

Japan's foreign minister Takeshi Iwaya: Africa cooperation is vital

Japanese foreign minister Takeshi Iwaya talks about Japan's priorities for the ninth Tokyo International Conference on African Development in Yokohama.



August 13th, 2025

TICAD 9 comes at a pivotal moment for global cooperation. Could you share Japan's vision for this summit and what it seeks to accomplish?

This year, 2025, is the year for Africa, with the ninth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD 9) to be held in Yokohama, Japan in August. TICAD 9 will be held at a significant time, leading into the UN General Assembly High-Level Week in September, marking the 80th anniversary of the UN. It then leads into the G20 Summit in South Africa in November, which will be the first time that Africa hosts that group of nations.

I myself visited South Africa in February and Senegal in May and experienced first-hand the dynamism of Africa.

As the international community faces multifaceted challenges, it has never been more important for Japan to deepen cooperation with African countries, based on the concept of human security, in addressing global issues such as global health, human resource development and education, disaster prevention and landmine clearance, where Japan has expertise.

These discussions are also in line with the UN Summit of the Future last September and with the fourth UN International Conference on Financing for Development (FfD4) in June-July this year.

From your perspective, what have been the most important milestones in the Japan-Africa partnership so far?

TICAD began in 1993 as a multilateral international conference on African development: it has served as a tipping point for the international community's interest towards Africa.

Under the principles of ownership and partnership, Japan has consistently bolstered sustainable development led by Africa itself, through the TICAD process, for more than 30 years. TICAD has led the trend of international discussion on African development. TICAD's uniqueness rests on its pioneering nature, its inclusiveness and openness to include many stakeholders such as international organisations, third countries, businesses, academia and NGOs, as well as its respect for African ownership. These features illustrate TICAD's unique strengths.

Regarding Japan's efforts, Senegal's Prime Minister Sonko said: "Japan's development model of teaching how to fish rather than giving fish is exemplary for Senegal."

In other words, Japan has not only provided funds and infrastructure but faced the challenges in African countries and worked together to find solutions while developing human resources and strengthening high-quality infrastructure and institutions.



What are the key themes that will shape the agenda of TICAD 9? How do they reflect both African priorities and Japan's foreign policy objectives?

TICAD 9 will be held under the theme "co-create innovative solutions with Africa". It will capitalise on Japan's innovative technologies and know-hows, such as cutting-edge technologies including AI, digital healthcare and the use of hydrogen and ammonia energy. We would like to create solutions to various challenges together and put them into implementation.

Public-private partnership is a key to achieving economic and social transformation in Africa, including inclusive growth and economic integration, which are included in the African Union's development goals, Agenda 2063. We will work with African countries to promote the mobilisation of private-sector funding by improving the investment environment, and to strengthen regional integration and connectivity by facilitating the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

We will also work together to strengthen the capacity of youth and women and develop human resources. We aim to utilise Japan's technology and know-how so as to accelerate industrialisation and to create employment in Africa, which will lead to Japan's own growth as well.

During TICAD 9 in August, a number of Japanese and African private companies will participate in the business-related events to present and showcase examples of the use of innovation. I hope that TICAD 9 will provide concrete ideas for solutions to economic and social challenges in each country and new business opportunities.

Ensuring peace and stability as well as good governance is a precondition for sustainable economic growth and investment, and for an inclusive society that leaves no one behind. We would like to encourage African solutions to African conflicts and the strengthening of governance by Africa itself. We intend to make use of TICAD to discuss important issues on peace and stability, such as conflict prevention and addressing the root causes of conflict focusing on the concept of human security.

Youth and women will carry the future of Japan-Africa relations. With one in three of the world's youth expected to be of African descent by 2050, youth and women need to become bearers of innovation and peace. To this end, we would like to promote human resource development, human exchange and cultural exchange for the next generation. For the upcoming TICAD 9, programs organised by youth are also underway and I am looking forward to them.

Finally, what message would you like to send to African leaders, entrepreneurs, and citizens as they prepare to join you in Yokohama this August?

With increased uncertainty in the world, it has never been more important to promote cooperation between Japan and Africa. I would like to make TICAD 9 an opportunity to confirm concrete cooperation with Africa to strengthen inclusive and responsible global governance and guide the international community towards cooperation.



Mohamed Ali Aboudi

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