

Ministry of Foreign Affairs



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Africa: Far Yet Near

Over 10,000 kilometers parts Africa and Japan.

As great as this distance may be, elements of Africa have very much become a part of everyday life in Japan.

Similarly, there are various "Japans" within Africa.

Japan has taken the initiative in rallying international support for Africa, and in return the African nations provided warm support in the aftermath of the Great East Japan Earthquake.

The bonds between Japan and Africa are stronger than ever.

Let's take a closer look at this fascinating continent, and at Africa as a valued partner of Japan.

"Africa" as noted in this pamphlet refers to the northern African countries as well as to Sub-Saharan Africa (54 in total).



Coffee

Japan is one of the world's largest consumers of coffee. This coffee is imported from Ethiopia — said to be the birthplace of coffee — and other countries, including Tanzania and Kenya.



Senegalese Wrestling

This traditional Senegalese style of folk wrestling is closer to wrestling than sumo. Rituals to ward off bad luck are performed before matches, and champions are celebrated as national heroes.



Shea Butter

Shea butter is a fat extracted from the nuts of the shea tree, which grows in western Africa. It is widely used in Japan for beauty purposes in the dry winters.



Rooibos Tea

Rooibos tea, made from a plant native to Africa, is a popular decaffeinated drink consumed for health. It is an enduringly popular beverage in southern Africa.



Djembe

The djembe is an iconic traditional African musical instrument. Ever since Mamady Keita of Guinea, known as the "god of the djembe," performed in Mishima Village, Kagoshima in 1994, the village has continued to engage in cultural exchange through this drum.



Chocolate

Chocolate is everybody's favorite treat. Roughly 80% of the cacao beans used to make chocolate in Japan are imported from Ghana.



Okra

Molokhiyya greens from Egypt are well-known in Japan as African vegetables, but okra, a summer staple vegetable in the country, also originates from northeastern Africa.



Sesame

Sesame seeds, a familiar ingredient on Japanese tables. Japan imports sesame from Burkina Faso, Nigeria, Tanzania, Mozambique, and Ethiopia, mainly processed into sesame oil.



Octopus

Octopus is a major seafood product imported from Africa. Many octopuses caught in Mauritania and Morocco are consumed in Japan — the beloved Japanese dish "Takoyaki" (octopus balls) has a little bit of taste of Africa inside each one.



Mineral Resources

Certain minerals are essential for devices such as smart phones, as well as for purposes of clean energy and electric vehicles. Africa is a primary production area for minerals critical to the Japanese economy.

AFRICA



The African Continent

The continent of Africa is home to 54 countries, across five main regions: northern, southern, eastern, western, and central Africa.*1

“Sub-Saharan Africa” refers collectively to the regions of the continent located south of the Sahara Desert, excluding northern Africa.

About 6,500 Japanese people live in Africa,*2 and about 27,000 Africans live in Japan.*3

*1: As established by the African Union (AU)

*2: Source: Annual Report of Statistics on Japanese Nationals Overseas, October 2025

*3: Source: Statistics on Foreign Residents in Japan, Ministry of Justice, June 2025

Africa Today

Western Africa (15 Countries)

 Republic of Ghana Capital: Accra Population: 35.1 million Main Language: English	 Republic of Cabo Verde Capital: Praia Population: 500,000 Main Languages: Portuguese, Creole	 Republic of the Gambia Capital: Banjul Population: 2.8 million Main Languages: English, Mandinka, Wolof	 Republic of Guinea Capital: Conakry Population: 15.1 million Main Language: French	 Republic of Guinea-Bissau Capital: Bissau Population: 2.3 million Main Language: Portuguese
 Republic of Cote d'Ivoire Capital: Yamoussoukro Population: 32.7 million Main Language: French	 Republic of Sierra Leone Capital: Freetown Population: 8.8 million Main Languages: English, Mende	 Republic of Senegal Capital: Dakar Population: 18.9 million Main Languages: French, Wolof	 Republic of Togo Capital: Lome Population: 9.7 million Main Language: French	 Federal Republic of Nigeria Capital: Abuja Population: 237.5 million Main Languages: English, Hausa, Yoruba, Ibo
 Republic of Niger Capital: Niamey Population: 27.9 million Main Languages: French, Hausa	 Burkina Faso Capital: Ouagadougou Population: 24.1 million Main Languages: French, Mossi, Dyula, Gourmanché	 Republic of Benin Capital: Porto Novo Population: 14.8 million Main Language: French	 Republic of Mali Capital: Bamako Population: 25.2 million Main Languages: French, Bambara	 Republic of Liberia Capital: Monrovia Population: 5.7 million Main Language: English

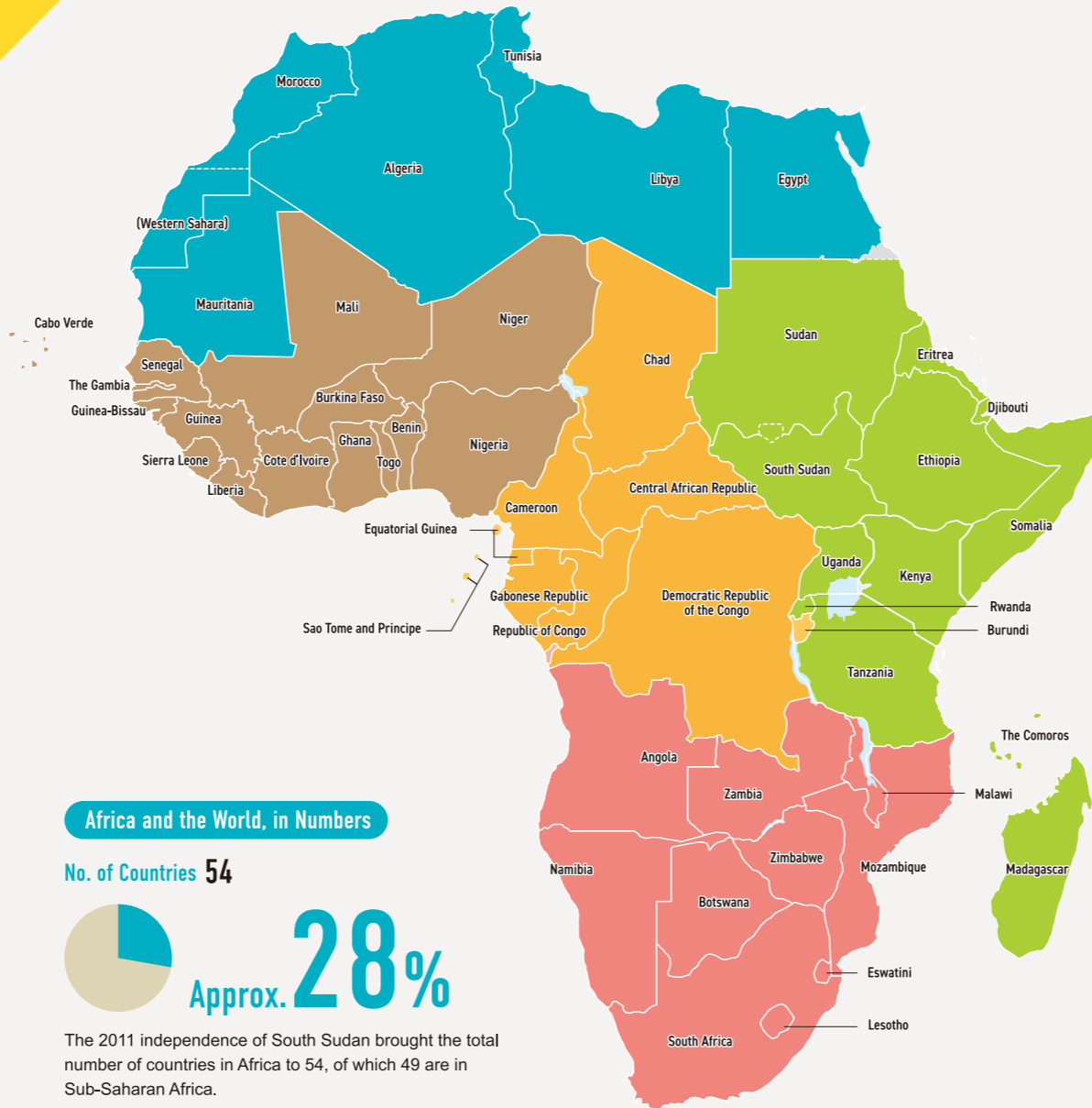
Central Africa (9 Countries)

 Gabonese Republic Capital: Libreville Population: 2.6 million Main Languages: French, English	 Republic of Cameroon Capital: Yaoundé Population: 29.9 million Main Languages: French, English	 Republic of Congo Capital: Brazzaville Population: 6.5 million Main Languages: French, Lingala	 Democratic Republic of the Congo Capital: Kinshasa Population: 112.8 million Main Languages: French, Kikongo, Lingala	 Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe Capital: Sao Tome Population: 200,000 Main Language: Portuguese
 Republic of Chad Capital: N'Djamena Population: 21.0 million Main Languages: French, Arabic	 Central African Republic Capital: Bangui Population: 5.5 million Main Languages: French, Sango	 Republic of Burundi Capital: Gitega Population: 14.4 million Main Languages: French, Kirundi	 Equatorial Guinea Capital: Ciudad de la Paz Population: 1.9 million Main Languages: Spanish, French, Portuguese, Fang, Bube	

African Countries with the Most Residents in Japan

1. Nigeria 4,654	2. Ghana 3,270	3. Egypt 2,585
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Source: Statistics on Foreign Residents in Japan, Ministry of Justice, June 2025



Africa and the World, in Numbers



The 2011 independence of South Sudan brought the total number of countries in Africa to 54, of which 49 are in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Population Approx. 1.47419 Billion



Africa's population continues to grow each year, and roughly one out of five people alive today is African. (Sub-Saharan Africa's population is approximately 1.25 billion).







Source: State of World Population 2025

Land Area Approx. 30 million km²



This vast continent contains roughly 23% of the world's total land area (Sub-Saharan Africa accounts for about 24.24 million km² of this). Algeria, Africa's largest country, is about six times the size of Japan.

Northern Africa (6 Countries)

 People's Democratic Republic of Algeria Capital: Algiers Population: 47.4 million Main Languages: Arabic, French	 Arab Republic of Egypt Capital: Cairo Population: 118.4 million Main Language: Arabic	 Republic of Tunisia Capital: Tunis Population: 12.4 million Main Languages: Arabic, French	 Islamic Republic of Mauritania Capital: Nouakchott Population: 5.3 million Main Languages: Arabic, French	 Kingdom of Morocco Capital: Rabat Population: 38.4 million Main Languages: Arabic, French	 Libya Capital: Tripoli Population: 7.5 million Main Language: Arabic
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Eastern Africa (14 Countries)

 Republic of Uganda Capital: Kampala Population: 51.4 million Main Languages: English, Luganda, Swahili	 Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Capital: Addis Ababa Population: 135.5 million Main Languages: Amharic, English	 State of Eritrea Capital: Asmara Population: 3.6 million Main Languages: Tigrinya, Arabic, English, various ethnic languages	 Republic of Kenya Capital: Nairobi Population: 57.6 million Main Languages: English, Swahili	 Union of Comoros Capital: Moroni Population: 900,000 Main Languages: French, Arabic, Comorian
 Republic of Djibouti Capital: Djibouti Population: 1.2 million Main Languages: Arabic, French, Somali	 Republic of the Sudan Capital: Khartoum Population: 51.7 million Main Languages: Arabic, English	 Republic of Seychelles Capital: Victoria Population: 100,000 Main Languages: English, French, Creole	 Federal Republic of Somalia Capital: Mogadishu Population: 19.7 million Main Languages: Somali, Arabic, English, Italian	 United Republic of Tanzania Capital: Dodoma Population: 70.6 million Main Languages: Swahili, English
 Republic of Madagascar Capital: Antananarivo Population: 32.7 million Main Languages: French, Malagasy	 Republic of South Sudan Capital: Juba Population: 12.2 million Main Languages: English, tribal languages	 Republic of Mauritius Capital: Port Louis Population: 1.3 million Main Languages: English, French, Creole	 Republic of Rwanda Capital: Kigali Population: 14.6 million Main Languages: English, French, Kinyarwanda, Swahili	

Southern Africa (10 Countries)

 Republic of Angola Capital: Luanda Population: 39.0 million Main Languages: Portuguese, Umbundu	 Republic of Zambia Capital: Lusaka Population: 21.9 million Main Languages: English, Bemba	 Republic of Zimbabwe Capital: Harare Population: 17.0 million Main Languages: English, Shona, Ndebele	 Kingdom of Eswatini Capital: Mbabane Population: 1.3 million Main Languages: English, Swazi	 Republic of Namibia Capital: Windhoek Population: 3.1 million Main Languages: English, Afrikaans
 Republic of Botswana Capital: Gaborone Population: 2.8 million Main Languages: English, Tswana	 Republic of Malawi Capital: Lilongwe Population: 22.2 million Main Languages: English, Chewa	 Republic of South Africa Capital: Pretoria Population: 84.8 million Main Languages: English, Afrikaans, Zulu	 Republic of Mozambique Capital: Maputo Population: 35.6 million Main Languages: Portuguese, Bantu languages	 Kingdom of Lesotho Capital: Maseru Population: 2.4 million Main Languages: English, Sotho

Source: State of World Population 2025

The Real Africa

Algeria

Casbah of Algiers

This old neighborhood was built on a hill in the capital city of Algiers. Narrow, stair-stepped alleys wind around in the spaces between the houses.

Angola

Welwitschia

This unusual plant grows wild from southern Angola through the Namib Desert. They are 600–800 years old on average, with some estimated to be over 2,000 years old.

Uganda

Source of the Nile

The source of the “mother river” Nile is Margherita Peak, in the Rwenzori Mountains: the river starts with melting snow from the glaciers on the 5,109-meter-high summit.

Egypt

Grand Egyptian Museum

The Museum was officially opened at the end of 2025 with tremendous support from Japan. It houses around 100,000 items from the ancient Egyptian civilization, including all the treasures of King Tutankhamun and offers a panoramic view of the Giza pyramid complex.

Eswatini

Swazi Candles

When lit, the flower and animal patterns on these candles are illuminated from within. Like stained glass, they are made using a technique known as millefiori.

Ethiopia

Coffee Ceremony

Coffee is offered as a form of hospitality for beloved guests and during festivals. The ceremony takes its time, beginning with roasting raw beans, and can take over an hour.

Eritrea

Art Deco Buildings

The capital city of Asmara is a UNESCO World Heritage site, with some 4,300 Art Deco buildings dating back to the Italian colonial period.

Ghana

Cacao

Cacao trees bear fruit not only from their branches, but also directly from the trunk. It can be interesting indeed to encounter rugby-ball-shaped cacao pods hanging from the tree's trunk!

Cabo Verde

Cesária Évora

This Cabo Verdean Singer was known for her hit songs, such as the “Sodade”. She brought the morna music of Cabo Verde to the world.

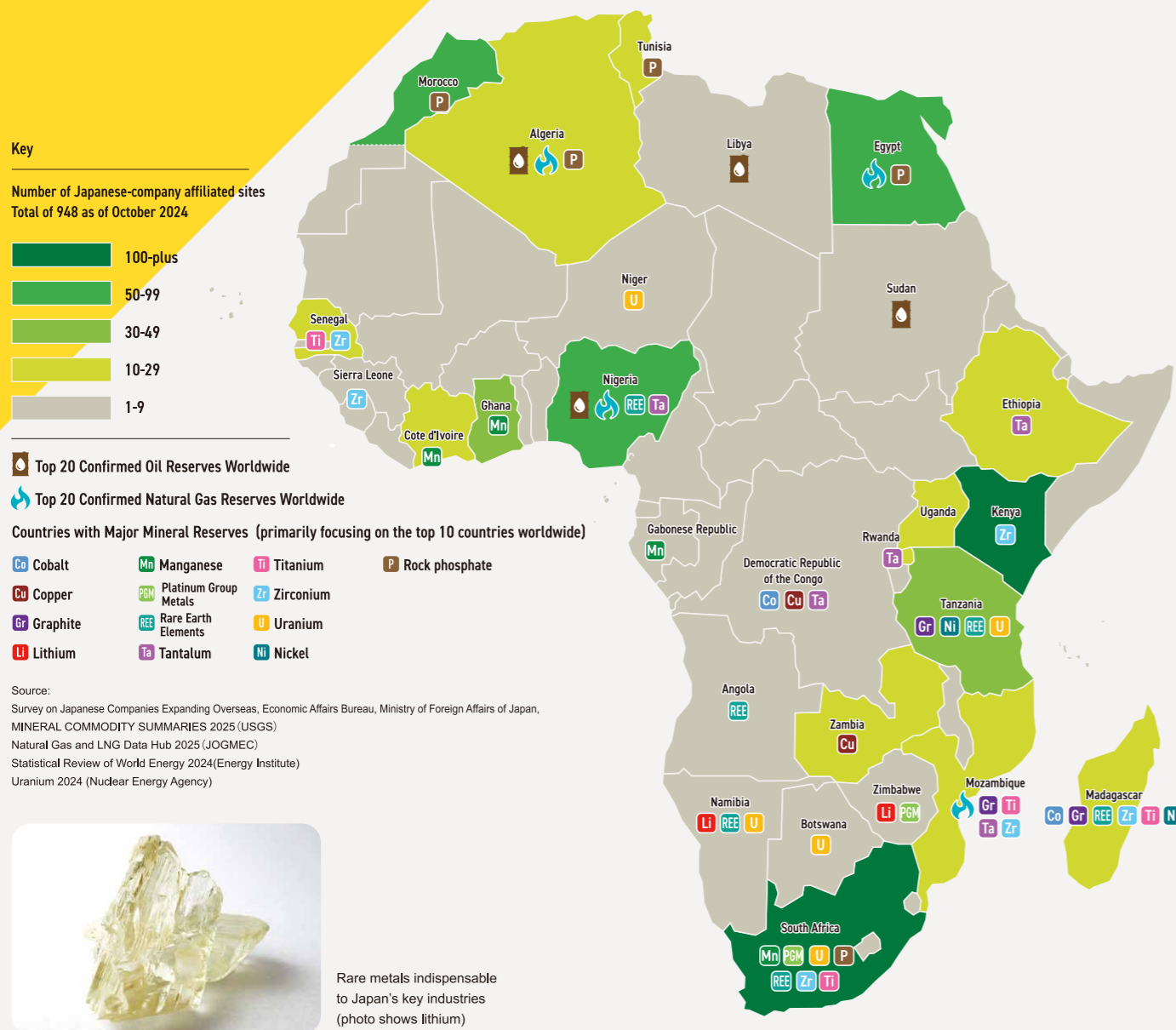
The Growing Continent of Africa

Africa holds promise for the future as a dynamic growth market thanks to its burgeoning young population supported by high population growth rates and its abundant natural resources.

Across Africa, political and economic integration has progressed in recent years, boosting foreign direct investment and domestic demand, and opening up opportunities for further development.

In particular, Sub-Saharan Africa boasts a GDP growth rate 1.25 times the global average and a GNI growth rate double the global average.

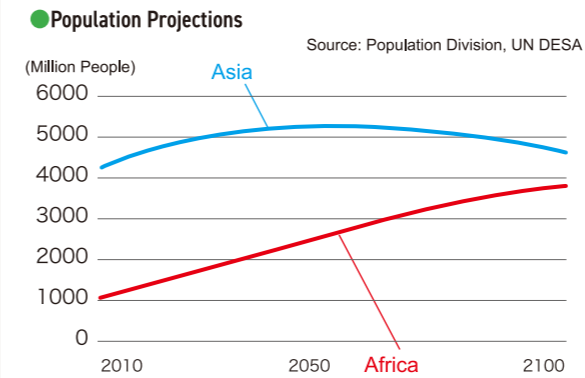
Mineral and Energy Resources in Africa and the Advancement of Japanese Companies on the Continent



Dynamic Africa

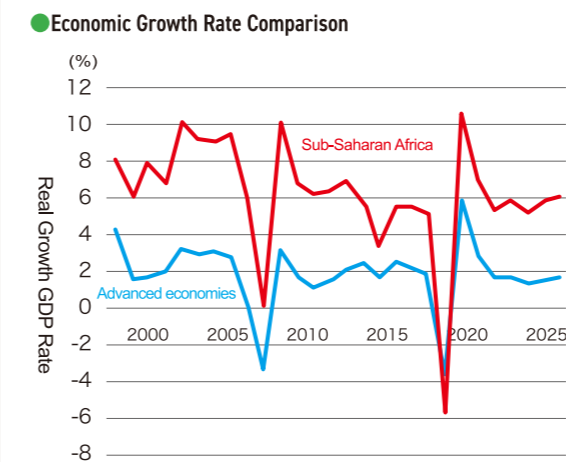
The Latent Potential of a Two-Billion-Person Market

Around 2060, Asia's population is expected to start declining; meanwhile, Africa's population is expected to grow by some 300 million each decade, reaching 2.5 billion by 2050 — more than double its 2010 population.



Sub-Saharan Africa Maintains Strong Growth

The average economic growth rate for Sub-Saharan African countries from 2000 to 2024 was 4.4%, outpacing the 1.9% of higher-income countries. Even though economic growth in Sub-Saharan gradually decreased starting in 2013 due to low resource prices and outbreaks of infectious diseases like the Ebola virus, followed by a sharp decline in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, economic indicators continue to improve. The region has maintained an impressive level of growth in recent years.

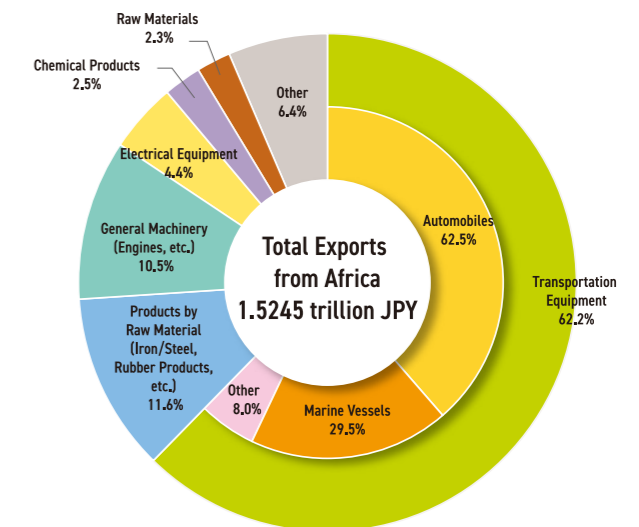


Economic Relations between Japan and Africa

Japan's total trade with Africa in 2025 is estimated at 1.5245 trillion JPY in exports, and 1.5155 trillion JPY in imports.

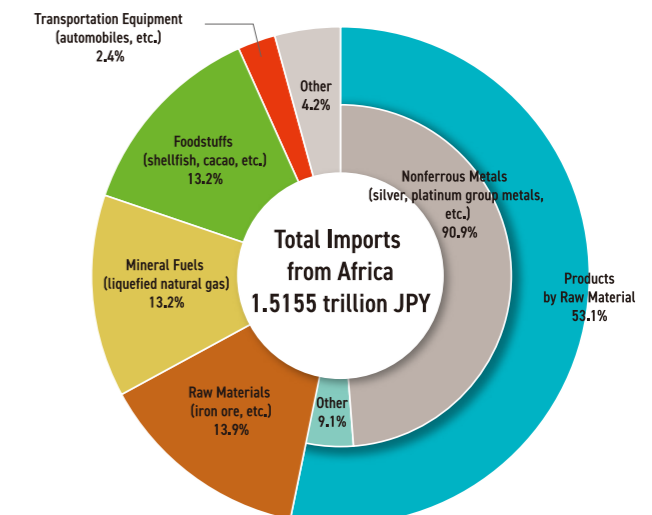
Japan's Top 3 Export Destinations in Africa (2025):

1. South Africa (22.7%)
2. Liberia (19.1%)
3. Kenya (12.5%)



Japan's Top 3 Import Sources in Africa (2025):

1. South Africa: 65.1%
2. Nigeria: 6.9%
3. Ghana 4.8%



The Real Africa

Gabon

Tropical Rainforests

Gabon was where Nobel Peace Prize laureate Dr. Albert Schweitzer focused his medical work. Some 85% of the country is covered in tropical rainforests, making it an invaluable habitat for gorillas and other primates.

Cameroon

The Kingdoms of Cameroon

Many kingdoms in Cameroon still maintain their traditional customs. One of the most famous is the Kingdom of Bamun, founded in the 14th century, whose royal palace is near Bafoussam in the West Region.

The Gambia

Roots

The African-American author Alex Haley modeled his autobiographical novel Roots after the Gambia. Kunta Kinteh Island, a UNESCO World Heritage site, is named after the main character of the story.

Guinea

Maps

The official national map of Guinea was produced by Japanese people. A team of surveyors, led by MOTOJIMA Kenzo, walked across the entire country in order to create the map, which took five years to complete.

Guinea-Bissau

Cashews

Cashews account for a major part of Guinea-Bissau's exports. These "nuts" are actually seeds, which grow out the end of a bell-pepper-shaped fruit called the cashew apple.

Kenya

Roses

Kenya's second largest export is horticultural crops, behind only black tea. Roses particularly benefit from the high-altitude growing conditions of this equatorial country, and exports to Japan continue to expand.

Côte d'Ivoire

Elephants

The name of the country translates to "Ivory Coast," and elephants are a precious symbol of the nation: the national emblem features an elephant along with palm trees and the sun, and the national sports teams are nicknamed "Les Elephants."

The Comoros

Coelacanths

In the waters near Comoros, the coelacanth has been confirmed to exist. In 1990, the Toba Aquarium conducted a survey of these fish in cooperation with the government of the Comoros and succeeded in filming it on video for the first time in Japan.

Republic of Congo

La Sape

A subculture of people who spend most of their income on fashion, and take to the streets with a unique walk to show off their styles. Their motto is "peace without weapons."

Towards a more Prosperous and Stable Society: Initiatives in Africa and Japan

In order to achieve comprehensive and sustainable growth in Africa, stable societies are essential. African countries are moving forward with initiatives aimed at promoting stability and development across the entire region. Japan supports these efforts from various angles, including human resource development and enhancing connectivity both within Africa and between Africa and the rest of the world.

Increased Regional Integration in Africa: AU and AfCFTA

One of the initiatives that is drawing increasing international attention is the continent's political and economic integration, led primarily by the African Union (AU).

The AU, established in 2002, is a regional organization dedicated to promoting peace, security, economic development, and political integration across the continent. It currently counts 55 member states and regions.

Since its founding more than 20 years ago, the AU has contributed to regional stabilization by promoting dialogues among member states, resolving conflicts, facilitating democracy and the rule of law, and more.

A major milestone came in 2023 when the African Union joined the G20, demonstrating its expanding role not only within Africa but also in the broader international community.

In addition, in recent years, the AU also intensified its efforts toward economic integration. The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), launched in 2021, for example, aims to enhance trade between African countries through gradual elimination of tariffs and reducing non-tariff barriers. As Africa moves toward deeper economic integration, the impact is increasingly being felt beyond the continent, including in Japan.

However, numerous challenges still hinder African integration, including political instability, conflict, economic disparities, lack of development financing—highlighting the importance of addressing these challenges effectively.



Flag of the African Union

Development Issues in Africa, and Japan's Initiatives

Africa has experienced rapid growth in recent years; at the same time, the continent faces a wide range of complex development issues, including rapidly increasing populations, climate change, poverty, and persistent disparities. In response, the AU has adopted "Agenda 2063," a charter for development, delineating a 50-year vision starting in 2015.

The Agenda outlines key aspirations for Africa, including African self-determination, democracy, the rule of law, and the protection of human rights. It is characterized by the strong emphasis on human security, building inclusive societies, and sustainable development.

Japan has advanced its development cooperation in a way that support the proactive efforts of African countries, while respecting the principles embodied in the Agenda 2063. At the heart of this cooperation is human resource development, which forms the foundation for Africa's self-reliant growth. Japan provides capacity-building support across a range of fields including industry, healthcare, and the judicial and administrative sectors.

Japan also prioritizes high-quality infrastructure development, providing assistance that aligns with the AU's self-led initiatives on projects such as roads, ports, energy, and digitalization, while taking into account safety, durability, and environmental sustainability.

These efforts help enhance regional connectivity and economic dynamism, which in turn leads to job creation and mobilization of private investment.



Rehabilitation made on National Trunk Road No.8 in Ghana
Photo credit: Akio Iizuka



Photo credit: SUMITOMO CHEMICAL COMPANY

Towards a Stable Society

Initiatives in the Healthcare Field



Investments have been made in more than 60 healthcare startups in Africa (photo credit: AAC Investment)

In Japan, both public and private sectors work together to help achieve broad-based healthcare and medical services in Africa, specifically through the "Africa Health Initiative". Drawing on the technology and expertise provided by Japan's health and medical sectors, the goal is to contribute to the resolution of problems plaguing the African healthcare sector. Among them are companies that launch Africa-dedicated funds to invest in startups with a view to providing specific solutions to address challenges in the healthcare sector.

Capacity and human resource development for women and youth



Supporting the empowerment of women and youth (photo credit: UNDP)

Japan supports improving access to basic education and capacity development for youth and women.

For example, Japan will expand Integrated Mobile-based Learning through the Pan African Virtual and Electronic University (PAVEU) Initiative, launch new exchange programs for hundreds of high school and university students, and develop AI-skilled professionals.

Advancing Africa's development through cooperation among Japan and countries across the Indian Ocean



Forum on the Economic Region of Indian Ocean-Africa (photo credit: Ministry of Foreign Affairs Website)

India, the Middle East, and African countries are increasingly being recognized as high-growth areas due to their great potential for economic growth fueled by a young population and ample energy resources. Under the Economic Region Initiative of Indian Ocean-Africa, Japan is working together with the countries across the Indian Ocean to step up collaborative efforts in these countries with a view to enhancing trade and investment—and to achieving an even better growth trajectory for Africa.

The Growing Anime and Other Creative Industries



Anime song concert (January 31, 2026, Abidjan) (photo credit: The Japan Foundation @nonosdav)

Japan's public and private sectors work together to connect Japan's creative industries with Africa, where the youth population is growing. In FY2025, JETRO sent a group of Japanese companies on site visit missions to showcase pop culture industry in Africa, to create matching opportunities with local companies. Also, the Japan Foundation held anime song concerts and attracted a large number of enthusiastic fans. Initiatives to develop talent in the animation industry have also begun.

The Real Africa

Democratic Republic of the Congo

Congolese Rumba

Originally from Kinshasa, this style of music has become popular throughout Africa. The songs are sung in Lingala, which has resulted in use of the name "Lingala pop" at times. The genre has even earned UNESCO World Cultural Heritage recognition.

Sao Tome and Principe

UNESCO Biosphere Reserve

This island nation consists of the islands Sao Tome and Principe, as well as the surrounding islands. The entire country has been designated a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve.

Zambia

Walking Safari

South Luangwa National Park is considered the birthplace of the Walking Safari. Experience the sights, sounds, and smells of the wilderness, including footprints of wild animals, the calls of wild birds, and much more, in a majestic natural environment.

Sierra Leone

Mt. Bintumani

Sierra Leone is blessed with a rich natural environment, with the Atlantic Ocean to the west, and West Africa's tallest peak, Mt. Bintumani (1,948 meters), to the east.

Djibouti

Lake Assal

Lake Assal, located in central Djibouti, is a saline lake with water even saltier than the Dead Sea. Here, you can find round, pearl-like crystals of salt.

Zimbabwe

Victoria Falls

This waterfall, located on the country's border with Zambia, is one of the largest in the world. It is known locally as Mosi-oa-Tunya ("The Smoke That Thunders"), and the spray can be seen from kilometers away.

Sudan

The Two Niles

The Blue Nile and White Nile rivers meet in the capital city of Khartoum. The point where the two rivers meet can be seen from the White Nile Bridge, each river with its own distinct color.

The Seychelles

The Last Remaining Paradise on Earth

The Seychelles are world-renowned resort islands. They recently attracted international attention when they became the honeymoon destination for British royalty Prince William and Princess Catherine.

Equatorial Guinea

Kapok Tree

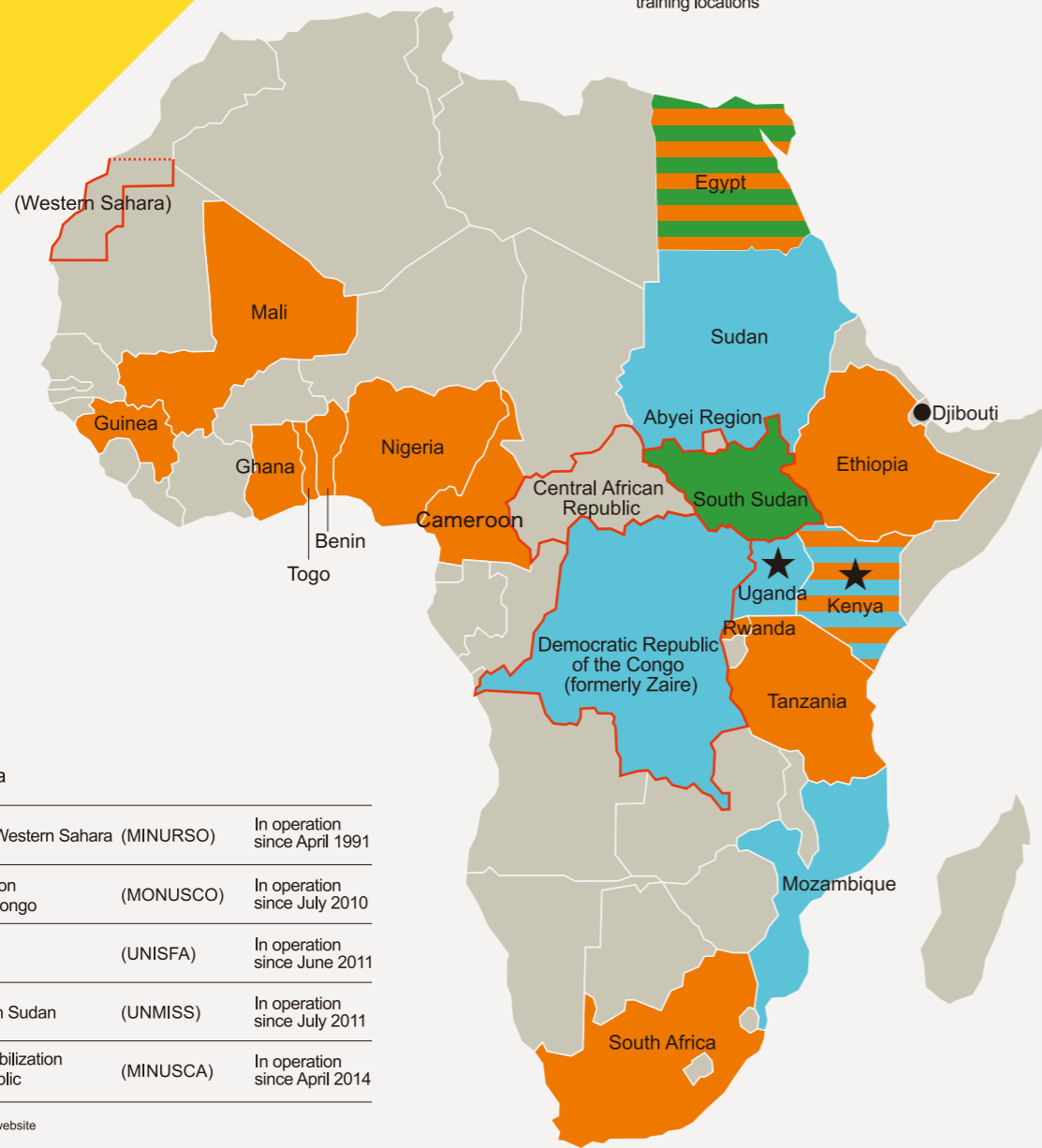
This is the national tree of Equatorial Guinea, and even appears on the country's flag. It is nicknamed "the tree of the gods" because of the oil that can be produced from its seeds.

Building Peace and Stability, the Cornerstones of Growth

Africa still faces serious challenges, as some countries and regions remain unstable due to conflicts and terrorism. Enduring peace is absolutely essential to the development of nations. Japan supports peace consolidation in Africa, as well as Africa's ability to maintain peace on its own.

Regions with UN Peacekeeping Operations and Japan's Initiatives

- Regions with UN Peacekeeping Operations (PKO)
- Countries where Japan Self-Defense Forces (JSDF) personnel are deployed as Staff Officers
- Country where JSDF and others are currently operating
- Countries where Japan has provided support to PKO training centers
- Countries and regions where JSDF and others operated
- ★ UN TPP (Triangular Partnership Programme) training locations



The UN PKO Mission in Africa

UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO)		In operation since April 1991
UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO)		In operation since July 2010
UN Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA)		In operation since June 2011
UN Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS)		In operation since July 2011
UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA)		In operation since April 2014

Source: UN Department of Peace Operations website

Peace and Stability

Support for PKO Training Centers



At a training session in Ethiopia, attendees learn about both theory and practice pertaining to peace and security (2023). (Photo credit: Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

In order to maintain peace, strengthening the capacity of African peacekeeping personnel is critical. From 2008 through 2025, Japan has supported 16 PKO training centers in 14 African countries, including through dispatching Japanese instructors such as Japan Self-defense Force personnel and civilian experts. In recent years, the scope of cooperation has further expanded to include training of female PKO staff, initiatives to address cybercrime, and the establishment of a master's course on peace building.

Landmine Victim Assistance Using Japanese Technologies



Prosthetics Manufacture in Nigeria (Photo credit: UNIDO)

Japan supports landmine victims in Africa through improving accessibility to 3D-printed prosthetics, using Japanese 3D printed prosthetics technology. Provided through the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), these support focus on strengthening production capabilities, supplying prosthetics, and promoting the assistive devices industry through global forums.

JSDF Collaborates on Regional Peace and Stability



Photo credit: PKO Office

Japan has dispatched Japan Self-Defense Forces (JSDF) personnel to serve as staff officers in UNMISS in South Sudan. These officers are engaged in coordinating logistics, information management, engineering activities, and flight operations.

*The Japanese engineering unit terminated its mission in May 2017.



Photo credit: PKO Office

Japan has dispatched JSDF personnel to serve as staff officers in Multinational Force and Observers (MFO), which is engaged in peacekeeping operations in the Sinai Peninsula, Egypt. These officers are engaged in liaison activities between Egypt and Israel, as well as facility maintenance.



Photo credit: Ministry of Defense

JSDF destroyer and patrol aircraft operate off the coast of Somalia and in the Gulf of Aden to ensure safe navigation of commercial vessels. Japan also maintains a JSDF facility in Djibouti.

Support through the UN Triangular Partnership Programme



Photo credit: Ministry of Defense

Japan leads this program in which the UN, supporting member states, and troop-contributing countries collaborate to provide training and equipment. Under this framework, Japan has been contributing to capacity building as well as to the safety of peacekeepers through the dispatch of instructors consisting of Japan Self-Defense Forces personnel and others to African countries. In addition, since 2021, Japan has also supported the establishment of the telemedicine project, which provides medical support for PKO personnel deployed in Africa.

The Real Africa

Senegal

Youssou N'Dour

This world-class pop musician was born in Senegal. He is sometimes known as the "singing journalist" for the strong message of his songs.

Somalia

Ilwad Elman

Ilwad works with her mother, also an activist, following in the footsteps of her assassinated father, who encouraged people to "drop the gun, pick up the pen." She has been nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize multiple times.

Tanzania

Mt. Kilimanjaro

Mt. Kilimanjaro, the tallest mountain in Africa, rises 5,895 meters above sea level. Kilimanjaro Arabica coffee, well known in Japan, is produced in Tanzania.

Chad

Toumai, Humanity's Oldest Ancestor

In 2002, the oldest known hominin skull, nicknamed Toumai, was discovered in Chad by a French research team.

Central African Republic

Manovo-Gounda St. Floris National Park

This enormous national park spans 17,400 km². The northern floodplains serve as a habitat for many waterfowl, and the savanna to the south is home to animals like African elephants and black rhinoceroses.

Tunisia

Harissa

This is an all-purpose seasoning paste made from a base of red chili peppers, mixed with spices like coriander seeds and cumin, as well as garlic and olive oil. It is often put on couscous.

Togo

German Culture

Togo was historically a German colony, and today their beer and sausages are unrivaled. Many say the country produces Africa's finest beer.

Nigeria

Nollywood

"Nollywood" is a major film industry akin to Hollywood and Bollywood, with a unique model: movies are created not for theatrical releases, but to be watched mainly online and on DVD.

Namibia

Namib Desert

At 80 million years old, the Namib Desert is said to be the world's oldest desert — and the most beautiful. Sunrises and sunsets paint the landscape red, creating a magical scenery.

African Development with Japanese Assistance

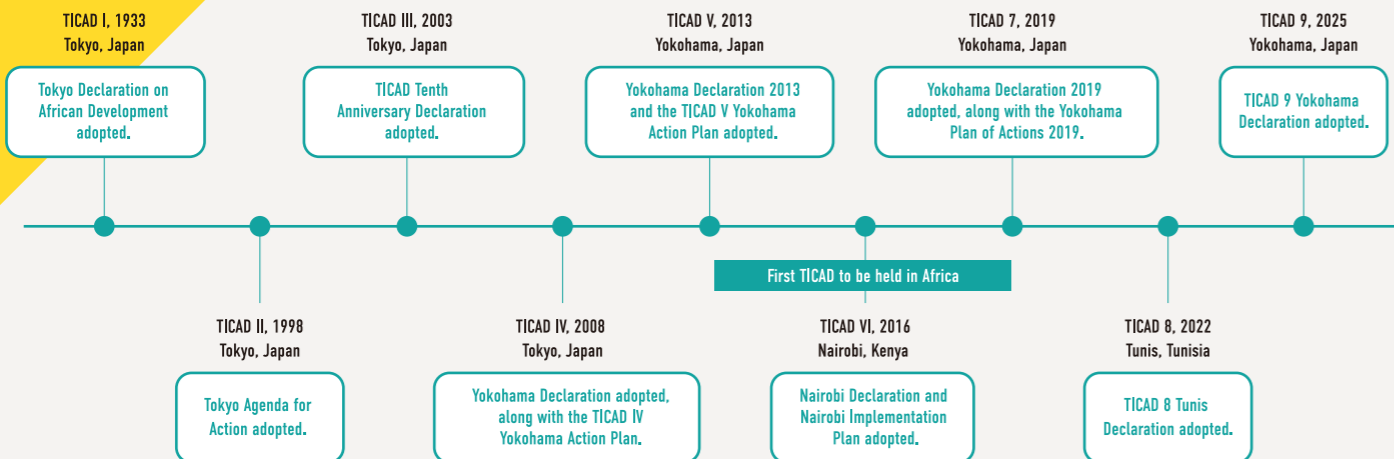
The population of the African continent, comprised of 54 countries, is projected to grow to a quarter of the global population by 2050. With its young population and boundless energy, the region enjoys great potential. Central to the “Global South”, Africa’s presence in the international community is becoming increasingly significant. Meanwhile, the continent faces serious development challenges, including ongoing conflict, terrorism, poverty and hunger. It is therefore essential to address these issues, which form the foundation for the Africa’s growth. Japan will continue to support Africa’s development and work together as a trusted partner to co-create our shared future.

Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD)

TICAD is an international conference on African Development that Japan launched in 1993 as a pioneering initiative. Since the establishment of TICAD, Japan has consistently encouraged Africa’s development under the core principles of African ownership and partnership with the international community, including Japan. This development philosophy is now widely shared across the international community, and has also taken root among African nations. Japan will continue to support Africa in advancing its own development agenda, Agenda 2063, as well as the SDGs aimed at addressing global challenges.



Photo session with heads of state participating in TICAD 9 (August 20, Yokohama)
Photo credit: Cabinet Public Affairs Office



Updated from a part of ‘TICAD History’ in the August 2025 issue of the government public relations online magazine, HIGHLIGHTING JAPAN.

History of TICAD

After becoming the world’s largest official development assistance (ODA) donor in 1989, Japan emphasized the need for Africa-led initiatives and South-South cooperation at TICAD I in 1993. This helped reignite the international community’s interest in Africa. At TICAD II, poverty reduction and integration with the global economy were highlighted. At TICAD III, participants agreed to channel support towards the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) *1, in order to back Africa-led initiatives. At TICAD IV, the concept of human security *2 was positioned as one of the key approaches to Africa’s development. As Africa’s economic growth progressed, TICAD V adopted the theme of “from

aid to investment,” shifting Africa’s position from that of an aid recipient to that of a business partner. Numerous discussions were held on bolstering trade and investment. At TICAD VI, held for the first time in Africa, Japan advocated for a “Free and Open Indo Pacific (FOIP).” TICAD 7 welcomed private companies as official partners and held direct public-private dialogues, while TICAD 8 announced initiatives placing strong focus on “investment in people.” In this way, Japan has consistently advanced African development from various angles, while remaining attentive to Africa’s priorities and responsive to global trends.

*1: A new partnership for development in Africa. This initiative was launched in 2001 with a view to development of Africa by Africans.
*2: A concept that encourages sustainable, individual self-reliance and social development through protection and empowerment. It focuses on each and every human being and aims to protect people from the wide-ranging and serious threats to their lives, livelihoods, and dignity, in order for them to achieve the full potential that they each possess.

Tokyo International Conference on African Development



TICAD 9

A total of 49 (33 heads of state) countries participated in TICAD 9, along with a diverse array of stakeholders, including co-organizers (UN, UNDP, the World Bank, the African Union Commission (AUC)), international organizations, private sector, members of parliaments, civil society, and more. TICAD 9 featured three different plenary sessions in separate fields as well as a public-private business dialogue. In parallel, more than 200 thematic events were held by international organizations, private sector, academic institutions, civil society, government ministries and agencies, etc., with various players interacting and holding discussions that spanned a broad array of subjects. On this occasion, then-Prime Minister Ishiba and then-Foreign Minister Iwaya each held bilateral meetings, 34 and 30 respectively, with representatives from the participating countries and organizations. In these meetings, they exchanged views on cooperation in line with the needs of African nations, as well as collaboration in the global arena, including the reform of the United Nations Security Council.

Co-Creating Innovative Solutions



TICAD 9 Closing Ceremony (August 22, Yokohama)

The theme at TICAD 9 was to co-create innovative solutions together with Africa to address challenges facing the continent and the wider global community. The Conference was composed of three different thematic sessions; economy, society and peace and stability. In particular, as cross-cutting priorities across all sectors, active discussions were held on private sector-led sustainable growth, youth and women, and regional integration and connectivity both within and beyond Africa. Three days of deliberations led to the leaders’ declaration, the TICAD 9 Yokohama Declaration.

Japanese Initiatives

Japan announced its intention to accelerate efforts in the following seven areas at TICAD 9: 1) Promoting the mobilization of private capital, 2) Promoting the mobilization of private investment in Africa, 3) Strengthening industrial cooperation, including the use of AI and DX and strengthening the resilience of mineral resource supply chains, 4) Enhancing connectivity within and beyond Africa, 5) Strengthening health policies, 6) Human resource development and exchanges focusing on youth and women, and 7) Progressing efforts toward peace and security in Africa. Specifically, the launching of “Strengthening the Global Supply Chain through Nacala Corridor Development,” a region-wide co-creation for common agenda initiative *3 which aims to improve and expand regional transport infrastructure and industrial development, as well as the establishment of the Public-Private-Academia Joint Study Group on Strengthening of Japan-Africa Economic Partnership were announced.

*3: A type of development cooperation aimed at achieving development goals by the “co-creation” of social value through dialogue and collaboration with partner countries. Japan will proactively propose appealing cooperation menus that leverage its strengths.

Promoting Business Between Japan and Africa



Then-Prime Minister Ishiba visiting a corporate booth at the TICAD Business Expo & Conference. (August 21, Yokohama) (Photo credit: Cabinet Public Affairs Office)

At TICAD 9, a total of 324 agreements on business collaboration were signed, reflecting the rising interest of Japanese companies in Africa. In addition, the TICAD Business Expo & Conference, hosted by JETRO as a thematic event, featured a record of 194 companies and organizations, attracting approximately 10,000 corporate persons from both Japan and Africa attended.

Youth Empowerment



The Youth Forum (August 20, Yokohama)

By the year 2050, Africa’s population is expected to grow to one-third of the world’s youth population. In light of this backdrop, TICAD 9 showcased opinions of the youth both from Japan and Africa. The Youth Forum was held as a youth version of TICAD with the participation of approximately 400 Japanese and African youths. A number of other youth-focused events were also held, including the Model Africa Union conference, inspired by the Model United Nations.

The Real Africa

Niger

The Tuareg People

The Tuareg people travel the desert with caravans of camels. They are sometimes known as the “blue people,” for their indigo-dyed turbans and traditional clothing.

Burkina Faso

People of Integrity

The name “Burkina Faso” means “land of honest people” in the local language. Visitors are amazed by how neatly bicycles are lined up in bicycle parking areas, even when the street is packed with bikes and motorcycles.

Burundi

Coffee and Black Tea

Burundi is a hilly highland country, much like its neighbor Rwanda. The coffee and black tea grown in this environment are exported to various countries, including Japan.

Benin

Voodoo

Benin is the birthplace of Voodoo. Much like Japan’s myriad deities, Voodoo is known for its many unique gods, like the god of iron, and a snake god.

Botswana

Chobe National Park

This 11,000 km² national park in northeastern Botswana is home to some 120,000 elephants. River cruises on the Chobe River offer an opportunity to see hippopotamuses and crocodiles.

Madagascar

Abundant Flora and Fauna

Madagascar is home to many distinctive species of flora and fauna; most of the baobab trees that appear in “The Little Prince” are unique to the island. This country is also the world’s top producer of vanilla.

Malawi

Lake Malawi

Lake Malawi makes up about 20% of the country’s surface area, and is home to over 500 species of fish, most of which are endemic to the lake. Lake Malawi National Park, at the southern end of the lake, is a World Heritage Site.

Mali

Griots

Griots are born into hereditary lines of musicians, and are called upon to perform at festivals and sing in honor of families at special occasions.

South Africa

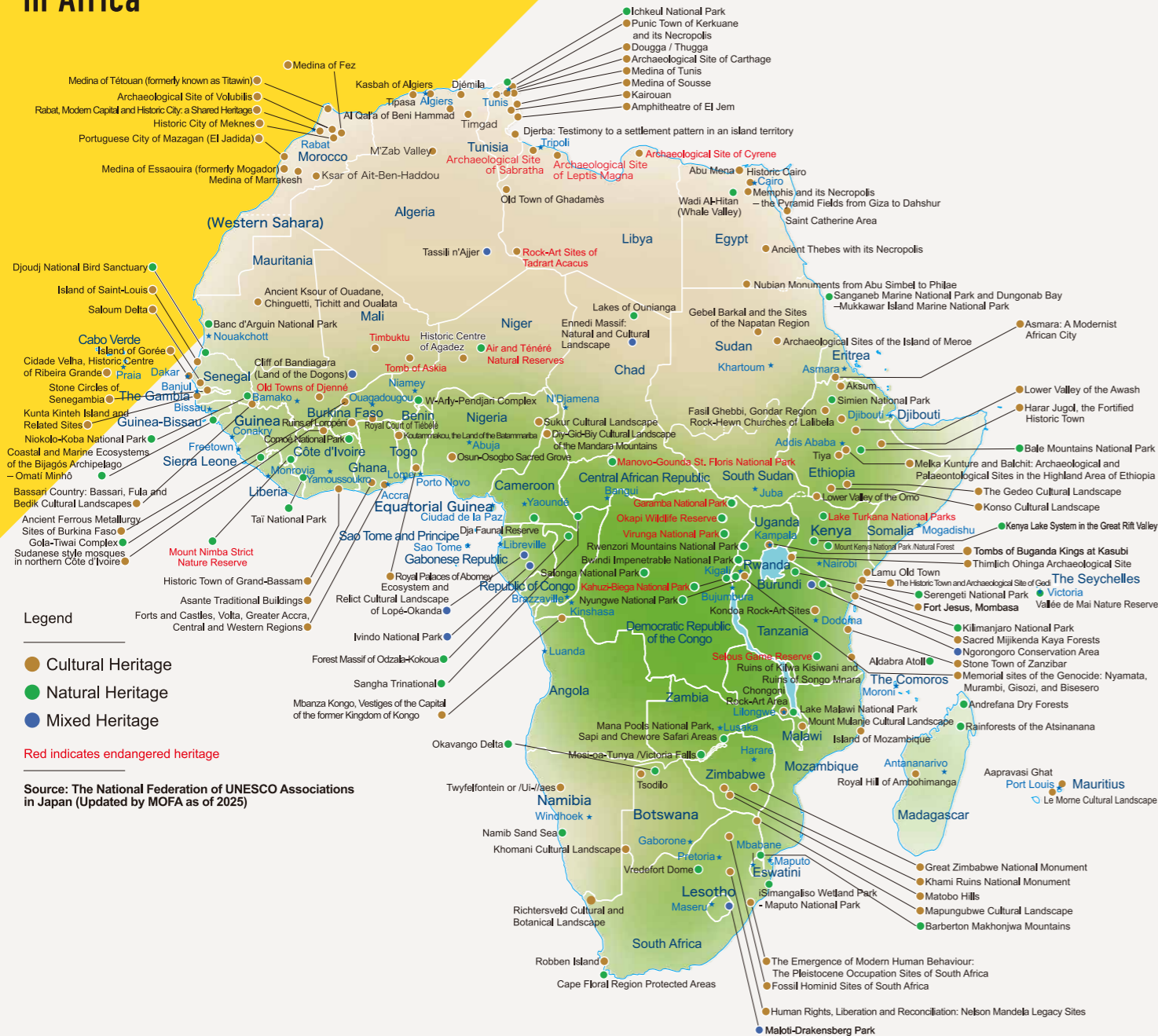
President Nelson Mandela

Mandela and other political prisoners at Maximum Security Prison on Robben Island studied and discussed topics like English together to keep up their morale, earning the prison the nickname “Robben Island University.”

Africa, the Land of Diversity

Known as the cradle of mankind, Africa is also a hub of diversity. The Maghreb, a region of northern Africa, bears unique cultural influences shaped by diverse ethnic groups. Sub-Saharan Africa, a treasure trove of natural environments, from deserts to tropical rainforests. This remarkable diversity is what makes Africa so captivating, something that cannot be captured in simple words.

UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Africa



Land of Diversity

Stone Town of Zanzibar (Tanzania)



Stone Town, located on the island of Zanzibar in Tanzania, is a prime example of an East African coastal trading city. It was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 2000. Influenced by the cultures of Africa, Arab, India, and Europe, the old town features a unique urban structure and architecture, and is known for its beautiful stone buildings.

Kirstenbosch National Botanical Garden (South Africa)



Photo credit: Ministry of Foreign Affairs

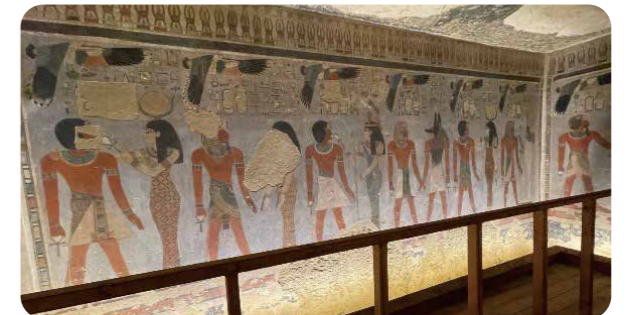
The Cape Town area, including the Kirstenbosch National Botanical Garden, was recognized as a Cape Floral Region Protected Area and inscribed on the UNESCO World Natural Heritage List in 2004. South Africa is a treasure trove of a diverse array of topography as well as different climates, including mountains, deserts, forests, plateaus, plains, and more. The Garden, established in 1913 and renowned for its distinction of being the world's oldest botanical garden, is home to flora unique to the Cape Town area, plus the fauna comprising numerous birds and other animals.

Island of Gorée (Senegal)



Gorée Island, Senegal, was the first place in Africa to be inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List, in 1978. Once a center of the slave trade, the island is now home to approximately 1,800 residents. Because of increasingly severe erosion caused by changes in ocean currents and climate change, Japan provided assistance in rebuilding a wharf to protect the coast.

Ancient Thebes and its Necropolis (Egypt)



The tomb of Amenhotep III, pharaoh of the 18th Dynasty of ancient Egypt was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List as part of Ancient Thebes with its Necropolis in 1979. Egypt reached the peak of its power during the reign of Amenhotep III. The tomb's wall paintings are typical examples of the art of the 18th Dynasty. However, they had suffered severe damage, leading to the tomb's closure to the public. In response, Japan cooperated in restoring the tomb's wall paintings and pillars as well as in their documentation through 3D imaging and photography. In addition, Japan assisted with the installation of interpretive signage and the implementation of safety measures. Thanks to these efforts, the tomb was opened to the public in 2025.

The Real Africa

South Sudan

National Unity Day

Every year, the nationwide sports tournament, called "National Unity Day", takes place in the capital city of Juba. For the first National Unity Day, the Japan SDF detachment deployed to South Sudan to help the preparation of the playing ground.

Mozambique

The Island of Mozambique

This island was once a stopover for traders traversing the Indian Ocean, and a base for Christian missionaries. In Japan, account indicates that in 1586, a party of the Tencho Embassy stopped here on their way home to Japan.

Mauritius

Resorts

Known as the "Star and Key of the Indian Ocean," this island nation is a popular luxury resort among Europeans. In Japan, Mauritius is known as a relay and supply base for the tuna fishing industry.

Mauritania

The world's longest articulated freight train

This articulated freight train, which carries iron ore from the mining town of Zouérat to the port of export, is the world's longest of its kind, stretching a total of 2.5 km in length.

Morocco

Tajines

These tajine cooking pots enjoyed a period of popularity in Japan. They are used to braise chicken or lamb in sauces, along with potato, carrot, and other vegetables.

Libya

Oil

Libya boasts Africa's largest and the world's tenth largest oil reserves (approximately 48.4 billion barrels). Oil production and related industry is the nation's largest industrial sector.

Liberia

Africa's first republic

Liberia became independent in 1847 as Africa's first republic. The country's name comes from the word liberty.

Rwanda

ICT

Rwanda is famous for coffee and mountain gorillas, but the country is also working to foster young entrepreneurs in order to develop a reputation for ICT as well.

Lesotho

Traditional Clothing Traditional Clothing

The traditional dress of Lesotho features blankets in various styles. In rural areas, the traditional cone-shaped basotho hat is worn to this day, along with these blankets.