Japan & the TICAD Process

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RECOMMENDATIONS

• Japan should reiterate its position on self-ownership to the African country governments in the context of implementing the discussed themes and objectives. Japan also needs to advocate the approach that the needs of the African people be considered by external countries seeking to gain profit in the African nations.

• Local opinion in African countries often asserts that Japan's Africa policy is a poor imitation of US and European policy. To facilitate better understanding of its original approach, Japan should implement public-relations campaigns, both in Africa and in other countries, to promote its steadfast Africa strategies.

• Japan should establish a permanent collaborative government–private sector institution that gathers and analyses information on African affairs on an ongoing basis. The purpose of the institution would be to provide information to facilitate competent, accurate, and rapid policy formulation. This recommendation comes in light of the fact that Japan's foreign ministry lacks sufficient specialised Africa observers. Such an institution would also contribute to training personnel, and would facilitate communication between relevant personnel in Africa and other countries.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Fifth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD V) will be held from 1–3 June 2013 in Yokohama, Japan. Although in co-sponsorship with many international organisations, the conference, first held in 1993, is the main Japanese platform for Africa's development. Following the dawn of the 21st century, Africa entered a rapid economic growth cycle, largely propelled by the expanding presence of newly industrialised countries, such as the BRIC group, on the continent. In this context, the TICAD process and the Japanese government's standing over TICAD is attracting increasing attention both in Africa and beyond the continent.

TICAD V's umbrella slogan is 'Hand in hand with a more dynamic Africa – Transformation for quality growth'. The conference's three themes are a robust and sustainable economy; an inclusive and resilient society; and peace and stability. Its all-encompassing target is 'poverty reduction through economic development'. This policy brief discusses the evolution of the TICAD process over the past 20 years and the challenges that need to be tackled at the TICAD V summit.

BACKGROUND

The Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) forum was established by the Japanese government in 1993 to declare its proactive position on development assistance to African nations and to release statements on related issues. At this time, following the end of the Cold War, African nations had begun to lose their strategic importance to the US and European countries, with Western nations also developing a sense of 'aid fatigue' regarding African-bound assistance. These two factors led to a rapid withdrawal from the African continent. As a result of this gap left by the US and European countries, Japan became a front-line presence in Africa's most critical social and economic development issues.

The development was an abrupt turnaround, compared with the relatively insignificant relations between Japan and African nations until this time.[2] The lack of previous relations meant that historical and government ties were weak. In addition, Japan's economic interest in Africa was relatively limited, as illustrated by the negligible trade volume. The one exception to this rule was South Africa, on which Japan had depended for a supply of essential rare resources.

It must be acknowledged that Japan's establishment of TICAD may have had to do with a hidden agenda of gathering votes to achieve a coveted goal of postwar Japan, namely to become a permanent member of the UN Security Council (UNSC). Japan had, however, demonstrated assistance initiatives even before the time when Africa became fashionable and prior to ensuing pessimism over international assistance for Africa. Japan's actions therefore served to promote international interest and involvement in Africa.

Through TICAD, the Japanese government has worked with the UN Development Programme and the UN Office of the Special Adviser on Africa; as well as with the World Bank as of 2000, and the African Union/African Union Commission as of TICAD IV. This collaboration has helped to raise awareness of the importance of African issues, and has helped to acknowledge that world peace and development would be impossible without Africa.

Japanese officials also invited African leaders (President Abdelaziz Bouteflika of Algeria, President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria, and President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa) to a peripheral meeting at the Kyushu–Okinawa Summit held in 2000. Following the summit, it became customary for leaders of major African nations to be invited to summits, which helped to create a venue for talks on Africa. After the Kyushu–Okinawa Summit the Africa Action Plan (AAP) was adopted at the Kananaskis Summit in June 2001. The AAP was in response to the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). The G-8 shared the fundamental objectives of NEPAD. The AAP set out how each of the G-8 partners, together or individually, would enhance its engagement with African countries in support of NEPAD. The G-8 also provided various bail-out packages, known as the G-8 African process.

Since TICAD I, there have been further conferences, held every five years, with preparatory meetings and ministerial conferences held inbetween. The TICAD and ministerial meetings, along with the monitoring process, is collectively known as the 'TICAD process'. The following is an overview of the four TICAD conferences.

TICAD I (October 1993, Tokyo) was attended by 48 African countries, 13 donor countries and organisations, 10 international organisations, 45 observer countries and organisations, and approximately 1 000 participants from NGOs. Under the Basic Agreement, aid to Africa was increased. Japanese goals included positive assistance on political and economic improvements; education/ training and environmental friendliness; and stepping up interaction and mutual communication. The conference also included specific plans for co-operation between Africa and Asia countries, so-called South–South co-operation, in the form of a transfer of Asian development experiences to Africa.

TICAD II (October 1998, Tokyo) was attended by 51 African countries, 18 US and European countries, 22 NGOs from Africa and other countries, and 40 regional and international organisations with branches in Africa. Under the Basic Agreement, the TICAD II 'African development towards the 21st century: The Tokyo agenda for action' was launched with a view to improving development planning and good governance; and conflict prevention (including security-force capacity building and mine removal). The agenda advocated involvement in political arenas and specific action plans as goals for Japan.

TICAD III (September–October 2003, Tokyo) was attended by 50 African countries, 34 non-African countries, and 47 regional and international organisations. The Basic Agreement advocated both African ownership and international partnership. In addition, the Global Coalition for Africa was a co-organiser of TICAD III, along with Japan's government, the UN and the World Bank.

The slogan at **TICAD IV** (May 2008, Yokohama) was 'Towards a vibrant Africa.' The forum, shifted for the first time from Tokyo to Yokohama, was attended by 51 African countries, 34 other countries including Asian nations, and 77 regional and international organisations. At the conference, the TICAD 'Yokohama Declaration' was unveiled, showcasing

Japan's political will on African development initiatives and general direction. Based on the action plan, two additional documents were also made public: the Yokohama Action Plan, which outlines a road map on specific TICAD initiatives, and the TICAD Follow-up Mechanism, which serves to validate the TICAD process. Specific goals for Japan were to double Japan's aid to Africa by 2012 (from $900 million to $1.8 billion); to double Japan's FDI to Africa (from $1.7 billion to $3.4 billion), and to provide $4.0 billion in yen loans. All of these goals were achieved.

TICAD V POLICY THEMES

TICAD V will be held in Yokohama from 1–3 June 2013. The slogan for the event will be 'Hand in hand with more dynamic Africa – Transformation for quality growth'. The conference is poised to be an extension of the past four TICAD action plans and an extension of assistance policy. However, over the past 20 years, the African environment has changed, together with Japan's sociopolitical circumstances. These changes are reflected in the conference content both directly and indirectly.

With the world's highest economic growth rates, Africa has now entered into an age of investment as opposed to aid. The continent, however, is also faced with the prospect of 'growth without development' and is still plagued with conflict. These issues comprise more than 65% of the topics of discussion before the UNSC.

Owing to its vast natural resources and markets Africa has attracted growing investments from the BRICs over the past decade. China's extensive African presence in particular has developed into a threat to the US and European countries' influence in Africa. The Forum on China–Africa Cooperation, which replicated TICAD, is now an important event in China–Africa relations. In contrast to China's growing assertiveness in Africa, Japan has cut official development assistance (ODA) budgets since 1997 in the face of financial deficits. Having lost its position as top donor in 2001, Japan developed 'aid fatigue' some 10 years behind the US and Europe. Though Japan continues to provide a large amount of ODA for Africa, Tokyo is increasingly frustrated with China's tendency to bring in large-scale manpower

and to provide public-works style assistance.

Against this changing background, the Japanese government staged the Preparatory Senior Officials' Meeting (held November 2012) in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso; followed by 'A dialogue between the foreign ministry and NGOs' (February 2013, Tokyo); and the Ministerial Preparatory Meeting in Ethiopia (March 2013, Addis Ababa). Specific themes were set for TICAD V at these preliminary meetings.

As a result of these developments, TICAD V will feature the three themes of a robust and sustainable economy; an inclusive and resilient society; and peace and stability. These themes, all interrelated, are integrated into the TICAD V Basic Concept. African ownership and international partnership are highly relevant to these themes. In addition, because the conference is an excellent venue for demonstrating incentive to achieve Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), TICAD will act as a forum for drawing up agendas for the post-MDGs. It is worth mentioning that TICAD also works to develop collaboration and facilitate dialogue with civil-society organisations, both in African and non-African countries.

Regarding the first theme of a robust and sustainable society, discussions led by the working groups identified the following objectives:
• public policies should have a crucial role to play;
• the private sector should be an integral partner;
• special attention should be paid to gender;
• capacity development and an innovative financing mechanism are needed; and
• there is a need to develop a pipeline of bankable projects and effective public–private partnerships.

Based on these considerations, TICAD V will emphasise the following:
• policy and regulation reform with a view to investment climate improvement;
• moving ahead with infrastructure development including via government–private sector partnership;
• in light of the importance of agricultural economics and food security, strengthening government–private co-operation on food supply while protecting small-scale farming and women;
• trade facilitation including intra-regional trade and regional integration; and
• enhancing tourism and cultural interaction initiatives.

On the second theme of an inclusive and resilient society, the working groups outlined three supporting objectives: achieving MDGs; addressing the environment and climate change; and disaster risk reduction.

The achievement of MDGs is particularly important, including anti-poverty and mother-and-child health, and private-sector initiatives to achieve these goals. Equally important is holding discussions on post-MDGs, and incorporating important concepts such as human safety and security. There is also a need to promote international co-operation and development towards building a strong society; to enhance education and disaster prevention; and to improve co-operation in scientific fields.

The third theme of peace and stability is dependent on good governance. The working groups identified two supporting objectives. The first of these is to assist African initiatives in achieving peace and stability, which form the basis of development. The second objective involves collaboration on land and sea with a view to eradication of piracy, including sharing Asian anti-piracy measures.

ENSURING THE PRESENCE OF THE TICAD PROCESS

As mentioned, the themes discussed at TICAD cover an extremely wide range of topics, making it difficult to achieve all of them. In the past, it has been pointed out that simply repeating dialogue does not bring about results. Since TICAD has passed the 20-year mark, it is important to note how policy themes can become a reality, and how they can be implemented. Some of TICAD's original goals of accelerating growth while focusing on the reduction of poverty and general vulnerability, plus fostering a strong society based on inclusiveness and sustainable growth, are critical issues. Clearly these issues were originally mentioned by Japan, different as they are from the US and European styles of development, and from the Chinese concept of simply fostering wealth.

The themes mentioned in the TICAD conferences apply not only to the African nations themselves. They are also important for countries that have relations with Africa. It is time for Japan, through TICAD, to clarify Japan's core policy attitudes and agendas with regards to Africa. TICAD, a key component of Japan's African policy, is not enough to promote sufficient understanding of Japan's stance, since the conference is held only every five years. However, 20 years have passed since TICAD was launched, and during this time Japan's policy of reducing poverty through economic growth has taken a solid hold.

The foreign ministry, the main government agency involved with the formulation of Japan's Africa policy, relegates policy to its bureaucrats, which, sadly, is an indication that Africa is not a priority for policymakers or politicians. Without sustained political guidance, Africa's presence in Japan is edged out by other initiatives. Expanding on Africa's position is therefore a critical step in facilitating private investment in Africa, for which there is currently a demand, and in making Africa more familiar to the Japanese society.

ENDNOTES

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2   Aoki K, 'Japan and Africa: Beyond the Fragile Partnership', in Ozaki RS & W Arnold (eds), *Japan's Foreign Relations – A Global Search for Economic Security.* Colorado: Westview Press, 1985; Ozaki RS & Walter W Arnold (eds), *Japan's Foreign Relations – A Global Search for Economic Security.* Colorado: Westview Press, 1985.