



**Africa Programme
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The Tokyo International Conference on African Development: Something Old, Something New?

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Summary

- The Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) is inspired by the achievements of East Asian countries over the last 40 years. It promotes development in Africa and is the basis of Japan's current relationship with African countries. TICAD is about South-South cooperation and African ownership, advocating their potential for economic and social development. In each of the preceding TICAD conferences, Japan has stressed that Africa's challenges are global issues and argued for collective action by the international community.
- Convening TICAD IV in Yokohama just over a month ahead of the G8 summit to be held in Hokkaido is good strategy by the Japanese. It is important that the results of TICAD IV impact the G8 communiqué on Africa. This matters as much to Japan as it does to Africa. International prestige is important to Japan, and TICAD is its way of signalling to the international community that it has a strong partnership with Africa. This year marks the halfway point for achievement of the UN Millennium Development Goals and TICAD IV offers an opportunity to evaluate progress made.
- Japan's strength does not lay in the ability to inject huge amounts of cash in aid to the continent. Nor does it lay with investment. What Japan can and should offer African nations is know-how and using its own development experience and that of East Asia to influence Western donors to follow suit. Perceived as relatively neutral on Africa due to its comparatively few investments and less historical baggage, Japan is well-placed to press other G8 members on an African agenda.

TICAD: Japan's relationship with Africa

Although Africans first went to Japan on Portuguese ships in the late 16th century, Japan has not historically been involved with Africa as deeply as colonial and Western powers. Even now, its engagement is limited compared to that of Europe, the US, China, India and Brazil. Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori's visit to Sub-Saharan Africa in January 2001 was the first ever official visit by a Japanese prime minister. There is little domestic support in Japan for aid to Africa, though there is higher political interest. Africa is important to Japan and it remains committed to African development in its own unique way.

The Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) is the basis of Japan's current relationship with African countries. It is co-organised by the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), the United Nations, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Bank, and "stakeholders include all African countries and development partners including Asian countries, donor nations, international agencies, civil society organizations, the private sector and parliaments."¹ TICAD is a process inspired by the achievements of East Asian countries over the last 40 years and is designed to promote development in Africa.

A framework for Asia-Africa cooperation, TICAD was initiated after the Cold War, at a time when Africa had lost the attention of the international community, with the first conference taking place in 1993 and one held every five years since. The initiative is about South-South cooperation and African ownership, advocating their potential for economic and social development. Particularly in the area of environment and climate change, Japan highlights that Africa's challenges are global issues and argues for collective action by the international community. TICAD predates many other initiatives on Africa, including by other G-8 members. Japan holds the G8 presidency for 2008 and this coincides with its fourth conference on African Development (TICAD IV), which will take place from May 28th - May 30th, ahead of the G8 summit in July. Despite emphasis on African ownership, many African states lack the capacity and resources to implement initiatives and policies. As TICAD

¹ <http://www.ticad.net/about.shtml>

emphasises the collective responsibility of the international community on Africa, and the G8 represents about 65 percent of the global economy, convening the fourth conference just over a month ahead of the G8 summit is good strategy on the part of Japan. This year also marks the midway point for achievement of the UN Millennium Development Goals, so TICAD will provide an opportunity for appraisal and reflection.

What matters is whether the outcomes of TICAD IV (the Yokohama Declaration, Yokohama Action Plan, and Follow-up Mechanism) can impact the G8 communiqué on Africa. This is as significant to Japan as it is to Africa. International prestige is important to Japan, and TICAD is its way of signalling to the international community that it too has a partnership with Africa and it too has global influence. For African states, it will be a success if the outcomes of TICAD IV influence G8 policies on Africa because TICAD reflects priorities of African governments for development.

Japan is a member of both the developed West and developing Asia, giving it a distinct relationship with Africa. It is a late industrialiser, having experienced defeat and poverty after the Second World War. In fact, African nations contributed to Japanese post-war reconstruction, importing 17.5 percent of Japanese exports in the late 1950s.² As Japan industrialised and trade with Africa began to diminish, it started contributing development assistance in the 1960s. Japan's history and identity enable it to offer Africa an alternative development model to that of its Western counterparts. That is, one which has seen a combination of private sector investment, trade and aid boost Asian development.

² R. Bradshaw (1993) *Japanese Interest in Africa: A Historical Overview*
http://www.acdis.uiuc.edu/Research/S&Ps/1993-Su/S&P_VII-4/africa_interest.html

Past conferences: themes, promises and outcomes

TICAD I

TICAD I took place in October 1993 and attracted participants from 48 African countries, 12 donor states, eight international organizations, and more than 45 observer countries and organizations, including NGOs. Themes explored included political and economic reform, private sector development, regional co-operation and integration, “Asian experience for African development”, and international co-operation. Of these the outstanding theme in terms of the development debate is “Asian experience for African development.” This continues to be the most important element of TICAD, with countries such as Malaysia and Thailand now emerging as donors instead of being aid recipients.

TICAD I resulted in “The Tokyo Declaration for African Development.” The relevance of Asia’s developmental experience for Africa is explored in the Declaration. It notes (i) the rational application of macro-economic policies and maintenance of political stability, and (ii) long-term investment in education and human resource development. It is in the Tokyo Declaration that the issue of African ownership is addressed, though not directly. The Declaration notes that economic and development strategies must be initiated by African governments based on their initiatives and values. Implicit in this is that African ownership means the state leads and is responsible for development. For their part, the Tokyo Declaration commits development partners to support those countries taking steps towards economic and political reform.

Soon after TICAD I the first Asia-Africa Forum (AAF I) was organized in 1994 in Indonesia to facilitate co-operation between Asia and Africa. A second Asia Africa Forum (AAF II) was convened in Bangkok, Thailand, in June 1997 in preparation for TICAD II and to emphasise some of the agreements reached at AAF I.

TICAD II

In 1998 TICAD II brought together representatives of 80 countries, including 15 heads of state and government along with senior officials from partner countries, and 40 international agencies, private sector institutions and 22 NGOs. A Preparatory Conference for TICAD II was held in Tokyo under the Co-Chairmanship of Ambassador Kunio Katakura, Chief Co-ordinator of Japan for TICAD II, and Ambassador Ould-Abdallah, Executive Secretary of the Global Coalition for Africa. The preparatory conference focused on four key themes: social sector development; agriculture and environment; conflict, peace and development; and governance. It also looked at the role of the private sector in stimulating long-term economic growth (to alleviate poverty) with the support of Africa's external partners who could implement debt relief measures, remove trade barriers, and assist the promotion and diversification of Africa's exports.

TICAD II itself focused on "poverty reduction through accelerated economic growth and sustainable development, and effective integration of the African economies into the global economy" as the primary theme of the "Tokyo Agenda for Action", adopted at the end of the conference. The key concept of the Agenda for Action is "the ownership by the African countries of their development initiatives", a concept that underscores the effort to make TICAD as inclusive as possible. With African ownership more directly addressed in this second declaration, it became clear that African governments were by this point becoming increasingly comfortable and confident with the TICAD process.

Education as "central to human capacity building" was given prominence in the Tokyo Agenda for Action. The Agenda acknowledges education as "the key to accelerated growth and sustained poverty reduction in East Asian economies." It aimed to i) ensure that at least 80 percent of children complete primary education by 2005, and universal primary education by 2015; ii) reduce adult illiteracy by half of the 1990 level by 2005, emphasising improvements in female literacy; iii) eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education by 2005; iv) improve the quality of education, and strengthen linkages between education and employment; and v) enhance national and regional capacities in the area of science and technology.

TICAD III

The third TICAD conference in 2003 has been the largest so far, with over 1000 participants from 89 participating countries. Twenty-three African heads of state or government attended TICAD III. Japanese policymakers consistently refer to the importance of the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) in the TICAD process. Then Japanese Prime Minister, Junichiro Koizumi, stated in 2003 that TICAD is a comprehensive exercise "to bring together knowledge and the experiences of the international community in African development in support of the New Partnership for Africa's Development", and it was at TICAD III that a formal commitment was made to support NEPAD.

As well as marking 10 years of the TICAD process and embracing NEPAD, this conference focused on poverty reduction through economic growth. Priorities on the development agenda included: consolidation of peace, capacity-building, human-centred development, infrastructure, agricultural development, private sector development, expansion of partnerships and dialogue with civil society. TICAD III produced the TICAD 10th Anniversary Declaration.

TICAD III was an idea-orientated conference that considered concepts of development. It did not seek to set goals, as TICAD II had done. World Trade Organisation talks were frequently referred to in this conference as only a few weeks earlier talks in Mexico had collapsed. This was particularly pertinent to discussion on agricultural development, given farm subsidies in developed countries. The Anniversary Declaration mentions failure of the talks and it calls for equitable trade. Not unrelated to this, the declaration also points to the need for a more supportive international environment, with Africa losing prominence once again in the post 9/11 environment.

TICAD III marked 10 years since the beginning of the initiative and in his keynote address Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi noted that Japan had provided \$12 billion in aid to Africa, trained more than 10,000 Africans in

Japan and sent more than 7,000 Japanese experts to Africa since the beginning of the process. The Prime Minister stressed human-centred development, poverty reduction through economic growth and the consolidation of peace as Japan's "three pillars" of assistance to Africa.³

TICAD IV: Towards a vibrant Africa

The fourth TICAD conference, themed "Towards a Vibrant Africa" takes place in Yokohama from May 28th – 30th. Its three priorities this year are boosting economic growth; ensuring human security; and addressing environmental issues and climate change. In his speech at the World Economic Forum annual meeting in January, Japanese Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda, noted that "development assistance should be based on self-help efforts by developing countries" and furthermore that "in order to accelerate growth in Africa, expansion of trade and investment is indispensable."

TICAD IV's preparatory conference was held in Gabon in March. This ministerial-level conference established the following priorities:

- 1 Strengthening regional infrastructure on roads and power – as set out in the recent Tokyo Infrastructural Consortium in March;
- 2 The use of ODA to trigger Africa's private sector with initiatives such as Africa–Asia business forums;
- 3 A focus on prevention and eradication of infectious diseases such as malaria, tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS;
- 4 The promotion of maternal and newborn health and health sector resources;
- 5 Education for all;
- 6 The promotion of safe drinking water and sanitation as part of the UN's theme for 2008;
- 7 The consolidation of peace in areas experiencing conflict, such as Chad, where Japan aided civilian police in their peacekeeping activities.

³ Summary by the chair of TICAD III, October 2003: <http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/africa/ticad3/chair-1.html>

This year marks the halfway point for achievement of the UN Millennium Development Goals and also is past some of the dates set at TICAD II for commitments to be met. TICAD IV offers an opportunity to evaluate progress made and reflect on the ability (or indeed commitment) of donors to meeting goals that have been set, as well as to celebrate many African countries' recent high economic growth rates.

Many of the discussion points for TICAD IV were features of previous conferences, and no doubt trade and international support will once again feature prominently, particularly because of the upcoming G8 summit in July. Though not on the agenda rising food prices are likely to also feature prominently during the conference, related as they are to trade, human security and environmental issues.

It is important to Japan that TICAD IV draws as good a turnout as TICAD III. Though a different kind of forum, 48 African countries were represented at the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, with 35 heads of state in attendance. India also hosted its own forum in April of this year with 14 African countries represented. Japan knows that in terms of investments it cannot compete with China, but success in terms of numbers at TICAD is still important as Japan values its relationships with African countries for reasons of international prestige and diplomatic sway. Increasingly, as it is harder for Japan to access China's resources, it is having to look to Africa to source its much needed rare metals for its high-tech industries.

Conclusion

A March 2007 proposal on TICAD IV from the African Diplomatic Corps in Tokyo noted that "TICAD's limited effectiveness on the ground reflects, in part, Japan's own approach to the continent - strong in terms of social development, but limited in the sector of economic development - including that of economic infrastructure." In recent years, Japan's approach to African development has been influenced by its sluggish economy and political instability. In terms of development assistance East Asia has historically been

Japan's priority, with Sub-Saharan Africa receiving about 10 percent of all ODA until recently.⁴ This is changing: as East Asian countries become more developed and need less development assistance, so Africa's share of Japanese ODA is growing. According to MOFA, while Japanese ODA has declined overall, aid to Africa in 2006 was more than treble that in 2005.

However, Japan's strength in terms of African development does not lay in the ability to inject huge amounts of cash in aid to the continent. Nor does it lay with investment: Japan's investments in Africa amounted to only 2.5% of all foreign investment in 2006. Though African countries are likely to welcome the use of ODA to stimulate private sector investment in Africa, what Japan can and should offer African nations is know-how and influence. It needs to use its own development experience and that of East Asia to influence Western donors to follow suit. It would also earn great respect from the developing world if it could make headway on trade and agricultural subsidies at the G8 summit in July, a matter notoriously difficult to push any progress on. Perceived as relatively neutral on Africa due to its comparatively few investments and less historical baggage, Japan is well-placed to press other G8 members on an African agenda.

Japan does have reasons to step-up its engagement with African countries. Its wish for UN Security Council reform and a permanent seat is challenged by emerging powers and other bidders for the position, such as India and Brazil. It also faces growing competition in resource access, but presently its diplomatic representation in Africa amounts to about half that of China in terms of country presence, and according to the Ambassador-designate of Japan to Botswana, Ryoichi Matsuyama, Japan has only 6000 nationals based in Africa compared to China's 750,000.⁵ Japan also needs Africa for greater diplomatic sway; for example, some point to the role of African votes at the International Whaling commission.

If Japan can effectively feed the Yokohama Declaration (the results of TICAD IV) into a G8 communiqué on Africa, it will be both to its advantage and Africa's advantage. That said, this year with new faces at the G8 (it is the first summit for Prime Minister Gordon Brown, President Dmitry Medvedev and

⁴ GRIPS Development Forum (2008) *Diversity and Complementarity in Development Aid: East Asian Lessons for African Growth*, pp.17: <http://www.grips.ac.jp/forum-e/D&CinDA.htm>

⁵ The Japan Times Online (2008) "Resource-rich Botswana lures Japan's interest", May 13th <http://search.japantimes.co.jp/cgi-bin/nb20080513n2.html>

Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda) and other hot topics such as climate change and the world economy, Japan will have to work hard to have its way on Africa. This challenge is important however, as TICAD presents itself as a global framework and its very raison d'être is to build international collective action on Africa. 2008 provides both an opportunity for and test of the TICAD process.

Elizabeth Donnelly is Coordinator of the Africa Programme at Chatham House and is attending TICAD IV. The Africa Programme is hosting a conference on June 24th with the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs on TICAD IV and its outcomes for the G8 summit. It is also conducting a project on Japan and the G8 presidency with funding from the Stavros Niarchos Foundation. Contact edonnelly@chathamhouse.org.uk

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