the forum held at

TICAD VI, held in Nairobi in 2016.

The Business Forum will bring together leading Japanese and African business representatives in Tunisia for discussions on innovation, carbon neutrality, industrialization, sustainable finance and other topics. In addition, JETRO will set up an exhibition corner at the venue to introduce technologies and products from Japanese companies that can contribute to Africa's development in the five areas of infrastructure and carbon neutrality; medical and health care; food and agriculture; consumer goods and lifestyle; and industrialization.

Rapidly growing startups in Africa are attracting a great deal of attention in Japan. JETRO has launched the Japan Innovation

In particular, renewable energy presents a major business opportunity in Africa, which is globally competitive in wind, solar and hydrogen power.

Bridge (J-Bridge), a business platform for creating international open innovation, to support collaboration and partnerships between Japanese and foreign companies in both the digitalization and green sectors. Seizing on the opportunity of TICAD 8, we added Africa to the coverage area for J-Bridge in April. I am confident that the global networks, financial strength, technology, world-class human resources and trustworthiness of Japanese companies will surely contribute to Africa's economic growth. JETRO also supports Japanese companies that seek solutions to social issues faced by Africa through the use of digital transformation.

We hope to see more cases of pioneering collaboration between Japanese and African companies, focusing both on the innovations sprouting in Africa and the startup scene creating them.



Above: JETRO's Japan-Africa Business Expo saw more than 150 companies and institutions showcase their products and services for sustainable African growth at TICAD 7 in 2019 in Yokohama. Right: Panel discussions are held on multilateral business partnerships at JETRO's Business Forum at TICAD 7. JAPAN EXTERNAL TRADE ORGANIZATION

The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), which is the world's largest free trade agreement, is expected to contribute to Africa's economic development and strengthen its competitiveness in the world. The promotion of intraregional trade will require the development of infrastructure, and human resource development will be essential. Japanese companies will be partners in this area, which has great scope for development. The AfCFTA also presents a business opportunity for Japanese companies, which have high expectations that boosting intra-African trade will turn the continent into a single market.

For Japanese companies, the expansion of African consumer markets and carbon neutrality are points of focus. In particular, renewable energy presents a major business opportunity in Africa, which is internationally competitive in wind, solar

and hydrogen power. Japan also needs to keep abreast of the changes and needs of the African market. To this end, JETRO will work on holding business meetings with Japanese companies in various fields, including medical devices, agricultural equipment and materials.

We believe that TICAD 8 will be the key to business success between Japan and Africa. JETRO is committed in its endeavors to create future business opportunities between Japan and Africa following TICAD and will further strengthen efforts to provide companies with institutional information and information on potential partners in Africa. And although the pandemic has limited face-to-face interactions through overseas travel restrictions, JETRO will take advantage of the resumption of international travel to resume its proactive business activities, including the establish-



Above: Attendees gather to speak with representatives offering various products and services at the Lagos International Trade Fair.



ment of a Japan Pavilion in Nigeria and the dispatch of business missions to Ghana, to allow Japanese companies to actually experience the vibrant African market firsthand. We will continue to work with various regions in Africa and contribute to the expansion of business between Japan and Africa through our nine African offices and network of overseas offices around the world. For those Japanese companies interested in Africa, or African companies considering doing business with Japan, please contact your nearest JETRO office and "Talk to JETRO First."



The opening ceremony of JETRO's Accra office in 2021

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Climate issues

Japan-led conference aims to reignite Africa's recovery

GABRIEL DOMINGUEZ
STAFF WRITER

The worsening effects of climate change, the socioeconomic fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic and the food security crises exacerbated by the Ukraine war are just some of the challenges facing African countries.

To discuss solutions to these and other pressing issues, dozens of African leaders — as well as representatives of international organizations, donor countries, private companies and civil society — are expected to come together on Aug. 27 and 28 in Tunisia for the eighth iteration of the Tokyo International Conference on African Development.

Since TICAD I in 1993, these conferences have offered a platform for African leaders and development partners to discuss ways to promote economic development, fight poverty and foster peace, while agreeing on action plans.

Held every three years and convened alternately in Japan and Africa since 2016, these meetings are organized by the Japanese government in collaboration with the United Nations, the U.N. Development Program (UNDP), the African Union Commission and the World Bank.

More than 10,000 people participated in the TICAD 7 conference, including 42 African leaders, 52 development partner countries and 108 heads of international and regional organizations, along with representatives of civil society and the private sector.

Held in Yokohama in 2019, the conference saw Tokyo promote "quality infrastructure investment," while African countries touted Japan's strategic policy shift from government aid to encouraging private-sector investment, with the number of companies participating in the summit doubling since 2016.

Japan's approach to development assistance focuses on Africans charting their own path forward in partnership with the international community, with observers saying that Tokyo seeks to differentiate its economic cooperation with the continent from that of China, which has long surpassed Japan as a business investor.

According to the Japan International Cooperation Agency, there are several unique points guiding Tokyo's engagement with the continent. These include respect for Africa's ownership, the promotion of self-help programs, a focus on people and human security, and the use of Japan's experience and know-how.

Founded in 1974, JICA — which handles Japan's official development assistance — has 31 offices across Africa and delivered ¥226 billion in the fiscal year beginning April 2020 in the form of loans, grants and technical assistance, as well as finance and investment cooperation. Its activities across Africa span a wide range of areas, including health care, education, industrial development, agriculture, infrastructure and environmental conservation, as well as the promotion of peace, democracy and good governance.

"We believe the lessons of Japanese modernization can be of help to African countries today, so that they can create their own development policies and strategies

while keeping their cultures and traditions," JICA Vice President Ryuichi Kato said in an interview with The Diplomat.

Japan's approach is mainly geared toward accelerating inclusive economic growth through innovation and private-sector engagement, deepening regional integration, ensuring debt sustainability and supporting quality education and infrastructure projects.

Critical challenges

This year's TICAD conference, which will focus on sustainability — both in terms of economic development and human resilience — comes as Tokyo updates its approach to the continent, which faces increasingly critical challenges such as the intensifying effects of climate change.

Even though Africa contributes less than 4% of global greenhouse gas emissions annually — compared with 78% by Group of 20 countries — the continent is on track to being among the hardest hit by global warming. Worsening the impact, Africa relies more heavily on climate-dependent economic sectors such as agriculture, and its capacity to cope and adapt is more limited.

"Climate-related and natural disasters, as well as environmental degradation, are contributing to the destruction of community assets and livelihoods, capital investments in infrastructure and agricultural outputs, while driving mass migration within and outside Africa," said Eve Sabbagh, a spokesperson for the UNDP's Regional Bureau for Africa.

"There is a critical need for a green transition across Africa, given the continent's disproportionate vulnerability to climate change," she said.

Without urgent action to build resilience, climate change and ecological decline will lead to increased poverty and displacement on the road to 2030 and will serve as barriers to the recovery from COVID-19, she added.

Worsening food insecurity

The situation has recently been made worse by the Russian military's blockade of Ukraine's Black Sea ports and the ripple effects of Western sanctions against Moscow, which have increased international food and fuel prices, leaving millions of Africans facing an "unprecedented food emergency" this year.

According to the U.N.'s World Food Program (WFP), prices have surged between 30% and 50% in many places — and even doubled in some markets — as the continent normally imports about a third of its wheat from Russia and Ukraine.

But even before Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February, many parts of the continent were already facing food insecurity because of natural disasters, increased conflict and unproductive farming.

For instance, the WFP reported in April that the number of hungry people in the Sahel and West Africa had quadrupled over the past three years, reaching 41 million. Meanwhile, the worst drought in decades is threatening an estimated 15 million people in the Horn of Africa, with Kenya, Somalia and large parts of Ethiopia at risk of acute food insecurity, according to the

International Organization for Migration.

Against this backdrop, the UNDP views the type of multilateral partnerships built and strengthened at conferences such as TICAD as "essential" to building resilience in African countries, especially by transforming Africa's resource wealth and taking advantage of "blue carbon" markets — where coastal ecosystems are restored, earning "credits" for the carbon that is captured and stored as a result — and green financing mechanisms. Other critical areas include climate risk-sensitive investment, environmentally sustainable projects and sustainable energy investment.

"Japan, through the TICAD platform, has aligned its support to the development priorities of African countries, which has made it a unique forum, in that it is underpinned by a strong belief in African-led and -owned development," Sabbagh said.

What can Japan do?

Speaking about the upcoming conference in Tunisia, JICA's Kato said the focus will be on building resilience in Africa's socioeconomic frameworks.

"We will do this by strengthening health care systems, realizing decent work opportunities, supporting startups and business innovation, promoting digitalization, facilitating regional trade and integration, combating climate change, increasing agricultural production to achieve food security, and more," he told The Diplomat.

Japan has decades of experience in this field and has repeatedly shifted its priorities for Africa to respond to the development needs of the continent, which is moving away from being an aid recipient and gradually becoming the driving force behind its own development.

For example, Kato explained in his interview that the Coalition for Africa's Rice Development, launched at TICAD IV in 2008, achieved a doubling of rice production in sub-Saharan Africa from 14 million tons a year to over 28 million tons a year.

JICA then launched the Africa Business Education Initiative and Corridor Development Approach at TICAD V in 2013, as well as the Africa Kaizen Initiative and Initiative for Food and Nutrition Security in Africa — better known as IFNA — in Kenya at TICAD VI in 2016. And in early 2020, JICA launched the Next Innovation with Japan initiative, also known as Ninja, which supports young African entrepreneurs and startups for business innovation and matches them with Japanese investors.

These efforts have resulted in numerous achievements. Between TICAD 7 and the end of March 2021 alone, JICA says it helped train 25,000 people in health care, 46,000 in the areas of law, police and security, and 260,000 in other industries and roles.

The organization, which aims to further expand its collaboration with African, Japanese and other partners, also says it provided ¥72.1 billion in financial support for infrastructure projects, and that it helped increase rice production to 32 million tons and provide quality education for 6 million children.

Flurry of projects

JICA has also been expanding its coopera-



A child walks outside makeshift shelters for people displaced by the country's severe droughts at the Kaxareey camp in Dollow, Somalia, on May 24. REUTERS

tion programs and initiatives to promote private-sector-led growth, with ex-participants of the ABE Initiative serving as a bridge between Japanese companies and African markets and partners.

The idea behind this approach — especially in recent years — has been that Japanese firms, big and small, have the potential to generate business activities in Africa that are conducive to the continent's inclusive, resilient and sustainable development.

The partnerships cover a vast range of areas and tackle numerous development issues. For instance, in Ghana the staple meal — a traditional porridge of fermented corn — is insufficient in energy, proteins and micronutrients, causing infant malnutrition.

In response, Tokyo-based company Ajinomoto has been using its expertise and technologies in food and amino acids to develop food products that can contribute to improved nutrition for infants, start local production and create a busi-

ness model to deliver these products to poor people.

Japanese companies have also been involved in numerous projects to improve access to water. For instance, due to the decline of groundwater levels caused by a lack of rain, Morocco is facing an increased cost of agricultural water and risking the depletion of its water resources. To tackle this issue, Tottori Resource Recycling has developed a technology designed to improve the water retention capacity of the soil and greatly decrease the amount of water required for irrigation by using porous materials made from glass waste.

In 2020, JICA provided approximately ¥2 billion in support of over 40 projects to mitigate the effects of climate change across 17 African countries. Examples of these include a geothermal power plant project in Kenya, which aims to develop energy in the Olkaria area, and the Gulf of El Zayt Wind Power Plant Project in Egypt.

Growing interest

According to a September 2021 survey conducted by the Japan External Trade Organization involving 335 Japan-related companies in 23 African countries, the percentage of companies expecting to expand their business operations increased by 6.8 points to 48.6%. On the other hand, more than 50% of the companies mentioned investment risks related to instability as well as the development and implementation of regulations.

Africa is at a critical juncture in its development as it seeks to reignite free trade and economic integration in a post-pandemic era. There are tough challenges ahead, especially with regards to climate change.

The determining factor will be how resilient, inclusive and sustainable its future development will be. In this regard, TICAD 8 can be a timely platform for the international community to work together with African leaders to find constructive solutions and map the way forward.

We Support TICAD 8 in Tunisia.

With headquarters in Tokyo and decades of research, programmes, and partnerships throughout Africa, the United Nations University is a committed supporter of the TICAD process. To learn more about our TICAD 8 activities, and our work in and on Africa, visit www.unu.edu/priority-africa.

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Charting Africa's growth

Prospects bright as investment climbs

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a severe effect on the global economy, but the economy in sub-Saharan Africa made a surprising rebound in 2021. Though this growth is expected to slow this year amid the war in Ukraine, the International Monetary Fund still forecasts growth of 3.8% in 2022 and 4.0% in 2023.

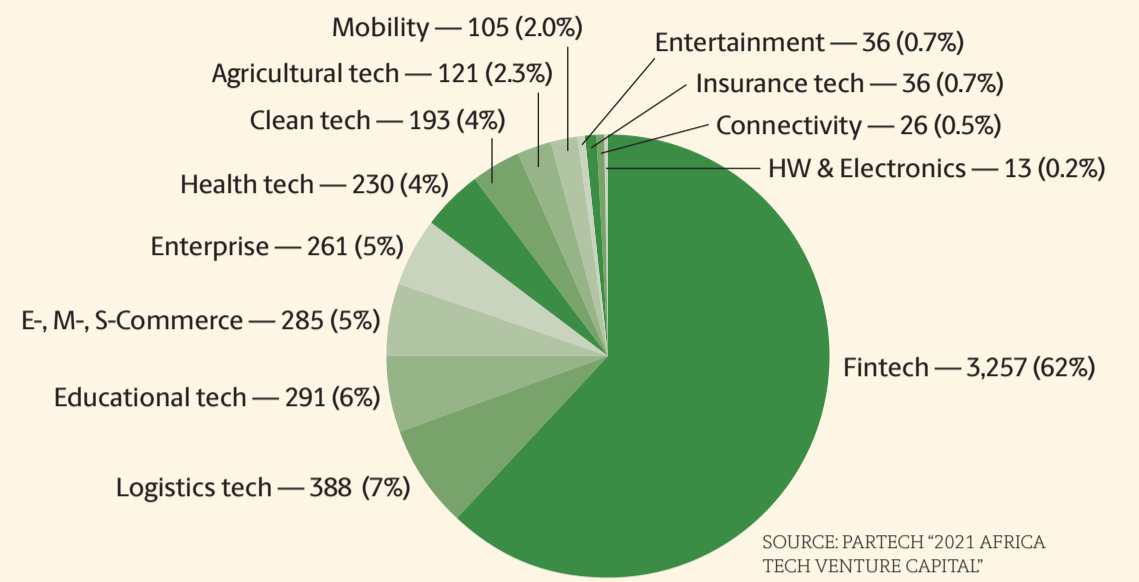
Africa's population is growing steadily as well and is expected to double by 2050. In 2021, foreign direct investment in African countries hit a record \$83 billion, with the technology sector reportedly growing faster here than any other region. In fact, tech start-ups raised a total of \$5.2 billion via 681 equity rounds, up a staggering 92% compared with 359 rounds in 2020, according to ParTech. Here are some charts showing where Africa stands today.

Africa's top 10 GDP forecasts for 2022 (%)

South Sudan	6.5
Congo	6.4
Rwanda	6.4
Mauritius	6.1
Equatorial Guinea	6.1
Cote d'Ivoire	6.0
Benin	5.9
Egypt	5.9
Kenya	5.7
Gambia	5.6

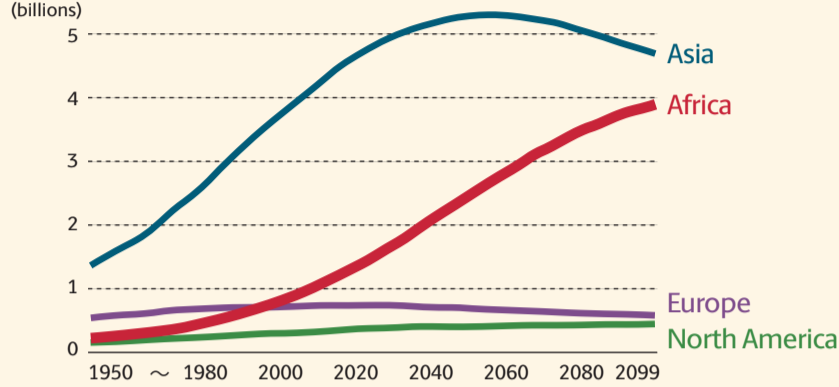
SOURCE: IMF-WEO 2022-4

2021 Africa tech venture capital top equity-funded verticals



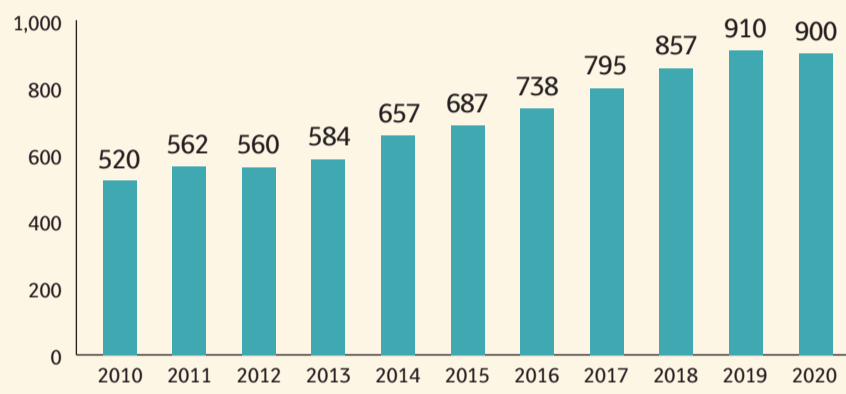
SOURCE: PARTeCH '2021 AFRICA TECH VENTURE CAPITAL'

Population trends, 1950 to 2099



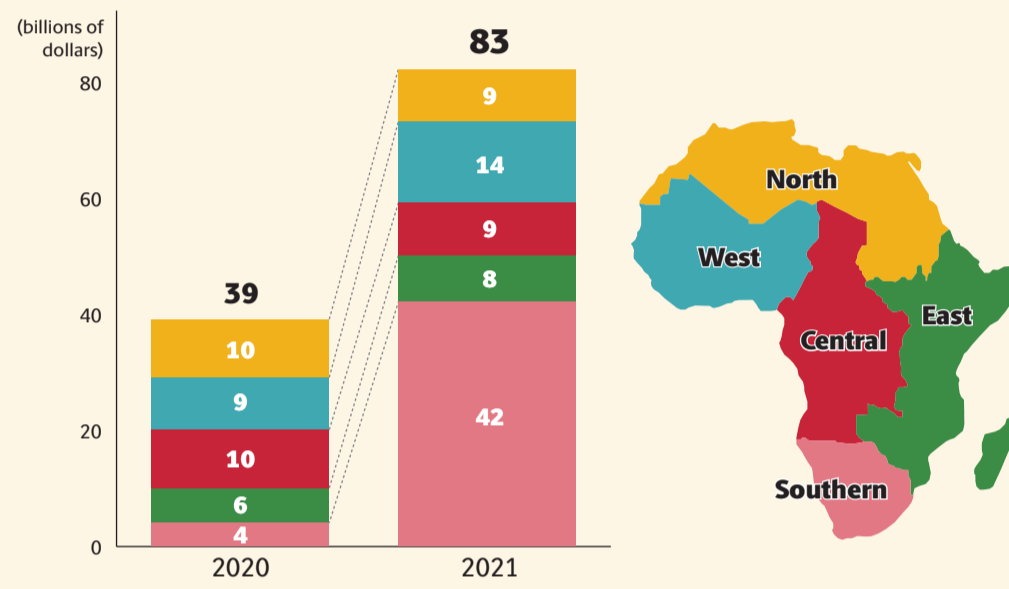
SOURCE: UNITED NATIONS WORLD POPULATION PROSPECTS 2022 VIA JETRO
NOTE: Projections from 2022 onward based on the U.N.'s medium-fertility scenario

Japanese corporate offices in Africa, 2010-2020



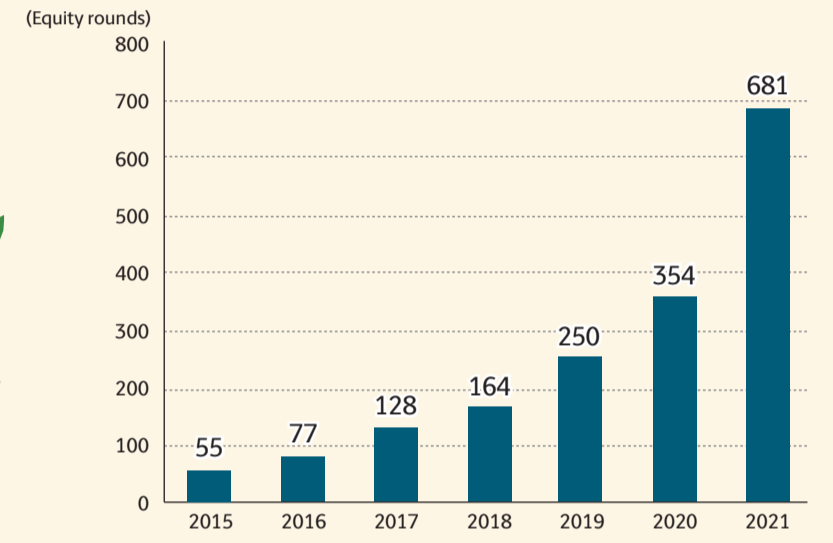
SOURCE: FOREIGN MINISTRY

FDI inflows in Africa by subregion, 2020-2021



SOURCE: UNCTAD WORLD INVESTMENT REPORT 2022

Africa tech venture capital equity rounds, 2015-2021



SOURCE: PARTeCH '2021 AFRICA TECH VENTURE CAPITAL'

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Robust regulatory climate offers African platform

Mauritius' valuable experience and expertise in financial services make it the ideal platform for foreign firms and fintech enterprises looking to venture into the continent.

For a small island nation in the Southern Indian Ocean, Mauritius is certainly making a major impression on the global stage courtesy of a world-class international financial center (IFC) that provides a robust and reliable backbone for an attractive, safe and well-regulated financial services sector, including state-of-the-art fintech frameworks and activities.

The banking and financial services sectors are core components of the Mauritian economy through the employment of around 9,000 people and contributing to an impressive 13% of the gross domestic product. The country's Economic Development Board (EDB) is not shy in praising the sector's performances, noting "the sophisticated IFC of substance boasts more than two decades' track record in cross-border investment and finance, and offers an unparalleled well-regulated and transparent platform."

"As an internationally recognized jurisdiction of repute, the Mauritius IFC is home to a number of international banks, legal firms, corporate services, investment funds and private equity funds," the EDB added. With roots stretching back to 1838, the banking sector has become a regional benchmark and now comprises nearly two dozen local and international banks that offer a wide array of services. These range from traditional retail banking facilities to specialized services such as fund administration, private banking, structured trade finance, Islamic banking, investment banking and custody services," the EDB noted, adding that the banks are licensed by the Bank of Mauritius to carry out banking activities.

Removal from watchlists fully deserved
In a hugely welcome development that is a testament to the work and significant progress the sector has made, the Financial Action Task Force — a Paris-based intergovernmental body that sets the standards for combating illicit financial activities, removed the country from its "gray list" in late 2021. The decision means that the country is no longer subject to increased monitoring, with many observers crediting the adoption of digital platforms in helping Mauritius exit the FATF list. In a further boost earlier this year, the European Union followed the FATF's lead and removed Mauritius from its list of third-country jurisdictions with strategic deficiencies in their

anti-money laundering/counterterrorist financing (AML/CTF) regimes.

"Mauritius is a jurisdiction where business can be conducted seamlessly," stated Minister of Financial Services and Good Governance Mahen Kumar Seeruttun. "In terms of compliance and Mauritius as an IFC, our removal from those two lists demonstrates that we have satisfied all the necessary standards and compliances and are a jurisdiction of substance. This brings comfort and trust to the investing community globally. Mauritius is a jurisdiction that satisfies all the requirements of the different international bodies with regard to AML/CTF requirements."

"The government has taken all the reforms that were necessary, and there are no issues in working with Mauritius. We have a proud track record of more than three decades in the space of global business, with all the necessary competencies and a very solid banking system. Our legal system is very independent."

'We have a very solid banking system. Our legal system is very independent. In terms of movement of capital, there are no restrictions at all.'

Mahen Kumar Seeruttun
Minister of Financial Services and Good Governance

"In terms of movement of capital there are no restrictions at all. We are looking forward, and implementing our 10-year financial services plan which will involve consolidation and bring more businesses to our jurisdiction."

Mauritius enjoys an outstanding reputation as a platform for channeling investment into the wider region — Africa as well as India. Important and reputable financial institutions from the EU and the United States are working with Mauritius to develop investment projects in those regions. Officials are confident the republic can now play a very crucial role for investors from Japan who wish to work with Mauritius and use the country's experienced



Dhanesswurnath Thakoor
CEO, Financial Services Commission

financial services sector as a platform for a broad range of African investment projects.

As industry watchdog and regulator, the Financial Services Commission, Mauritius, is one of the key figures behind the financial services industry's success and upward growth trajectory. Headquartered in the ICT hub of Ebene Cybercity, the FSC has facilitated the adoption of innovative technologies and helped Mauritius solidify its positioning in the emerging fintech industry. The body also played a crucial role in the removal of Mauritius from the EU and FATF watchlists, while another feather in its cap has been the country's excellent placement in global business indices. These include its eye-catching 13th place — out of 190 — in the esteemed World Bank's Ease of Doing Business Index, a position that saw it ranked first in Africa for a regulatory environment that is highly conducive to business operations and stronger protections of property rights.

"Exiting the FATF and EU lists are testimony to the culture of compliance that prevails in Mauritius. We want to demonstrate that Mauritius is a reliable and trusted jurisdiction and the way that we do business is very transparent," stated FSC CEO Dhanesswurnath Thakoor. "We need to give confidence to our investors; we need to ensure that the confidence of investors in the jurisdiction is maintained. And now, although there is a strong compliance culture, some might find it painful, but overall, this is very important for the jurisdiction to always level up with international standards."

Having only joined the FSC in mid-2020, Thakoor has achieved a great deal of success in



Famous as an upscale vacation destination, Mauritius is diversifying its economy via a focus on financial services and fintech activities.

a relatively short space of time. Someone who looks forward rather than back, the talented official is now working out ways to develop Mauritius' full potential in the fintech sphere. His mission has been helped by the fact that less than five years ago, the Mauritius Africa Fintech Hub was launched, with the ambitious aim of making the country of 1.3 million people a powerful technology and innovation hub for the whole continent.

Given the significance of tourism and its related service industries to the country's economic well-being, the COVID-19 pandemic and associated travel restrictions were a dev-

astating blow to the private and public sectors. However, the financial services sector was one of the few economic segments that achieved positive growth against a backdrop of international isolation.

In a recent budget speech, Minister of Finance and Economic Development Renganaden Padayachy praised the industry's "strong resilience in the face of the crisis, with a growth rate of 4.2% last year." He highlighted upbeat forecasts from the International Monetary Fund that predict GDP will exceed its pre-pandemic level, reaching 520 billion Mauritian rupees (\$11.6 billion) by 2022, versus 465 billion rupees in 2021.

"We need to build on this momentum (and) to this end (will) continue the overhaul of the financial services sector (and) the government will adapt its legislative framework to converge the domestic and global business regime. The Bank of Mauritius and the Bank of China will launch a regional Renminbi Clearing Center this year; the former will collaborate with the National Payments Corporation of India for the issuance of 'RuPay' cards and the Indian QR code in Mauritius. A national payment card will then be introduced, with the FSC revamping its framework to enable reinsurance companies to set up operations in Mauritius."

FINANCIAL SERVICES COMMISSION MAURITIUS: A dynamic, innovative and forward-looking regulator

FSC regulated activities:

- Global Business
- Fin Tech - Insurance
- Pension - Capital Markets
- Investment Funds and Intermediaries
- Virtual Asset and Initial Token Offering Services

Global Business Entities: over 18,200

Investment Funds: over 1,000

The FSC is the integrated regulator in Mauritius for the financial services sector (other than banking) and global business.

The FSC has, over the years, been a dynamic, innovation-driven regulator which has been instrumental in the establishment of Mauritius as a jurisdiction of substance in the global landscape.

To keep pace with digital transformation, the FSC launched the FSC One Platform, an online tool to process applications and to deliver international financial services through cutting-edge technological solutions. A modern regulatory framework has also been put in place for a spectrum of innovative financial products and services such as peer-to-peer lending, crowdfunding, special purpose funds, robotic and artificial intelligence-enabled advisory services, guidelines for the issue of green bonds and has enacted the Virtual Asset and Initial Token Offering Services (VAITOS) Act 2021.

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