

8

Africa

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1 Overview

Africa, with a population of over 1.4 billion in 54 countries, has been attracting attention due to its young population, rich mineral resources, and relatively high economic growth rates. On the other hand, some African countries are in serious debt, and there are many challenges to the investment environment, such as a lack of transparency in the enforcement and operation of domestic laws. At the same time, there are regions where peace and stability are threatened by conflicts, terrorism, and political turmoil, including the armed seizure of power, and they still face development challenges including serious poverty.

Russia's aggression against Ukraine continues to affect the political and social situation in Africa. Africa is also actively involved in working toward a solution, for example, by sending a head-of-state peace mission to Ukraine. Africa's presence in the international community is also increasing. For example, Egypt and Ethiopia were admitted to the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) at the BRICS Summit hosted by South Africa in August, and the accession of the African Union (AU) to the G20 was decided at the G20 Summit in New Delhi in September.

In Sudan, the fighting between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) erupted in April, creating millions of refugees and displaced persons both inside and outside the country, resulting in a humanitarian crisis, which is also having an impact on the stability of neighboring countries that cannot be ignored. In West Africa, following Mali, Guinea, and Burkina Faso, a military seizure of power also occurred in Niger in July. Following the presidential election held in August in Gabon, a military seizure of power occurred,

led by the military and security forces, who claim that the results of the election were fraudulent and invalid. Food insecurity is growing in the “Horn of Africa”¹ region, where conflict and drought have caused a large number of refugees. In the Great Lakes region, particularly in the eastern region of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), armed groups such as the March 23 Movement (M23)² have become more active, resulting in many internally displaced persons and refugees, and a worsening human rights and humanitarian situation. Meanwhile, the presidential elections held in Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Zimbabwe, Madagascar, Liberia, and Comoros were generally peaceful.

The year 2023 saw a flurry of high-level visits between Japan and Africa. In March, Prime Minister Kishida met with President João Manuel Gonçalves Lourenço of Angolan during his visit to Japan. Moreover, from April 29 to May 4, Prime Minister Kishida visited Egypt, Ghana, Kenya and Mozambique, and held meetings with the leaders of each country (See Special Feature on page 180). In May, the Joint Mission for Promoting Trade and Investment to Africa headed by State Minister for Foreign Affairs YAMADA Kenji, visited Mozambique and Mauritius. From July 31 to August 3, Foreign Minister Hayashi visited South Africa, Uganda, and Ethiopia. On the occasion of international conferences, Foreign Minister Hayashi met with the leaders and foreign ministers of Madagascar and Niger in June, and Foreign Minister Kamikawa met with the foreign minister of Sierra Leone in September. In November, Foreign Minister Kamikawa met with Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation Verónica Nataniel Macamo Dlhovo of Mozambique, who was visiting Japan. Furthermore, State Minister for Foreign Affairs HORII Iwao visited Senegal in November to

¹ The “Horn of Africa” refers to the region on the northeastern part of the African continent that protrudes in the shape of a horn toward the Indian Ocean and the Red Sea. It encompasses the countries of Ethiopia, Eritrea, Djibouti, Somalia, and Kenya.

² An armed group, which is against the government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, made up of ethnic Tutsis that has been stepping up its activities in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo.

attend the 9th Dakar International Forum on Peace and Security in Africa, and made courtesy calls and held talks with dignitaries from Senegal, Mauritania, and Guinea-Bissau.

Furthermore, Japan invited Comoros, the chair of the AU, to the G7 Hiroshima Summit in May, and in the Leaders' Joint Communiqué, the G7 leaders expressed their commitment to strengthen partnerships with African countries and to help Africa be better represented in multilateral forums.

In August, Japan organized a TICAD 30th Anniversary Event - TICAD's 30-Year History and Prospects - marking the 30th anniversary of the Tokyo International Conference on African Development

(TICAD) in Tokyo. Prime Minister Kishida issued a video message, and about 400 participants, including Foreign Minister Hayashi, members of the Diet, African embassies in Japan, and private companies, engaged in lively discussions.

The TICAD Ministerial Meeting is scheduled to be held in Tokyo in 2024, and TICAD 9 in Yokohama in 2025. Through the TICAD process, based on the achievements that TICAD has built over the past 30 years, Japan will work together in a spirit of partnership toward the co-creation of solutions to the various challenges facing Africa. Japan will also strive to further strengthen relations with African countries through investment in people and other unique Japanese initiatives.

SPECIAL FEATURE

Prime Minister Kishida's Visit to Africa

From April 29 to May 4, Prime Minister Kishida visited Egypt (North Africa), Ghana (West Africa), Kenya (East Africa), and Mozambique (Southern Africa). Prime Minister Kishida had three themes in mind during his visit to the African countries. The first was to serve as a bridge between the developing and emerging countries, known as the "Global South," and the G7; the second was to promote Japan's commitment as "a partner growing together with Africa," as expressed at the Eighth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD 8) in August 2022; and the third was to confirm Japan's close cooperation for the stabilization of Sudan.

In Egypt, Prime Minister Kishida held a Summit Meeting with President Abdel-Fattah El-Sisi, and the two leaders agreed to deepen bilateral relations by elevating Japan-Egypt relations to a "Strategic Partnership." Prime Minister Kishida also attended the Japan-Egypt Business Forum to encourage Japanese companies to expand their business activities into Egypt. He also visited the League of Arab States headquarters, the first visit by a Japanese Prime Minister, and affirmed that Japan and the Arab world will deepen cooperation to maintain and strengthen the international order based on the rule of law.

In Ghana, Prime Minister Kishida held a Summit Meeting with President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo. Prime Minister Kishida asserted that no unilateral change of the status quo by force is tolerated in any region in the world, and the two leaders shared the view on the importance of free and open international order based on the rule of law. In addition, the two leaders reaffirmed the enhancement of bilateral relations through efforts in the health sector and in the international arena. Prime Minister Kishida also expressed his commitment to provide approximately 500 million U.S. dollars over the next three years to contribute to peace and stability and promote sustainable growth in the Sahel region and the neighboring coastal countries of the Gulf of Guinea.

He also visited the Noguchi Memorial Institute for Medical Research, which Japan has supported for many years.



Prime Minister Kishida visiting the Grand Egyptian Museum (April 30, Cairo, Egypt; Photo: Cabinet Public Affairs Office)



Prime Minister Kishida visiting the Noguchi Memorial Institute for Medical Research (May 1, Accra, Ghana; Photo: Cabinet Public Affairs Office)

In Kenya, Prime Minister Kishida held a Summit Meeting with President William Samoei Ruto, who has shown active leadership both in terms of regional peace and stability and in the international arena. The two leaders shared the view to cooperate toward stabilizing the situation in Sudan, and, with Russia's aggression in Ukraine in mind, to work together for the promotion of the rule of law. They also confirmed cooperation in various infrastructure project plans in Mombasa, a logistics hub in East Africa, under the new plan for a “Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP).”

In Mozambique, Prime Minister Kishida held a Summit Meeting with President Filipe Jacinto Nyusi in which the two leaders shared the view to push for the early resumption of Africa's largest liquefied natural gas (LNG) development project. The two leaders also affirmed that they would cooperate to encourage the realization of tangible business results by taking advantage of the Public and Private Sector Joint Mission for Promoting Trade and Investment in Africa that was dispatched in conjunction with the visit. President Nyusi expressed his hope that Japan, as the G7 Presidency, would address various issues in Africa through collaboration between the G7 and the African Union (AU).

During Prime Minister Kishida's visit to these four countries, which are major economic centers in Africa, Japan was able to further strengthen bilateral relations with each country while holding a series of substantive discussions based on the three themes.

2023 marks 30 years since TICAD was established under the leadership of the Government of Japan. Based on the achievements accumulated to date, the TICAD Ministerial Meeting is scheduled to be held in Tokyo in 2024, and TICAD 9 in Yokohama in 2025. Taking advantage of these opportunities, Japan will continue to work together with Africa on various issues from the same perspective.



Japan-Kenya Summit Meeting
(May 3, Nairobi, Kenya; Photo: Cabinet Public Affairs Office)



Japan-Mozambique Summit Meeting (May 4, Maputo, Mozambique; Photo: Cabinet Public Affairs Office)

2 East Africa

(1) Uganda

Under President Yoweri Museveni's long-serving administration, Uganda has enjoyed economic growth owing to its stable domestic politics. The country is actively accepting refugees from neighboring countries, and currently hosts approximately 1.5 million refugees, the largest number in Africa. It is also contributing to regional stability by deploying its own army to the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS)³ and to the eastern region of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where armed groups are active.

In August, Foreign Minister Hayashi became the first Japanese foreign minister to visit the country,



Japan-Uganda Foreign Ministers' Meeting (August 2, Kampala, Uganda)

paying a courtesy call to President Museveni and meeting with Minister of Foreign Affairs Jeje Abubakhar Odongo. During the courtesy call and meeting, the two countries affirmed to further strengthen bilateral

³ African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS): Established in March 2021 with the approval of the UN Security Council, ATMIS restructured the mandate of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) to facilitate a transition to a system in which the Somali government takes responsibility for maintaining security.

relations and to continue to work together on various issues facing the international community.

(2) Ethiopia

Ethiopia has the second largest population in Africa (120 million people) and high economic potential, with a high annual growth rate of around 8% from 2004 to 2019 (approximately 6% since 2020).

Armed clashes that occurred between the federal government and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) continued from November 2020, but the situation has improved since the November 2022 peace agreement. Meanwhile, in the Amhara region, where the armed forces and the government have been fighting since April 2023, the conflict intensified in August, and the government declared a state of emergency in the region.

In August, Foreign Minister Hayashi visited the country, paid a courtesy call on Prime Minister Ahmed Ali Abiy and met with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Mekonnen Hassen Demeke. They confirmed future cooperation in addressing various issues in the international community, including bilateral cooperation in the economic field and ensuring food security in Africa.



Japan-Ethiopia Foreign Ministers' Meeting (August 3, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia)

(3) Eritrea

Eritrea is a country located on the international strait connecting the Indian Ocean, the Suez Canal, and Europe. Its territorial waters are a crossroads in terms of economic security, with many Japanese-related ships passing through them. Eritrea's role in the stability of the "Horn of Africa" region is important, and in FY 2024 Japan will upgrade its consulate in Eritrea to an embassy.

(4) Kenya

Kenya is an important like-minded country for Japan that shares fundamental values and principles such as democracy and the rule of law. Kenya has been actively involved in the peace and stability of East Africa, including through its efforts to resolve conflicts in Sudan, Ethiopia, Somalia, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Kenya is also the economic hub of East Africa and one of the leading hubs of Japanese companies in Africa. In 2023, the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations with Japan, Prime Minister Kishida visited Kenya in May and held a summit meeting with President William Samoei Ruto to discuss issues challenging the international community, including Russia's aggression against Ukraine and the situation in Sudan. They also shared the view to further develop bilateral relations, including business relations. In February 2024, President Ruto visited Japan and held a summit meeting with Prime Minister Kishida, where the two leaders shared the view to further strengthen economic relations, promote a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)", and enhance cooperation in the international arena.

(5) Union of Comoros

The Union of Comoros is Japan's partner and supports FOIP as a maritime nation like Japan. In 2023, as the chair of the AU, the country has been active in diplomatic efforts. Japan invited the country, as chair of the AU, to the G7 Hiroshima Summit, which it hosted in May, and President Assoumani Azali contributed to the discussions. At the Japan-Comoros summit held on that occasion, the two countries affirmed cooperation on FOIP and the AU's participation as a permanent member of the G20.

(6) Djibouti

Djibouti is an important partner in FOIP because it is located on an international shipping route that connects the Indian Ocean with the Suez Canal and Europe and is used by many Japanese vessels. Japan has had a Self-Defense Forces (SDF) base here since 2011 and has been engaged in anti-piracy operations. The base was also used to evacuate Japanese nationals and others when clashes broke out in Sudan in April. State Minister for Foreign Affairs TAKEI Shunsuke, who was

dispatched to handle the evacuation, expressed gratitude for Djibouti's full cooperation in the evacuation in his meeting with Secretary General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Mohamad Ali Hassan, and both affirmed their commitment to continue deepening Japan-Djibouti relations towards the realization of FOIP.

In December, Japan signed and exchanged new notes with the Djibouti government to enable the SDF of Japan to secure, in an appropriate manner, the status of the SDF in Djibouti for the protection and transportation of Japanese and other nationals abroad and for the development of a temporary posture for the possibility of such measures.

(7) Sudan

In April, fighting broke out in the Sudanese capital, Khartoum, between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces, and the fighting spread to other parts of the country. More than six million people have been displaced both inside and outside the country, creating a humanitarian crisis in Sudan and neighboring countries. The United States (U.S.), Saudi Arabia and other countries, regional organizations such as the AU and the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), as well as the UN, are continuing to mediate efforts to achieve a ceasefire, but a lasting ceasefire is yet to be achieved. Japan has provided assistance totaling 92 million U.S. dollars to address humanitarian issues in Sudan and neighboring countries and is supporting efforts to address various issues together with regional organizations such as IGAD and the AU, as well as international organizations such as the UN.

(8) Seychelles

Seychelles is located at a strategic point in the Indian Ocean and is an important partner for Japan in realizing FOIP. It is an island nation renowned for tourism and rich fishery resources and boasts the highest GDP per capita in Sub-Saharan Africa. However, it is susceptible to the effects of climate change and is vulnerable as a small island nation. Until now, the Embassy of Japan in Kenya was accredited to Seychelles and had a dual-role consulate in the country, but in January 2024 it was upgraded to the Embassy of Japan in Seychelles.

(9) Somalia

The humanitarian situation in Somalia remains severe due to factors such as intermittent terrorist activities by the radical Islamist group Al-Shabaab and drought. Japan has been supporting the efforts of President Sheikh Mohamud Hassan, who took office in May 2022, toward the consolidation of peace, and in 2023, provided humanitarian assistance totaling approximately 27 million U.S. dollars in various areas, including food, health, and medical care, through international organizations.

(10) Tanzania

Tanzania is located in a strategic position connecting eastern and southern Africa and continues to experience economic growth thanks to its stable domestic politics. Under President Suluhu Hassan Samia, who took office in April 2021, the country is also working to attract investment and develop large-scale infrastructure such as railways and ports.

The First Japan-Tanzania Business Environment Improvement Committee was held in May, where discussions were held toward facilitating investment and trade between the two countries.

(11) Burundi

Burundi is a landlocked country located in the central part of the African continent. Under President Évariste Ndayishimiye, who took office in May 2020, Burundi is accelerating efforts to fight corruption and improve relations with neighboring countries. Japan has been providing ongoing development cooperation to Burundi since the 1970s and continues to provide support for infrastructure development and the improvement of basic social services.

(12) Madagascar

Madagascar is an island country in the Indian Ocean located off the southeastern coast of Africa that supports FOIP. It is also an important country as a supplier of mineral resources. In June, Foreign Minister Hayashi paid a courtesy call on President Andry Nirina Rajoelina during his visit to France and discussed bilateral cooperation, including an integrated nickel-cobalt production project run by a Japanese company, as well as strengthening food security. A presidential election

was held in November in which President Rajoelina was re-elected.

(13) South Sudan

South Sudan has been in turmoil since clashes that broke out between the government and anti-government groups in December 2013, but the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS) was signed in September 2018. As the deadline for the implementation of this agreement approaches in February 2025, delays have been seen in the drafting of a constitution, preparation for elections, and so on.

Japan continues to support the peace and stability of the country through development cooperation through the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and support for UN Peacekeeping Operations (PKO). In December, Japan decided to provide approximately 12 million U.S. dollars in assistance via international organizations for areas such as ceasefire monitoring, election assistance, and humanitarian assistance.

(14) Mauritius

Mauritius is a maritime nation like Japan and is an important partner in realizing FOIP. In March, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Yamada met with Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade Alan Ganoo at the G20 Foreign Ministers' Meeting. In May, the Public and Private Sector Joint Mission for Promoting Trade and Investment in Africa, headed by State Minister for Foreign Affairs Yamada, visited Mauritius. In September, Prime Minister Kishida held a brief talk with Prime Minister Pravind Kumar Jugnauth and agreed to develop bilateral relations, including trade and investment.

(15) Rwanda

Under the leadership of President Paul Kagame, Rwanda has continued its efforts toward economic development and national reconciliation. The country aims to become an ICT-based nation and has been experiencing rapid development, particularly in the field of information and communications technology, and the number of Japanese companies, including startups, entering the country is increasing. Japan is contributing to the digitalization of the country,

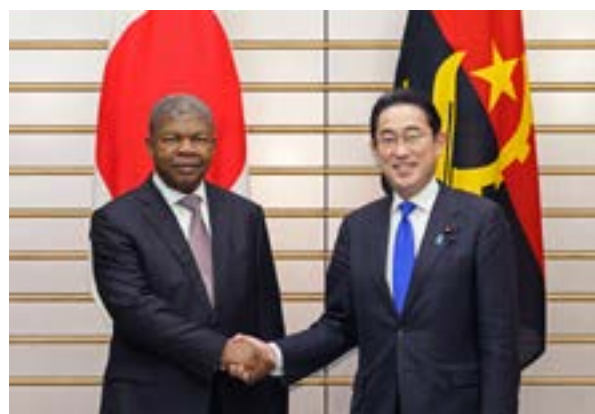
including providing grant aid for the introduction of an intelligent transport system in the country's capital, Kigali, in October. Japan and Rwanda are also cooperating in the space industry, including launching satellites and training engineers through industry-government-academia collaboration.

3 Southern Africa

(1) Angola

Angola has a stable political foundation and plays an important role in regional peace and stability through active multilateral diplomacy. It is one of the leading oil-producing countries in Africa and is rich in mineral resources such as diamonds. President João Manuel Gonçalves Lourenço is actively working to improve the business environment and promote domestic industry to diversify and stabilize the economy.

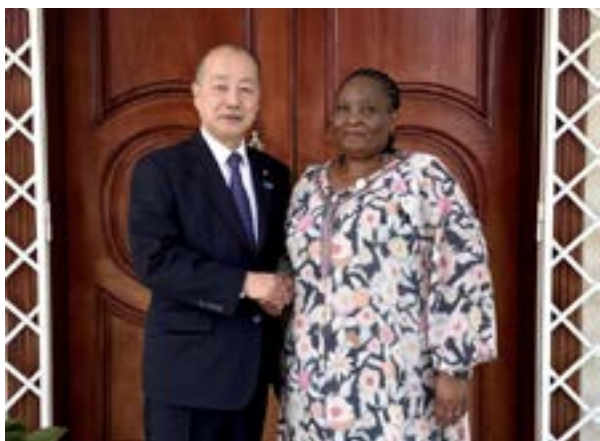
In March, President Lourenço made an official working visit to Japan and attended the Japan-Angola Business Forum. During his meeting with Prime Minister Kishida, the two leaders discussed strengthening business relations and Russia's aggression against Ukraine and affirmed the importance of transparent and fair development finance. During his visit to Angola in August, Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry, NISHIMURA Yasutoshi, signed the Japan-Angola Investment Agreement and attended the Japan-Angola Business Roundtable.



Japan-Angola Summit Meeting (March 13, Tokyo, Photo: Cabinet Public Affairs Office)

(2) Eswatini

Eswatini maintains the only absolute monarchy in Africa under King Mswati III.



Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs Takagi meeting with Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Thulisile Dladla of Eswatini (February 16, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia)

In April 2018, the country changed its name from the “Kingdom of Swaziland” to the “Kingdom of Eswatini.” It is the only country in Africa that has diplomatic relations with Taiwan. In February, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs TAKAGI Kei met with Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Thulisile Dladla during his visit to Ethiopia. Parliamentary elections were held in October and the King appointed a new prime minister and cabinet members.

(3) Zambia

Zambia, which has abundant mineral resources including copper, defaulted on its debts in November 2020, but in June 2023, it reached a general agreement on a debt restructuring plan with a committee of official creditors under the common G20 framework. Its domestic politics remains stable, and the country is strengthening its ties with Western countries, including co-hosting the second Summit for Democracy with the U.S. as Africa’s representative in March. In July, Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan and high officials of Zambia exchanged views, and Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry Nishimura visited the country in August and paid a courtesy call on President Hakainde Hichilema.

(4) Zimbabwe

In August, Zimbabwe held general elections, including a presidential election, for the first time in five years. Japan provided election-related equipment and training through a grant assistance program called the Election Assistance Program (UNDP partnership),

thereby contributing to the consolidation of democracy and the rule of law in the country. Incumbent President Emmerson Mnangagwa was re-elected, and a new cabinet was formed, but some international election observers, including the European Union, have expressed concern about the fairness of the election. The U.S. and Europe continue to impose sanctions, including asset freezes and travel bans on certain companies and individuals. The new government faces challenges in managing the economy, including dealing with prolonged inflation and excess debt.

(5) Namibia

Namibia has been politically stable since its independence in 1990. It is an important logistics hub on the Atlantic side of the Southern African region with abundant marine and mineral resources. It also ranked first in Africa in the 2023 World Press Freedom Index. In April, Minister of Mines and Energy Tom Alweendo visited Japan. In June, a Japanese business mission visited Namibia. In August, Minister of Economy, Trade, and Industry Nishimura became the first Japanese cabinet minister to visit Namibia, where he affirmed that Japan would further strengthen and develop bilateral relations.

(6) Botswana

Botswana has been politically stable since gaining independence in 1966. Economically, the country has grown rapidly since independence thanks to revenues from diamonds and other minerals and is now classified as an upper-middle-income country. Meanwhile, President Mokgweetsi Masisi is aiming to transition to a knowledge-intensive economy with diversified industries. In February, Japan and Botswana signed an exchange of notes for the Emergency Support Project in Response to the COVID-19 Crisis, which will provide financial support towards economic and social stabilization and the transition to a green economy.

(7) Malawi

Malawi has maintained stable domestic affairs since its independence in 1964. However, in recent years, the economy has become unstable due to floods and foreign currency shortages. The country is currently working on disaster recovery, fiscal reconstruction, and

agricultural industrialization. Japan has built friendly relations with Malawi, with which it shares fundamental values, and provided emergency relief goods through JICA in response to the flood and landslide damage caused by Cyclone Freddy, which struck the southern part of the country in March.

(8) South Africa

South Africa has demonstrated its presence in the international arena through its participation in the G20 and BRICS, and through the efforts of African leaders in the Ukraine peace initiative. It is also a major economic power in Africa and continues to attract interest from foreign companies, including Japanese, as a base for expanding business operations. In June, Foreign Minister Hayashi held a telephone call with Naledi Pandor, Minister of International Relations and Cooperation. In August, he visited South Africa and held a foreign ministers' meeting in which the two countries affirmed to strengthen bilateral relations and cooperate in the international arena. In the energy and mining sector, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Yamada visited the country in February to participate in the Mineral Security Partnership. In September, upon Minister of Higher Education and Training Bonginkosi Emmanuel Nzimande's visit to Japan, the two governments concluded a memorandum of cooperation on matters related to hydrogen and ammonia.



Japan-South Africa Foreign Ministers' Meeting (August 1, Pretoria, South Africa)

(9) Mozambique

Mozambique is an important partner for FOIP and has been a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council with Japan since 2023.

In May, Prime Minister Kishida visited Mozambique with the Public and Private Sector Joint Mission for Promoting Trade and Investment in Africa, led by State Minister for Foreign Affairs Yamada, and held a summit meeting with President Filipe Jacinto Nyusi. The two governments agreed to provide strong support for the early resumption of the liquefied natural gas development project in the north of the country. In October, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs HOSAKA Yasushi visited the country to attend the inauguration ceremony for the Nacala Port project, which Japan provided support for through yen loans, and paid a courtesy call on President Nyusi. In November, Foreign Minister Kamikawa met with Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation Verónica Nataniel Macamo Dlhovo, who was visiting Japan, and confirmed the importance of multifaceted development that will lead to growth in the entire northern region of the country, including using the Co-creation for Common Agenda Initiative, as well as the promotion of issues such as “Women, Peace and Security (WPS)”.

(10) Lesotho

In Lesotho, a landlocked country composed of mostly mountainous highlands, trout aquaculture is conducted in the lake of the Katse Dam constructed by utilizing natural resources, providing a major export product to Japan. In addition to improving the food situation through food aid, Japan is also supporting the improvement of the country's energy supply by upgrading the Katse Dam's small hydroelectric power generation facilities and increasing the country's power generation capacity through renewable energy.

4 Central Africa

(1) Gabon

Following the presidential election held in August, members of the military and security forces claimed that the election results were fraudulent and invalid, and declared the dissolution of state institutions, installing General Brice Oligi Nguema as the interim president and non-military member Raymond Ndong Sima as appointed prime minister. The interim government has pledged to hold democratic and fair elections

and a national referendum to adopt a new constitution and is working to eliminate corruption and strengthen press freedom.

(2) Cameroon

The Government of Cameroon continues to make efforts to resolve the issue in English-speaking regions, where clashes between separatists and security forces persist. Japan exchanged notes for the second phase of the Recovery in South-West region of Cameroon through rehabilitation of health centers and water points (in cooperation with UNDP, with a grant amount of 300 million Japanese yen) in March and for food aid (grant aid of 200 million Japanese yen) through the UN World Food Programme (WFP) in September, contributing to strengthening peace and stability in Cameroon.

In the senate elections held in March, the ruling party, the Cameroon People's Democratic Movement (CPDM), led by President Paul Biya, won 94 out of 100 seats, maintaining a strong administration.

(3) Democratic Republic of the Congo

The Democratic Republic of the Congo held a presidential election on December 20th, marking the final year of President Félix Antoine Tshisekedi Tshilombo's first term. Japan provided support to ensure that the election was held in an inclusive and safe manner.

In the eastern region, the human rights and humanitarian situation has deteriorated significantly as armed groups have become more active, resulting in many internally displaced persons and refugees. Against this backdrop, the government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo has requested the early withdrawal of the UN PKO mission deployed in the country. The international community has pointed out the importance of realistic and concrete measures for the gradual, responsible, and sustainable withdrawal of the UN PKO mission, and stressed the need to strengthen governance in the country, including security sector reforms. Japan is collaborating with international organizations to provide assistance through the reestablishment of a local policing model.

In addition, the country has an abundance of important mineral, forest, and water resources, and Japan is promoting cooperation for the country's socioeconomic

development, including the use of resources and assistance in the field of electric power infrastructure.

(4) Republic of Congo

In June, the Republic of Congo participated in a peace mission to Ukraine and Russia, which was led by seven African leaders. The country, which is home to the vast Congo Basin, has also been active in addressing climate change and has been involved in regional and international issues, including hosting the Summit of the Three Basins, Biodiversity Ecosystems, and Tropical Forests in October.

On the other hand, the domestic economy has been sluggish due to Russia's aggression against Ukraine and other factors, making economic diversification a priority issue, and Japan has provided food aid to the country through the WFP. In October, Denis Christel Sassou N'Guesso, Minister of International Cooperation and Promotion of Public/Private Partnership, visited Japan and met with Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs FUKAZAWA Yoichi in which both sides welcomed the consent in principle recently reached on the technical cooperation agreement between the two governments. Both sides also mutually affirmed that they would make further efforts to strengthen bilateral relations through exchange of views among public and private stakeholders of both countries.

(5) Sao Tome and Principe

In Sao Tome and Principe, where poverty rates are high, President Carlos Manuel Vila Nova is working to diversify the economy to reduce poverty. Japan has been providing food aid and is the second largest donor after Portugal, Sao Tome and Principe's former colonial power. The counterpart funds for food aid are used for the country's economic and social development.

(6) Equatorial Guinea

Equatorial Guinea remains under the long-running administration of President Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, who was re-elected in the presidential election in November 2022. In February, cases of Marburg virus disease were confirmed in the continental Equatorial Guinea, but in June, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared an end to Marburg virus disease in the country.

(7) Chad

In Chad, a national referendum on a new constitution was held in December, and there has been progress toward the transition to civilian rule. Following clashes that erupted in Sudan in April, the country has accepted more than 400,000 Sudanese refugees. In May, Japan decided to provide assistance to refugees and returnees in countries neighboring Sudan, including Chad, and provided humanitarian assistance to Chad. Japan values and encourages the role that Chad plays in peace and stability in the Sahel and Lake Chad regions and supports it by providing food aid and other assistance.

(8) Central African Republic

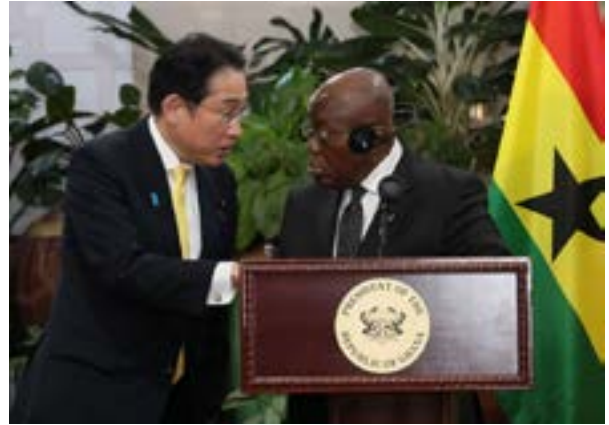
The Central African Republic is moving forward with its domestic peace process, including dismantling five domestic armed groups in April. However, the country continues to face humanitarian challenges with a large number of refugees and internally displaced persons. In September, Japan exchanged notes regarding food aid (250 million Japanese yen) through the WFP and continues to provide humanitarian assistance to the country.

A referendum on the new draft constitution was held in July, and in August the Constitutional Court in the Central African Republic declared its adoption by a majority vote.

5 West Africa

(1) Ghana

The Akufo-Addo administration, which was launched in 2017 and re-elected for a second term from 2021, has adopted the concept of Ghana Beyond Aid and is working to promote investment and diversify industries. In addition, the country continues to focus on rebuilding the domestic economy, including the debt situation. In May, Prime Minister Kishida visited Ghana, becoming the first Japanese prime minister in 17 years to do so, and held a summit meeting with President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo and visited the Noguchi Memorial Institute for Medical Research, which Japan has supported for many years through ODA. The institute plays an important role in the fight against infectious diseases in the region. In February,



Joint press conference following the Japan-Ghana Summit Meeting (May 1, Accra, Ghana; Photo: Cabinet Public Affairs Office)

Foreign Minister Hayashi held talks with Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration Kwaku Ampratwum-Sarpong.

(2) Cabo Verde

Cabo Verde has a well-established democracy with high political stability among African countries. In January, Foreign Minister Hayashi met with Minister for Foreign Affairs, Cooperation and Regional Integration Rui Alberto de Figueiredo Soares in New York, U.S., and the two shared the view to strengthen bilateral cooperation. Furthermore, Japan implements economic development cooperation with the country, including exchanging notes regarding grant aid for food aid in September.



Japan-Cabo Verde Foreign Ministers' Meeting (January 12, New York, U.S.)

(3) The Gambia

Since President Adama Barrow took office in 2017, the Gambia has been promoting reforms based on fundamental values and principles, such as democracy and the rule of law. However, it faces social issues such as a fragile economic structure dependent on agriculture

and serious poverty. Japan is contributing to the stabilization of the country through food aid.

(4) Guinea

In Guinea, after the military takeover by a group of Guinean army soldiers in September 2021, a transitional government (led by interim President Mamadi Doumbouya) was established, and the transition to civilian rule is underway with a completion deadline of the end of 2024.

Guinea has abundant water resources and fertile land, has high development potential for agriculture and fisheries, and is a major producer of bauxite and iron.

Japan has built friendly relations with Guinea over the years and provides assistance to the country in areas such as food security, development of economic infrastructure, and improvement of basic social services to promote sustainable development.

(5) Guinea-Bissau

Guinea-Bissau aims to overcome poverty and political instability by taking advantage of its fertile lands, blessed with fishery and mineral resources. In June, Guinea-Bissau held peaceful elections for its National People's Assembly and inaugurated a new prime minister, Geraldo Martins. Japan continues to provide assistance to Guinea-Bissau, including in the form of institution-building, to strengthen the rule of law and democratic governance. At the Dakar International Forum on Peace and Stability in Africa held in Senegal in November, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Horii paid a courtesy call on Prime Minister Martins and the two countries shared the view to further strengthen relations.

(6) Côte d'Ivoire

Côte d'Ivoire is working to promote and strengthen its agricultural production system under its National Development Plan. To support this, Japan exchanged notes in April regarding two grant aid projects for the Economic and Social Development Programme worth a total of 1.15 billion Japanese yen, which will involve the provision of agricultural engineering equipment and fertilizer. In June, Japan exchanged notes regarding grant aid for the Project for the Improvement of Mechanized Services in the Rice Cultivation Sector.

Furthermore, in response to the lack of public services and the increasing influx of refugees in the northern region, Japan exchanged notes with Côte d'Ivoire in October regarding the Local Government Social Infrastructure Improvement Plan in the Northern Region (in cooperation with UNDP). In February, Chief Executive Officer of the Investment Promotion Center Solange Amichia visited Japan and met with Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs Takagi, where they discussed promoting investment by Japanese companies in Côte d'Ivoire, and shared the view to continue active discussions through the Bilateral Committee on the Improvement of the Business Environment and other means.

(7) Sierra Leone

In Sierra Leone, presidential elections were held in June, and President Julius Maada Bio was re-elected for a second term. The Bio administration is focused on building a stable, peaceful, open and pluralistic democracy, and continues to work on priority areas such as food security, human resources development, youth support, and technology promotion. Japan implements development cooperation with the country in areas such as health, human resources development, agriculture, and basic infrastructure development. In September, Foreign Minister Kamikawa held a foreign ministers' meeting with Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Timothy Musa Kabba in New York, U.S., and confirmed cooperation in the international arena.



Foreign Minister Kamikawa meets with Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Kabba of Sierra Leone (September 19, New York, U.S.)

(8) Senegal

As the stabilizing force in Western Africa, President Macky Sall has been actively working toward peace and stability in Africa, participating in the Ukrainian peace mission to Ukraine and Russia in June, and hosting the 9th Dakar International Forum on Peace and Security in Africa in November. On the domestic political front, President Sall announced his intention not to run in the next presidential election scheduled for February 2024, in accordance with the provisions of the constitution, once again demonstrating to the international community that Senegal is a country where government is administered according to the constitution and democracy is firmly established.

At the Dakar International Forum on Peace and Security in Africa in November, State Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan Horii introduced Japan's efforts to promote peace and stability in Africa and underlined that Japan would think together with Africa and work as a partner to co-create better solutions, given the increasing role of African countries in the international community. He also paid a courtesy call on President Sall and met with Foreign Minister Ismaïla Madior Fall and affirmed that they would work together to further strengthen bilateral cooperation and Japan-Africa relations, as well as to strengthen cooperation in the international arena.

(9) Togo

In April, in order to improve food security and resolve development issues in Togo, Japan exchanged notes regarding the grant aid Economic and Social Development Programme, which provides fertilizer, the price of which has risen sharply due to Russia's aggression against Ukraine. Japan and Togo also exchanged notes in September regarding food aid. Furthermore, in order to support Togo in its efforts to become a regional logistics hub by developing logistics corridors, Japan exchanged notes with Togo in November regarding the grant aid Project for Construction of Bypass Road at Sokodé.

(10) Nigeria

The presidential election in February resulted in the election of Bola Tinubu from the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC), the first change in presidents in eight

years. Japanese House of Representatives member TANAKA Kazunori, as Special Envoy of the Prime Minister, attended the presidential inauguration ceremony in May. The new president's basic policies include governance based on the constitution and the rule of law, security measures, eradicating poverty, job creation, improved access to capital, and fighting corruption. Of note, soon after taking office he embarked on economic reforms, including the abolition of fuel subsidies that had been putting pressure on the country's finances for many years.

In terms of security, terrorist attacks and raids by groups such as Boko Haram continue, particularly in the northeast. Japan is carrying out economic and social development assistance, as well as humanitarian assistance through international organizations.

(11) Niger

Niger is facing the growing threat of terrorism primarily on its borders with Mali and Burkina Faso, and was making sustained efforts to counter terrorism and overcome development challenges in cooperation with the international community, under the leadership of President Mohamed Bazoum. However, in July, the detention of President Bazoum by members of Niger's Armed Forces army soldiers occurred. Japan strongly condemned the action by the soldiers, and a Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesperson issued a statement calling for the safety of President Bazoum and for the constitutional order to be upheld. Japan will continue to support diplomatic efforts by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the AU, among others, to ensure the safety of President Bazoum and the early restoration of constitutional order.

(12) Burkina Faso

Following the seizure of power by members of Burkina Faso's Armed Forces in January and September 2022, a transitional government, led by President of the Transition Ibrahim Traoré, was established and is working toward the transition to a civilian government. The security situation in Burkina Faso is seriously deteriorating, with frequent terrorist attacks and raids mainly in the border areas with Mali and Niger in the north, and a large number of internally displaced persons have

been reported. Ensuring peace and stability in Burkina Faso, which is the linchpin for peace and stability in the Sahel region and the countries along the Gulf of Guinea, has become an urgent issue.

To contribute to the improvement of the humanitarian situation, Japan exchanged notes with Burkina Faso, regarding grant assistance for food aid in October and is providing food aid with Japanese government rice to improve food security in the country and is also promoting cooperation regarding assistance for internally displaced persons.

(13) Benin

Considering the urgent need to strengthen security measures in northern Benin due to the southward movement of terrorist organizations resulting from instability in the Sahel region, Japan exchanged notes in October regarding grant aid for the Economic and Social Development Programme and decided to provide anti-terrorism and security equipment. Romuald Wadagni, Minister of Economy and Finance, visited Japan in June and met with State Minister for Foreign Affairs Yamada, during which the two countries shared the view to further develop bilateral relations and to work toward peace and stability in the Sahel region and the countries along the Gulf of Guinea.

(14) Mali

Following the seizure of power by Malian army soldiers in August 2020 and May 2021, a transitional government, led by President of the Transition Assimi Goïta, was established and is working toward the transition to civilian rule. The security and humanitarian situation have deeply deteriorated, with frequent terrorist attacks, raids, and clashes occurring mainly in the north and east of the country. In June, in response to a request for withdrawal from the Mali transitional government, the UN Security Council unanimously adopted a resolution to withdraw the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). Ensuring peace and stability in Mali, which is the linchpin for peace and stability in

the Sahel region and the countries along the Gulf of Guinea, has become an urgent issue.

Japan supports peace, stability, and sustainable growth in Mali. In October, Japan exchanged notes on the grant assistance for The Project for the Promotion of Education for Children Based on the ‘School for All’ Model in Vulnerable Areas (in collaboration with the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF)) and is working with UNICEF to promote primary education enrollment and improvement of the learning environment in Mali.

(15) Liberia

President George Tawlon Manneh Oppong Weah is focusing on reducing poverty in Liberia, following the civil war that broke out in 1989 and the Ebola hemorrhagic fever that spread from neighboring countries in 2014, causing enormous humanitarian damage in Liberia. Infrastructure, education, and health are also priorities, and Japan is supporting the country’s sustainable growth through assistance for the expansion and upgrade of the main road (Japan Freeway) in the capital Monrovia and food aid. The first round of the presidential election was held in October, and a runoff election was held in November, in which the former vice-president candidate, Joseph Nyumah Boakai, was elected.

(16) Mauritania

While being located in the Sahel region, where politics and security are becoming increasingly unstable, there have been no terrorist attacks since 2011 in Mauritania, and its government continues to be relatively stable. However, food shortages are becoming severe due to factors such as the global situation and the increase in the influx of refugees caused by the worsening security situation in neighboring countries. Japan continues to provide assistance, including food aid. In addition to its long-standing cooperation in the fisheries sector, Japan is also supporting the country’s development through cooperation in the agricultural sector.