

# Japan and the TICAD Process

Bert Edström

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**Bert Edström**

Institute for Security and Development Policy  
Västra Finnbodavägen 2, 131 30 Stockholm-Nacka, Sweden  
[www.isdp.eu](http://www.isdp.eu)

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1619 Massachusetts Ave. NW, Washington, D.C. 20036  
Tel. +1-202-663-7723; Fax. +1-202-663-7785  
E-mail: [caci2@jhuadig.admin.jhu.edu](mailto:caci2@jhuadig.admin.jhu.edu)

Editorial correspondence should be addressed to Dr. Bert Edström at: [bedstrom@isd.eu](mailto:bedstrom@isd.eu)

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## Executive Summary

In the aftermath of the end of the Cold War, Japan took the initiative of what became known as the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD). At the time, Japan's foreign policy faced considerable problems, as it was premised on the Cold War bifurcation of the world into two hostile blocs, while the African countries found themselves abandoned by other countries. The first TICAD conference was held in 1993. Subsequently, TICAD conferences have also convened in 1998, 2003, and 2008. Japan has, consistently, over the years promoted ownership – that reforms in African countries must be initiated and carried out by these countries themselves, based on their visions, values and socio-economic background, as well as spoken up for the Asian experience as something that African countries could learn from. Japan's relations with Africa got a boost when Prime Minister Mori Yoshirō invited three African heads of state to the G-8 Summit in Okinawa in 2000 and also paid a visit to South Africa, Kenya, and Nigeria in 2001. Mori is well-known as an ardent promoter of human security. When he acted as chairperson of TICAD III in 2003, it contributed to make human security a key issue on the TICAD agenda. A will to exert leadership on part of Japan can be discerned in the context of TICAD. This ambition was given a stamp of approval at TICAD IV in Yokohama 2008, when participants recognized that the TICAD Process had "Japan at its center."

## Introduction<sup>1</sup>

The postwar world casts its skin. The system of international relations that was born as a result of the outcome of the Second World War is changing. Countries and regions long on the periphery are moving onto the center of the world stage, not only on account of war and conflict, as in the past, but also because of raised expectations over their bright future. In the world of today, one such region is Africa, until relatively recently characterized almost exclusively in terms of war and conflict, horrendous poverty, corruption, reckless rulers, and repression. Such traits still remain, of course, but Africa is also increasingly seen in terms of its potential. In an era of globalization, the continent of Africa can no longer be ignored, both because of its riches but also because of its problems. Japan's Prime Minister Mori Yoshirō stated in South Africa during his official visit to three African countries in 2001: "There will be no stability and prosperity in the world in the 21st Century unless the problems of Africa are resolved."<sup>2</sup> His words had a prophetic ring and a decade later it is easy to see that his insight was well-founded. Mori, if he were speaking today, would probably add that there will be no stability and prosperity in the world in the twenty-first century unless not only the problems of Africa are resolved but also the potential and riches of the continent are mobilized for the good of the world.

Prime Minister Mori's visit to South Africa, Kenya, and Nigeria on January 7–13, 2001 was epochal, at least in one sense. It was the first official visit to Africa by an incumbent Japanese prime minister. During the entire twentieth century none of Mori's predecessors had found it worthwhile to visit Africa.<sup>3</sup> In contrast, visits of high-level emissaries and representatives in the other direction, from Africa to Japan, had been common. Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia made a state visit in 1956, which initiated a succession of visits by kings, presidents, and other head-of-state-level dignitaries from

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<sup>1</sup> Paper prepared for presentation at the Nordic Africa Days, Åbo Akademi University, Åbo/Turku, Finland, September 30–October 1, 2010.

<sup>2</sup> "Speech by Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori, 'Africa and Japan in the New Century'," at Gallagher Estate, Midrand, Republic of South Africa, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, January 9, 2001, [http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/africa/pmv0101/pmspeech\\_s.html](http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/africa/pmv0101/pmspeech_s.html)

<sup>3</sup> Oda Hideo, "Japan-Africa Relations in the Twenty-first Century," *Gaiko Forum*, Winter 2002, p. 42.



Africa almost every year, often several times a year. Thus, for decades into the postwar period Africa continued to be treated as an area of secondary importance by Japan and the Japanese. As late as in 1982, a leading scholar on the Japanese-African relationship characterized Africa as remaining "Japan's continent-sized blind spot."<sup>4</sup> Despite the fact that decolonization and the struggle for independence had resulted in many new independent countries in Africa, the Japanese relationship with Africa was weak and unbalanced.

In the prewar period, Japan's relations with Africa were limited to just a few countries, and the lack of interest in Africa and African countries continued for decades into the postwar period. However, even while relations between Japan and the African continent were meager, that is not to say that they did not occasionally emerge on Japan's diplomatic horizon. In the initial postwar years, Japan needed the support, among others, of African countries to enter the United Nations; the Japanese government submitted its first application for UN membership immediately after it regained sovereignty in 1952. At the time, Japan was a member of the Afro-Asian group.

Even though the struggle for independence and decolonization resulted in the emergence of dozens of new independent countries from the 1960s, it had little impact on Japan's diplomacy. The intervals between diplomatic milestones in Japan's relationship with Africa were long. It took nearly a decade from the Division of African Affairs being established in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) in 1961 until the Diet Association of African Economic Development was inaugurated in April 1970. Japan's key instrument in its foreign policy tool box – Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) – began also, albeit hesitatingly, to target Africa, with Japanese disbursement to five African states: Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Tanzania, and Uganda. The aid flows to these countries were rather modest in the beginning, and were mainly in reciprocation for their lowered import restrictions on Japanese goods.<sup>5</sup> This is no surprise since, at this time, Japan's diplomacy excelled in *keizai gaikō*, "economic diplomacy," and Japan's foreign policy was often described as more or less equal to trade policy. Leading politicians at that

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<sup>4</sup> S. Olu Agbi, "Japan's continent-sized blind spot," *The Japan Times*, June 6, 1982.

<sup>5</sup> Jun Morikawa, *Japan: Big Business and Diplomacy* (London: Hurst, 1997), quoted in Scarlett Cornelissen, "Japan-Africa relations: patterns and prospects," in Ian Taylor, Paul Williams, eds., *Africa in International Politics: External Involvement on the Continent* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004), p. 2.

time saw no problem in admitting, rather bluntly, the fact that aid was being used to promote Japanese exports, an accusation that was leveled at Japan. In 1959 Prime Minister Kishi Nobusuke announced his government's intention "to strengthen the basis for the development of overseas markets through aid funds."<sup>6</sup> The commencement of Japan's aid to several African countries can be seen as an illustration of the application of this thinking.

While Japanese aid to Africa took shape, its volume remained low. Before the 1973 "oil crisis," aid flows to Africa from Japan did not exceed three percent of Japan's total foreign aid.<sup>7</sup> In the wake of the oil crises of the 1970s, however, representatives of African countries in Japan demonstrated that they had studied Henry Kissinger. At the height of the 1973 oil crisis, the latter had pointed out that "the Arabs can use oil as a weapon, and we can use food as a weapon."<sup>8</sup> In a subsequent move, African diplomats told Japan that Africa had tremendous potential to provide it with natural resources, but will "only support those countries that support us."<sup>9</sup>

Whether it was such sentiments and opinions that had an impact is unclear, but Japan's diplomacy began to grind into action in the wake of the 1973 "oil crisis." In its aftermath, Prime Minister Tanaka Kakuei launched the Japanese *shigen gaikō*, "resources diplomacy."<sup>10</sup> Despite the use of this term, it was not resources per se but rather oil that was in focus as a result of the oil crisis, even though it is often claimed in hindsight that the focus was on resources more generally.<sup>11</sup> Thus, in the aftermath of the 1973 oil crisis, an increasing Japanese interest in Africa could be seen.<sup>12</sup> In November 1974,

<sup>6</sup> Quoted in Bert Edström, *Japan's Evolving Foreign Policy Doctrine: From Yoshida to Miyazawa* (New York, N.Y.: St. Martin's Press, 1999), p. 40.

<sup>7</sup> William Nester, "The Third World in Japanese Foreign Policy," in Kathleen Newland, ed., *The International Relations of Japan* (Houndmills, Basingstoke and London: Macmillan, 1990), p. 94.

<sup>8</sup> "Near East & South Asia," JPRS Report, Foreign Broadcast Information Service, JPRS-NEA-93-056, April 30, 1993, <http://www.dtic.mil/cgi-bin/GetTRDoc?Location=U2&doc=GetTRDoc.pdf&AD=ADA334584>

<sup>9</sup> Quoted in Kweku Ampiah, *The dynamics of Japan's relations with Africa: South Africa, Tanzania and Nigeria* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), p. 54.

<sup>10</sup> On Tanaka's resource diplomacy, see Valerie Yorke, "Oil, the Middle East and Japan's search for security," in Nobutoshi Akao, ed., *Japan's Economic Security: Resources as a Factor in Foreign Policy* (Aldershot, Hampshire: Gower for the Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1983), pp. 52–56.

<sup>11</sup> See, e.g., Oda Hideo, ed., *Afurika no seiji to kokusai kankei* [African politics and international relations] (Tokyo: Keisō shobō, 1991), pp. 318f.

<sup>12</sup> Hideo Oda and Kazuyoshi Aoki, "Japan and Africa: Beyond the Fragile Partnership,"

the foreign minister in the Miki Takeo government, Kimura Toshio, became the first Japanese cabinet minister to visit Africa, with a round tour to Egypt and four countries in sub-Saharan Africa, Ghana, Nigeria, Zaire, and Tanzania. The visit was a token of the interest in Africa shown by Tanaka's successor Miki Takeo in the aftermath of the oil crisis. But his interest was rather shallow. It is hard to detect that he had any genuine interest in the continent. When Miki brought up Africa in policy speeches in the Diet, he merely mentioned that relations should be expanded. His rather lackluster pronouncements on the subject are probably best interpreted as an outflow of the necessity to further relations with a continent that was now perceived to be important for world oil supplies.<sup>13</sup>

Not much had changed. When Japan's economy recovered after the 1973 relatively quickly, its Africa diplomacy lost momentum.<sup>14</sup> Ten years later, such a renowned authority on Japan as Ronald Dore, referring to the fact that Africa was the origin of only six percent of Japan's metal raw materials imports, claimed that "Africa could disappear from the globe with little lasting effect on Japan's resource position."<sup>15</sup> His view was rather exaggerated, however. Africa's share in Japan's gross imports and exports might have been rather small in relative terms, but considering the fact that Japan's imports and exports increased dramatically – Japan began to take on the shape of an economic superpower during these years – it is a mistake to underestimate the importance of exchanges, both for Japan and its African counterparts. Japan was exercising its "resources diplomacy," with the result that its ODA to Africa was concentrated on only a few countries. There was a clear correlation between countries being recipients of Japanese ODA and being sources of important raw materials. The major recipient countries were Zambia and Zaire, who were important exporters of copper, Niger with its uranium, and Madagascar with its chromium. Japan also directed ODA to two countries that were potentially important export markets for Japanese products, Kenya and Nigeria.<sup>16</sup> Japanese ODA to Sudan and

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in Robert S. Ozaki and Walter Arnold, eds., *Japan's Foreign Relations: A Global Search for Economic Security* (Boulder and London: Westview Press, 1985), pp. 156f.

<sup>13</sup> Edström, *Japan's Evolving Foreign Policy Doctrine*, p. 88.

<sup>14</sup> Oda and Aoki, "Japan and Africa," p. 157.

<sup>15</sup> Ronald Dore, "Japan and the Third World: Coincidence or Divergence of Interest?" in Robert Cassen, ed., *Rich Country Interest and Third World Development* (London: Croom Helm, 1982), p. 141.

<sup>16</sup> Peter J. Schrader, Bruce Taylor, Steven W. Hook, "Clarifying the Foreign Aid Puzzle:

Somalia also increased substantially. In Sudan's case, it was potentially an important exporter of raw materials and oil, which merited Japan's interest; but the increasing aid was also motivated by the fact that it was a neighbor to Ethiopia, a country where the Soviet Union had stepped up its activities.<sup>17</sup>

The importance of African countries in world politics became more pronounced with the end of colonialism and the birth of independent nations, which increased the political clout of African countries, not least in the United Nations. To Japan, which had budding ambitions to become a member of the UN Security Council, the voice of African countries could not be neglected. With the increasing number of UN members located in sub-Saharan Africa, African votes counted as was shown in 1978 when Japan failed to secure enough votes to gain a seat on the Security Council as a nonpermanent member.<sup>18</sup> The contrast with 1956 when African votes contributed to Japan being accepted as a member of the United Nations was clear and was duly taken into account by Japan.

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A Comparison of American, Japanese, French, and Swedish Aid Flows," *World Politics*, Vol. 50, No. 2 (1998), p. 301.

<sup>17</sup> Juichi Inada, "Japan's Aid Diplomacy: Economic, Political or Strategic?" in Newland, ed., *The International Relations of Japan*, p. 106.

<sup>18</sup> Ogura Kazuo, "Reconsidering Japan's Foreign Policy," *Gaiko Forum*, Fall 2003, p. 58.

## Japan's TICAD Initiative

The pre-TICAD period from the late 1960s to early 1990s has been characterized by the leading Japanese diplomat Ogura Kazuo as one where Japan's interest focused on economic interests. "The standard view," he writes, "was that Africa was a market for Japan's industrial output and a supplier of mineral resources and other primary products."<sup>19</sup> This, however, is to underestimate the scope of Japan's international policy. During the Cold War, while Africa was not a key interest for Japan, it could not ignore it either. Japan's policy towards Africa and African countries can be described as being embedded in the international policy of Japan, with its solid foothold in the Western bloc led by the United States and pitted against Communism. For Japan, it was, therefore, important to act as a member of the Western bloc during the Cold War. While Japanese interest in Africa was by no means huge, Africa as a pawn in the strategic power play between the two opposing camps could also not be ignored by Japan. This was expressed with graphic clarity in 1984 by Foreign Minister Abe Shintarō, who emphasized Africa's importance in the East-West nexus and stated that the major diplomatic objective of Japan was "to use its economic influence to help entrench African countries in the Western camp."<sup>20</sup>

In a sense the basis of Japan's foreign policy changed with the fall of the Berlin Wall, which signaled the end of the Cold War. The end of the bifurcation of the world into two antagonistic blocs saw Japan-Africa relations enter a new phase, if not for any reason other than the fact that the precondition for embeddedness described above ceased to exist. Both Japan and African countries had to tread a new path in the new international situation. For Africa, the end of the East-West confrontation meant that the associated geopolitical interests in Africa created by the former were no longer operative. The motivation for the United States and other leading Western countries to induce African countries to ally themselves with the Western bloc ceased to exist, and the attention of the donor nations of the West came to focus on Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. To this was added

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 57.

<sup>20</sup> Quoted in Morikawa, *Japan: Big Business and Diplomacy*, p. 10.

that Western donors had begun to feel aid fatigue after what was seen as Africa's "lost decade" in the 1980s.<sup>21</sup>

In response to this aid fatigue, Japan took the initiative in trying to effectively counter the rising Afro-pessimism.<sup>22</sup> At a UN General Assembly meeting in 1991, Japan proposed that an international conference be convened to promote high-level policy dialogue between African leaders and development partners. This conference is now known as the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD).<sup>23</sup> It has been argued by the leading African Japan specialist Seifudein Adem that "[t]he launching of TICAD was one of the initiatives born out of Japan's self-confidence."<sup>24</sup> Yet the real reason could not be further from what Adem claims. In fact, TICAD was launched in the aftermath of, and as a counter-move to, what Tokyo saw as a plain disaster for its foreign policy: Japan's involvement, or rather the lack thereof, in the 1991 war against Saddam Hussein. Citing constitutional restraints, Japan, instead of dispatching soldiers to participate in the UN-authorized, U.S.-led war against Iraq, shouldered a sizeable part of the financial burden of the war effort, contributing US\$13 billion to the military campaign against Iraq. To the consternation of the Japanese government and Japanese in general, Japan came in for derisive criticism rather than earning praise for its financial generosity. The leading international relations scholar Soeya Yoshihide went even further and described the outcome of the 1991 Persian Gulf War on Japan's foreign policy as "absolute humiliation."<sup>25</sup>

Japan's foreign policy thus found itself in disarray with self-confidence at a nadir. It was readily recognized that Japan faced an arduous fight for regaining not only international respect but also self-confidence. Basically, Japan had to reorient its capsized foreign policy of previous decades.

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<sup>21</sup> Shinsuke Horiuchi, "TICAD after 10 Years: A Preliminary Assessment and Proposals for the Future," *African and Asian Studies*, Vol. 4, No. 4 (2005), p. 469.

<sup>22</sup> "What is TICAD?" Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, <http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/africa/ticad/what.html>

<sup>23</sup> Jun Morikawa, "Japan and Africa after the Cold War," *African and Asian Studies*, Vol. 4, No. 4 (2005), p. 204.

<sup>24</sup> Seifudein Adem, "Japan in Africa: Diplomacy of Continuity and Change," paper presented at the conference on "Africa in Contemporary International Relations: Contexts, Stakes, Actors and Issues," Grand Valley State University, September 21-22, 2009, Grand Rapids, MI, p. 6.

<sup>25</sup> Bert Edström, *Japan and the Challenge of Human Security: The Founding of a New Policy, 1995–2003* (Stockholm: Institute for Security and Development Policy, 2008), pp. 66f.

In this phase, when Japan had to chart out a new course for its foreign policy, relations with Africa came into the limelight. Most important was the interest Tokyo had in regaining its standing and voice in the world. With the increasing prominence of African countries in world politics, it was in Japan's interest to strengthen its relations with these countries. With ODA the key tool in Japan's foreign policy tool box and given the humanitarian needs in Africa, it was a matter-of-course that the Japanese government mobilized its ODA policy.

### **TICAD I (1993)**

It was in a move by Japan to burnish its international image that TICAD convened in Tokyo on October 5-6, 1993. That Japan took the initiative in convening a large-scale African development conference was met by astonishment from African countries, used as they were to Japan taking a back seat in world politics – and as the latter had hitherto not shown any particular interest in Africa in comparison to European countries and the United States.<sup>26</sup> This notwithstanding, Japan made an auspicious start: it secured the participation of representatives from 48 African countries, 13 donor states, 10 international organizations, and more than 45 observer countries and organizations including non-governmental organizations (NGOs).<sup>27</sup> In his keynote speech, Prime Minister Hosokawa Morihiro pledged that “Japan will continue to actively support Africa's political and economic reforms.”<sup>28</sup>

The conference adopted the Tokyo Declaration on African Development. With its 2,700 words, it was a fairly short document, with a political focus on: democratization, respect for human rights, and good governance; as well as an economic focus: on diversification and liberalization of economic activities, poverty reduction, and improved general welfare by means of increased employment opportunities and expanded social services. The adoption of the Declaration made the conference a success for Japan in the sense that it had been able to influence agenda-setting, inducing discussions

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<sup>26</sup> Morikawa, “Japan and Africa after the Cold War,” p. 486.

<sup>27</sup> “List of the Participating Delegations of the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (October 5-6, 1993, Tokyo, Japan),” Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, <http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/africa/ticad/list/africa.html>

<sup>28</sup> “Keynote address by Prime Minister Morihiro Hosokawa of Japan at the Tokyo International Conference on African Development, Tokyo, October 5, 1993, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, <http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/africa/ticad/address9310.html>



focused on issues that were of vital interest for Japan in at least two respects. At the outset of the conference, the Japanese hosts presented the conference as a multilateral initiative with the two-fold aim of promoting high-level policy dialogue between African leaders and their partners and mobilizing support for African-owned development initiatives. These objectives were said to be embodied in the concepts of “ownership” and “partnership.”<sup>29</sup>

“Ownership” was made a lodestar in Japan’s effort to promote African development as well as Japan’s relations with the continent. Paragraph 5 of the Tokyo Declaration on African Development states that “political, economic and social reforms must be initiated and carried out by African countries themselves, based on their visions, values and individual socio-economic background.” The emphasis on inclusive orientation as well as on the idea of ownership by African nations of the development process within their respective countries became a central idea of “the TICAD framework,” one that began to take shape at the conference and would continue to loom large at subsequent TICAD conferences.<sup>30</sup>

In a speech at the TICAD conference, Japan’s Deputy Foreign Minister Matsuura Kōichirō used the term “ownership” in the sense of “the attitude of taking charge of one’s affairs and assuming responsibility for the consequences.”<sup>31</sup> The Japanese view of ownership was based on the country’s own history. The Japanese diplomat Enoki Yasukuni, who was involved in the TICAD process, has testified that “the basic attitude of Japan to fully respect the ownership of the recipient government in conducting development aid is derived from her own historical experiences in the modernization process. The modernization process of Japan since the Meiji era was a history to harmonize through exercising full ownership the introduction of modernization and the preservation of traditional culture.”<sup>32</sup> The experience of the Japanese made them put “an emphasis on ‘self-help’ [that] runs through Japan’s aid planning and implementation, a focus that derives from

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<sup>29</sup> “About TICAD,” Tokyo International Conference on African Development, <http://www.ticad.net/about.shtml>

<sup>30</sup> Kweku Ampiah, “Japan and the Development of Africa: A Preliminary Evaluation of the Tokyo International Conference on African Development,” *African Affairs*, 104/414 (2005), p. 97.

<sup>31</sup> Horiuchi, “TICAD after 10 Years,” p. 470.

<sup>32</sup> Quoted in Howard P. Lehman, “Japan’s Foreign Aid Policy to Africa Since the Tokyo International Conference on African Development,” *Pacific Affairs*, Vol. 78, No. 3 (Fall 2005), p. 436.



Japan's experience of postwar economic development, which depended relatively little on foreign aid."<sup>33</sup> Self-help emphasizes that "aid means helping those who help themselves – i.e., supporting the people of developing countries in their own efforts to improve their present circumstances, efforts that are their responsibility to work out for themselves."<sup>34</sup>

Self-help had important implications for Japan's ODA policy that was now mobilized. Due to its historical past, Japan differed from other Western donors and had no ambition of telling aid recipients what to do or what to prioritize. It expected the recipient country to instead identify its own needs, and then to initiate dialogue with Japan over aid with an informed request, thereby not forcing Japan's views on recipient countries; this is called the *yōseishugi* process, or request-based disbursement of ODA. This approach made Japan clash with other important Western donors like the World Bank and IMF, who rejected that Africans formulate the rules for African development. The *yōseishugi* view also represented the underpinning of Japan's view of the importance of ownership.

The second lodestar for Japan's ambitions to set the agenda was to promote the view that the Asian experience was something that African countries could learn from; in particular lessons drawn from the economic development in East and Southeast Asia. Tokyo seemed to have been provided with good arguments as the Japan-sponsored World Bank report *The East Asian Miracle* had been issued and created quite a stir.<sup>35</sup> Japan could claim for itself success in this endeavor. The Tokyo Declaration on African Development stated that while "no one model of development can be simply transferred from one region to another...some relevance of the Asian experience for African development" was acknowledged. "The very diversity of successful Asian countries gives hope that lessons can be drawn for African development. Participants had noted "that as demonstrated by the successful examples of the Asian development experience, the backdrop of development success lies in the combination of a strong commitment by the

<sup>33</sup> Richard Grant, "Japan: A Foreign Superpower," in Richard Grant and Jan Nijman, eds., *The Global Crisis in Foreign Aid* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1998), p. 45.

<sup>34</sup> Nishigaki Akira and Shimomura Yazutami, *The Economics of Development Assistance: Japan's ODA in a Symbiotic World* (Tokyo: LTCB International Library Foundation, 1999), p. 153.

<sup>35</sup> World Bank, *The East Asian Miracle: Economic Growth and Public Policy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).

leadership and the people to economic prosperity, appropriate long-term development strategies and functional government administration to pursue these strategies coherently.”<sup>36</sup>

The TICAD conference saw a meeting of kindred spirits in that Japan’s disinterest in interfering in the internal affairs of other countries resonated among participants from Africa, used as they were to receiving lectures from Westerners. Too long had the Africans been under the yoke of foreign masters, with the rules of the game imposed by colonial master and donors. Japan had no problems with going along with the view expressed by one of the African leaders participating at the TICAD conference: “Uganda’s President Yowen Museveni told the Tokyo conference that donors should not interfere in Africa’s general development. Foreigners had interfered with Africa for the past 500 years, he said, and its present crisis had been caused mainly by outsiders.”<sup>37</sup>

Having been able to put its two priorities – ownership and the relevance of Asian experiences for African development – on the agenda, the result of the TICAD conference earned Japan a feather in its cap and went some way to redressing its perceived foreign policy debacle during the 1991 Gulf War. It demonstrated, at least to the Japanese, that their country was back on track in international politics, bent on regaining its former position as one of the world’s leading countries.

At the outset of the TICAD conference, Prime Minister Hosokawa Morihiro declared in his keynote speech that it was payback time for Japan: “After World War II, Japan benefited greatly from the generous assistance from the international community. It is time for my country to return this goodwill by taking an active role in assisting Africa, among others, in cooperation with the United Nations and other members of the international community.”<sup>38</sup> Behind Japanese declarations of goodwill, some spotted a hidden agenda. Scarlett Cornelissen has argued that Japanese patronage was rather “aimed at drawing political dividend from a raised international

<sup>36</sup> Tokyo Declaration on African Development, §§23, 24.

<sup>37</sup> Quoted in Khairul Hanim Pazim, “Japan’s Positive Aid Sanctions Policies: Case Study of African Developing Countries,” MPRA Paper No. 11917, December 4, 2008, <http://mpra.ub.uni-muenchen.de/11917/>

<sup>38</sup> “Keynote address by Prime Minister Morihiro Hosokawa of Japan at the Tokyo International Conference on African Development,” Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, Tokyo, October 5, 1993, <http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/africa/ticad/address9310.html>

profile as a benevolent collaborator in Africa's development."<sup>39</sup> The assistance that Japan offered to Africa "in cooperation with the United Nations and other members of the international community" was essentially an offer of Asian leadership in Africa's development process, under the pretext Africa could learn from the experience of Asian development – namely, that of Japan whose modern history was a showcase and a success story.

The TICAD conference was a promising first step in the direction of restoring Japan's foreign policy after 1991 and of promoting its standing vis-à-vis the African continent, which was becoming increasingly important but had long been neglected by Tokyo. In short, it was a question of demonstrating international leadership on the part of Japan. Already at the end of TICAD I, the Japanese government announced that a new TICAD conference would follow five years later, in order to "chart strategic direction for African development into the 21st century."<sup>40</sup> With this, Japanese leadership ambitions were laid bare.

## TICAD II (1998)

The second TICAD conference convened in Tokyo on October 19–20, 1998. With delegates from 80 countries, 40 international organizations, and 22 NGOs, it eclipsed the previous conference in terms of participation.<sup>41</sup> The increasing interest in the Japanese initiative reflected developments both in Africa and Japan. The end of the apartheid system in South Africa and the emergence of a new government headed by President Nelson Mandela in 1994, the year after the first TICAD conference, was a moment of unbridled optimism not only for South Africa and all African countries but for the world, giving hope of a better future for millions still suffering from oppression. Such prospects were tempered, however, by the horrifying genocide in Rwanda and the ravages of civil wars in other African countries that resulted in millions of casualties.

<sup>39</sup> Cornelissen, "Japan-Africa relations: patterns and prospects," p. 5.

<sup>40</sup> Njunga Mulikita, "Japan's Conference, Diplomacy and African Development," *Southern African Political and Economic Monthly*, Vol. 13, No. 3 (December 1999), p. 53; as quoted in Lehman, "Japan's Foreign Aid Policy to Africa Since the Tokyo International Conference on African Development," p. 430.

<sup>41</sup> "TICAD II Outline: Second Tokyo International Conference on African Development," Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, <http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/africa/ticad2/outline.html>

The expanded participation at the second TICAD conference was also influenced by events in Asia. In May 1997, an economic and financial crisis broke out when economic problems in Thailand triggered a run on the Thai *baht*. The crisis spread to other countries in the region and continued well into 1998, dealing a serious blow to the emerging economies of Africa. Being the economic powerhouse in East Asia, Japan put up massive support for hard-hit countries in the region, totaling US\$80 bn. The question in the TICAD context was whether Japan would be able, or willing, to also support struggling countries in Africa, especially since a preparatory meeting in Tokyo on November 10-11, 1997, had decided that TICAD II would be a non-pledging conference.<sup>42</sup>

There was a basic continuity in aims from TICAD to TICAD II that was clarified in a key document produced for the conference according to which "TICAD I involved outlining the problem areas in African development and tried to focus on the general means for addressing these issues. TICAD II aims to focus more specifically on the areas to be developed, using the framework outlined in TICAD as a basis for cooperation."<sup>43</sup>

The Tokyo Agenda for Action that was adopted dealt with three broad areas: (1) social development (education, health and population, and other measures to assist the poor); (2) economic development (private sector development, industrial development, agricultural development, and external debt); and (3) basic foundation for development (good governance, conflict prevention, and post-conflict development).

Poverty alleviation constituted the top priority. The ambition was to take measures in order to reduce the "proportion of the population living in extreme poverty by at least one-half by the year 2015." A key role for attaining this goal was seen to be played by the private sector in forging and sustaining long-term economic growth. At the same time, the state was expected to take more positive actions in every sphere of activity. The Tokyo Agenda for Action introduced ideas of mobilization of resources that could be obtained by the rationalization of public investments, creation of employment opportunities, improvements in income distribution, revitalization of rural communities, improvement of public expenditures, and expansion of social services, especially safety nets. The key role given to the

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<sup>42</sup> Ampiah, "Japan and the Development of Africa," p. 103.

<sup>43</sup> "TICAD: Aims, Achievements, and Future Prospects," p. 9.

state was based on the malfunctioning of the market system in Africa. The Tokyo Agenda for Action argued that there should be a continuous dialogue between government, the private sector, and civil society, and that, in turn, it could form a basis for ownership.<sup>44</sup>

The issue of ownership that had loomed large at TICAD continued to be a key concern at TICAD II. It was stressed that the key role of the private sector should be supported by Africa's external partners. This, however, did not mean that they should take leadership, but that they should limit themselves to "to gently prodding on self-reliance efforts."<sup>45</sup> The Tokyo Agenda for Action stated that planning and decision making should be shifted to African countries: "The 1995 Cairo Agenda for Action defines the economic and social development priorities for Africa as determined by Africa itself, and the TICAD-II initiative is in support of these priorities. Ownership is derived when development priorities, as set by Africa, are pursued."<sup>46</sup>

African ownership fitted Japan's way of providing assistance to African countries with its emphasis on the importance of self-help. In marked contrast to the development strategies and policies of the World Bank and other Western donors, Japan argued that not solely debt relief and the extension of new grants should be used for reducing poverty but economic production.<sup>47</sup> And, again, Japan could push for one of its most cherished ideas which had been forwarded already at TICAD: African countries could learn from Asia's economic success story.

Japan's insistence on self-help and aversion to poking its nose into the internal affairs of other countries was a legacy of Japan's unfortunate recent history and the mistakes it had committed. Nevertheless, Japan did not hesitate to advocate reforms based on its status as a Western democracy. The Tokyo Agenda for Action requested that African governments should strengthen constitutional legitimacy and democratic systems by ensuring that democratic elections are truly free and fair, establish independent and impartial judiciaries, prevent corruption, promote decentralization, and restructure their civil services. On their part, donors (called development partners) should support the efforts by African governments to enhance

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<sup>44</sup> The Tokyo Agenda for Action, §9.

<sup>45</sup> Horiuchi, "TICAD after 10 Years," p. 476.

<sup>46</sup> The Tokyo Agenda for Action, §9.

<sup>47</sup> Lehman, "Japan's Foreign Aid Policy to Africa Since the Tokyo International Conference on African Development," p. 433.

capacity building in the legislature, judiciary, and executive branch of the government.<sup>48</sup>

Given the fact that many African countries were dictatorships exhibiting a lack of checks and balances in government, and were marked by widespread corruption, and that democratization and free market economies were something that Western donors in any case tried to impose on African countries, the drive for democratization found in the Tokyo Agenda for Action might be seen as having been out of place. The inclusion of democracy should not be a surprise, however. Japan was only one of many donors participating in TICAD II, and for other Western countries democratization was a *sine qua none* for development. Given the lessons the Japanese had drawn from the country's recent history, it was not Japan's cup of tea, however. Horiuchi Shinsuke, Japan's former Ambassador of Japan to Kenya and a leading commentator on African matters, was later to regret that support in the area of good governance and democratization was not the main thrust of Japanese ODA as a co-organizer of TICAD.<sup>49</sup> But this added to the feel good atmosphere around the TICAD process with its participation not only of Nelson Mandela's South Africa, the shining beacon of the world that was emerging after the end of the Cold War, but also representatives from dictatorships and oppressive regimes. When the Tokyo Agenda for Action had been adopted with its intention "to guide concrete policy implementation by African countries and their partners for African development toward the 21st century," as the TICAD II co-chairs stated,<sup>50</sup> Japan had come closer to fulfilling its ambition to be seen as a key partner to African countries in the promotion of their development and in achieving this and, highlighting what it considered the success of the Asian development model, demonstrating leadership on the world stage.

In its summary of the proceedings of TICAD II, MOFA argued that the conference "provided an invaluable opportunity for the African leaders and their counterparts to share understanding that in order to reduce poverty and improve quality of life in Africa, Africa's ownership and partnership between Africa and other countries should be enhanced."<sup>51</sup> It is not too

<sup>48</sup> The Tokyo Agenda for Action, §§30, 31.

<sup>49</sup> Horiuchi, "TICAD after 10 Years," p. 473.

<sup>50</sup> Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 472.

<sup>51</sup> "TICAD II Outline: Second Tokyo International Conference on African Development," Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, <http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/africa/ticad2/>

farfetched to see in such a formulation the interest of the Japanese government in demonstrating international leadership, something which had been alluded to in Prime Minister Hosokawa's keynote speech at the conference five years before. At the beginning of the 1990s, Japan became the world's largest ODA donor, a feat that the Japanese were justifiably proud of. Excelling in its ODA, Japan sought to demonstrate leadership in the donor community by taking a more distinctive path in its foreign aid policy towards Africa.<sup>52</sup> As a leading specialist in Japan's relations with Africa wrote, TICAD II "created confidence in Japanese foreign policy to either initiate new foreign policy endeavors or to partner with other foreign governments. For Japan, TICAD solidified its preeminent role in world affairs."<sup>53</sup> To MOFA officials and foreign policy-makers, Japan was right on track.

### **TICAD III (2003)**

The third TICAD conference convened in Tokyo from September 29 to October 1, 2003. Participation was even more comprehensive than the two previous conferences, with delegates representing 89 countries – 50 of which were from Africa – including 23 heads of state from Africa, and 47 international organizations.<sup>54</sup> The expansion of participation reflected the increasing importance of African countries in Japanese foreign policy as well as in world affairs, not only due to the customarily depressing stories related to HIV/Aids, dictators, war, famine, and oppression, but also to optimism over budding democracies and economic progress and, not least, the key role played by some African countries in the United Nations.

In a planning document for TICAD III issued in 2002, MOFA officials listed the aims of the conference as: 1) to awaken international attention towards Africa; 2) to promote African ownership; and 3) to strengthen international partnership.<sup>55</sup> The aims were not new but rather a continuation

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outline.html

<sup>52</sup> Howard P. Lehman, "The Asian Economic Model in Africa: Japanese Developmental Lessons for Africa," Draft prepared for the annual meeting of the International Studies Association, March 26-29, 2008, San Francisco, California, p. 2.

<sup>53</sup> Lehman, "Japan's Foreign Aid Policy to Africa Since the Tokyo International Conference on African Development," p. 434.

<sup>54</sup> "Summary by the Chair of TICAD III," October 1, 2003, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, <http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/africa/ticad3/chair-1.html>

<sup>55</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, "Outline of Agenda for TICAD III," Tokyo 2002; referred to in Lehman, "Japan's Foreign Aid Policy to Africa Since the Tokyo



of the intentions outlined in the two previous conferences. The Japanese interest in continuing on the same track was also clear when Foreign Minister Kawaguchi Yoriko presented the objectives of TICAD III to the African Union in August 2002: "We believe that Asia's experience and expertise in development may also be useful for African development in the twenty-first century, because Asia, in the latter part of the twentieth century, approached development challenges that are similar to Africa's situation from a somewhat different angle and with some remarkable results."<sup>56</sup> Japan's stress on the importance of economic development for poverty reduction was made all the more clear in the statement that "without economic growth, poverty reduction cannot be realized."<sup>57</sup>

To prepare for TICAD III, a meeting was held in Dakar, Senegal. From the chair's summary report, aspects of human security emerged as one of the areas that came under focus. The report pointed out that "HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases [are] a menace to human security and undermine African development."<sup>58</sup> The seriousness was obvious since bringing about development was a key objective of the TICAD process. The inclusion of this aspect was in line with developments seen in Japan's foreign policy after TICAD II.

The chair of TICAD III was Mori Yoshirō, Prime Minister of Japan 2000-01. His selection was indicative of the importance the Japanese government attached to TICAD and Japan's relations with African countries. While Mori's time in office had been short, he had nevertheless made an imprint that made him eminently suitable to chair the conference. As prime minister he had focused on Africa in his foreign policy. As the host of the G-8 Okinawa Summit in 2000, he invited three African heads of state, President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria, President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa, and President Abdelaziz Bouteflika of Algeria. Mori also became the first incumbent prime minister to go to Africa in an official capacity, visiting South Africa, Kenya, and Nigeria. During his visit he gave a keynote speech in

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International Conference on African Development," p. 437.

<sup>56</sup> "Policy speech by Ms Yoriko Kawaguchi, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, at the United Nations Conference Centre, Addis Ababa," August 26, 2002, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, <http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/africa/fmv0208/ethiopia.html>

<sup>57</sup> TICAD III statement.

<sup>58</sup> "Dakar Preparatory Meeting for TICAD Ministerial-level Meeting: Chairman's Summary Report," Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, October 31, 2001, <http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/africa/ticad/min01/summary.html>



South Africa. He emphasized Tokyo's commitment to tackling the problems of Africa – which he declared to be one of Japan's overall foreign policy priorities – through the inter-related approaches of development assistance, conflict resolution, and dealing with the refugee crisis. In a striking remark, he stated that “until the problems of Africa are resolved there will be no world stability or prosperity in the 21st century.” He went on to add: “All the problems confronting Africa – poverty, conflicts, refugees, infectious diseases, water resource, environmental destruction, etc. – are problems that threaten human existence itself. Indeed, Japan's peace diplomacy of the 21st century places human security at its core. In that sense, it would not be an exaggeration to say that our success or failure in establishing human security in Africa will test the merits of Japan's foreign policy.”<sup>59</sup> To underline the importance that he placed on human security, Mori was accompanied by Ogata Sadako, the former UNHCR and soon-to-be co-chairperson of the Commission on Human Security and later president of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), considered the foremost spokesperson for the need to focus on human security.

Africa made a deep impression on Mori and he made it one of the key concerns of the foreign policy of his government. His policy speech in the Diet on January 31, 2001, shortly after his return from Africa, included a passage on the human security situation of Africa. The prime minister's policy speech was notable for his expression of a sincere will to shoulder responsibilities and exert leadership.<sup>60</sup> This was a will that he could amply demonstrate as the chairperson of TICAD III.

When TICAD III opened, Mori emphasized in his opening remarks what had become the distinguishing-mark for him since his premiership – the key role that human security plays, not least for African countries: “The problems confronting Africa are problems that threaten human existence itself. We must establish a ‘human security’ that will release all people from such threats. [...] “Human security,” he said, “is one of the key visions of Japanese diplomacy, and it provides a new perspective to the TICAD process.”<sup>61</sup>

<sup>59</sup> “Speech by Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori ‘Africa and Japan in the New Century,’ at Gallagher Estate, Midrand, Republic of South Africa,” January 9, 2001, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, <http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/africa/pmv0101/pmspeech.html> (downloaded September 4, 2005).

<sup>60</sup> Edström, *Japan and the Challenge of Human Security*, p. 123.

<sup>61</sup> “Opening Remarks by Mr. Yoshiro Mori, Chairperson of TICAD III (Provisional

Mori's focus on human security in his opening remarks were followed up by Prime Minister Koizumi Jun'ichirō in his keynote speech: "Japan wishes to further dialogue with its African partners in order to address the question of how the people of Africa can become free from various threats against lives and human dignity including poverty, conflict and infectious diseases, in other words, how Japan can contribute to 'human security,' and realize a society in which people can live with hope." It was part of one of the third "pillars" that he announced comprised Japan's initiative for assistance to Africa – human-centered development, poverty reduction through economic growth, and consolidation of peace. "These pillars," he said, "correspond to the priority areas laid out by NEPAD."<sup>62</sup>

New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) was a vision and strategy promoted by South Africa, Senegal, Nigeria, Algeria, and Egypt. It was comprised of a set of development rules formulated by Africans and the expression of the political will of African leaders. While NEPAD offered a set of rules by Africans, the principal rules centered on democratization and liberal market economics, which were no different from other initiatives advanced by developed countries. According to a Japanese analyst, "The visions in NEPAD seem to express the sentiments and ideas of African people, but the strategy follows the free market system. On the one hand it vehemently advocates self-reliance, but on the other hand a huge amount of resource flow is expected from developed countries."<sup>63</sup>

A link between NEPAD and TICAD emerged during the conference that was related to one of Japan's priorities in the TICAD process, ownership. NEPAD aimed at rectifying an asymmetry in how aid was granted in that it was not "demand driven" but "supply driven," that is, decided by donors and not recipients. NEPAD was an attempt to change this and return development in Africa to the hands of Africans. In order to put an emphasis on "the ownership by the Africans of their development initiatives," officials from NEPAD countries were invited to share their thoughts

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Translation)," September 29, 2003, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, <http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/Africa/ticad3/opening.html>

<sup>62</sup> "Keynote Speech by Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi at the Third Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD III) (Provisional Translation)," September 29, 2003, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, <http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/africa/ticad3/pmspeech.html>

<sup>63</sup> Horiuchi, "TICAD after 10 Years," p. 476.

on the TICAD-NEPAD synergies, which gave legitimacy to the Japanese initiative.<sup>64</sup> This helped the Japanese idea of “ownership” to achieve a breakthrough at TICAD III. One key Japanese idea was accepted without reservation when the “TICAD Tenth Anniversary Declaration” was adopted by conference participants, which stated that “one of the ultimate goals of the TICAD process is to forge solidarity between Africa and the rest of the international community based on ownership and partnership because African development can be achieved only by the concerted efforts of Africa and its development partners.”<sup>65</sup>

Japan also met with success in the promotion of another of its key ideas, that Asian experiences had something to teach African countries, which it continued to advocate at the third TICAD conference. A network was proposed to facilitate cooperation between Asia and African countries in agriculture, capacity building, technology transfer, trade, and investment.<sup>66</sup> Furthermore, the “TICAD Tenth Anniversary Declaration” claimed that Asia-Africa cooperation had an “enormous potential” and that “it is of great significance that the TICAD process has underscored the importance of South-South cooperation, especially Asia-Africa cooperation that utilizes the successful economic development experiences of Asian countries.”

A windfall for Japanese diplomacy was that the concept of solidarity was brought up in the TICAD Tenth Anniversary Declaration. To explicitly refer to “solidarity,” in this case with the African countries, was a link to what Japanese consider the noblest of ideas as to what the basis of Japan’s relationship with other countries should be. It had found its most revered expression in the Fukuda Doctrine of 1977, which became the basis of Japan’s relations with ASEAN countries. It should not be forgotten that it was the nationalistic Prime Minister Kishi Nobusuke, with his roots in Japan’s pre-war imperialistic past, who elevated solidarity to a central position in Japan’s post-war relations with Asia.<sup>67</sup> Now, also African countries were embraced by Japan in a similar way as Asian countries.

For Japan, its persistence in promoting its central ideas at the three TICAD conferences had paid off. That TICAD had adopted what the Japa-

<sup>64</sup> Ampiah, “Japan and the Development of Africa,” p. 105.

<sup>65</sup> “TICAD Tenth Anniversary,” October 1, 2003, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, <http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/africa/ticad3/declaration.html>

<sup>66</sup> Horiuchi, “TICAD after 10 Years,” p. 480.

<sup>67</sup> Edström, *Japan and the Challenge of Human Security*, p. 156.

nese saw as their ideas signified – or so it must have seemed to them – that TICAD participants endorsed Japanese leadership. Indeed, it was seen as a breakthrough for Japanese directive leadership, and must have been noted with great satisfaction in governmental quarters in Tokyo.

### TICAD IV (2008)

After the successful holding of three consecutive conferences at five-year intervals, TICAD could be seen as having become a recurrent event. But despite the fact that TICAD had seemed to have become institutionalized, the decision to organize them was on a case by case basis and, periodically, it was not clear whether it would be continued. This uncertainty can be traced to the reason that since the main organizer was Japan, and since its main instrument to further this process was ODA, there was a lingering uncertainty among Japanese from the end of the 1990s. Budget allocations to ODA had begun to be cut, and cuts were made in successive years. Japan's pride in the 1990s over its status as the No. 1 ODA power had emboldened many Japanese to call their country an "ODA superpower," but this now belonged to the past. As 2008 approached, it became increasingly uncertain whether a conference would in fact take place. The budget cuts had begun to take their toll. While Japan had donated US\$750 million in economic assistance at TICAD II and a US\$1 billion at TICAD III, it was becoming more and more unclear whether Japan could continue this generosity, given the hollowing out of its ODA budget. In an analysis presented in 2005, Kweku Ampiah argued that "there is as yet no convincing evidence that the TICAD is a serious commitment to the development of Africa."<sup>68</sup> Skepticism could also be noted on the part of African spokespersons. Dr. Alpha Oumar Konare, chairperson of the Commission of the African Union, aired his dissatisfaction the year after TICAC III: "The partnerships formed by Japan under TICAD have been with donor nations and the African Union has been made subordinate to those partnerships."<sup>69</sup>

In spite of the above, Japan continued on the "TICAD journey," living up to what the chairperson of TICAD III, former Prime Minister Mori Yoshirō, had assured delegates at TICAD III – that the TICAD process would

<sup>68</sup> Ampiah, "Japan and the Development of Africa," p. 110.

<sup>69</sup> Quoted in Morikawa, "Japan and Africa after the Cold War," p. 494.

certainly live on: "The conference recognized the importance of continuing the TICAD process and the co-organizers committed themselves to continuing the process in a more institutionalized manner, regularly following up outcomes of the conference."<sup>70</sup>

Mori was right in his prediction. TICAD IV convened on May 28-30, 2008, in Yokohama, with the participation of 85 countries, of which 51 came from Africa, 75 international and regional organizations, and representatives of the private sector, academic institutions, and civil society organizations. Thus, country representation was more or less equal to 2003, but the participation of international and regional organizations had increased substantially. While 1,000 delegates assembled in 2003, they numbered more than 3,000 in 2008.

In his opening address, Japan's Prime Minister Fukuda Yasuo declared that TICAD IV had become "a truly historic event" with its impressive representation from African and Asian as well as donor countries. He foresaw a new page in the history of African development "titled the 'century of African growth.' In the future, Africa will become a powerful engine driving the growth of the world." Once again, the key idea that had been proposed by Japanese delegates at the previous TICAD conferences was aired: African countries and people could learn from the Asian economic success stories. Fukuda advocated a whole-sale adoption by Africans of the "Asian" model for economic development: "The time has come for the countries of Africa to adopt as their own a model that led to success in post-war Japan and many other Asian countries." His reasoning of Africans adopting the Asian model "as their own" made it a question of ownership, another key trait of Japanese thinking that had also been proposed at previous TICAD conferences. Fukuda argued that it was a philosophy "that has been a part of TICAD since its founding," and he warned: "Where there is no 'ownership,' which respects self-reliance, neither sustainable development nor growth is possible."

Equally important according to Fukuda was "partnership," which was an idea that he said "should be shared beyond Japan. I would like to see an exchange of insights and experiences between Africa and Asia." And, so,

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<sup>70</sup> "TICAD III wraps up with a call for global partnership for Africa's develop," Tokyo International Conference on African Development, October 1, 2003, [http://www.ticad.net/ticad\\_global\\_partnership.shtml](http://www.ticad.net/ticad_global_partnership.shtml)

the Prime Minister of Japan bundled the ideas together and, stating that Asian lessons had turned into African reality, announced that Japan's ideas on ownership had prevailed.<sup>71</sup> His enthusiasm in his address at the opening session reverberates in the "Yokohama Declaration" that was adopted at the conference. It was reported that:

The Participants at TICAD IV acknowledged that from its inception in 1993, the TICAD Process with Japan at its center and other co-organizers including the United Nations, the United Nations Development Programme and the World Bank playing a valuable role stressed the importance for Africa to exercise full "ownership" of its own development agenda and the need for a genuine "partnership" with the international community in pursuit of that agenda. In this regard, the TICAD Process has also served as a bridge between Africa and Japan and Asia as a whole, and as a Forum through which the Asian development experience can be shared with Africa. It is clear that the pursuit of an even closer relationship, based on shared concerns and common strategic interests, is of critical importance in terms of further enhancing global development and stability.<sup>72</sup>

As seen here, the key Japanese concerns in the TICAD context since its inception – that of ownership and Japan as a champion of Asia both as a model and as an inspiration for Africa – are reflected and, what is more, have been adopted. But it was not only that these ideas figured in the Declaration: there was *de facto* recognition of Japan's international leadership – a goal underlying Japan's "hidden agenda." Therefore, in recognizing that the TICAD Process had "Japan at its center," participants at TICAD IV gave a stamp of approval to Japan's ambitions to exert leadership on the world stage.

Further down in the Declaration, another of Japan's concerns, but of more recent origin than that of ownership, human security, was given ample recognition and support in that participants committed themselves to working

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<sup>71</sup> "Address by H.E. Mr. Yasuo Fukuda, Prime Minister of Japan at the Opening Session of the Fourth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD IV)," May 28, 2008, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, <http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/africa/ticad/ticad4/pm/address.html>

<sup>72</sup> "Yokohama Declaration: Towards a Vibrant Africa," Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, May 30, 2008, <http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/africa/ticad/ticad4/doc/declaration.pdf>

together to boost economic growth, ensure human security, and to address environmental issues and climate change. One section reads: "The Participants welcomed TICAD IV's focus upon and promotion of the concept of 'human security', which underscores freedom from fear and freedom from want, and emphasizes the protection and empowerment of individuals and communities." In a later presentation at Chatham House, a leading Japanese diplomat went as far as to claim that human security underlay the various initiatives that Japan took at TICAD IV.<sup>73</sup>

Fukuda's pledge in his opening address that Japan was to double its ODA to Africa certainly made the headlines. Given Japan's regular cuts in the ODA for many years, he added the disclaimer that ODA allocation to Africa would increase gradually over five years to achieve this target by 2012. Moreover, he promised that Japan would provide up to US\$4 billion in soft loans to Africa. Together, it was a commitment from Japan that caused a stir among the conference delegates.

TICAD IV seemed to confirm what seemed to be the conclusion already by TICAD III, that this initiative had become a success story, at least for Japan, in the sense that Japan's central ideas of ownership and partnership had been adopted. And with Prime Minister Fukuda's announcement that Japan's economic support to Africa was to be increased considerably, it also augured well for participants from Africa. Yet, lingering in the background was another emerging power that in a whirlwind of action had already started to grab the initiative away from Japan, capturing the imagination of Africans as well as international attention – China. And lurking in the background is yet another giant, India.

China's emergence in Africa in the past few years has been nothing short of astounding. It has been followed by India, a country that has a long history of relations with African countries, of which many have large groups of African citizens of Indian ancestry. Both China and India have convened international conferences centering on Africa in recent years. In 2009 the fourth Forum on China-Africa Cooperation was convened in Egypt, with 48 African countries represented and 35 heads of state attending. Furthermore, 14 African countries were represented at the Africa-India Forum Summit in

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<sup>73</sup> Itsunori Onodera, "Japan-African Engagement: The Outcomes of TICAD IV and the G8 Hokkaido Toyako Summit Agenda," Conference Opening Remarks, Chatham House, June 24, 2008, p. 5.



New Delhi in April 2008. In 2007, China's total trade with African countries came to US\$73.5 billion, while total trade between Japan and Africa was US\$26.6 billion dollars.<sup>74</sup> As the noted specialist Kweku Ampiah has commented, "it can be easy to forget how insignificant Japanese investment in Africa has become. Between 2002 and 2004 Japanese foreign direct investment (FDI) in sub-Saharan Africa amounted to only \$415 million, roughly 0.4% of Japan's total FDI during the period. Moreover, 85% of these investments were concentrated in two countries, Liberia and South Africa. Liberia alone accounts for 50% of all Japanese investments in the region."<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Kweku Ampiah, "Japan in Africa: a distant partnership," *open democracy*, June 6, 2008, <http://www.opendemocracy.net/article/japan-in-africa-paths-to-partnership>

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*



## Concluding Remarks

The four TICAD conferences that have been organized have constituted a key undertaking for Japan's foreign policymakers and MOFA officials. It was an endeavor that found its inception in the situation Japan and African countries found themselves in at the end of the Cold War: the emergence of a unilateral world with victory over Saddam Hussein's Iraq by a UN coalition led by the United States. Japan's foreign policy faced considerable problems, as it was premised on the Cold War bifurcation of the world into two hostile blocs, and the African countries found themselves abandoned by other countries. Thus, it made sense to both sides to embark on the TICAD endeavor.

The fourth TICAD conference in Yokohama was declared to be a success. Not least Japan was pleased since its central ideas had been embraced by participants, representing African and many other countries as well influential international organizations. Future prospects are dim, however. TICAD might well be an initiative that has peaked and is starting to decline in importance – at least from a Japanese perspective. Events and developments in recent years have rendered the strategy used by Japan to exert international leadership, and to gain influence on the world stage, as self-defeating.

Japan's chief instrument in the TICAD context to lure African countries into its orbit has been its ODA policy. The funds allocated by Japan to Africa have increased from conference to conference. But the cuts in ODA that Japan has continued to make have hollowed out the ODA budget, and this instrument is not as enticing to recipient countries as was previously the case. Both the volume of trade and aid from China now surpasses that from Japan, and there are no signs that this will be reverted. Japan has simply been outcompeted by China, with India also looking to increase its presence.

Japan's central ideas proposed in the TICAD context have been ownership, partnership, and Asian economic success as a model for African development. But ownership as an idea has not been consistent with "lecturing" Africans about the benefits of the Asian economic experience. There is a contradiction between Japan's policy of non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries and its preaching of the democratic and free-market

sermon. With China's emergence as a world power with an appetite for oil and other resources, African countries can choose to turn to China instead, a country that does not lecture African dictators, warlords, and peoples about the benefits of democracy and the free market. It pays for resources, does not ask awkward questions, nor does it wag a telling finger.

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