

Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan KAMIKAWA Yoko on the occasion of her visit to Nigeria

I am pleased to be able to visit Nigeria this time as my first visit to Sub-Saharan Africa since I became Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan last September.

The bilateral relationship between Japan and Nigeria dates back to Nigeria's independence in 1960 and the establishment of the Japanese Embassy in Lagos. Over the past 60 years, Nigeria has become the largest economy and democracy in Africa, with a population of approximately 220 million people and GDP of over \$400 billion, making it the "Giant of Africa".



KAMIKAWA YOKO
Japan, Minister for Foreign Affairs

THE PURPOSE OF MY VISIT TO NIGERIA IS THREEFOLD

The first objective is to further strengthen bilateral relations on the economic front. Goldman Sachs' "The Path to 2075" shows that Nigeria could become the world's fifth largest economy in 2075, if conditions are met. 51 Japanese companies have established operations in Nigeria. Sojitz Corporation has entered the gas retail business for factories, and JGC Holdings Corporation is participating in a floating LNG production project. Otsuka Pharmaceutical is constructing a plant in Ogun State, which will be the first African production base for the sports drink "Pocari Sweat." Japan looks forward to contributing to the dynamic development of the Nigerian economy through the products and technologies of Japanese companies.

Nigeria is also a vibrant country, in which young people highly skilled in digital technologies are launching startups to solve social issues. Several Japanese venture capital firms are working with local partners to help promote innovation and the startup economic system, and Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) are working to match Japanese companies with Nigerian startups. I am confident that these collaborations will result in innovations that will change Africa and the world.

The second objective is to support political and economic stability in Nigeria and other coastal countries of the Gulf of Guinea. As Prime Minister Kishida announced during his visit to Africa last May, Japan attaches great importance to peace and stability in the Sahel and coastal countries of the Gulf of Guinea, and I respect Nigeria's strong leadership as ECOWAS chair and hope that ECOWAS, the AU and the countries concerned will find a solution through dialogue.

In addition, Japan is working with international organizations to bring stability to the North-East region of Nigeria by providing food and livelihood assistance and health services to internally displaced persons. Japan hopes to further strengthen its cooperation with Nigeria in the area of WPS (Women, Peace, and Security). For myself, during this visit, I would like to listen to the real voices of female leaders in the relevant UN agencies which are implementing the supporting projects of North-East region that Japan is supporting and those of internally displaced women for making the most of their voices for global WPS policy.

The third objective is to confirm the strengthening of cooperation on African and global issues with Nigeria, as the leader in Africa. With the growing importance of the African voice in the international community, during my visit, I look forward to discussing with Nigeria, which values democracy and the rule of law, the issues such as strengthening of global governance including UN Security Council reform and African and global challenges. For instance, with regard to nuclear disarmament, Japan, as the only country that suffered atomic bombings during war, is continuing and strengthening its realistic and practical efforts toward a world without nuclear weapons. I am pleased that Nigeria, which shares the common goal of a world without nuclear weapons, has joined the FMCT Friends from Africa. The FMCT Friends is an effort that Japan took the initiative and announced its establishment which aims to enhance political attention and expand support for the FMCT (Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty), a treaty limiting the quantitative improvement of nuclear weapons by banning the production of fissile materials for use in nuclear weapons.

The TICAD Ministerial Meeting, which I will chair, will be held in Tokyo this August, and TICAD 9 will be held in Yokohama in August 2025. Through both meetings, Japan will deepen discussions with Nigeria to co-create with African countries innovative solutions to issues that will lead to Africa's economic growth and the development of young people who will play leading role in the future, and to expand the solutions worldwide.