

A NEW PUSH TOWARDS AFRICA

In this issue

Seeking More Aid	1
More Is Not Enough	2
NGOs Marginalised	3
Outcome 'Inadequate'	4
Africa Keeps Japan Guessing on Security Council Seat	5

DISCLAIMER: The views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung or of IPS Europe.

SEEKING MORE AID

African leaders are seeking an increase in official development assistance (ODA) and a boost to trade and investment.

In a keynote address at a three-day conference May 28-30 in Japan's port city Yokohama, Tanzania's President and African Union chairman Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete welcomed the announcement by Japan's Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda to double Japan's ODA to Africa in the next five years, bringing annual aid from the current 900 million to 1.8 billion dollars by 2012.

But, he added: "Africa needs more ODA to develop its infrastructure, develop its human capital, and improve the provision of basic social and economic services."

Kikwete was addressing the fourth round of the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD). Speaking on behalf of 52 African governments, the Tanzanian President said: "Besides the increase in ODA, which is highly appreciated, TICAD needs to go further."

He said there was a need for increased trade between Africa and Japan, more Japanese investment, and "more involvement and active presence and participation of the Japanese private sector on the continent."

Kikwete and other African heads of state also welcomed a Japanese package that includes up to 4 billion dollars of soft loans to Africa over the next five years to help improve infrastructure, and the doubling of grant aid and technical cooperation for the region over the next five years, bringing the five-year average to 1.4 billion from 700 million dollars at present.

But they stressed the need to take into account all countries on the African continent, and not focus the measures on South Africa and Egypt, which absorb 85 percent of Japanese investment in Africa.

"We must attach importance to the local potentialities of the African countries -- particularly in the face of the current food crisis," Akihiro Ohta, a senior leader of the New Komei Party that forms the ruling coalition government in Japan with the Liberal Democratic Party told IPS. Ohta pleaded for exploring needs for technology and aid, keeping in view concerns about the environment and human rights.

Contradicting reports in some newspapers that along with China and India, Japan was joining the run for Africa's rich resources, External Affairs Ministry spokesman Kazuo Kodama said Japan was keeping up a high-level policy dialogue with African leaders and development partners that it had launched at the first round of TICAD in 1993 -- when "aid fatigue" had set in after the end of the Cold War.

Kodama told IPS that the process continued with TICAD II in 1998 and TICAD III in 2003, and has evolved into a major global framework to facilitate initiatives for African development. (continued on page 6)

Voices of the South on Globalization is a monthly newsletter intended to inspire a meaningful North-South Dialogue by raising awareness for global interdependences and by offering a forum for voices from the South in the globalization debate. Each edition will present short analyses or commentaries from a Southern perspective on one particular issue of the globalization process.

Voices of the South on Globalization is published by IPS Europe with financial support from the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung.

For further information please contact:

IPS-Inter Press Service Europe,
Ramesh Jaura, Marienstr. 19/20, 10117 Berlin
Tel.: ++49-(0)30-28 48 23 60
Fax: ++49-(0)30-28 48 2369
rjaura@ipseuropa.org

MORE IS NOT ENOUGH

Japan received kudos for what UN Deputy Secretary General Asha-Rose Migiro called the country's "strong commitment to Africa's development." But praise for Japan at the fourth round of the TICAD did not come without a touch of criticism, particularly from Zimbabwe.

The admiration is for the fact that Japan, the world's second largest economy, initiated the 'TICAD process' in 1993, when focus on Africa's concerns was drifting. As Migiro points out, TICAD that is held every five years "helped rally Africa's development partners in a collective and forward-looking effort."

Former prime minister Yoshiro Mori initiated a dialogue between Africa and the world's major industrial countries at the Okinawa G8 summit in 2000.

Eight years later, Africa's development concerns will again be tabled by a Japanese Prime Minister, Yasuo Fukuda, at the G8 summit in Hokkaido in Japan, scheduled July 7 to 9.

President Blaise Compaore of Burkina Faso joined the UN Deputy Secretary General in testifying to the TICAD conference that the process had enriched the policy dialogue based on the principle of African countries taking ownership of their development, and the international community supporting Africa's efforts.

"This is also the basis upon which the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) was founded," Migiro told delegates.

While lauding Japan's decision to double its ODA in the next five years, bringing its annual aid to Africa from the current 900 million to 1.8 billion dollars by 2012, Migiro joined African leaders in pointing out that "donor countries must meet their commitments to increase the volume, quality and predictability of ODA."

Japanese officials told IPS that though Tokyo continues to hold on to the UN goal of spending 0.7 percent of gross national income (GNI) on official development assistance (ODA), there is no plan to set a date for fulfilling the target.

Presently, only 0.17 percent of Japan's GNI goes for ODA.

Former prime minister Toshiki Kaifu (1989-1991), who founded Japan's volunteer corps to support developing countries, told IPS that it is much easier to convince people of the need for humanitari-

an assistance than for ODA to countries with which Japan has no historical ties. "But of course we must continue to pursue the goal."

United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Executive Director Thoraya Ahmed Obaid expressed hope that more funds would be allotted to maternal health. Obaid warned that the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) will not be achieved unless the lives, the health and the rights of women are promoted more vigorously.

"Maternal health underpins all the other MDGs, especially those to improve infant and child health, to empower women, and to attain gender equality," she said. "Only when women are healthy, educated and empowered can they lift their families and their nations from the depths of poverty, and place them on a firm stairway to development."

In his opening speech to the conference, Prime Minister Fukuda had made a strong link between improving reproductive health and achieving the MDGs.

The International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF), the largest civil society organisation delivering sexual and reproductive health care in Africa, said that TICAD IV comes at the half-way point of the MDGs, and provides a real opportunity to address the lack of progress being made towards improving maternal and child health enshrined in MDGs 4, 5 and 6.

"The dialogue between African leaders and international development partners should help remove bottlenecks and scale up action," IPPF said in a statement.

The consensus reached through a broad consultative process leading up to TICAD IV is that there are a number of policy recommendations and 'windows of opportunity for action' that could favourably be supported to realise the vision of a 'Vibrant Africa' over the next five years, IPPF said.

The Japanese government won some nuanced praise from Zimbabwe's Foreign Minister Simbarashe S. Mumbengegwi for offering "a valuable (continued on page 6)

NGOs MARGINALISED

If the fourth round of the Tokyo International Conference on African Development was seriously flawed, it is because non-governmental organisations had at best been allowed to influence the policy dialogue between Japan and the African governments only from the margins.

For the first time in TICAD's 15-year history, a 'civil society forum' was held during the three-day conference. But the group of 55 African, Japanese and international non-governmental organisations (NGOs) expressed disappointment at the "exclusion" of large segments of the civil society from the conference.

They were allowed to attend as "observers", but did not have the right to address key TICAD sessions to discuss specific development and environmental issues.

According to Asahi Shimbun newspaper, the Foreign Ministry initially told the NGOs that it would allow only three representatives from groups based both in Japan and Africa to attend the general meetings as observers.

The NGOs had demanded that at least nine from among 85 members be allowed to enter. The ministry later promised that six could be permitted to enter, citing space limits.

The NGOs say their limited participation reflects "Tokyo's entrenched view of NGOs as inexpensive subcontracting workers."

"This casts huge doubts on the legitimacy and accountability of the conference," Gustave Assah of the Civic Commission for Africa, a member of the TICAD NGO Network told IPS.

But the NGOs' criticism goes beyond their exclusion from the conference, and spans issues critical to African development.

The Japanese government has announced several measures to promote rapid growth in Africa, including 4 billion dollars in loans for transport infrastructure, trade insurance, and 2.5 billion dollars worth of financing support for Japanese companies seeking investment opportunities in Africa in the next five years.

"While there is no doubt that Africa needs growth," the TICAD NGO Network argues, "this is precisely the time to prioritise direct investment in the area of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), both because many African societies suffer from social and economic divides and in order to ensure that

the poor people can take part in economic activities."

The MDGs are eight goals to be achieved by 2015 that respond to the world's main development challenges. These are drawn from the actions and targets contained in the Millennium Declaration that was adopted by 189 nations and signed by 147 heads of state and governments during the UN Millennium Summit in September 2000.

The NGO Network is also concerned about the implication of the large amount of loans on the poor communities in Africa.

The NGO Network argued in a position paper circulated to the media that Africa's current debt crisis had started with plummeting primary commodity prices.

"It is not clear whether the current growth is sustainable, and it is questionable whether Africa will have the capacity to repay the (fresh) loans announced (May 28)," the authors of the paper said.

Announcing the aid package, Japanese Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda had reiterated the importance of achieving the MDGs, and committed Japan to support reproductive health, and to train 100,000 health workers in the coming five years (TICAD is held every five years).

"Although welcome in itself, the plan does not go far enough to help Africa reach the health MDGs," the NGOs said.

Africa's public health sectors suffer from a huge lack of money to recruit and pay for human resources, with the result that trained and qualified people have little choice but to migrate to rich countries, they said.

"If Japan is serious about overcoming the health worker crisis, then it needs to be prepared to pay for these expenditures," said the position paper.

"No amount (of money) is too much to invest in human development," said the paper, adding: "Africa is currently losing over eight million lives a year to health related reasons, and this is unacceptable." (Continued on page 4)

OUTCOME 'INADEQUATE'

A key document emerging from TICAD IV has failed to address HIV/AIDS in the region. The three-day deliberations ended May 30 with an agreement on three documents – the Yokohama Declaration, the Yokohama Action Plan, and the TICAD Follow-Up Mechanism. But the action plan fails to undertake a commitment to ensuring universal access to the prevention, care and treatment of HIV/AIDS by 2010, the Africa Japan Forum says.

The forum called on the Japanese government to review the action plan, and to show leadership at the G8 summit. In view of the fact that Africa bears 80 percent of the global AIDS burden, G8 countries acknowledged the need to scale up the fight against AIDS by committing themselves to universal access to treatment by 2010 at the St. Petersburg G8 summit in July 2006.

"Yet the Yokohama Action Plan fails to address and fully support, through financial and technical means, the attainment of universal access by 2010," the Africa Japan Forum's Masaki Inaba told IPS.

The Forum welcomed the fact that the action plan recognises the role of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria. It also lauded the Japanese government's decision to spend 560 million dollars to fight AIDS in the coming years. But it said that the amount pledged "still falls far short of what Japan should be committing as the world's second largest economy, and based on increasing requests from countries requiring funding from the Global Fund."

Although prevention is key to dealing with the prevalence rate of HIV/AIDS, in generalised epidemic prone areas such as sub-Saharan Africa, prevention, treatment and care must all be strengthened, says the forum.

The action plan spells out a wide range of activities to be undertaken in the next five years. These encompass strengthening of health systems in Africa, improvement of maternal and child health, and measures against infectious diseases.

Commenting on the Africa Japan Forum criticism, a senior Japanese foreign ministry official said: "There has been a dialogue with the NGOs and there will be dialogue with them; they are very important members of the TICAD process, so they have had and will have a chance to put forward their ideas."

"There is no antagonism between my government and the NGOs," Shigeyuki Hiroki, the deputy director-general for international cooperation at the foreign ministry told IPS. TICAD IV had confirmed the twin principles of African ownership of its development and partnership with the international community for development. ☑

(Continued from page 3)

Investment in the MDGs should be seen as "a kind of Marshall Plan for Africa" that would provide "increased and sustained development support" over the period necessary for the infrastructure for sustainable development to be in place, the paper said.

The NGOs point out that though Africa has experienced some positive developments in democratisation over the past decade, there are several signs causing concern.

The recent events in South Africa involving violent attacks on immigrants, for example, indicate that even in a highly developed country with a relatively strong economy and institutionalised democratic structures, huge income gaps, high unemployment and continuing poverty for the majority of the people can threaten such strong foundations of democracy.

"The challenge (in Africa) therefore is to ensure that democratic consolidation is embarked upon alongside redistributive development," said the paper.

It added: "There can be no long-term peace in Africa without redistributive development. TICAD IV has to put back the issue of democratisation on its agenda and link it with peace and development. African countries and their partners have to evolve development agendas complimented by forms of governance that promote democratic, responsible, participation."

As part of the Cool Earth Partnership, Japan has announced a plan to provide 10 billion dollars for developing countries trying to reconcile economic growth and climate mitigation objectives.

The NGO Network regrets that the money is mainly intended for large developing countries emitting greenhouse gases responsible for global warming.

According to the Network, "Africa will continue to suffer as long as and as much as Japan continues to cause global warming." Japan should provide adaptation financing to African countries. ☑

AFRICA KEEPS JAPAN GUESSING ON SECURITY COUNCIL SEAT

If the Japanese government was expecting assurances from African nations that they would support its bid for a permanent seat at the UN Security Council, they have reason to be disappointed with the outcome of TICAD IV.

Africa accounts for some 25 percent of the 192 General Assembly members, and would carry considerable weight when it comes to a vote on the reform of the world body to enlarge the Security Council's permanent membership.

The overarching theme of the three-day conference May 28-30 in the port city of Yokohama near Tokyo was not the reform of the Security Council but 'Towards a Vibrant Africa: a Continent of Hope and Opportunity'.

The discussions, therefore, focussed on boosting economic growth; ensuring 'human security', including the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the consolidation of peace and good governance; and addressing environmental issues and climate change.

But senior government officials and influential members of the Japanese parliament, who did not want to be named, made no secret of the fact that they hoped for African support at the UN.

Short of that "TICAD IV became one of the biggest international conferences ever held by the Japanese government," a senior Japanese foreign ministry official said. "I feel that trust between African countries and Japan has crystallised." This was no less due to the bilateral meetings Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda had with 40 leaders of African countries. He received what the foreign ministry official described as "varying responses".

Ghana supports

The strongest support would appear to have come from President John Kufuor of Ghana. "We will support Japan becoming a permanent member of the UN Security Council," he said.

However, the response from some other countries was far from encouraging. "I will take the issue back to my country and examine it," said President Hifikepunye Pohamba of Namibia.

Summing up African responses, the Japanese official said: "Most participating countries showed understanding or support on the (UN) issue. However, only a few countries went beyond their past stances and expressed their support for our bid."

"Algeria, Egypt, Libya said they won't approve the Security Council reform if they can't become a permanent member themselves. Some countries are showing superficial support for Japan while in their hearts they are less than supportive," according to a comment on the online edition of the respected Japanese daily Yomiuri.

External affairs ministry spokesman Kazuo Kodama denied reports in some newspapers that along with China and India, Japan was simply joining the run for Africa's rich resources.

But he was keen to point out that African participation in TICAD IV was higher than in the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) last year in Beijing. Also, a larger number of African countries (40) were represented by their heads of government or state at the Tokyo conference than at the Beijing meet (35).

A long way to go

Yet, Japan has a long way to go to compete with China in its trade with Africa. China's trade with African countries amounted to 73.5 billion dollars in 2007. The trade between Japan and Africa added up to 26.6 billion dollars.

Japan announced a wide set of measures at TICAD IV to reinforce relations with Africa.

Prime Minister Fukuda has also pledged to provide 50 million dollars to help developing countries, including those in Africa, increase food production, in addition to the 100 million dollars in aid already given.

The money will be used to provide seeds, fertiliser and machinery to poor farmers to help them produce more food, Japanese officials said.

But African countries are of the view that Japan, the world's second largest economy, should be doing more. ☑

NOTE: All reports in this edition of the Voices of the South were written by Ramesh Jaura, who attended the TICAD IV on behalf of IPS - Inter Press Service.

MORE IS NOT ENOUGH

(Continued from page 2)

platform for genuine policy dialogue free from the prescription-based approach."

Zimbabwe's Foreign Minister commended "the people and government of Japan" for taking the lead in the global efforts to combat the HIV/AIDS pandemic by providing 500 million dollars in 2000 which became seed money for the Global Aids Fund."

He added: "However, when they made this selfless gesture, the government and people of Japan were not aware that the Global Aids Fund would one day be used as a political weapon with which to sanction some developing countries for unjustified political reasons."

Since the launch of the Fund, Zimbabwe has received assistance from it only twice in the nine disbursements made so far. Besides, Mumbengegwi said, the amounts that were disbursed to Zimbabwe on those two occasions were paltry in comparison to what was given to other countries in the region.

The average per capita aid for Zimbabwe is only four dollars compared to 124 dollars for the region. "It is regrettable that the Global Aids Fund has been politicised," Mumbengegwi said.

But a senior Japanese official did not appear to be optimistic about aid to Zimbabwe. Japan has an ODA charter which lays down three important criteria for recipients of ODA, he said. These are the rule of law, human rights, and good governance.

"Unless these criteria are fulfilled, we cannot provide ODA; our parliamentarians and people would not understand," the official said.

The Charter says, among others: "In order to address direct threats to individuals such as conflicts, disasters, infectious diseases, it is important not only to consider the global, regional, and national perspectives, but also to consider the perspective of human security, which focuses on individuals. Accordingly, Japan will implement ODA to strengthen the capacity of local communities through human resource development. To ensure that human dignity is maintained at all stages, from the conflict stage to the reconstruction and development stages, Japan will extend assistance for the protection and empowerment of individuals." ☑

SEEKING MORE AID

(Continued from page 1)

"The (present) conference comes at a time when Africa's average economic growth rate has reached 6 percent, peace-building and democratisation are taking hold, and countries are tackling climate change and environmental concerns," Kodama said.

This view is supported by a World Bank study released in May. According to the study, sub-Saharan Africa is reversing its two-decade decline in economic and social development. That is reason enough for the organisers to give a forward-looking title to the conference, 'Towards a vibrant Africa: A continent of hope and opportunity'.

Japan's Prime Minister Fukuda said: "If we were to liken the history of African development to a volume of literature, then what we are about to do now is open to a new page, titled the 'century of African growth'. In the future, Africa will become a powerful engine driving the growth of the world."

The conference, TICAD IV, was attended by leaders from 51 African countries including some 40 heads of state and government, 22 donor nations along with the European Union (EU), 12 Asian countries, and officials from 16 African regional organisations and 55 international organisations.

The conference had three priorities: boosting economic growth; ensuring human security, including the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and consolidation of peace and democratisation; and addressing environmental issues and climate change.

The conference was co-organised by the United Nations Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the World Bank.

The results of TICAD IV will be fed into the G8 summit in Hokkaido in Japan scheduled to be held July 7 to 9. "We want to bring African priorities to the summit of the world's major industrial nations," Kodama said.

TICAD IV concluded with the adoption of the 'Yokohama Declaration' outlining guiding principles and approaches to African development among TICAD stakeholders, as well as a 'Yokohama Action Plan' and a 'Yokohama Follow-up Mechanism' laying out a road map for action-oriented initiatives with measurable targets. ☑