

# TICAD VI in Africa

## —The Spirit of Ownership and Partnership

**Junzo Fujita, Ambassador for TICAD and Ambassador in charge of Regional Economic Communities, Peace and Security in Africa at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs**



Photo: Yuichi Itabashi

**T**HE Sixth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD VI) will be held from 27 to 28 August 2016 in Nairobi, Kenya. We asked Junzo Fujita, Ambassador for TICAD, about the history of TICAD and the nature of Japan-Africa relations today.

### **What are the objectives and chief characteristics of TICAD?**

TICAD was launched at the initiative of the Government of Japan with the objective of having the international community join with African nations to think about the issues facing Africa and take actions to resolve those issues. When the first TICAD was held in Tokyo in 1993, shortly after the end of the Cold War, the international community's interest in Africa had faded. TICAD renewed interest in Africa around the world. One of the characteristics of TICAD is that it is an inclusive and open forum engaging not only Japanese and African government leaders but also international organizations, partner countries, private companies and NGOs. The basic philosophies of TICAD are "ownership" and "partnership." "Ownership" is the notion that African development should be self-reliant, pursued with Africa's own efforts. The "partnership" element refers to international support for such efforts. TICAD also has a follow-up mechanism to confirm the implementation of pledges announced at the summit-level meetings of TICAD.

### **What is the significance of TICAD being convened in Africa for the first time?**

African nations have long hoped to host the TICAD in Africa. In June 2014, the African Union (AU) adopted a resolution stating that the next TICAD would be hosted in Africa and also be convened every three years as opposed to the five-year interval until that time. In response to this resolution, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe confirmed at the United Nations General Assembly in September 2014 that TICAD would be held every three years, hosted alternately in Africa and Japan, and that TICAD VI would be convened in Africa in 2016.

TICAD VI will assess progress on the initiatives announced in the Yokohama Declaration 2013 and Yokohama Action Plan 2013-2017 adopted at TICAD V in 2013. TICAD VI will also address a range of issues that have been confronting Africa since 2013, including the Ebola outbreak, the increase in terrorist attacks, and the fall in international resource prices.

I am grateful that the African nations hoped to host TICAD in Africa on their own initiative. I believe that their decision to host the conference in Africa represents their strong appreciation and expectations for TICAD.

### **What are Africa's expectations of Japan?**

African nations are highly appreciative of Japan's Official Development Assistance (ODA), which has been implemented in a wide range of areas including education, health care, and infrastructure development. Today, they expect private sector investment from Japan in addition to ODA.

African nations have achieved strong economic growth over the past ten years or more, and the pace of this growth will be further accelerated with more private sector investment from Japan. African countries have perfect trust in Japanese products and technologies. We can demonstrate

our state-of-the-art scientific technologies in Africa in various areas such as IT, agriculture, medical and space science. For Japan's private sector, Africa has significant potential as a market with an extensive young labor force and multiple business opportunities. Given this background, a considerable number of Japanese companies will be participating in TICAD VI.

### **You served as Japan's Ambassador to Uganda from 2013 until this year. What are your impressions of Uganda?**

The people of Uganda are very friendly and cheerful, and I enjoyed working there. Uganda is an agricultural state with abundant fertile land. It is also blessed with plentiful natural resources, which has given me the overwhelming impression that the country has strong potential for growth in the future.

Human resource development is a key factor in enabling Uganda to achieve economic growth. For instance, a Japanese company is building a new bridge across the Nile River with an ODA project. The Japanese company involved in this construction project has been working hard to develop and train local engineers in the expectation that they will be capable of handling maintenance operations on their own after the completion of the construction.

For many years, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) has supported the Nakawa Vocational Training Institution in Kampala, the capital of Uganda. Even people with college degrees attend this school, attracted by the high job placement rate of its graduates.

I am convinced that promoting human resource development programs is one of the most important missions for Japan to perform, not only in Uganda but also in other African countries. 

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Inverview by OSAMU SAWAJI

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