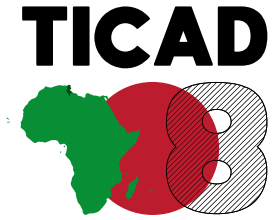


FOSTERING A SUSTAINABLE JAPAN-AFRICA PARTNERSHIP



In August of 2022, Tunisia hosted the Eighth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD 8), which boasts a history of around three decades. At the conference, Prime Minister KISHIDA Fumio announced that Japan is going to invest 30 billion U.S. dollars as the sum of the public and private financial contribution over the next three years. As Japan aspires to be “a partner growing together with Africa,” it supports the continent’s efforts to achieve sustainable development.

“Africa is a young and hopeful continent that can expect dynamic growth. Japan wants to be a partner that grows together with Africa.” Prime Minister KISHIDA Fumio made that powerful remark in a speech given on August 27 while participating online in the opening of TICAD 8 in Tunisia.

As a pioneering forum on the development of Africa, the conference was first held in Tokyo in 1993, and under Japan’s leadership, it has been co-hosted through the years by the United Nations, the United

Nations Development Program (UNDP), the World Bank, and the African Union Commission (AUC). Twenty heads of state and government were among the participants from 48 African countries this year.

At the conference, Prime Minister Kishida shared his hopes of realizing a resilient Africa that the continent itself aims to achieve, with a specific focus on “investment in people” and “quality of growth.” He announced that Japan will invest 30 billion dollars as the sum of its public and private financial



This is the second time Africa has hosted TICAD, the previous instance being the Kenya meeting in 2016. POOL/AP/AFL0



Over 500 participants joined JETRO’s Business Forum, where they engaged in a lively exchange of opinions. JETRO Chairman and CEO SASAKI Nobuhiko spoke at the opening session.



contribution to Africa over the next three years.

“With the increasing international importance of Africa’s development, contact between business and development is becoming increasingly frequent,” said SASAKI Nobuhiko, chairman and CEO of Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO), which works to promote mutual trade and investment between Japan and the rest of the world. To expand the investments, which had declined due to the pandemic, JETRO opened a support desk last year, and is now assisting Japanese companies’ business expansion in Africa and matching Japanese firms with African ones. The Business Forum organized by JETRO at TICAD 8 had over 500 participants for two days, including politicians and businesspeople from both Africa and Japan.

Prime Minister Kishida stated in the forum that he would like to highlight the importance of support for startups, green investment, and investment in human resources. The Japanese business community is set to launch an investment fund for startups of over 10 billion yen. What is more, Japan will also establish the Green Growth Initiative with Africa, directing 4 billion dollars through public and private cooperation toward a structural transformation toward net zero, while developing 300,000 professionals through a three-year period of training in a wide range of fields, including industry, health, medicine, education, agriculture, judiciary, and administration.

Chairman Sasaki stated, “I can say with confidence that this TICAD was an opportunity to make a new start for African business. The Tunisian AI startup that spoke at the Business Forum’s panel discussion garnered major attention at the venue. African ministers also told me that they had fruitful exchanges of ideas with Japanese businesses.” More than 90 memoranda of understanding (MOUs) for cooperation and collaboration were signed this time.

“There are high hopes for Japanese companies that make a sincere effort to develop human resources and enable technology transfer,” Sasaki added.

With African countries facing economic hardship due to soaring food and energy prices stemming from Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, Sasaki said that “the very question is whether Japan can be a friend in difficult times.” With international developments exerting a grave impact on Africa, Japan plans to provide 300 million dollars to bolster food production through co-financing with the African Development Bank (AfDB). Japan will also provide co-financing of up to 5 billion dollars together with the AfDB to improve the lives of African people. In addition, it will contribute up to 1.08 billion dollars to the Global Fund to support countermeasures for infectious diseases. Furthermore, it will appoint an ambassador, namely, a Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa, to respond swiftly to the complex challenges facing the region.

Africa, which is expected to account for a quarter of the world’s population by 2050, is surely a treasure chest of possibilities. Based on the discussions at this year’s TICAD, Japan will strongly support development in Africa on the basis of African ownership.



TICAD 8 closed with the adoption of the Tunis Declaration. At the closing ceremony, Prime Minister Kishida, who joined the conference online, reiterated Japan’s intent to boost the vitality of the African people and maintain peace and stability.