

By Fumio Kishida, Prime Minister of Japan

# Looking forward to fruitful visit to Ghana – Japanese PM

**S**TARTING next week, I will be visiting Ghana. It is a great pleasure to be able to visit this country, which plays a pivotal role in West Africa.

This will be the first visit by a Japanese Prime Minister to Ghana in 17 years. I am very delighted to be able to finally return to Ghana as the Prime Minister of Japan, after overcoming the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Historic turning point

The international community is now at a historic turning point. Russia's aggression against Ukraine has had a major impact on Africa, including a food crisis and soaring fertiliser prices.

In addition, cooperation among the international community is even more crucial to effectively address various challenges facing the international community, such as climate change, energy, and opaque and unfair development finance.

As both Japan and Ghana currently serve as members of the United Nations Security Council, and as the two countries work together as important partners that share values and principles such as democracy and the rule of law, I look forward to having a frank discussion with President Akufo-Addo.

Taking this opportunity, I would like

to further deepen the strong economic relationship between Ghana and Japan. First, I would like to further promote business and investment with Ghana, one of the leading economic centres in West Africa.

Based on the belief that quality infrastructure development is the foundation for revitalising economic activities, Japan has been supporting infrastructure such as roads to improve Ghana's connectivity to this date.

Japan has high hopes for Ghana, which hosts the Secretariat of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), to play a role as a standard-bearer in promoting regional integration and trade facilitation. We are determined to cooperate more closely with Ghana in the future.

## Dr Noguchi

The development of Ghana-Japan relations cannot be discussed without acknowledging the achievements of Dr Hideyo Noguchi.

The healthcare sector is an important area for both countries, and we are pleased that Japan is contributing to the health and medical fields in Ghana and the West African region through the establishment of the Noguchi Memorial Institute for Medical Research and technical cooperation

through the institute.

In particular, the Hideyo Noguchi Africa Prize, which was established following the Prime Minister Koizumi's visit to Ghana in 2006, have recognised individuals who have made outstanding achievements in medical research and medical activities in combating infectious diseases and other illnesses in Africa including Ghana.

This prize has contributed to the improvement of health and welfare in Africa as a whole. With a view to achieving Universal Health Coverage (UHC), we will continue to contribute to the improvement in the health sector in Africa and the world.

## International order

In the face of Russia's aggression against Ukraine, which shakes the very foundations of the international order, we must once again firmly uphold the international order based on the rule of law and recall that ensuring peace and stability is the cornerstone of growth.

As former UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, once mentioned, all states had a clear interest, as well as clear responsibility, to uphold international law and maintain international order.

Japan has been supporting Africa's own efforts to achieve peace and stability, the prerequisite for economic growth, investment and betterment of livelihoods, under the New Approach for



• The writer

Peace and Stability in Africa (NAPSA), which approaches the root causes of impediments to human security as well as peace and stability.

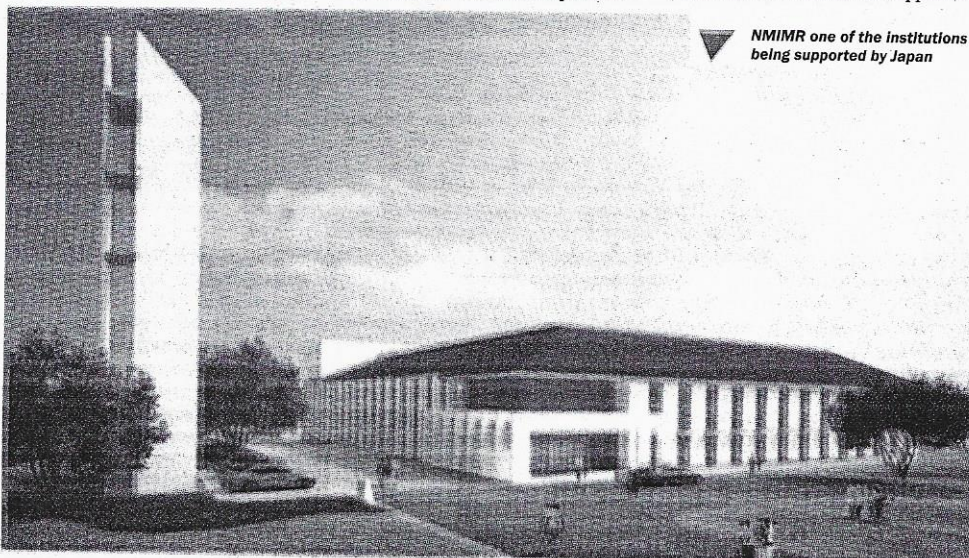
During this visit, I would like to reaffirm our close collaboration with Ghana, which is playing a leading role in maintaining peace and stability in the region through the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Accra Initiative.

Finally, I would like to touch upon the long-standing and friendly bilateral relationship between Ghana and Japan. Ghana stood by Japan when we were in a difficult situation. I will never forget that last year, when former Prime Minister Abe passed away after being shot, three Presidents to date, including President Akufo-Addo, visited our Embassy to sign the book of condolences, while the Ghanaian Parliament organised a memorial service.

At the TICAD 8 held in August last year, Japan expressed its firm determination to be a "partner growing together with Africa" and to cooperate with Africa to realise a resilient Africa that Africa itself aims to achieve. My visit to Africa will be a strong demonstration of Japan's commitment to walk hand in hand with Africa. As the country holding the G7 Presidency, Japan is also committed to carefully listening to the voices of African countries.

I am very much looking forward to seeing you all in Ghana!

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