G. Africa

(a) Overview

While many African countries continue to implement structural adjustment reforms, the continent is finding it difficult to extricate itself from poverty, and approximately two-thirds of all sub-Saharan African countries are recognized as Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPCs). Moreover, the rampant spread of infectious diseases places a heavy burden on development, and some African countries continue to suffer from political confusion, including the prolongation of armed conflicts despite the peacemaking efforts of concerned countries.

However, the trend in Africa toward holding democratic and peaceful elections in accordance with constitutional procedures is gaining momentum. The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) has emphasized democracy and good governance as prerequisites to development, and overall the movement toward democratization is becoming firmly established.

(b) Political Conditions in Each Region

In Southern Africa, discharged soldiers in Zimbabwe who were dissatisfied with the government's land reform efforts began assaulting white farmers since around February 2000. The British Commonwealth and other members of the international community have been urging Zimbabwe to strictly observe law and order in implementing its land reforms, but in November 2001 the government of Zimbabwe stepped up its forced expropriation of farmland by presidential authority. Zimbabwe held presidential elections on March 9 and 10, 2002, amid the economic crisis and social instability accompanying those land reform efforts, and the incumbent President Robert Mugabe emerged victorious against the leader of the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) Morgan Tsvangirai. Attention is still riveted on the continuing confrontation between the opposition and ruling parties and on the future direction of Zimbabwe's socioeconomic instability. In Angola, there has been no end to the civil war between the Angolan National Armed Forces and the anti-government forces of the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA), a conflict that has been ongoing ever since Angola gained independence in 1975; but the February 22, 2002, combat death of Jonas Savimbi, who had led UNITA for many years, has resulted in a growing consensus that the civil war may finally be headed toward a conclusion.

In Central Africa, Democratic Republic of Congo President Laurent Kabila was assassinated in January and was succeeded by his son, Major General Joseph Kabila. President Joseph Kabila has announced that he will implement the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement signed in August 1999, and he is otherwise striving to establish domestic peace. The separation of forces stipulated by United Nations Security Council resolutions has almost been completed, and a full-scale United Nations Peacekeeping Operation (PKO) has been initiated. In Burundi, a provisional administration has been established under the peace process, and a tribal reconciliation cabinet, with roughly equal numbers of Tutsi and Hutu ministers, was launched in November. In the Central African Republic (CAR), the domestic political situation grew increasingly unstable. There was an attempted coup d'état by certain members of the CAR military in May and an armed confrontation between certain members of the CAR military and the president's security force in November.

Column

"National Sovereignty" and United Nations Peacekeeping Operations

Working at United Nations (UN) Peacekeeping Operations (PKOs) often makes me feel very small. We are kept at a great distance by certain non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that believe that they will lose their "neutrality" simply by being seen together with PKO personnel.

The primary mission of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), which is being developed following 10 years of civil war in that country, is the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration of ex-combatants (an effort known as "DDR"). Specifically, our mission is to disarm and demobilize the anti-government and government forces—the two main actors of the war—and assist with the reintegration of the ex-combatants into civil society. (The government forces are actually an agglomeration of what were originally hunting groups under the traditional chieftain system, which emerged to counter the anti-government forces, but like the anti-government forces they have been transformed into a brutal citizens' militia). The more than 45,000 soldiers from both sides have been brought up in a world of massacres and revenge, and carrying a rifle is the only way of life they know. UNAMSIL stands directly between the government and anti-government forces, and we must maintain strict neutrality in balancing the interests of both parties to successfully disarm such soldiers. If we were not completely impartial, as some NGOs claim, the successful completion of the DDR works would be absolutely impossible.

In the peace-building effort, we must constantly consider the serious issue of who will maintain the peace after the UN PKO is completed. In cases like that in Sierra Leone, where there are anti-government forces who are hostile to the government of a sovereign country, the duty of keeping the peace will eventually fall to the sovereign country itself. Even if the present government is corrupt—which is precisely what the anti-government forces cite as the reason for their uprising—peace-building must be advanced through the self-help efforts of the government as a sovereign state, and a dogmatic "neutrality" will serve no purpose whatsoever. Thus, UNAMSIL must respect the sovereignty of the present government while

In West Africa, agreement was reached in Sierra Leone in May 2001 on disarmament procedures aimed at ending the longstanding conflict between the anti-government forces, the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), and government forces, which receive support from neighboring Liberia; and efforts related to the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) of ex-combatants moved forward under the auspices of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL). In January 2002, President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah announced that the DDR program works had been completed. In Côte d'Ivoire, there was domestic political turmoil following the military coup in 1999, but national assembly and local assembly elections have since been implemented and the democratization process is proceeding. In Nigeria, Islamic forces have emerged in northern regions, and the conflicts among different tribes and religious groups are intensifying.

In East Africa (the Horn of Africa), since the peace agreement in December 2000, the peace process of the border conflict between Ethiopia

mediating with the anti-government forces. The situation appears paradoxical, and yet we must maintain some semblance of neutrality. We need skillful means to convince the anti-government forces that even if the disarmament works are conducted under the authority of the present government, there will be no retaliation against the former combatants and guarantees will be instituted to ensure their participation in the democratization process. Given this situation, we find it necessary to deal somewhat harshly with the present government, which has an overwhelming advantage. For example, when we arbitrate violations of the ceasefire agreement, we sometimes intentionally side with the anti-government forces.

I worked in Sierra Leone before the civil war began. The country was in a state of anarchy, including rampant bribery, and the government ruled in name only. I watched as the country spiraled downward into civil war. Yet, UN PKOs cannot intervene by force to prevent such a government from being revived, as this would contradict the principle of national sovereignty, and I find that extremely frustrating.

At my previous posting with the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET), the United Nations built up a government administration from scratch; and frankly, it is the true feeling of many UN PKO workers that it would be easier and quicker to leave everything up to the UN. On the other hand, they also feel that adopting the approach of providing support to the government as a sovereign state will lessen the UN's responsibility in the case of failure. We continue to wrestle with the concept of national sovereignty amid the tension between these two points of view.

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and Eritrea has been proceeding steadily. In Somalia, which has been in anarchy since 1991, the situation is worsening due to the armed conflicts between the Transitional National Government (TNG), which was launched in October 2000, and the Somali Reconciliation and Reconstruction Council (SRRC), which was formed among anti-TNG factions in March 2001.

(c) Economic and Social Conditions

Many African countries have introduced market economic principles and are advancing structural adjustment reforms, mostly centered around fiscal entrenchment policies. Over the mid-term, through the year 2003, the majority of African countries are expected to post average gross domestic product (GDP) growth rates of more than 5 percent per year. However, the economic foundations of many African countries remain fragile since their economies are highly vulnerable to fluctuations on primary product markets and because they have failed to foster the development of internationally competitive industries. The GDP per capita in the African region actually declined from the 1970s to the 1990s, and there has been no significant improvement in living conditions, with approximately one-fourth of the population still forced to live on US$1 per day or less. Moreover, in many African countries, cumulative foreign debt repayments have become a major economic burden. In fact, 33 of the 42 countries designated by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) as HIPCs are located in Africa, and the African debt problem has become a major issue for the entire international community. Additionally, while the population of Africa accounts for just 10 percent of the global population, 70 percent of all AIDS cases worldwide appear in Africa, and the AIDS epidemic has a devastating effect on African societies and economies.

(d) Japan's Efforts

During 2001, cooperative relations between Japan and the African countries were reinforced through diplomacy at heads-of-state level and through Africa's increased understanding of Japan's policy toward Africa.

In January, Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori visited South Africa, Kenya, and Nigeria, becoming the first incumbent Japanese prime minister to visit sub-Saharan Africa. In the policy speech on Japan's cooperation with Africa delivered in South Africa, Prime Minister Mori explained Japan's intention to continue its active cooperation with the African countries, focusing on development assistance and on conflict prevention and refugee assistance as if they were "two wheels of a cart," based on the understanding that there will be no stability and prosperity in the world in the 21st century unless the problems of Africa are resolved. In his speech, Prime Minister Mori also delivered a message calling for the development of new Japan–Africa relations based on wide-ranging mutual exchanges. Prime

Minister Mori's trip was highly praised by the leaders of not only the host countries but also of other African countries, as it demonstrated Japan's determination, as one of the leading members of the international community, to tackle poverty, infectious diseases, conflicts, and other issues that Africa is facing.

Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo paid an official visit to Japan in May, and South African President Thabo Mvuyelwa Mbeki paid a state visit to Japan in October. Both leaders held summit meetings with Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi and exchanged opinions with Japanese leaders in various fields. In the summit meeting between Japan and Nigeria, an agreement was reached to strengthen cooperation as special partners, thus contributing to the further enhancement of the bilateral cooperative relations. In the summit meeting between Japan and South Africa, leaders confirmed that both countries should serve as a bridge between the North and the South, with the goal of resolving the global issues of the new century. Overall, Japan's African diplomacy was further deepened over the course of the year as these leaders of two major African countries visited Japan following Prime Minister Mori's visit to Africa.

As announced during Prime Minister Mori's visit to Africa, Japan has actively promoted cooperation with Africa with development assistance and conflict prevention/refugee assistance as the two main pillars. The Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) process, which was initiated in 1993, is moving forward; in December 2001, Japan co-sponsored the TICAD Ministerial-level Meeting together with the United Nations, the Global Coalition for Africa (GCA), and the World Bank (see Chapter I, C-6). In the field of conflict prevention and refugee assistance, Japan dispatched a joint mission with the U.K. to Sierra Leone, where a DDR program is implemented, provided support to African regional organizations engaged in conflict prevention and resolution, and continued to provide support to refugees and internally displaced persons via the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the World Food Programme (WFP), and other international organizations.