

Opening statement by Professor Hoshino Toshiya at Chatham House Webinar “Japan-UK Cooperation in Africa: Looking ahead at TICAD8,” February 24, 2022.

I am very honored to be a part of UK/Japan Dialogue series, jointly hosted by Chatham House and Japan House.

And the subject, Japan-UK cooperation in Africa, could not be timelier as Japan is hosting TICAD 8, Japan’s flagship diplomatic and international cooperation initiative for Africa, this coming August.

Looking from the UK-side, the “Global Britain” vision as the Integrated Review paper proudly put forward is now in action.

I am the one, and one of many in Japan, who was thrilled to witness the grand tour and the visit of British aircraft carrier HMS Queen Elizabeth and her carrier strike group to East Asia and Japan, which clearly demonstrated UK’s “Indo-Pacific Tilt.”

Actually, Japan’s initiative to promote “a Free and Open Indo-Pacific” or “FOIP” and your “Indo-Pacific Tilt,” and their confluence, can be considered as a basis of our joint engagement with Africa, particularly in East Africa.

In fact, when Japan proposed the FOIP, there was a strategic vision to connect not just two oceans, The Pacific and the Indian, but two continents, the Asian continent that is growing and the African continent that is rising.

Africa is now clearly placed in Japan’s strategic perspective.

This, from my interpretation, symbolizes a renewed vision of “Global Japan,” comparable to “Global Britain.”

I said, renewed. Because, Japan’s systematic engagement with Africa dates back in the 1990s.

Japan started TICAD, Tokyo International Conference on African Development in 1993.

Why then?

There were two reasons, One is that the attention given to Africa was visibly declined after the end of the Cold War. And second, when Africa was given much needed attention, it was basically with dark and negative images of poverty, conflict, epidemics and corruption.

Japan wanted to shed light on Africa, and sought to change the narrative about Africa to a continent of enormous positive opportunities.

Contrary to other bilateral approaches to Africa, TICAD is a multi-and-bi combined efforts.

During the past seven rounds, Japan has certainly provided its own sizable bilateral support to Africa, but Japan has designed TICAD, jointly with the UN, Africa Union Commission, World Bank and UNDP, so that we can multilaterally leverage and harmonize all the relevant initiatives each other.

The TICAD should be an evolving platform to advance African development, but Japan's stance of being a partner to Africa remains as its core attitude, which I welcome.

We respect African perspective by putting Africa's ownership first, and emphasizing the local solutions, including conflict resolution measures, as much as possible.

We cannot deny the challenging realities that the countries in Africa face today. They are dramatically exacerbated by the COVID pandemic, which has rapidly grown out of the realm of health emergency to become one of the most devastating crises of human security, immensely impacting on all the spectrum of huma lives, the survival, livelihood and dignity of individuals.

Usually, TICAD has three pillars. Namely, economy, society, and peace and stability. Among them, I believe that peace and stability are now taking a new shape.

NAPSA, a new approach for peace and stability in Africa, is a key vehicle of Japan to comprehensively support what Africa needs.

Some examples of specific projects include;

- human resource development in the field of criminal justice for West Africa, including the G5 Sahel,

- border control capacity enhancement to strengthen counter-terrorist measures,
- and capacity-building for PKO personnel in African countries,

Tackling against gender-based violence and SEA is always given a high priority.

In my view, the current COVID experience has reaffirmed the validity of Japanese style of partnership with Africa,

If I characterize, I found the following 3 focuses;

One is providing not just short-term assistance but also mid-to-longer term support. Efforts to support building institutions, infrastructure and human capacity are the key examples.

Helping building institutions and governance structures are important. Considering by enhancing local and state institutions, including judicial, executive and legislative, we can make the nations resilient to all the pressures that can destabilize the state and society.

Helping building quality infrastructure with sustainable financing are also our priority. I emphasize “high quality” infrastructure. In this connection, I’d like to point out the Japan’s projects of strengthening intra-Africa connectivity and sub-regional integration through infrastructure development.

And helping building human capacities, ranging from government, business and to justice, police, and security and peacekeepers, is always a part of foundational policy menu that Japan promote.

Second is trying to address root-causes that can be found behind the symptomatic cases of conflict and terrorism

Third is the introduction of human security perspective of supporting survival, livelihood, and dignity of people, comprehensively, by combining peace and stability agenda with such measures as quality education, job creation, and universal health coverage, to name a few.

I agree with the dynamic roles that the youths can play in this context.

Providing economic and social opportunities to those young population is the best way to

invest for the future of Africa, and it will contribute to prevent the young talents in Africa from sliding into futile violent extremism and radicalization.

As a university professor, we welcome thousands of those aspirant young students coming to study in Japan, hoping that they can bridge us together.

In our engagement with Africa, the collaboration with UK should prove to be ideal. As we share basic interests, values, and principles. Of course, the UK has longer and deeper ties with Africa, your wise counsel is much appreciated.

Last July, off the coast of Djibouti, and in the Gulf of Aden, Japan's maritime self-defense force conducted the joint exercise with the HMS Queen Elizabeth, to enhance maritime security, together with the vessels from the US and the Netherlands. I was very excited to hear about this joint exercise Physically taking place in East Africa region.

Japan has been involved in anti-piracy patrolling in the Gulf of Aden since 2009, Together with the UK and the US. But to me, that exercise was something very special.

From freedom of navigation to rule of law, two maritime nations, Japan and the UK, share the values we both treasure.

With the rise of China in every corner of the world, including Africa, and the unfortunate retreat of America from the centerstage of international affairs, Japan and the UK, two prominent powers with global mind, should work together more in diplomatic front.

If you recall, Japan had a formal alliance relationship with the UK, from 1902 to 1923. Incidentally, this year marks the 120<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance pact. The pact, unfortunately, was relatively short lived. And looking back the path that Japan took after terminating the pact, It is not only me that believe that it is wise for Japan to maintain a long-lasting relationship of mutual trust and interest with the UK serving not just the two nations but the rest of the world.

Time has changed but the trust and global minds are the one we share.

Our joint action to support Africa can be one good pillar to promote.

And it is to be hoped that TICAD 8 is going to be a useful opportunity for Japan, with the effective cooperation from the UK, to support prosperity and build back better recovery of Africa led by Africa by themselves.

Finally, as a former Japanese ambassador to the UN, I cannot end my talk without mentioning the need to reform the UN Security Council. It should be materialized at the earliest possible timing. It is necessary that Africa should ensure its permanent presence in the Council while Japan is also committed to play a constructive role in maintaining international peace and security at the Council as a permanent member.

Thank you very much for your kind attention.