

TICAD 7 Special

TUESDAY, AUGUST 27, 2019



Clockwise from above: Singer Misia, the honorary ambassador appointed by the Foreign Ministry for The Seventh Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD 7), smiles with a child in Zambia during her trip to the country from late July to early August; TICAD 7 will be held at the Pacifico Yokohama; a giraffe in the Kenyan Savanna; young girls playing on a digital tablet.

Above: Prime Minister Shinzo Abe (center) smiles as Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta (left) and Chadian President Idriss Deby Itno shake hands after TICAD VI in Nairobi on Aug. 28, 2016. Left: A herd of zebras at the Serengeti National Park in Tanzania. KYODO, GETTY IMAGES

Corporate expansion in spotlight at Africa conference

Companies urged to take serious look at chances on continent

STAFF REPORT

The city of Yokohama is set to host The Seventh Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD 7) from Aug. 28 through 30, as dozens of top leaders from African countries and international organizations will gather in Japan. TICAD, which was first launched by Japan in 1993, has undergone critical transformations in recent years, and there are plenty of reasons for Tokyo to reform TICAD in the drastically changing African environment. To avoid direct competition with the growing Chinese presence in Africa, Japan has shifted its focus of economic assistance to quality, rather than quantity, Japanese diplomats and experts say. TICAD 7 will also be more business-oriented than previous iterations as the Japanese private sector is "finally becoming serious" about the African economy, said Shigeru Ushio, director-general of the African Affairs Department of Japan's Foreign Ministry in a recent interview. "The (Japanese) private-sector businesses have requested (the Japanese government) to let them take the driver's seat and speak during a plenary meeting of TICAD for the first time," he said. As a result, TICAD 7 will have a business dialogue session by representatives of the private and government sectors on Aug. 29. In the past, such a session was



organized as a side event, but this time it will be upgraded to a plenary meeting for the first time. There are clear reasons for Japanese firms to be more serious about business in Africa. The African economy, which once suffered heavily from regional conflicts, poverty and food crises, started to enjoy great benefits from surging prices of various natural resources, such as oil, minerals and other commodities in the 2000s. From 2000 through 2017, African countries maintained high real economic growth, with an average of 4.5 percent, according to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). Meanwhile, the population on the continent is predicted to continue growing to 4.28 billion in 2100. The population of Asia — the main overseas market and manufacturing base for major Japanese firms — will peak in 2055 and

start shrinking, according to the United Nations. "At the end of this century, one in every four humans in the world will be African," Ushio said. "So Africa will be highly significant as a market. It's regarded as 'the last frontier of the 21st century.'" Keidanren, Japan's most powerful business lobby, is well aware of the great potential of the African continent. "Africa has realized high economic growth thanks to its rich natural resources and other factors. The gross domestic product surged from \$632 billion in 2001 to \$2.1 trillion in 2016, as the economy expanded 3.4 times," Keidanren said in its report on Africa in September last year. "Africa has far more potential since economic growth is expected to continue and the middle-income class will expand," Keidanren said.

Still, the future of Africa is probably not as rosy as some optimists argue. Rapidly growing urban populations in Africa could cause a massive food shortage, as the land productivity of African agriculture is far lower than the world's

average, and Africa still needs to import massive amounts of staple foods, warned Katsumi Hirano, executive vice president of the Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) and an expert on African affairs. Without drastic improvement of land

productivity, the rapidly increasing population would only pose a grave burden for the future of Africa, Hirano said. "African people may say they no longer need assistance, but they do need it to

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Turning on the Light in Africa

Global crossvalue platform
Marubeni

supporting Africa

A messenger in name and actions

MAMI MARUKO
STAFF WRITER

"I want people to feel happy through music," said singer Misa, who endeavors to bridge Africa and Japan through the power of music.

The acclaimed singer is the honorary ambassador of The Seventh Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD 7), which will be held in Yokohama from Aug. 28 to 30. This is her second time in the role, following her first stint in 2013 (TICAD V).

Misa is hopeful about letting more Japanese people know about Africa and sings the conference's theme song "Amazing Life," which is also the theme song of the popular NHK program "Darwin ga kita! Kimono Shin Denetsu," a show that looks at different animals around the world.

"Music is a tool for communication, especially between people with different languages. We can share our feelings through music. In Africa, people recite each other's

songs. That way, they can communicate with each other (even if they use different languages)," she said during a July interview with The Japan Times in Tokyo.

Spreading Africa's charm

Misa wants to spread the charm of Africa to Japan and the world through sharing her experience of visiting some of the countries across the African continent. The singer, who rose to fame after the release of her single "Everything" in 2000, has visited eight African countries over the past decade.

Noting that there are over 50 countries in Africa, and that each has a unique culture, nature and history of its own, Misa said: "Africa today has a sense of momentum — with an expanding economy, women's empowerment, biodiversity, development of medicine and more. But (these things) are not just about Africa. Our lives are linked and it has to do with our lives, too; we need to think about various issues with a wider perspective."

She added that she believes not many

people in Japan — and in the world — know about "the real (state of) Africa today."

"Did you know that South Africa is the only place in the world that produces Rooibos tea?" Misa asked with a smile. "It's not just that we (Japan) support Africa. We are supported by Africa, too, through their exports such as Rooibos tea, chocolates, energy sources and more."

The singer stresses that it's important to first take interest in Africa, then learn about its blessings, as well as the problems that the continent holds and try to tackle the issues from the standpoint of each individual. "It's sometimes good to get tips from experts as well. Greater power is created when powers of individuals (and companies and organizations) come together," she said.

Misa's first experience in Africa was when she visited Kenya in 2007. The singer traveled to the Kibera slum in Nairobi, one of the largest slums in the world, and met with children at the Magoso elementary school. Children who have lost their parents live there together, and she was happy to find out that her visit to the school sparked interest in some children, pushing them to work toward realizing their dreams, with studying in Japan being one of them.

After that, she became a board member of mudéf — a charity foundation that supports Africa through education, while working to eliminate poverty and eradicate malaria — and visited seven more African countries.

Misa said that although it was shocking to know that there were many children battling illnesses in Africa, it was more shocking to find out that "there are children who die without even being able to battle illnesses" due to limited hygiene and lack of medication. According to 2018 UNICEF findings, 5.4 million children die before they reach the age of 5. Misa says she wants to continue searching for ways to help end this malicious circle.

Messages that life brings

Misa's interest in Africa and the theme of life derives from her upbringing on Tsushima

island, Nagasaki Prefecture, where she first discovered soul music as a child and further honed her five-octave vocal range. She also became naturally conscious of the messages that life brings through birth and death because of her parents' encounters in their careers (both are doctors).

Speaking on her impetus to take interest in social issues, she also gives credit to the extensive peace studies covered at schools in Nagasaki, the site where the second atomic bomb was dropped in 1945 during World War II. "That is how I became interested in international dispute issues," said Misa. "We need to make a society where life is valued more."

Even in Japan, where society is seemingly affluent, Misa stresses that the problem of poverty and child abuse is rampant. There are countless children in need — those whose voices are difficult to hear.

Music and giving back

According to Misa, being a musician and pursuing social contribution activities are linked in the sense that they have the same goal — sending a message to people. "I can do these activities and speak out, all because I'm a musician. Conveying messages through songs is what singers do," she said.

Misa explained that whereas some musicians feel that music is entertainment that expresses the extraordinary, for her, music is something that is more realistic. "I want to tell my real feelings and real situations (in society) through music," she said.

In tandem with her activities for TICAD 7, Misa published the picture book "Heart no Leona" ("Leona's heart") on July 26.



Misa, the honorary ambassador of The Seventh Tokyo International Conference on African Development, met with The Japan Times in Tokyo on July 17. MARTIN HOLTkamp

It is a story about a female lion named Leona with a heart on her forehead. Leona travels around Africa with a pelican friend to learn more about Africa, both growing to appreciate the continent along the way. The pair encounter many different animals, cultures, languages and issues in each country, and the places that they visit are ones Misa visited herself. The singer hopes people will be able to discover Africa's beauty through reading the book.

"The model for the lion is a Japanese girl who died at just 18 months old due to an illness," Misa said sadly. "The little girl taught me the meaning of life. I found out from her situation that there are many children like her who die at a young age. Through this picture book, I wanted to show her the beauty of Africa."

Some of the book's revenue will be used to support children with illnesses in Japan as well as children in Africa.



Misa meets with children during her trip to Zambia, where she visited a refugee camp from July 29 to Aug. 5. The singer has traveled to eight African countries in the past decade. MUDEF

Promoting healthy hygiene

(Sponsored content)

Improving health practices through a hands-on approach

From Aug. 28 to 30, The Seventh Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD 7) will be held in Yokohama. Saraya Co. hopes that this meeting will serve as a milestone for the harmonization of African nations.

Those who live in Japan long enough to know some brands of long-selling consumer goods may think of a dishwashing detergent in a bottle with a palm tree design when they hear the company name "Saraya." However, the products Saraya manufactures actually cover a variety of categories from detergent, hair care and cosmetics to sweetener and the cold chain system. They also specialize in services supporting health and hygiene such as conducting food inspections, providing information and seminars on health, food sanitation or medical topics, and reprocessing medical devices.

Using diverse technologies, knowledge and its products, Saraya takes proactive approaches to health, social and environmental issues.

On the health and social front, the company is effectively using its products to support and promote hygiene in Uganda and other African nations.

"Access to clean water has been a challenge in Uganda. In some places in northern Uganda, refugees, mainly from South Sudan, live in a densely populated condition where hygiene is of utmost importance to prevent epidemics," said Yusuke Saraya, president of Saraya.

Projects for the community

The first initiative the company launched in Uganda was "Wash a Million Hands!" project in 2010 to promote hand-washing and the use of soap and tippy tap (domestically produced hands-free foot pedal dispenser). "The year 2012 was Saraya's 60th anniversary, and we wanted to plan some kind of a commemorative project. So we consulted UNICEF to find out if there was anything we could do in any part of the world using our specialty," said Saraya.

"We learned the critical situation in Uganda where the death rate of children under the age of 5 was high. The main cause was diarrhea stemming from diseases such as cholera," he said.

Hand-washing with soap is the most basic way of prevention for such diseases. "The Ugandan government was also eager

to promote hand-washing in the country, so we collaborated with the government and UNICEF to launch this project," he said. In 2011, Saraya East Africa was established to incorporate a business approach to the project to make the project sustainable.

"What is important as a business is to continue such projects that help the community sustainably. We are creating local businesses with the local people, processing the local resources with advanced technologies and putting products in the local sales channels," said Saraya.

Saraya further commented that the hand-washing project in Uganda was initially a three-year project, but by setting up local businesses to support it, the project period has extended to 2021. "And it is starting to cover a greater area with our new entity set up in Kenya," said Saraya.

In 2012, Saraya extended its efforts to promote hygiene to hospitals through the "Preparatory Survey for BoP (base of the pyramid) Business Promotion" system of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). The system is designed to promote and support companies entering the countries referred to as the base of the



President of Saraya Co. Yusuke Saraya talks during an interview with The Japan Times. He notes that the company makes proactive efforts to health, social and environmental issues. SARAYA CO.

pyramid to start businesses there.

"The hospital project focused on hand sanitization using rubbing alcohol, but imported disinfectants are expensive, so we started the local production of an alcohol hand rub in 2014," said Saraya.

This is how the "Saraya Safe Motherhood Project" was launched in 2018. "At some clinics, which we had a chance to visit through the project supported by RHU (the NGO Reproductive Health Uganda), we saw many pregnant women waiting to be treated or on the way to the delivery," he said. "What worried us was the unhygienic environment and tools, which can pose a substantial risk for both mothers and babies. To improve the conditions surrounding childbirth, we have been conducting hand-washing education projects and promoting an alcoholic disinfectant at maternity centers in addition to hospitals."

Addressing sustainability

With the upcoming TICAD 7, Saraya hopes things can move forward and faster if all African countries collaborate on common policies and standards, which will also make it easier for companies like Saraya to enter the African market.

"It takes more than one year to acquire a necessary license to sell a chemical product in an African country, but there are other fields such as food processing that can be profitable in a shorter time frame," he said.

Using the Rapid Freezer unit and packaging devices Saraya has developed, they have also been contributing to building a cold chain to deliver fresh fish from the coastal city of Mombasa in Kenya to Kampala, the capital of Uganda.

Saraya has eight plants and 26 sales bases outside Japan. "We are planning to network them to attain higher efficiency in product distribution. We have just established a subsidiary of our Egyptian local entity in Dubai, which will serve as a hub to distribute our products to Middle Eastern countries," said Saraya.

Some of their current and future projects include the development of medication for jigger bites, production of essential oils from local flowers in Tunisia, and planting jojoba trees and extracting jojoba oil in Egypt. Saraya intends to boost the local labor market through these new businesses.

To address climate change and preserve biodiversity, Saraya donates 1 percent of the sales from some of their products including its signature Yashinomi detergent to the

Borneo Conservation Trust in Malaysia. The organization carries out such projects as creating the Green Corridor to connect the riverside forests and inland tropical forests to preserve the natural habitats by purchasing lands, and rescuing injured or isolated animals.

Saraya has also been using palm oil certified by the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil for its products. The palm oil is made in a sustainable way with consideration for human rights and environment. Saraya also partners with a company that generates biomass energy from coconut oil mill waste.

"We all have the responsibility to hand down what we have to the next generations. The whole idea of the Sustainable Development Goals set by the United Nations General Assembly in 2015 is to pursue the balance among society, economy and environment," said Saraya. "It is ideal if each private enterprise tries to understand the idea and take actions to leave no one behind in the society."

Connect Through Life
SARAYA



Left: A Ugandan nurse uses soap to wash her hands. Since 2012, Saraya Co. has promoted improved hygiene in hospitals as part of its larger and ongoing efforts across several countries in Africa. Right: A worker uses a Rapid Freezer unit developed by the company. SARAYA CO.

African growth

Summit has potential to further strengthen relations

STAFF REPORT

Since Japan launched the first Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) in 1993, many African countries have seen remarkable economic growth, transforming themselves from aid recipients to attractive markets.

Given such changing circumstances, African participants hope to see discussion on Africa's economic stability and development take center stage during TICAD 7 that is set to be held in Yokohama between Aug. 28 and 30.

"I believe that this summit will be a turning point in the relationship between Japan and Africa as it represents an excellent opportunity for a smooth transition from a relation based mainly on official development assistance toward more diverse ties in trade and investment," Egyptian Ambassador to Japan Ayman Aly Kamel said during a recent interview with The Japan Times. Egypt is the chair of the African Union this year, and co-chair of TICAD 7.

Noting that Africa has managed to control a lot of political instability over the past two decades since the launch of the TICAD process, Kamel said the state of security, peace and stability on the continent is



Egyptian Ambassador to Japan Ayman Aly Kamel speaks to The Japan Times during a recent interview in Tokyo.
YOSHIKI MIURA

much better today. He explained that such changes allow them to focus more on investment and trade.

"Africa now is considered one of the fastest-growing economies in the world. It pos-

sesses a huge potential of natural resources, as well as a very young — and one of the fastest-growing — populations in the world," Kamel said. "This fact represents a great opportunity for Japan to benefit from

the African continent as an investment partner in the future."

Africa's population is projected to exceed 2 billion by 2050 according to a U.N. report, accounting for roughly a quarter

of the world population. Africans are also young, with the median age of the continent projected to be under 20 in 2020.

Although Japanese companies have turned their eyes to the expanding market and growing labor force in Africa over the past decade, their presence remains small in the region, Kamel said.

According to Foreign Ministry data, there were 75,531 Japanese corporate offices overseas as of October 2017. Of those, 796, or roughly just 1 percent, were located in Africa.

"There is still an excellent chance for Japanese companies to fulfill the need for more investments in Africa in all major sectors," Kamel said. "Although Japan was one of the first pioneering countries to engage in relations with Africa, it now lags behind in terms of business and the number of companies that are working in the African markets."

This is partly due, Kamel said, to the role of some media sources portraying primarily negative aspects of the African continent, without reflecting the reality of ongoing developments in modern Africa.

"I think it's time now for the Japanese private sector to overcome those past concerns and try to benefit from the experience of some countries who already have

a presence in Africa ... and try to extend the Japanese presence on the African continent," he said.

Given Africa's growing population and wealth of natural resources, such as oil, natural gas and rare metals, many countries have launched conferences similar to TICAD in the past two decades, including China's triennial Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) launched in 2000 and the Russia-Africa Summit that is scheduled to be launched in Sochi in October.

TICAD, however, is unique compared to other multilateral or bilateral cooperation forums, Kamel said. This is because the forum is built on the principles of African ownership and international partnership, and is co-organized by international organizations such as the U.N. and World Bank.

"TICAD is not just about Japan and its interests in Africa. It also ensures the presence of other stakeholders that look after the development of African nations," Kamel said. "This forum is one of the most appreciated platforms by African countries, as it is based on the great potential for cooperation between Japan and Africa. ... We have a lot of hope that the summit could represent a milestone in cooperation between Japan and the African continent."

Stimulating sustainable development in Africa

ACHIM STEINER
ADMINISTRATOR, UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME



The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) works in 170 countries and territories, helping to achieve the eradication of poverty, and the reduction of inequalities and exclusion. We help countries develop policies, leadership skills, partnering abilities, institutional capabilities and build resilience in order to sustain development results.

UNDP is one of the founding co-organizers of the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) that was first held in 1993. The TICAD process has notably contributed to the mainstreaming of human security and human-centered approaches to development in Africa since then. Japan's immense contribution to development via the TICAD process also mirrors UNDP's belief that sustainable development can only flourish with the active participation of a full spectrum of partners — including donors, recipient countries, nongovernmental organizations, civil society and the private sector.

Public-private partnerships

UNDP keenly recognizes that the private sector's involvement in achieving all 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by the year 2030 requires more than their contribution to tax revenues and job creation. Realizing the SDGs' vision of a low carbon, climate resilient, peaceful and socially inclusive world requires a funda-

mental transformation in the way people live, work and do business.

Globally, the private sector is an ever more critical development partner. On average, in Africa, the private sector constitutes 60 percent of gross domestic product (GDP), 90 percent of jobs and 80 percent of capital flows. On the continent, there are over 700 companies with an annual revenue of more than \$500 million, including 400 with annual revenue above \$1 billion. Thus, the private sector represents as a key strategic partner for UNDP and the countries it supports in the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as well as the African Union's Agenda 2063. The private sector's role is multidimensional — from acting as a creator of jobs and generator of tax revenues to being a developer of innovative development solutions and a champion of impact investment.

As a result of economic and population growth, Africa has also grown into a vast market. Africa's economy has grown by 5 percent on average per annum over just one decade. Seven out of the 10 fastest-growing economies in the world are African. The Japanese private sector can provide not only technology, innovation and services to countries in Africa; they can also offer invaluable experience in corporate ethics and human resources development. Such engagement has the potential to make a significant contribution to both the economic and social development of Africa.

Boosting the continent's growth

A key highlight of TICAD 7 will be the launch and signing of a tripartite partnership agreement between UNDP, the Japan International Cooperation Agency and the Japan External Trade Organization to promote sustainable development

in Africa. The plan is to kick-start the launch of the conference with a "pitching event" for blue chip startup businesses from Africa and Japan to facilitate partnerships between investors and corporations.

UNDP and the Japan Association of Corporate Executives are slated to sign an agreement during TICAD 7 to establish a framework to encourage support from Japanese corporations in contributing to the achievement of the SDGs in Africa. In addition, UNDP will partner with Kanagawa Prefecture on SDG localization through multisectoral partnerships.

UNDP's development priorities

Supporting Africa's continued development remains a priority for UNDP. Working in close collaboration with our partners, including Japan, UNDP has been supporting African countries to advance development in a wide range of areas including peace and security, livelihoods, health, education, as well as helping countries tackle climate change and improve their disaster risk reduction capacity.

Out of a total of 60, 36 of the new global network of UNDP Accelerator Labs are located in Africa. The labs, which will serve 78 countries, aim to identify innovative local solutions, allow new experimentation and power the rapid scale-up of successful initiatives. This new undertaking by UNDP is just one reflection of the fact that we are reimagining how we approach development in the 21st century. We also want to utilize the myriad of benefits associated with the Fourth Industrial Revolution, such as the digital transformation that is currently underway, to help surface new and relevant solutions. The ultimate goal is to

support solutions that are tailored to the unique development pathways of African countries.

Looking to the future, UNDP is committed to continue working closely with African governments, the government of Japan, the private sector and a range of other partners to realize a brighter, and more inclusive vision of development for Africa. TICAD 7 will provide us with a vital springboard to grasp this exciting future.



A UNDP staffer provides agricultural tools, fertilizer and seeds to community members in Michika, Yobe state, Nigeria.
UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

Building a Special Partnership of Trust with Africa



TICAD 7 JICA SEMINAR SERIES

Date and Time	Event Title	Venue	Available Languages
Tue. Aug. 27 6-7:30 p.m.	Sports for Africa	Pacifico Yokohama (Exhibition Hall B03)	Japanese/ English/French
Wed. Aug. 28 5-7 p.m.	Education for Africa to Empower the Future Generations	InterContinental Yokohama Grand (Silk)	Japanese/ English/French
Thu. Aug. 29 9-10:40 a.m.	Towards Enhanced Partnership and Solidarity to Support Forcibly Displaced Persons in Africa	InterContinental Yokohama Grand (Silk)	Japanese/ English/French
Thu. Aug. 29 2-4:20 p.m.	From Idea to Action: Harnessing the Potential of Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) in Africa Development	Pacifico Yokohama (Exhibition Hall B02)	Japanese/ English/French
Thu. Aug. 29 5-6:45 p.m.	JICA High-Level Panel at TICAD 7: "Global governance and Africa's development; How can Africa and Japan respond to emerging challenges?"	InterContinental Yokohama Grand (Silk)	Japanese/ English/French

*JICA will be hosting 25 other seminars and events throughout TICAD 7 (Aug. 28-30).

Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)
<https://www.jica.go.jp/english/>

For information on other events

<https://www.jica.go.jp/africahiroba/english/ticad/ticad7seminar.html>



Japan Times ESG Consortium

Showcasing a wide variety of Japanese companies' ESG efforts

Long before the Government Pension Investment Fund — the world's largest pension fund — signed up for the U.N.-backed Principles for Responsible Investment, the philosophy of "sanpo yoshi" has endured as the foundation of Japanese business practices. The term describes a symbiotic relationship between sellers, consumers and society at large.

However, Japanese companies have unfortunately failed to appeal to relevant parties abroad in the realm of environmental, social and governance (ESG) efforts; this is in relation to companies pursuing the U.N. Sustainable Development Goals and creating shared value, a business concept proposed by academic Michael Porter. This is partly

due to the commonly accepted mentality of *intoku* (doing good work behind the scenes).

It is very regrettable the international community has an impression that Japanese companies' ESG efforts are lagging behind because of this.

In order to more widely illustrate ESG management adopted by Japanese companies, The Japan Times launched the ESG Consortium in 2018.

For more information on ESG and notable companies, please visit our website.

<http://jtimes.jp/esg>



facts and figures of Africa

Continent's growth sustains upward trend

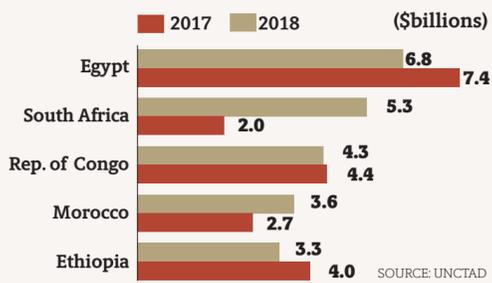
Africa, along with Asia, is experiencing a period of high growth both in terms of economy and population. Between 2000 and 2017, Africa's economy grew an average of 4.3 percent.

Attracted to its natural resources, Japanese companies are strengthening footholds on the continent in helping to develop Africa's energy sector among other industries.

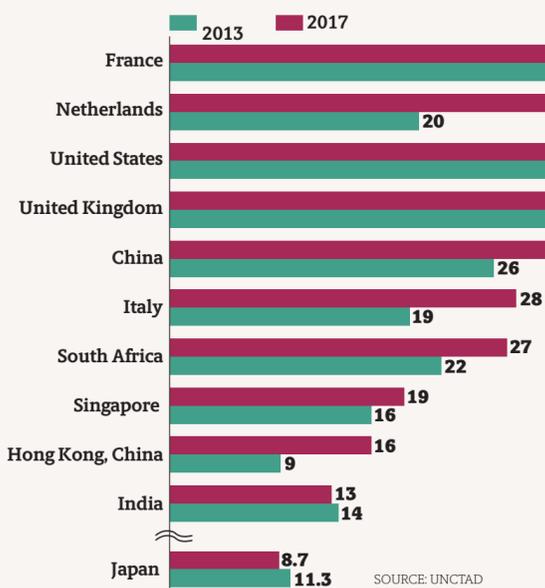
Africa's population has also grown rapidly over the last 30 years, and the current population of about 1.3 billion is expected to reach 2.49 billion by 2050. Nigeria, a country about the size of Texas, is currently one of the most populous countries on earth and its population is predicted to be over 730 million by 2100.

Here are some statistics that show where Africa stands today.

Top 5 FDI recipients in Africa

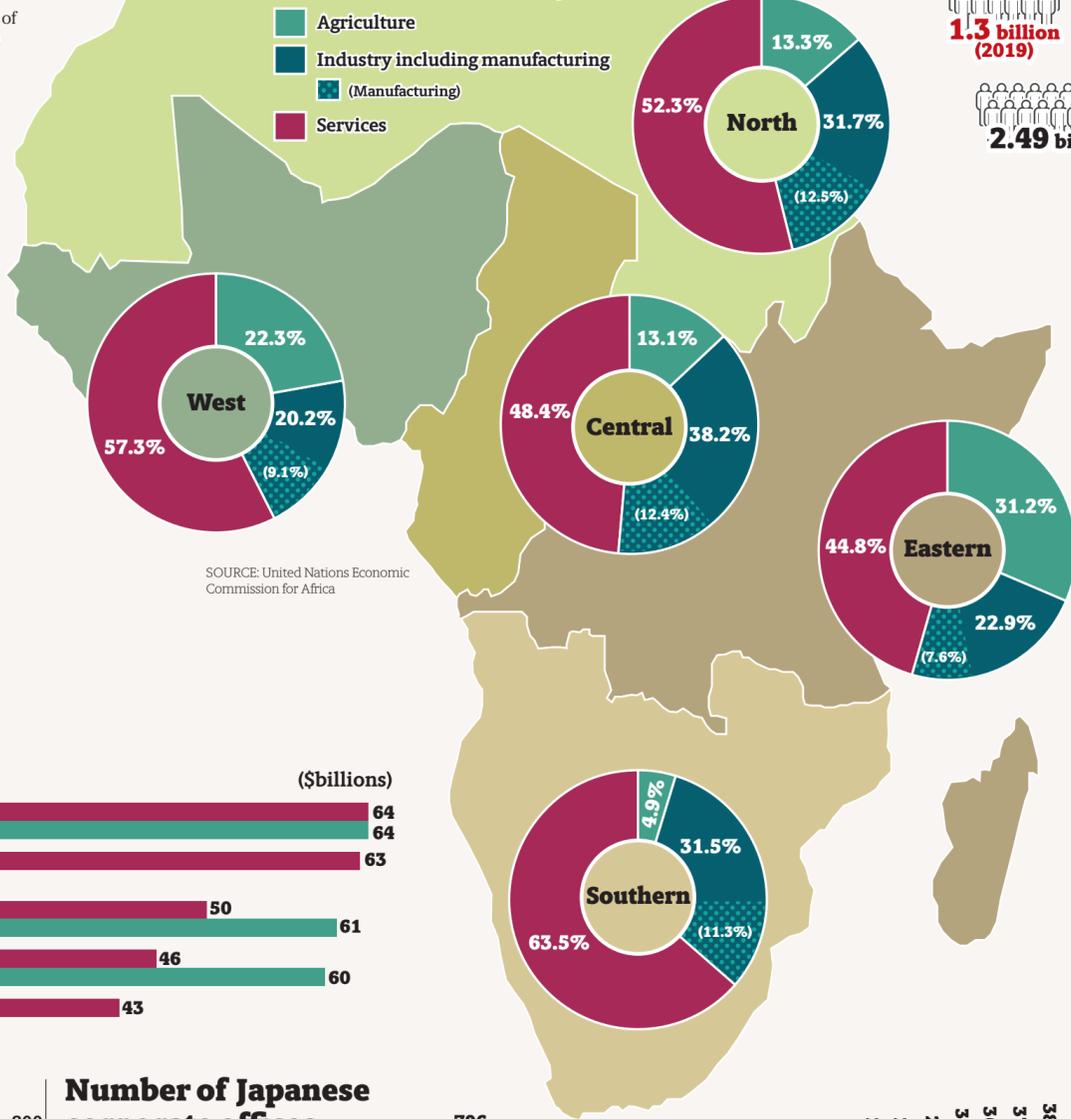


Top investor economies in Africa



Breakdown of GDP by industry and region

*Data from 2016



1.18 billion (2015)

Africa's population and projections

SOURCE: United Nations

1.3 billion (2019)

1.69 billion (2030)

2.49 billion (2050)

4 billion (2090)

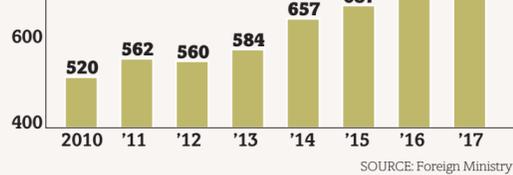
Top 10 ODA recipients

(by percentage of GNI contribution)

South Sudan	64.5
Liberia	44.8
Central African Republic	28.4
Burundi	24.7
Malawi	23.5
Sierra Leone	21.9
Somalia	17.4
Guinea-Bissau	16.5
Mozambique	14.2
Rwanda	13.9

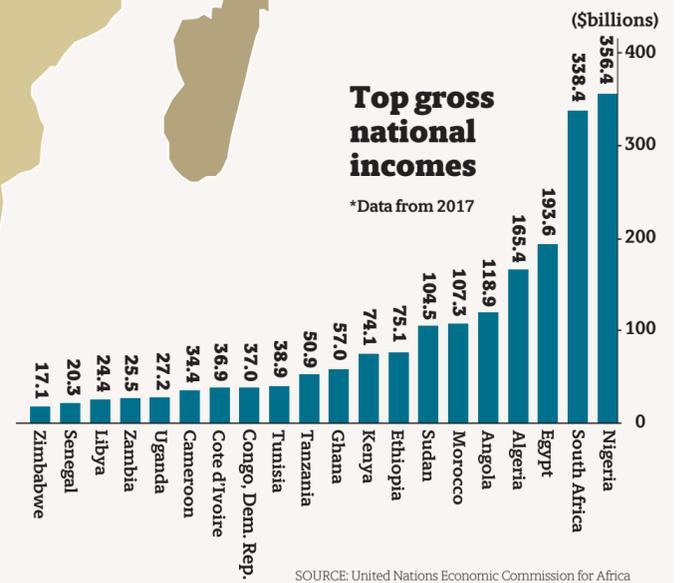
*Data from 2016 SOURCE: World Bank

Number of Japanese corporate offices in Africa



Top gross national incomes

*Data from 2017



WITH AFRICA FOR AFRICA

As a general trading company with business activities spanning mobility, healthcare, consumer goods, and technology and energy, we are passionate about being part of Africa's continuing development.

We are Toyota Tsusho.



Japan's initiatives

Businesses encouraged to invest in key future market

Japan in danger of being left behind as other countries increase African investment initiatives

STAFF REPORT

The Japan Times recently interviewed Shigeru Ushio, who heads the African Affairs Department of Japan's Foreign Ministry and is a key senior bureaucrat managing The Seventh Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD 7) to be held in Yokohama from Aug. 28 through 30.

During the interview, Ushio attached great importance to the growing African population, saying it will likely become a huge market for Japanese firms. At the same time, he pointed out poor productivity regarding agriculture in Africa could be a "bottleneck" in the future. He also admitted Japan lags behind other nations in doing business on the African continent, and Tokyo is now focusing on the quality of its economic assistance and infrastructure projects.

The following are edited excerpts of the interview.

What's your general view of Africa and the current situation surrounding TICAD right now?

Simply put, we pay particular attention to two factors. One is the growing population of Africa, to which we attach great importance. Another is the formation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

The population of Africa is now about 1.3 billion, accounting for 17 percent of the world's population. This is now predicted to surge to 2.5 billion in 2050. At the end of the 21st century, one in every four people

in the world will be African.

This population will form a large market of great importance; because of this, Africa is described as "the largest frontier of the 21st century."

As for AfCFTA, this is so big that we need to see how it will work and how each country will behave. It's a huge market with a population of 1.3 billion and gross domestic product of \$3.4 trillion, which makes it appropriate to call it "the largest frontier of the 21st century."

One critical issue pertains to agriculture. Productivity is low, meaning that the food self-sufficiency rate is low, which forces Africa to rely heavily on imports. This also leads to higher labor costs than those of Asia and it can create a bottleneck. We need to reconfirm the importance of agriculture.

Many countries, China in particular, have expanded economic assistance and Russia is going to organize a summit meeting with African leaders. What's the strategy for Japan? Isn't Japan lagging behind other countries?

It's true that Japan is lagging behind other countries, many of which, including emerging economies like Indonesia, are trying to advance into Africa.

The Asian market will eventually become saturated. Given that fact, competition in ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) and Asia will intensify and businesses will have no choice but to expand beyond their region.



Shigeru Ushio, director-general of the African Affairs Department of the Foreign Ministry, speaks during an interview at the ministry on Aug. 2. YOSHIKAKI MIURA

The private sector of Japan is finally becoming serious (about business in Africa). That's what I have felt in organizing TICAD this time. Still, Japanese firms are lagging behind. So, a key purpose of TICAD is to back them up and give them a boost.

Other than the automobile industry, Japanese firms are slow in going to Africa compared with those of other countries. Why? For one thing, you can say they haven't fully become global companies yet. What is needed most is to find a good partner in

foreign companies and thereby advance into Africa.

I used to work in Indonesia and I don't think Japanese firms have an advantage over foreign competitors in Southeast Asia, either.

What's the main significance of TICAD this time?

If some firms advance into Africa, the government should familiarize itself with what is going on in Africa and improve the investment environment. That's a role

the government should play. We still are exploring ways to reduce risks and make the business environment better, but we'd like to gain a springboard opportunity through TICAD 7.

I hear TICAD has become more business-oriented since the 2008 event, which was a turning point. Is it true?

That's not only relevant to Africa as it can be said about Asia as well. The significance of official development assistance has been considerably decreased as far as effects on development are concerned. The role of ODA has been refined and it is now believed that ODA should play a role of catalyst that introduces private sector funds.

Do you plan to set up a new specific goal at TICAD 7, like the previous target, to provide aid worth \$30 billion?

An agenda critically important for both Africa and Japan is how we can make Japanese private sector corporations ready for business in Africa. Support for such efforts will be a central focus.

Quality of assistance is more important than quantity. We don't attach much importance to quantity.

But Japan's "quality" projects usually cost more.

From the beginning, we haven't tried to achieve any quantitative target. Once again, we don't attach much importance to quantity. We need to pay attention to some factors like the fiscal soundness of a recipient government.

If you build a road and it becomes bumpy only one year later, who would shoulder the cost of maintenance? It's the local government. If Japan builds a road

and you don't need to repair it for five or 10 years, you won't say it's really expensive. If you think about the total cost, it's not expensive.

Situations surrounding TICAD have changed a lot. What's your view of the history of TICAD?

When TICAD was launched in 1993, Western countries were financially exhausted and not able to keep providing assistance to Africa. Africa saw more and more conflicts and the situation was very tough.

For a long time, central topics were those about government assistance. But Africa started seeing fewer conflicts and people began to think growth should be promoted, and it was private sector investments that came to be considered most important.

Could you explain some examples of successful Japanese businesses in Africa?

Ajinomoto Co., whose performance has been always good, and Yamaha Motor Co., which has been selling motorcycles and outboard engines. I think everything Yamaha is dealing with in Africa has been quite successful.

Do you think forming an alliance with a third party company is a key for success in general?

Yes, I think so. TICAD 7 can help achieve that key, which is a characteristic of this event. This time, we have greatly increased the number of official side events during the duration of TICAD 7.

From a business perspective, we'd like to make networking opportunities to find business partners.

Shift seen from quantity to quality spending

→ Continued from page B1

raise productivity of grain production," Hirano said.

Because of this, both the private and government sectors must cooperate and tackle this problem, and such efforts won't take root unless farming becomes a profitable business, Hirano said, emphasizing the need to further promote agricultural businesses in Africa.

During the interview, Ushio also admitted Japan has been "lagging far behind" other countries as far as business in Africa is concerned.

A vast majority of Japanese firms have long put emphasis on Asia, and many firms appear to be still reluctant to advance into Africa although they are well aware of the potential of the African economy.

Japan's foreign direct investment stocks in Africa stood at just \$8.7 billion at the end of 2017. Meanwhile, France made the largest direct investment in Africa with \$64 billion the same year, followed by the Netherlands with \$63 billion, the U.S. with \$50 billion, Britain with \$46 billion and China with \$43 billion.

In the previous TICAD meeting in Kenya in August 2016, Tokyo pledged to extend economic cooperation funds totaling \$30 billion over the next three years, to be provided by both the private and government sectors. Meanwhile, Beijing in September

2018 organized a similar Africa summit meeting in Beijing and pledged to provide as much as \$60 billion.

Shinichi Takeuchi, professor and head of the African Studies Center at the Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, pointed out that a considerable portion of the Chinese assistance is loans, and Japan should not

'Japan needs more global companies and has to connect more to the outside world.'

KATSUMI HIRANO, EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT, JAPAN EXTERNAL TRADE ORGANIZATION

simply compare the Chinese loans to its assistance.

Still, experts all agree that Japan would no longer be able to beat China in terms of the amount of funds it can provide to Africa, an apparent reason that Tokyo is beginning to focus more on "the quality" of its government economic assistance and private-sector projects.

While greatly expanding its economic and political presence on the African continent, last year Beijing appeared to have incorporated its development policies for Africa into its Belt and Road infrastructure development initiative, said Mitsugi Endo, a University of Tokyo professor and a noted expert on African politics.

"China was interested mainly in (natural) resources in Africa in the early 2000s, but now its focus has shifted to infrastructure system exports to Africa. The move is probably interlocked with the Belt and Road initiative," Endo said.

In fact, some African countries have reportedly started to be concerned about the so-called "debt trap diplomacy" of China's Belt and Road initiative.

Under the Belt and Road initiative, China aggressively extended loans to many countries, and as a result, some states ended up being saddled with snowballing debts.

For example, Sri Lanka received high-interest loans from China to build the Hambantota port. Being unable to pay back loans with ballooning debts, Sri Lanka eventually agreed to lease the port to China for 99 years, an incident that has badly damaged the reputation of China's loan-based infrastructure projects.

Japan seems to take a different approach from that of China, and the Foreign Ministry's Ushio stresses that Japan's focus of its assistance to Africa is now quality, rather than quantity.

For example, Tokyo attaches much importance to "the fiscal soundness" of a country it will extend loans to, Ushio said.

Japan will also consider "the total cost" of a project, including repair and maintenance expenses. Constructing a robust

road may be expensive, but the total costs would be lower in the long run, if it requires less repairs in the future, he said.

Another key for Japanese firms to succeed in Africa is forming partnerships with local or foreign firms of other countries well-versed in African business, Ushio and Hirano of JETRO both emphasized.

For that purpose, TICAD provides good opportunities because it will host a total of 257 side events useful in networking, such as seminars and product exhibits, Ushio said.

TICAD is also open to various businesses and organizations because it is co-organized by Japan, the United Nations, U.N. Development Programme, World Bank and African Union Commission. Meanwhile China organizes its African summit meeting on its own, he pointed out.

Hirano of JETRO in the meantime argued that Japanese firms are still heavily "introverted" and focused only on business in Japan and other parts of Asia, in particular China and the Association of Southeast Asian Nation countries.

Many Japanese people believe Japan heavily relies on exports and Japanese firms have been heavily globalized. But comparison of trade figures suggest otherwise as Japan's trade dependency is far lower than the average of developed countries, Hirano pointed out.



Prime Minister Shinzo Abe (front row, center) with African leaders at the Tokyo International Conference on African Development in Nairobi on Aug. 27, 2016. KYODO

For example, Japan's export to GDP ratio was 13.1 percent in 2016, but the figure was 38.5 percent for Germany, 38 percent for South Korea, 25.5 percent in Canada, while France stood at 19.8 percent.

The low dependency on overseas markets also means Japanese firms have much room for growth if they globalize more, Hirano said.

Japan is facing serious problems stem-

ming from a rapidly aging population and shrinking market, Hirano said.

"Japan needs more global companies and has to connect more to the outside world," he said, adding that Japan needs to focus more on Africa as a prospective future market.

"In that sense, I believe TICAD this time has more meaning for Japan, rather than Africa," he said.

We will develop business across Africa
in the spirit of
TICAD 7



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international cooperation

Deepening Africa-Japan relationship with trust

SHINICHI KITAOKA
PRESIDENT, JAPAN INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AGENCY



With abundant natural resources and a rapidly growing population, the African continent has much potential for growth. By 2050, it is expected that the African continent will foster one-fourth of the global population. Although Africa is currently facing challenges and difficulties in some countries such as political instability and economic stagnation, I believe that Africa will successfully manage

them to develop and become the growth center of the global economy in the coming decades.

From Aug. 28 to 30, Japan is going to host The Seventh Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD 7) in Yokohama. TICAD is a summit-level international conference on Africa's development initiated by Japan in 1993, and co-organized by the United Nations, United Nations Development Programme, the World Bank and the African Union Commission.

TICAD 7 will focus on three agendas. The first is economic transformation and improvements in the business environment and institutions through private investment and innovation. Second is the promotion of a resilient and sustainable

society for human security, while the third is peace and stability. All African heads of state and government, international organizations, partner countries, private companies, researchers and many non-governmental organizations are invited to discuss development initiatives for Africa from various perspectives.

Through meetings with many African leaders and at TICAD VI held in Nairobi in 2016, I strongly felt that their ownership for development is firmly rising. For example, Rwanda, under the strong leadership of President Paul Kagame, has been realizing miraculous reforms in various challenging fields, such as societal stability, the development of health and education and improvement in business environments. It is estimated by a World Bank report that the business environment of Rwanda ranks near the top among African countries, ahead of Japan, in the "ease of doing business" category.

I believe we can deliver significant developments in various fields for Africa's sustainable growth if we further catalyze private investments with an open and innovative mind by respecting the ownership of Africa's partner countries. In this regard, TICAD 7 is a good opportunity to deepen the Africa-Japan relationship with trust.

To facilitate the development of African countries, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) is enhancing its cooperation with a focus on two missions — human security and quality growth.

Since all human beings have the right to live with dignity, the international community must uphold this right. It is the core

A Japanese agricultural expert advises refugees on rice cultivation in northern Uganda.
JAPAN INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AGENCY



Teachers, community leaders and parents work together to improve education in African countries under the School for All program.
JAPAN INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AGENCY

essence of our first mission of human security. To ensure human security in Africa, we need to tackle a broad range of issues such as refugees, health, nutrition and education.

I would like to present a few examples of our endeavors in this field in Africa. The first example concerns refugee-related programs in northern Uganda. In the west Nile sub-region where more than 700,000 refugees, mainly from South Sudan, are settled, JICA has been cooperating for the capacity building of host districts in terms of planning and budgeting development programs, and the development of key infrastructure. JICA has also supported refugees in attaining livelihood skills such as rice cultivation to help them live independently with dignity, even in a protracted situation of displacement.

Another good practice for human security in Africa is a unique initiative in health and nutrition. JICA launched the Initiative to Improve Food and Nutrition in Africa at TICAD VI in collaboration with the New Partnership for Africa's Development. This aims to broaden partnerships among Afri-

can countries and development partners to promote collective actions for nutrition in Africa. It promotes formulating a cross-sectoral nutrition improvement strategy and focuses on reducing the number of undernourished and stunted children.

Education is another essential aspect of human security. The School for All program aims at promoting community participation in the management of primary schools to raise awareness among parents and community leaders regarding the importance of education and encouraging them to send their children to school. Started in 2004, we are expanding this model to schools in Madagascar. Under this program, schools are providing meals, with help from local communities, to improve attendance and schoolchildren's nutrition.

Our second mission is to realize quality growth, which aims at sustainable and inclusive growth. To accelerate quality growth, JICA is focusing on advancing regional connectivity in terms of promoting trade and logistics and strengthening human networks.

For instance, JICA has been promoting

corridor development in three African regions, including the Northern Corridor (Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda and others); the Nacala Corridor (Mozambique, Malawi, Zambia and other countries); and the West Africa Growth Ring (Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Togo and Burkina Faso). These initiatives are building cross-border transport infrastructure networks, facilitating intraregional trade and promoting development at the subregional level. JICA has also been supporting the establishment of 14 one-stop border posts (OSBP) in 11 countries. In this system, neighboring countries jointly conduct cross-border procedures, such as customs, immigration and quarantine at OSBP facilities to reduce time and cost.

To strengthen human networks between Africa and Japan, JICA has, over five years, offered opportunities for more than 1,200 young Africans to study master's courses at Japanese universities and participate in internships at Japanese enterprises through the Africa Business Education (ABE) Initiative. JICA also follows up on ABE Initiative graduates to help them start their own businesses and drive Japanese companies expanding business in their home countries. This initiative also contributes to build networks among participants for sharing their experiences in Japan, as well as continuing partnerships with Japanese people as "navigators" to attract more investments to Africa from Japan.

JICA will foster these activities to accelerate quality growth in Africa to ensure human security for all Africans and to achieve African sustainable development goals.

JICA is devoted to and will continue to deepen its development cooperation with Africa through mutual dialogue. Moreover, I am sure that development in Africa will become a driving force for development of the entire world. Profound partnerships and mutual trust with African partners will lead both Africa and Japan to further growth. There is nothing else to realize as "leading the world with trust" is JICA's vision.



A JICA volunteer teaches nutrition improvement in Madagascar.
JAPAN INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AGENCY

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Japanese business in Africa

Africa commerce succeeds through new partnerships

NOBUHIKO SASAKI
CHAIRMAN AND CEO, JAPAN EXTERNAL
TRADE ORGANIZATION



The shift from "aid" to "business" in Africa since The Fourth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD IV) in 2008 has become mainstream. This happened throughout TICAD V (2013) and TICAD VI (2016), the first conference held in Africa (Nairobi, Kenya). Private enterprise is now in the driver's seat of Africa's development.

Under these circumstances, the Japan Business Council for Africa was established in Tokyo in June. This is a platform aimed at the Japanese private sector, where ambition to do business in Africa runs high, under the

full support of the Japanese government. The Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) serves as part of its secretariat.

Among rising interest in African business, and as an organization tasked with supporting Japanese companies' expansion abroad, JETRO understands that its role in helping develop the trade relationship between Africa and Japan is all the more important today. We are particularly focused on the following four themes.

First is broadening the fields of Japanese business in Africa. According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, there were a total of 75,531 overseas business sites of Japanese companies in the world in 2017. Among them, 796 are in Africa—just over 1 percent. Traditionally, Japanese companies' business in Africa has greatly leaned toward infrastructure, natural resources and automobiles. From now, it is necessary to build diversified economic relations with Africa.

The key to this diversification is small

and mid-sized enterprises (SMEs), which account for 99.7 percent of all Japanese companies. Even in the era of the internet, for SMEs, Africa is a region with high psychological hurdles, as well as actual risks. However, as the Japanese market shrinks, SMEs now have to look overseas. Given this, it is clear they cannot afford to overlook the continent that will become home to 25 percent of the globe's population by 2050. JETRO will ensure that these SMEs have the information they need on Africa, leveraging our network throughout Japan.

In supporting Japanese SMEs, JETRO will also work with the United Nations programs such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and United Nations Industrial Development Organization, as well as development organizations such as the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). Through our combined strengths, we will increase the certainty of SMEs succeeding in Africa.

Second is promoting alliances between Japanese companies and those from Africa or other countries. Collaboration with not

only local enterprises in Africa, but also those companies with business knowledge and proven track records from France, the U.K., Turkey or India helps Japanese firms in managing risks, seeking projects and expanding sales and service channels. JETRO will facilitate this process through our global network spanning 74 offices in 54 countries and 48 offices located throughout each of Japan's prefectures.

Third is matching Japanese companies and startups from Africa. The digital economy has drastically transformed the business environment, even in emerging and developing countries. Africa is no exception. As exemplified by "M-Pesa" in Kenya, the rapid dissemination of services such as those for mobile money has given rise to new business.

As a result, we are seeing an accumulation of consumer data from the market's lower income sector, which had long been difficult to obtain, as information that can help business. It is local African startups that have been creating new business models to solve social issues with this big data, and they are drawing the attention of Japanese companies as potential new partners for entering the market. JETRO regards accelerating collaboration between both sides as vital for expanding business opportunities.

Lastly, improving the business environment through self-reliance within each African country is requisite to expanding investment from Japan. JETRO will convey the problems and requests of Japanese companies to the relevant authorities of each country, working with Japanese embassies. Through this, we will help each country prepare a more attractive business environment.



Leaders at the Japan-Africa Business Conference at The Sixth Tokyo International Conference on African Development in Nairobi on Aug. 28, 2016 JAPAN EXTERNAL TRADE ORGANIZATION

At TICAD 7, a comprehensive platform for African development hosted by Japan, we will convene the Business Expo consisting of two zones. One is the Japan Fair; where technologies, services and products of Japanese companies will be showcased. The second is the Africa Lounge, where each African country will introduce its investment and business environment. In addition to providing a venue for business talks between exhibitors and visitors, the Business Expo will be a catalyst for exchange between the exhibitors of the Japan Fair and Africa Lounge.

This will coincide with another large-scale event of ours, the Japan-Africa Business Forum. More than 20 government and

private sector representatives from Africa and Japan will discuss how business will pave the way for Africa's future. "African Innovation & Startups" and "Multilateral Business Partnership" will be the themes of this forum. A special session will also be held to introduce Japanese SMEs aspiring to do business with the region.

Additionally, with the aim of providing concrete business opportunities to both Japan and Africa, we will jointly organize a pitch event featuring African startups with UNDP and JICA.

Through these activities, JETRO is fully committed to contributing to the success of TICAD 7, the "Business TICAD."



A plenary session at the Japan-Africa Public-Private Economic Forum in Johannesburg on May 3, 2018 JAPAN EXTERNAL TRADE ORGANIZATION



Lagos International Trade Fair held in November 2018 JAPAN EXTERNAL TRADE ORGANIZATION

Strengthening bilateral ties at business fair

STAFF REPORT

A record number of over 150 Japanese organizations from the private and public sectors are set to showcase their latest technology to visiting African leaders and officials at an exhibition in Yokohama on the sidelines of The Seventh Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD 7).

During the Japan Fair scheduled from Aug. 28 to Aug. 30 at Pacifico Yokohama Exhibition Hall D, 156 Japanese exhibitors from 27 prefectures, including 142 companies, will display their products, technology and services to guests from Africa visiting Japan for TICAD 7, including heads of state, government officials and business leaders, said the organizer, the Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO).

The fair is part of the Business Expo hosted by JETRO, which has concurrently organized the Japan-Africa Business Forum

scheduled for Aug. 29 at the Yokohama Bay Hotel Tokyu. Both events aim to provide visitors with various business opportunities and introduce the latest trends in relevant fields.

In particular, the forum invites political and business leaders from Japan and Africa to share the possibilities and vision of doing business in Africa, as well as introduce upcoming trends and collaborations. Sessions are scheduled on topics including "African Innovation & Startups" and the "Multilateral Business Partnership."

The overall tagline for these events is "Tsumugu" (meaning "spin a yarn"), expressing the idea of "Africa and Japan intertwined in a more solid relationship," according to JETRO.

The exhibition at the Japan Fair will be separated into high-quality infrastructure; construction of food value chains; climate change countermeasures; and health and hygiene-related improvement zones, among others. These issues were addressed

as priority issues in Africa in the Nairobi Declaration issued at TICAD VI in Kenya in 2016 and at Agenda 2063 adopted by the African Union in 2015 as a blueprint and master plan for the continent's future.

As exhibitor stands are going to be allocated based on those categories, visitors to the fair can easily find what solutions Japanese companies can offer for those issues. A unique characteristic of the fair is that among the 156 Japanese exhibitors, there are 81 small and mid-sized companies who will demonstrate "their eagerness to expand business with Africa," JETRO said.

The Business Expo also features the Africa Lounge, where Japanese business people interested in African business can obtain a wide range of information on prospective industries and opportunities for investment through relevant exhibitions and interactions. A meeting space is available for business discussions.



The Japan Fair at The Sixth Tokyo International Conference on African Development in Nairobi JAPAN EXTERNAL TRADE ORGANIZATION

There will also be various seminars at the Event Stage, enabling visitors to know more about each country in the region during the Business Expo.



A rendering of the Business Expo event reception area on the sidelines of The Seventh Tokyo International Conference on African Development JAPAN EXTERNAL TRADE ORGANIZATION

About 7,000 people visited the Japan Fair held at Kenyatta International Convention Center in Nairobi on the sidelines of TICAD VI in 2016. The event saw 96 exhibitors

from Japan participate. For further information on this year's events, please visit <https://www.jetro.go.jp/en/events/jabfe2019/>.

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City of Yokohama

(Sponsored content)

Yokohama: Sharing passion for the future with Africa

Africa has seen remarkable development as a business partner with its abundant natural resources and growing population.

The city of Yokohama has become "the closest city to Africa" in Japan through the experiences of hosting the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) twice in the past — in 2008 and 2013. As the host city, Yokohama has actively shared its advanced infrastructure technology and know-how in urban development with African countries while working to enhance mutual understanding.

Using the opportunity to host the development conference once again this year from Aug. 28 to 30, Yokohama aims to further strengthen Yokohama-Africa ties in three areas: technical cooperation, business and women's empowerment, and next generation and people-to-people exchanges.

Technical cooperation

Having faced and overcome various urban challenges in the past such as a lack of infrastructure as a result of rapid population growth, as well as environmental issues, Yokohama has been applying its acquired knowledge and skills to assist African countries, together with the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).

One area of such technical cooperation is the improvement of water supply systems.

As of fiscal 2018, Yokohama had welcomed 574 waterworks professionals from 47 African countries and also dispatched 71 of its own officials to 13 African countries to provide technical assistance on waterworks. Since fiscal 2014, the city has been dispatching officials to Blantyre in the Republic of Malawi to support improving the water supply system in that country. From June this year, the Yokohama Waterworks Bureau is dispatching an official for a four-year period to Lilongwe in Malawi.

In addition to that, Yokohama Water Co., a subsidiary of the Yokohama Waterworks Bureau, has been conducting nonrevenue water reduction projects in countries such as the Republic of South Africa and Republic of Rwanda.

Apart from such support for improving



Participants take part in a technical training program on waste management systems in Yokohama. CITY OF YOKOHAMA

water supplies, waste disposal management is another area where Yokohama is cooperating with African countries. Due to economic growth and rapidly increasing populations, demand for system improvements has been on the rise.

Given the growing needs, Yokohama is actively accepting officials from those countries to visit waste disposal facilities and recycling plants in the city.

Under the African Clean Cities Platform (ACCP) framework launched in April 2017 jointly by the Ministry of the Environment, JICA, the United Nations Environment Pro-

gramme and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, Yokohama also conducts training programs to introduce waste disposal systems and technologies. In fiscal 2018, 24 people from 22 African countries visited Japan to participate in training programs. ACCP's second general meeting is scheduled to be held in Yokohama on Aug. 26 and 27, concurrently with TICAD 7.

In the areas of ports and harbors, Yokohama annually accepts trainees from African countries to introduce workings of the port of Yokohama, such as its maintenance and development, logistics efficiency and management and operation.

In fiscal 2018, 51 people from 19 African countries visited the port under the training program.

Business and women

Every year, Yokohama holds African business seminars together with JICA and the Japan External Trade Organization to introduce businesses and the investment environment in Africa to local Yokohama companies.

Apart from Yokohama's efforts on this, the Japanese government and JICA have also been welcoming talented African youth to Japan under the African Business Education Initiative for Youth (ABE Initiative) scholarships. Launched in 2013, the

initiative offers African nationals opportunities to study in undergraduate and graduate courses at Japanese universities, as well as work as interns at Japanese companies.

Yokohama has been supporting and encouraging local companies to use the initiative to offer young African nationals a chance to work as interns, as it could lead to the corporations gaining a foothold in Africa.

Women's empowerment is another area the city has been making efforts in.

During a TICAD V session titled "Driving African Development Through Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment" where African leaders including President of the Republic of Liberia H.E. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf participated, Mayor of Yokohama Fumiko Hayashi proposed the creation of a women's network in cooperation with JICA.

Since then, a total of 88 female entrepreneurs and government officials from 20 African countries visited Yokohama through the end of fiscal 2018. During their stay, they exchanged opinions and deepened mutual understanding with female entrepreneurs in Yokohama.

Next generation

Yokohama is also working to nurture an understanding of Africa among the city's next generation of youth.

One such example is the One School,

A city's vision to support development

FUMIKO HAYASHI
MAYOR OF THE CITY OF YOKOHAMA



Using the opportunities provided by hosting the fourth and fifth editions of the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) in 2008 and 2013,

Yokohama has been steadily establishing partnerships with African countries.

Yokohama has applied its experiences and knowledge, as well as the advanced technologies of local companies to support the development of African cities in fields such as waterworks and waste disposal management. Furthermore, 80 elementary and junior high schools in Yokohama are participating in a cultural

exchange program called One School, One Country. The program has helped deepen children's understanding of Africa.

Yokohama's theme for TICAD 7 is "Africa and Yokohama, Sharing Passion for the Future." This theme expresses Yokohama's determination to create a future where it grows together with Africa through cooperation with the public, private and academic sectors. The word "passion" refers to the driving force of Africa's remarkable growth and development, and is also an encouragement to the young people of Africa and Yokohama, whose potential is unlimited.

We are honored that discussions about Africa's future will be held here in Yokohama. The city of Yokohama will pursue all-out efforts to make TICAD 7 successful and will continue its endeavors to contribute to Japan-Africa technical cooperation and economic exchanges.



Female entrepreneurs from Africa participate in the Japan-Africa Business Women Exchange Program. CITY OF YOKOHAMA

One Country program. As of May, 80 elementary and junior high schools in the city and 34 African countries have participated in the program, which sees students learn about the cultures, histories and ways of life in Africa through cultural exchange events with the ambassadors of African countries.

University students have also been working to deepen their understanding of Africa through the Student Conference of African Development in Yokohama program in which students research and discuss issues currently facing Africa.

Having hosted TICAD twice in the past, Yokohama has worked to further deepen a sense of closeness to Africa among Yokohama citizens, holding around 100 events

where people can get a glimpse of African culture, people and society.

Under the slogan "Africa and Yokohama, Sharing Passion for the Future," Yokohama will continue its effort to contribute to Africa and the success of the development conference.

Official TICAD side events

- "Unleashing the Power of Women and Girls in Africa" symposium
Date: Wednesday, Aug. 28, 2-5 p.m. (Please register in advance)
Venue: Pacifico Yokohama Exhibition Hall B02
- "Japan Africa Business Forum and Expo"
Date: Wednesday to Friday, Aug. 28 to 30
Venue: Pacifico Yokohama Exhibition Hall D



A Yokohama official and his African counterparts conduct a water leakage inspection in the Republic of Malawi. CITY OF YOKOHAMA

Welcome to Yokohama!

Bienvenue à Yokohama!



Yokohama, a city where urban and historic views exist in harmony. Whenever you visit, you'll find different charms and attractions to cultivate your senses and excite your mind.

Yokohama is striving to be the top convention city. PACIFICO Yokohama, one of the city's MICE facilities, has ranked first for more than 10 years running in Japan as hosting the greatest number of international convention participants. Furthermore, the multifunctional convention center North, featuring one of Japan's largest multipurpose halls, will be opening in April 2020 as a new addition to PACIFICO Yokohama.



Sankeien Garden, a genuine Japanese-style garden, is beautifully maintained and serves as a fantastic showcase of historical architecture.



Accessing Yokohama by Train
From Narita Airport: 90 min.
From Haneda Airport: 24 min.
From Tokyo Station: 26 min.



Yokohama Visitors Guide Website (English)



Instagram @findyouryokohama_japan

PHOTO by Hideo Mori

MAURITIUS

Center of excellence for Africa is continent's rising star

Fueled by strong economic growth and enviable political stability, the ambitious island nation is building an outstanding reputation for businesses seeking to thrive there and on the mainland

The recent high-profile inauguration of the first permanent Japanese embassy in Mauritius marked the latest milestone in the blossoming relationship between the pair and opened an exciting new chapter in the ambitious island nation's bilateral relations with a key trade and development partner.

The launch of the long-term diplomatic presence in the capital of Port Louis is a clear statement of intent by Japan and reinforces the huge confidence, high esteem and strong trust as it looks to capitalize on the republic's enviable human assets and favorable strategic location in the heart of the Indian Ocean.

The transformation from a traditional island economy dependent on textiles and sugarcane is impressive and reflects Mauritius working hard to reinvent itself as a safe and secure hub for foreign direct investment (FDI). Through the signing of trade agreements, improved market access, attractive incentives and the creation of a vibrant and competitive private sector, the increasingly diversified economy has flourished.

Mauritius has enjoyed uninterrupted economic growth over the past few decades, and it boasts key advantages over other global financial centers. The growth curve is expected to continue with real gross domestic product growth projected at 3.9 percent in 2019, according to leading global financial institutions The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

While such progress is undoubtedly impressive, Mauritius offers huge untapped potential in several industries that investors from Japan are now being invited to explore against a backdrop of political, fiscal and social stability. In addition to the new permanent embassy,



Joseph E. Charles Cartier
Chairman, EDB

Mauritius' Economic Development Board (EDB) has opened an office in Tokyo to further explore bilateral opportunities.

TICAD 7 will be trigger for big trade boost
Bilateral trade remains on an upward trajectory, with official data showing exports from Mauritius — mainly marine products and textiles — worth nearly \$100 million to Japan in 2018. Heading the opposite way were significant volumes of automobiles and technology-related items, with Japanese goods worth around \$1.5 billion delivered.

Those figures are forecast to maintain a positive momentum, especially with many major deals poised to be inked at The Seventh



François Guibert
CEO, EDB

Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD 7), in Yokohama.

His Excellency Yoshiharu Kato, first resident ambassador of Japan in Mauritius, is certainly very excited about the opportunities that lie ahead and is looking forward to spearheading such success and building on the core bilateral foundations that already exist.

"The strategic position of Mauritius as a gateway to Africa will not only boost trade and investment between Japan and Mauritius, but give our two countries a chance to work together on the international front and in the region as a whole," he said.

"I am eager to see more private sector investment from Japanese companies looking to set

up in Mauritius, creating jobs and new opportunities. This could lead to an economic boost for Mauritius. Our embassy has made efforts to strengthen bilateral relations and deepen mutual understanding."

Japan's support for its smaller partner is widespread and extends to activities and operations in diverse areas such as health, education, good governance and even space exploration. "Japan has been offering scholarships and training to students and public officials from Mauritius. In terms of consultancy, Japan has deployed a geo-technical expert for landslide management and some meteorological consultants will be providing technical training to the staff of the Mauritius Meteorological Services.

"Since the creation of the Embassy of Japan in Mauritius, we have helped the Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority to participate in the Japan Tourism Expo 2018 organized by the Japan Association of Travel Agents in Tokyo and we created communication tools for the occasion, such as Japanese promotional booklets for Mauritius," said the ambassador.

The two countries' relationship has also blossomed in other ways, as the ambassador revealed: "The Japan Dodoshima Alumni Association (JDAA) was founded in October 2018 by former participants, mostly Mauritian public officials, under Japan International Cooperation Agency training programs.

"Meanwhile, JDAA was set up to regroup former participants and strengthen cooperation between Japan and Mauritius. It is also one of our missions to put in the spotlight Mauritians who are happy about the outcome and results of their collaboration with Japan."

Global financial watchdogs praise progress
With its pro-business climate, advantageous strategic position and adherence to international standards and regulations, Mauritius is widely seen as the safest, and best, option for a Japanese business entering the African continent. Earlier this year, the IMF praised the island nation's efforts to overcome some structural hurdles in an upbeat report on its economic performance and policies.

"The Mauritian economy continues to grow at a steady pace, benefiting from a vibrant services sector and strong domestic demand," the Washington D.C.-based entity noted. "Mauritius is pursuing an ambitious strategy — centered around upgrading infrastructure, promoting diversification and spurring private investment — to foster inclusive growth and reach the high-income country milestone."

Although only in its infancy, the EDB has made a strong start in life following its early 2018 birth from the merger of the Board of Investment, Enterprise Mauritius and the Financial Services Promotion Agency. As an apex body operating under the aegis of the Prime Minister's Office, the EDB synergizes efforts across all ministries and private stakeholders to meet the set goals.

Heralded as an exciting new era for investment in Mauritius, the creation of the EDB is a new chapter in economic planning, investment, trade promotion and facilitation. In addition to its ongoing work with highly developed countries like Japan, the EDB aims to reinforce economic collaboration with African states in order to leverage on the geostrategic position of Mauritius to drive investment into the continent.

With around two dozen double taxation avoidance treaties and a similar number of investment promotion and protection agreements already signed with African allies, Mauritius offers investors a solid platform for doing business in a broad range of sectors.

The EDB is available to guide and support investors exploring all industries, including the lucrative financial services sphere. In a bid to foster cooperation among financial centers and to position Mauritius as an international financial center (IFC) of choice, repute and substance, the EDB became a member of the World Alliance of International Financial Centers in July.

"The overarching objective of the EDB is to ensure greater coherence and effectiveness in implementing policies and draw the vision for the economic development path to be adopted to reach a high-income economy status, through sustainable and inclusive growth, while ensuring economic independence," said EDB CEO François Guibert.

"The mandate of EDB is to, inter alia, provide strong institutional support for strategic economic planning and ensure greater coherence and effectiveness in economic policy formulation, promote Mauritius as an attractive investment and business center, a competitive export platform, as well as an IFC. ... and facilitate inward and outward investment and ensure a conducive business climate.

"The locomotive of our transformation stems from wanting to position Mauritius as a center of excellence for Africa. This continent is the next



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region where annual growth will average double digits, and Mauritius has a key role to play on this front. That notion includes different things, for example, what we are doing presently by creating safe solutions for investors to look at the potential of Africa," Guibert said.

EDB energizes growth and entices new FDI
While the senior executive acknowledges there are comparatively few natural resources in the country, he emphasizes Mauritius' impressive human resources and capacity to train engineers for mining industry operations elsewhere on the continent means their services are in great demand.

"We also have a very strong financial services sector that allows these mining activities to take place in Africa," said François Guibert. "We have investor protection agreements with 24 African countries. This is not only a place where you can feel assured to locate your investment, there are also many value-added services such as internationally recognized arbitration. With two centers on the island, Mauritius is signatory on all conventions of arbitration.

"The key is we are the only Commonwealth country where the Napoleonic Code still prevails, which means in our legal system we have the British common law and the French civil law. We get a lot of people doing research on how these two systems intertwine.

"The locomotive of our transformation stems from wanting to position Mauritius as a center of excellence for Africa — the next region for double-digit annual growth."

François Guibert, CEO, EDB

"The benefit of this is very clear if we look at Africa holistically, as it has countries with French law and British law, you can more or less divide Africa between those two, and the legislature in Mauritius has experience in both. So, not only do we facilitate investment towards Africa, but in cases of conflict we have the proper structure to resolve disputes through arbitration," Guibert said.

Focus on innovation and education is key. Economic Development Board's Chairman, Joseph E. Charles Cartier, highlights how seriously Mauritius takes its role in helping the creation of one giant African market. African nations only trade 12 percent between themselves, compared to a 60 percent rate between EU countries and a 24 percent figure in Asia.

"Just imagine the kind of economic boost that will be seen if we move to 20 percent and then 30 percent. This is the key role we want to play as we want Mauritius to be part of the supply chain of African industry," Cartier said.

"Strategic Japanese investment could be implemented effectively in the infrastructure we are developing to reinforce our maritime strength at Port Louis. There is also a very strong education sector in Japan that could further bolster our scholarly offering here, if the U.K., France, Australia and other developed nations have based several universities here, then why not Japan?"

"Placing a Japanese education institution here would expose the African continent and its young minds to Japanese culture, language and way of doing business. This would cement the ties and open a gateway for Japanese investors to work in Africa."

According to Cartier, one of the main drivers



Yoshiharu Kato
Ambassador of Japan in Mauritius

of the Mauritian economy is innovation and technology, with officials seeking to embrace innovation in research and development and agriculture; not only in traditional areas such as banking and financial services.

"We want to enhance our agricultural production to be intelligent by using technologies such as the internet of things; using mobile apps that allow farmers and workers to know exactly what is happening in their fields and act upon that sensor data accordingly," he explained.

"We are a small country and this is something similar to Japan, giving us even more of a reason to collaborate on this front as they already have the experience to deploy this technology here. As for financial technology (fintech), we want to position Mauritius as a laboratory for technologies that can be exported to the rest of Africa.

"We have the Mauritius Africa FinTech Association and are launching innovative legislation to make this happen. The best example is the creation of a framework that sets out the rules for a license that allows the holder to provide custody services for digital assets. This move makes Mauritius the first jurisdiction globally to offer a regulated landscape for the custody of digital assets."

Strong performance in coveted rankings
One honor Mauritius is very proud of is its leadership position in the annual Ease of Doing Business rankings in Africa. The republic jumped from 25th to 20th place in the latest coveted survey of 190 countries by the World Bank.

The report's authors recognized the series of improvements achieved by Mauritius in eight out of the 10 indicators, namely starting a business, dealing with construction permits, getting electricity, registering property, protecting minority investors, paying taxes, trading across borders and enforcing contracts.

Mauritius also performed relatively well in the 2018 Corruption Perceptions Index by Transparency International, ranking in the top third of the 175 countries surveyed. That improved position was welcomed by Minister of Financial Services and Good Governance Sudhir Dharmendar Sesungkur.

"Mauritius has modernized its rules and legal system to become fully compliant with international standards, which is extremely important for international investors," the minister confirmed. "We are eager to welcome a few banks from Japan. They don't need to come and set up a big office. They can set up a branch, which doesn't need a huge amount of capital.

"This can accompany businesses from Japan targeting Africa. Once they have the momentum, they can decide whether to have a full-fledged office, but they have the money and the capital Africa needs. Japan can be a key player and partner in the development of Africa."

Mauritius

Your Partner of Choice
for Business in Africa



The Economic Development Board marks a new beginning in the economic landscape of Mauritius. The key objectives of EDB are to ensure greater coherence and effectiveness in implementing policies and pave the way for Mauritius to graduate into a high-income economy through sustainable and inclusive growth, whilst ensuring economic independence.

A Thriving Economic Powerhouse

Mauritius offers an enabling regulatory environment and a competitive platform for the setting up of Regional Headquarters to better serve key markets.

- A highly-educated & bilingual workforce passionate about innovation
- Secure investment location with established rule of law
- A wide array of investment and trade agreements
- Preferential market access to Africa, Europe & the USA
- A sophisticated International Financial Centre of substance
- A strategic manufacturing hub with cutting-edge technology
- A vibrant culture & exquisite lifestyle
- Free movement of capital across borders
- Protection of intellectual property



Africa's best-positioned financial hub is the safest option for Japanese investors

With a safe, streamlined and stable business environment, the banking and financial services sector meets strict global standards and opens doors in Africa and elsewhere

With a strong track record in cross-border finance and investment, Mauritius' banking and financial services sector is one of the region's strongest and most transparent. Home to many international banks, investment funds, legal firms and corporate services providers, the industry has built a reputation every bit as strong as its modern infrastructure backbone.

The country is leveraging on its state-of-the-art facilities and innovative legal framework and ease of doing business regime, so offering a panoply of competitive financial products and services, noted the Economic Development Board (EDB). "(These) include private banking, global business, insurance and reinsurance, limited companies, protected cell companies, trusts and foundations, investment banking and global headquarter administrations, among others," it added.

As a new member of the World Alliance of International Financial Centers (WAIFC), Mauritius will benefit from its place at the top table of global financial jurisdictions. The country is certainly among illustrious company, given the other 13 members include, Frankfurt Main Finance, Luxembourg for Finance, CityUK, Paris Europlace, Toronto Finance International, Abu Dhabi Global Markets and Casablanca Finance City.

The EDB, as the statutory body responsible for the promotion of the Mauritius International Financial Center (IFC), has also been voted onto the board of directors of the WAIFC. The association's core objectives include the promotion of cooperation among financial centers in order to sustain long-term growth, exploration of cross-fertilization opportunities and facilitating exchanges of best practices. The WAIFC is additionally developing the dialogue with public authorities on an international level.

Also project-driven, WAIFC projects currently underway for the benefit of its members, civil society and the global community include a fintech empowerment and capacity-building initiative, a series of publications on the role of IFCs in financing the economy, and a financial center database.

EDB CEO, François Guibert, is delighted, saying: "(The) EDB will leverage on its membership to the WAIFC to advocate on the important role that the Mauritius IFC plays as a robust, sophisticated, and well-regulated platform, in driving prosperity in developing and emerging countries. This strategic alliance will further strengthen the value that Mauritius adds as an IFC in the global economy."

Ten-year plan will shape future of IFC

With a strong regulatory framework, transparent legal regime, fierce commitment to international best practices and standards, and a favorable time zone (GMT+4) that allows trading on all global markets in a day, the island nation is an increasingly popular quality-efficient and cost-competitive IFC of choice for regional and global players.

The government is targeting sector growth of 5.5 percent per annum for the next decade, a fig-



Harvesh Seegolam
Chief Executive
Financial Services Commission

ure that would see a doubling of the gross value added. With many countries embracing the digital economy, Mauritius is eager to promote fintech and blockchain technology to provide platforms for the trading of digital assets, and is also eyeing the creation of an international platform for debt struc-

"Mauritius' track record, expertise and trust, can help it develop corporate finance and corporate banking to become a regional center."

Harvesh Seegolam, Chief Executive, FSC

turing and listing. Industry guardian the Financial Services Commission (FSC) has embarked on a 10-year plan for the sector with the blessings of the government. There are three main focus areas, as FSC Chief Executive, Harvesh Seegolam, explained: "The first is reaffirming, reinstating, and further consolidating the position of Mauritius as an IFC for cross-border investments.

"This is already our forte and what we have been known for over the last 30 years. The second leg is corporate finance; with the markets maturing in Africa and in the Indian subcontinent, and with this development, the needs for these markets are changing. They are moving from purely equity financing deals to corporate finance deals that you would typically see in the developed world.

"Mauritius with its track record, expertise and trust can develop corporate finance and corporate banking at the regional level to become the main center that facilitates both of these types of activities, as well as credit financing. It also entails key activities such as treasury management that is very instrumental in this process. There is also a lot



J. Alain Law Min
CEO, MCB

of focus on the corridor created between Asia and Africa through Mauritius.

"Trade financing, corporate financing, corporate banking and treasury management; all these activities fall under this limb of developing the Asia-Africa corridor with Mauritius becoming this center of finance and business that actually enables these productive movement of capital to happen.

"The third focus of our strategy is private wealth. As Africa emerges into the developing category of countries, there is a great need for private wealth solutions. Because of the trust and expertise we have in our jurisdiction, this has been identified as the key segment of activities and three main drivers we can further develop."

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Energy and Public Utilities, Ivan Collendavello, believes the country's financial services industry can be a hub for Japanese investors in Mauritius, but who may want to use the nation as a gateway into Africa.

"We have a serious network of management companies that specialize in investment in Africa, and have specific know-how of the continental markets," he said. "The continental market would be attractive to Japanese investors. On this three-pronged approach, Mauritius and Japan, through The Seventh Tokyo International Conference on African Development, for instance, can push forward their overall global strategy."

Capital markets milestone set by SBM

A highly successful, award-winning trailblazer and innovator in African Banking, SBM Holdings reinforced its excellent reputation with a 2017 collaboration that changed the continent's capital markets forever. The high-profile deal with the African Export-Import Bank saw the supranational trade finance bank open its shareholding to the investing public through the issuance of depositary receipts.

Established nearly four decades ago, the company boasts a strong franchise in Mauritius, with a market share of more than 20 percent in domestic advances and deposits. The group has also built a significant presence in India, Madagascar, and Kenya, and also holds a banking license to operate in the Seychelles.

Given its excellent track record, SBM Holdings is an ideal partner for companies from Japan and elsewhere seeking to take advantage of the myriad of opportunities created by fintech, as K.C. Li Kwong Wing, chairman of SBM Holdings, explained: "Africa is the global leader when it comes to development, adoption and usage of mobile wallets.

The continent has more than 220 million registered mobile money accounts with more than 80 million active every three months. "With fintech, Africans benefit from convenient and affordable financial services, enabling them to even leapfrog other regions in some cases. The paradox of financial exclusion in Africa is that almost all the digital transformations that the financial sector will experience can be more easily established on the continent.

"Mobile banking, for example, allows access to the banking world without going through expensive procedures; Africa is becoming an e-commerce platform where operations can be multiplied more quickly than elsewhere. The expansion of the financial sector in Africa will attract more and more investors, and the continent especially will be served as a financial platform."

To illustrate this point, Li Kwong Wing highlighted how SBM Holdings is the first Mauritian financial institution to partner with the leader of

the digital financial service and lifestyle platform, Alipay, which is part of the Chinese giant Alibaba Group.

"Africa is the best place for technological breakthrough and expansion of companies," he added. "Africa is leapfrogging so many countries in terms of technology, since it is adapting to the latest ones better than others. Technology, especially fintech, is addressing a real problem and thus serving a real need in Africa.

"If Japan really wants to enhance its engagement in Africa, it should not only think about helping Africa, but about participating with Africa in new technological ventures, in the launch of new generation banking services, and in new financing initiatives through private-public partnerships and joint ventures.

"Africa needs three important things: more connectivity, more physical infrastructures and finally smart and sustainable investments. Japan can have an important role in delivering all three. The African market is truly a basket of opportunities, which you can grasp by using Mauritius as a gateway."

Banking players embrace open economy

As a small island nation that has always punched well above its weight, few doubt the government's ambitious bid to build Mauritius' reputation as the "Luxembourg of Africa" will be achieved.

By opening up the nation to overseas investors and implementing fundamental changes to the way the economy is managed, the country has enjoyed a greater transfer of technology, knowledge, talent and capital from developed countries in Asia and Europe.

Such goals chime with those of Mauritius Commercial Bank (MCB) Ltd., a subsidiary and the mainstay of MCB Group Ltd., and the longest standing and leading banking institution in Mauritius. Founded 180 years ago and with an increasingly prominent foothold in the region, MCB remains true to its guiding principle of assisting in the advancement of individuals, corporates and the country at large, thus playing a key role in the socioeconomic development of Mauritius.

MCB embraces an innovative culture, with significant progress made in upgrading its IT platform and developing its digital footprint. The bank, which leverages a global network of around 1,200 correspondent banks, has diversified its activities in sub-Saharan Africa and beyond, as gauged by participation in major cross-border deals and transactions, as well as the deployment of the "Bank of Banks" initiative.

"There is no point doing things in Africa if you are



MauBank Ltd.

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just mediocre; you have to be good at what you do," stated Alain Law Min, CEO of MCB. "The fact we are investment grade helps a lot for us to go on the international market.

"We have just raised funds internationally to fuel our growth elsewhere. It was led by a Japanese Bank, Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation (SMBC), which has been a long time partner for us. I first worked with them when I freshly joined the bank in 1998. They led a syndication for the first power plant in Mauritius in 1998, so they have been here for a long time. We've always worked very well with SMBC.

"We also have good relationship with Japanese financial institutions and we raised \$800 million with the help of SMBC and Standard Chartered PLC on the international market. We are experts in trade and have gone into different countries to fund the oil and gas trading business."

Industry awards underline scale of success

Mauritius Commercial Bank's success has caught the eye of its peers with the bank recently named, for the fourth year in a row, the title of "Best Bank in Mauritius" by banking industry bible Euromoney. That award came hot on the heels of the title of

"Regional Bank of the Year — Southern Africa" at the African Banker Awards 2019.

According to Min, such recognition was well deserved and is just reward for extensive engagement in many major projects to improve the quality of customer services, as well as the country itself, in relation to its sustainable development.

He is confident more acclaim will follow and is keen to work more closely with foreign partners from Japan and elsewhere. "With MCB Capital Markets we have partnered with African Development Bank for the launch of a bond issue," he said. "It's a very good sign; all of these are good signs to show there is confidence in the local jurisdiction. We can be a center to raise funds and people are interested in this. It is not a major investment, but every little bit counts. We want to be positioned to attract investment and people are interested in our bonds.

"We have a structure that enables us to look at the needs of specific segments of customers and Japanese clients will, of course, be most welcome. It has been 20 years since we first worked with Sumitomo, so we are quite comfortable in interacting with Japanese investors. We tick all the boxes when someone from Japan looks into Mauritius."

"Fintech is highly regulated and monitored, while on the other side you also have this ease of doing business without much bureaucracy."

Shaan Kundomal, CEO, Capital Horizons



Fintech: Fusion of finance and new technology drives digital success

The birth of fintech has created a highly competitive global industry focused on innovation and compliance with strict regulations, with Mauritian firms playing a big part in the digital quest

Given the speed with which the global fintech industry has grown, not to mention the fierce competition among countries to establish themselves as regional, or global bases, it is no surprise to see Mauritius has established the Mauritius Africa FinTech Hub (MAFH). Described as a "fast-growing ecosystem where entrepreneurs, corporations, governments, tech experts, investors, financial service providers, universities and research institutions can collaborate to build cutting-edge solutions for the emerging African market," MAFH is confident about its prospects, and those of fintech. As countries race to establish themselves as global hubs for revolutionary digital hardware and software for fintech and blockchain, Mauritius is determined to ensure it develops the right regulatory framework and operating environment for such state-of-the-art technologies to not just survive, but thrive.

The precedents are certainly positive, as Samade Jhummun, CEO of Global Finance Mauritius, underlined: "Mauritius has a long history of reinvention and is recognized for its openness, ability to adapt and respond to changing times, as well as its highly educated and skilled workforce. These attributes will help us on our future path to a high-income economy which will generate jobs and growth for future generations, with the Mauritius International Financial Center (IFC) at the heart of it." Capital Horizons is an award-winning, boutique provider of financial services offering bespoke solutions to a broad range of customers. Licensed and regulated by the Financial Services Commission (FSC) in Mauritius, the firm offers corporate and legacy management services to institutions and high net worth individuals, respectively, and stands out for its capacity to cater to the Japanese. The firm has focused on combining fiscal optimization through the creation of offshore structure while maximizing what the Mauritius jurisdiction has to offer, namely debt restructuring through the various international banks present.

This has allowed many of the company's clients to decrease their cost of debt by utilizing interest rate swaps. Moreover, cross-border financing has allowed its clients to generate an offshore war chest, which can be used for international investments while choosing in which jurisdiction they wanted to keep their assets tied. "One of our



Shaan Kundomal
CEO, Capital Horizons

proudest moments came this year when we were nominated by at least five international magazines, and won the corporate finance advisor of the year for Mauritius by (digital business magazine) Acquisition International," revealed Capital Horizons CEO, Shaan Kundomal, who also sits on the board of directors of several firms, including a subsidiary of the SBM group. "Inspired by these achievements, we are constantly investing in our infrastructure through a secured cloud-based enterprise resource planning system on which our clients can monitor all their transactions, accounting, net asset values and requests"

Adherence to regulations pays dividends

Trust and good governance are at the heart of Capital Horizons' philosophy, with CEO Shaan Kundomal highlighting the importance of such compliance given the national regulator's eagle-eyed officials are always watching. "The FSC has a very strong surveillance enforcement division, and every year send their teams to audit all companies like ours to ensure we are doing things right and our clients are proceeding in transactions correctly," Kundomal said. "It's highly regulated and monitored environment, while on the other side there is ease of doing business without much bureaucracy."

Headquartered in Ebene CyberCity, MauBank is the third-largest bank in Mauritius and offers a full range of financial services to private and corporate clients, high net worth individuals, companies, public and financial institutions. MauBank is at the forefront of the digital revolution and a major investor in new technology to enhance customers' experience.

Innovative mobile apps win awards

"We do not have a digital transformation strategy, we have a customer experience strategy," said Premchand Mungar, CEO of MauBank. "This may seem like a strange statement, but one of our main objectives is to provide a class-leading customer experience and no technological tool can deliver that by itself. Digital transformation for us is not an objective, it's a means to an end. "We are not approaching digital transformation from the perspective that we want to implement a specific technological strategy. For instance, we are not saying our strategy is to use our data to generate next-product-to-buy predictions or apply distributed ledger technology to cross-border payments. These are all tools, tools with great potential," Mungar said

"Our strategy is not about implementing digital tools, but looking at our customer experience as a whole. We have identified three concrete goals: We want our products to be highly personalized, operationally transparent to our clients, and be efficient in delivering our products. According to a 2017 survey, nearly half of the respondent financial institutions said their latest digital investment is failing to generate returns higher than the cost of capital. One of the main reasons why any transformative strategy does not deliver is because of a failure to scale up."

Mungar added MauBank made a clear statement of intent with its mobile banking app WithMe, designed to adapt to customers' changing needs and ensure a seamless banking experience. "We became the first bank in the country to on-board customers through a mobile app," he continued. "Online leasing application platform MyLease allows customers to calculate how much lease they could take and make their application easier, coupled with a 10-minute approval in principle. Both products won the Infosys Fincle Client Innovation Award 2019 in the API Innovations Category and Emerging Technology led innovations Category."

Cultural charms create memories to last a lifetime

As a dream vacation destination popular for decades, Mauritius was once as famous for its high-profile guests as its incredible scenery and hospitality. That has changed in recent years, and rising tourist figures will thrill investors chasing big returns on tourism projects

Blessed with breathtakingly beautiful beaches lapped by the warm waters of the Indian Ocean, and rich in history, tradition, culture and cuisine, Mauritius' award-winning tourism offering is a melting pot that is second to none. Around 1.4 million international visitors arrived by air or sea in 2018, a number that will surely increase over the coming years as heavy investment in tourism infrastructure such as hotels, airports and ports attracts even more travelers to the sun-kissed tropical paradise. Plans for this significant capital expenditure are outlined in the latest edition of the national three-year strategic plan, as well as the Mauritius Vision 2030 development plan. Working in tandem, they aim to enhance the visibility of Mauritius as an up market tourist destination in traditional, emerging and new markets.

One of the main pillars of the strong economy and also a key source of employment and revenue, the tourism industry is estimated to directly employ 40,000 people. Several thousand other workers rely on the sector indirectly in support services.

Melting pot of exotic cultures is unique

The Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority (MTPA) sums up the country's ample assets in a colorful nutshell. "From the north's incredible variety of beaches with stunning coves and lagoons, to the south's volcanic landscape of the Chamarel Seven Colored Earths, visitors can indulge in all four corners of Mauritius by Escaping, Enlivening, Enjoying and Exploring."

Not for the first time, Mauritius was awarded prestigious titles at the 2019 World Travel Awards (WTA), including the Indian Ocean's Leading Destination. The country was also voted the World's Best Island Destination for 2019 by the Pacific Area Travel Writers' Association. Arvind Bundhun, director of the MTPA, was delighted with Mauritius' performance at the "Oscars of the travel industry" as it increased the visibility of the island destination on the international front. "Mauritius is not only a sun, sea, and beach destination; we also have other attributes," he said. "Mauritius is a melting pot of culture, traditions, religions, ethnicities, gastronomy and arts. It is also a safe destination for tourists and investment. The tourism business is firstly and foremost a people business, and what I hear as feedback from the 1.4 million tourists that come to Mauritius is the hospitality has a unique element that speaks volumes of our population."

"We are not just a beach destination, but a melting pot of culture, traditions, religions, ethnicities, arts and gastronomy."

Arvind Bundhun, Director, MTPA

Bundhun notes the MTPA is now focusing on other attributes Mauritius boasts other than its amazing natural assets, such as the plethora of cultures, gastronomy and religion. "We also want to promote the clear air and sustainability here in Mauritius," he added. "There is a plant called lichens that only grows in very pure air, you can find it in the Himalayas across various countries; we have it here in Mauritius growing on thousands of trees. This is another unique selling point that appeals to the Asian market." The importance of a healthy tourism sector to national pride, well-being and socioeconomic development cannot be understated. "We cannot imagine Mauritius without a tourism industry," said Minister of Tourism Anil Gayan. "Of course, there are challenges and there



Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority (MTPA)

www.tourism-mauritius.mu



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is much more competition today than in the past. The Maldives has increased its popularity over the years, but we have a product that is special. Anyone who visits Mauritius will not have the same experience anywhere else in the Indian Ocean. We want Mauritius to be a hub, a link between East Africa, Europe and the Indian Ocean. We are looking at all the opportunities in the aviation sector and are very focused on improving such services.

"Today, Africa is a land of opportunities, though mainstream media focus more on the continent's remaining challenges. Like my ministry, the Seventh Tokyo International Conference on African Development finds inspiration in aspiring to explain Africa in an understandable way to reduce the gap between stereotypes and the traditional perception about the continent, and this new and exciting reality of development and openings."

Japanese tourists and investors welcome

The minister is eager for Japanese foreign direct investment to maximize his country's tourism offering, as well as help develop new sectors such as the ocean economy — one area in which Japan has a wealth of experience. "This is certainly an area we would be happy to get Japanese interest and investment, not only for fishing but for a number of things, including oil and gas exploration, or exploiting other minerals, like manganese," he added. "At TICAD 7 we will showcase all the things Japanese tourists can do in Mauritius, from trekking to touring villages and visiting homes, participating in religious activities and cultural events. Mauritius is a multi-ethnic society, and almost every week there is an event that pertains to a particular religion or culture. "This is something that the Japanese would never be able to see anywhere else in the world, it is not even the same in India. What we have done here is preserve the heritage that the Indian and African

workers came with 200 years ago, and that has not changed. In India, for example, many things have changed, but here that tradition is preserved."

Mauritius' hospitality industry offers luxury around the clock that fits most budgets, with more than 110 hotels offering beautiful pools, views, and excellent cuisine and service. Unlike many of its counterparts, The Lux Collective offers a memorable experience, by inviting guests of all ages, backgrounds, and nationalities to explore the island and connect with people, rather than just operate as a base for beach lovers.

With the Japanese not known as huge sun worshippers, a stay at one of the handful of LUX Resorts and Hotels in Mauritius is ideal for guests from the East. Indeed, with The Lux Collective's international headquarters now based in Singapore, the company has valuable experience of fine-tuning and tailoring its upscale offerings to guests from Japan and the wider region. The award-winning group's Mauritius hotels and resorts boast magnificent views and gorgeous swimming pools set among lush landscaped gardens. Visitors can choose from rooms at the foot of the rugged and majestic Mount Le Morne, or stays amid the comfortable surroundings of the relaxing boutique resort of Belle Mare.

All the gorgeous hotels adopt a sustainable approach, including the stunning Lux Grand Gaube, found on the island's northern coast and billed as a clever balance of contrasts and fresh design. In a new twist on high-end hospitality, The Lux Collective launched an exciting new project called Salt: a hotel that encourages people to get out and about, does not offer TV and invites guests to cook with the chefs. "We are not in the hospitality business, we are in the business of time," explained Sydney Pierre, senior vice president, commercial, The Lux Collective. "People save for a year to afford to fly and stay in a hotel for a week. Our vision is that

each moment matters, and so our purpose is to help guests celebrate life.

"Our pools and beaches are not better than the others, but what is better is our philosophy. This is our culture, people try to copy that, but this is natural for us, it's our passion. Every person working for us, from the chef to the man making up the rooms, contributes to that culture. Our occupancy rates are high, but not because we are the cheapest. We believe in the experience we are providing."

Flying away with the title of Leading Indian Ocean Airline 14 times in the last 17 years in the

"We are in the business of time. Our vision is each moment matters, and so our purpose is to help guests celebrate life."

Sydney Pierre, SVP-Commercial, The Lux Collective

coveted WTA, including in this year's edition, flag carrier Air Mauritius is also now one of the world's top 40 airlines. The operator boasts an expanding route network, safe and modern fleet and is proud to be the world's first operator of both the Airbus A350 and the Airbus A330neo models.

Setting sky-high standards of service

As the flag carrier, Air Mauritius is also a national icon and the largest company in the country, with its impressive four-star rating by Skytrax well deserved given the quality of its onboard product and staff service, both in the air and on the ground. Earlier this summer, Skytrax ranked Air Mauritius as the third-best African airline at the World Airline Awards. Commenting on the multiple titles, Air Mauritius

CEO, Somas Appavou, stated: "I dedicate these awards to the hard working people of Air Mauritius. It is a recognition of all the efforts put in by our personnel. As a Mauritius company, hospitality is in our DNA and we strive to improve our products and services so they best reflect the 'mosaic' of our cultural heritage."

With around 2,300 employees and flying to a combined two dozen destinations on four continents, the ambitious carrier is well aware of its importance to the country's image, especially as for many travelers it will be the first Mauritius experience of their vacations. The airline's network is also being reinforced in line with its ambition to transform Mauritius into a strategic aviation hub to connect countries and continents — with the help of international partners.

A new business model means Air Mauritius remains confident that initiatives taken and to come will allow the company to chart a new course for its future. The growing carrier intends to further increase its service and targets daily flights on other destinations adding to the existing daily flights to Paris, Johannesburg, Antananarivo, St. Denis and Pierrefonds (Reunion Island). In July, Air Mauritius launched twice weekly flights to the Seychelles.

The adoption of the Air Mauritius Hub Concept has, over the past decade, evolved from a point-to-point to an origin-and-destination network. This successful new business model offers more choice to its passengers through the hubs it operates with its many partner airlines.

Air Mauritius now offers more than 100 destinations from a series of hubs it operates with partner airlines, in Paris, Johannesburg, Nairobi, Kuala Lumpur, Singapore and Perth. Service to Europe has also been reinforced with seasonal flights to one of Europe's key financial centers, the Swiss city of Geneva.

Focus on renewable energies offers wave of FDI opportunities

Mauritius is embracing renewable energies such as solar and wind power, with Japan's outstanding reputation for state-of-the-art technology making it the ideal investment partner

Unlike many developing countries, Mauritius already offers 100 percent electricity coverage to residents and businesses across the nation. With such an achievement almost unheard of in Africa, Mauritius stands in a privileged position for energy generation and distribution. Well aware of the potential impact of global warming should sea levels rise, the government is committed to boosting the share of electricity generated by renewable energies to 35 percent by 2025 from the current 22 percent. It aims to do this through wind farms, solar energy, biomass and waste-to-energy projects, seeking significant foreign direct investment to maximize such untapped resources. Although bagasse (sugarcane waste) remains the overwhelming source of renewables (89 percent) in Mauritius, the country derives the remaining 11 percent from hydro, wind, landfill gas, fuel wood and solar power.

The national energy policy encourages the use of renewable and clean energy to reduce its dependence on fossil fuels and avoid harmful greenhouse gas emissions. Launched in 2016, the Mauritius Renewable Energy Agency (MARENA) spearheads the adoption and use of renewable energy for sustainable development goals. As per the MARENA Act of 2015, the agency developed the first Renewable Energy Strategic Plan (RESP) 2018-2023; a keystone reference for execution of critical national policy and goals. Designed to support Vision 2030, the RESP reviews energy requirements with the aim to advise the government in the planning and execution of future decisions in its quest to provide clean and affordable energy to the nation. With its prominent role in addressing renewable

energy opportunities and challenges. MARENA falls under the aegis of the Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities, which is headed by Deputy Prime Minister Ivan Collendavelloo. He explained the government seeks international competitive bidding for most of its power projects and favors joint ventures between the local private sector and international firms.

However, in 2017 the Central Electricity Board (CEB) Act was amended to allow CEB (Green Energy) Co., a wholly owned subsidiary of the CEB, to participate in projects without recourse to public procurement. The aim of CEB (Green Energy) Co. is to promote the development of renewable energy.

Interest in solar power technology heats up

"Renewable energy is a real success story here as we have achieved almost a 1,000 percent increase in just four years," said Collendavelloo. "Our objective is to secure a 30 percent reduction in carbon dioxide emissions by 2030, and have a 35 percent renewables share in our electricity mix by 2025."

The minister is eager for Japanese technology to play an integral part in Mauritius' energy industry, including in liquefied natural gas (LNG). "We have looked at what the Japanese are doing and what they can offer," he said. "Japanese technology has created a measure of interest with us, especially in offshore LNG technology. Of course, in Mauritius offshore facilities tend to be very attractive, but also expensive. We need to determine how we are going to approach this, but Japanese investors could certainly bring that technology to Mauritius."

"Japanese technology would also benefit us in electric vehicles. This means charging batteries



Shamshir Mukoon, Acting General Manager, CEB

and taking fossil fuels, but if you have solar energy to power your batteries, you can do it. Japanese technology and investment is considered the best for this challenge. My dream is to bring that state-of-the-art technology here." The country's current three-year strategic development plan has identified a number of facilitators that will help boost the use of renewables. They include new energy generation capacity and the use of energy efficiency measures, as well as increasing electricity generation capacity through the installation of a 120-megawatt combined cycle gas turbine (CCGT) power plant at Fort George Thermal Power Station near Port Louis.

CEB is powerful energy industry guardian

The plan also calls for investment in renewable energy with a 13 MW solar photovoltaic power plant in Henrietta, a 29.4 MW wind farm in Plaine Sophie and six solar farms with a total capacity of 65



Ivan Collendavelloo, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Energy and Public Utilities

MW. The impressive success of the national electricity industry is chiefly due to the CEB. The forward-thinking entity is at the forefront of the growing sector, although once a long-awaited electricity act is approved, the CEB will no longer have the role of generator, distributor and authority overseeing the sector. "We produce 40 percent of our electricity from coal and 40 percent from heavy fuel oil, so 80 percent of our energy comes from imported fossil fuels," said CEB General Manager, Shamshir Mukoon. "Fortunately, we are a sugarcane producing country so we use the bagasse that comes from the processing of this crop. We have around 13 percent from biomass bagasse and four percent from hydropower and 2 to 3 percent from solar."

The senior executive notes bagasse is considered a low emission combustion material, and that the sugarcane grown helps reduce the amount of carbon dioxide in the air. "We have been releasing

tenders and projects within the renewables space and by late 2020 we expect to commission a total of 120 MW of wind power. Today, we only have 40 MW operational. The aim is to bring the renewable energy target from 20 percent to 35 percent in 2025. "Many of the tenders that are currently being offered by the CEB have been offered on a basis there will be a power purchase agreement between us and the investor. The second thing we have initiated is a customer individual solar plan for private home users. We have allowed them to install their own solar rooftops and connect to the national network. "They produce their own electricity and distribute the surplus to the network. This system of giving autonomy to an individual is known as Small Scale Distributed Generation. We already have 4,000 homes on this system and are looking to increase that number so many more people benefit."

Lighting up the lives of the disadvantaged

Acutely aware of the huge difference a reliable supply of electricity can make to the lives of people in poorer communities, the CEB runs a series of initiatives that benefit low-income citizens. "For such people we proposed to buy their home solar energy kit, install, operate and maintain it," Mukoon continued. "This category of customer also benefits from 50 kilowatt-hours of free energy. Whatever excess power comes back onto the grid is then sold to other users and to repair the grid system when problems arise. The groundbreaking and well-received idea was presented to the International Renewable Energy Agency at the World Future Energy Summit in the United Arab Emirates.

"It was ranked as one of the best projects, which resulted in a concessional loan from the Abu Dhabi

Fund for Development to realize this. This allowed us to purchase 10,000 solar home kits. We are also on the lookout for rooftop space, since available land in Mauritius is so scarce."

While renewables are undoubtedly the future of energy generation for many countries, including Mauritius, traditional fuel sources remain an important part of the energy mix. The CCGT project aims to optimize LNG as a feedstock for the modern power plant. Natural gas is a much cleaner fuel than alternative energy sources like coal and diesel, and will help boost electricity capacity for peak load needs. "We started the feasibility studies on LNG two years back and now have a report ready for consideration," Mukoon said. "The government needs to decide where and when to build a jetty gas stor-

"Our plan is to decarbonize and take the steps to move further into renewable energies. Japan could invest in projects, as well as LNG."

Shamshir Mukoon, General Manager, CEB

age facility, import the gas and get it to our shores. Natural gas could then replace all fossil fuels and cut emissions by 40 percent. Our plan is to decarbonize and take coordinated steps to move further into renewables. Japan should explore energy investment in areas like our LNG project as many Japanese firms are involved in this industry and have the experience, know-how and reputation."

This report was produced by Global Insight and can also be read online at: www.japantimes.co.jp/country-report_category/mauritius-report-2019/ and www.global-insight.net Project Director: Clara Arrighi, Information Manager: Bruno Gabriel

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TICAD 7 host city

Port area the center of national firsts, lively excursions

CEZARY JAN STRUSIEWICZ
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Modern Yokohama might be second in Japan in terms of population but, historically, it has long been a city of firsts.

In the mid-19th century, after U.S. Commodore Matthew Perry forced the Japanese government to open its ports to the world, Yokohama was one of the first places in the country to take in foreign ships and with them an influx of Western culture and innovation. In 1861, it became the place where Albert W. Hansard started Japan's first English-language weekly paper, the Japan Herald, which in 1863 became Japan's first daily newspaper, the Daily Japan Herald. Then in 1870, Norwegian-American William Copeland opened Japan's first commercially successful brewery, the Spring Valley Brewery, in Yamate, Yokohama. Over the next few years, Yokohama's affluent Bashamichi area in particular became the center for Western influences in Japan, emerging as the first place in the country that saw gas lamps, an ice-cream parlor and a photography studio.

That era of innovation has ended now but Yokohama still remains a leader in many areas, most notably when it comes to offering first-rate entertainment and sight-seeing opportunities. Any visitor to the city should start their exploration of Yokohama with Landmark Tower, which used to be the tallest building in Japan, though it was relegated to second place in 2014. However, at 70 stories measuring a total of 296 meters, it's still a massive structure and a symbol of Yokohama, a significant portion of which one can admire from the tower's 69th floor observation deck called Sky Garden. On clear days, grand views of Tokyo Tower, Tokyo Skytree, the Izu Peninsula and Mount Fuji are visible. The price of admission is ¥1,000 for adults, ¥800 for seniors, ¥500 for children and ¥200 for toddlers; however, the prices go down a little on rainy (weekdays only) or cloudy days

(weekends and holidays only). Even in inclement weather, a coffee or meal at the Sky Cafe can still be enjoyed while taking in the 360-degree panoramic view of the surrounding Minato Mirai area.

Minato Mirai 21, literally "harbor of the future," is the result of a decades-long port and waterfront redevelopment project that ultimately transformed Yokohama's industrial shipyard into a thriving business and entertainment center. It's now home to concert halls, amusement parks, and a sailing ship docked right next to Landmark Tower — the Nippon Maru. Part of the Nippon Maru Memorial Park, the ship is an actual former training vessel where, together with the adjacent Yokohama Port Museum, visitors can learn all about Yokohama's maritime history. An interesting fact about the Nippon Maru is that during its service, it sailed over 1.8 million kilometers, or roughly 45 times around the Earth.

Minato Mirai is also a great place to get some souvenirs, especially at the Landmark Plaza, the shopping complex connected to Landmark Tower. Once inside, visitors should visit the fifth floor's Yokohama Memories, a one-stop shopping destination for all souvenir needs, from Yokohama-branded toys to key chains, cookies, curries and more. The fourth-floor's official Studio Ghibli store Donguri Kyowakoku (Acorn republic), or the second-floor Jump Shop selling goods featuring characters from popular Japanese anime such as "Dragon Ball," "One Piece," "Naruto," "Bleach" and more are also worth checking out. On the way out, people should be sure not to miss the plaza's peculiar curved escalators, one of just 36 such installations in all of Japan.

Wide variety of food

By now, an appetite may have been worked up, so visitors may wish to take a short walk to the nearby Cupnoodles Museum. Dedicated to the work and memory of instant ramen's inventor, Momofuku

Ando, the museum not only nourishes the mind, but also the body. On the museum's fourth floor is the Noodles Bazaar — World Noodles Road, a fun, multicultural food court serving noodle dishes from all over the world, from Japanese ramen to Vietnamese pho or Lagman noodles from Kazakhstan. For the more adventurous, there is also soft serve ice cream topped with savory instant ramen toppings. But the biggest draw of the museum is the chance to make personalized instant ramen at the My Cupnoodles Factory. After purchasing and decorating a cup, a choice of one of four soup flavors (classic, curry, seafood or chili tomato) and four out of 12 possible ingredients (including things like garlic chips, cheese, corn, shrimp, egg and more), gives a grand total of 5,460 possible flavor combinations. Once that is done, the pack of ramen is shrink-wrapped, after which it is placed inside a protective "air package," creating a one-of-a-kind souvenir.

The Cupnoodles Museum also offers courses in making ramen from scratch at the Chicken Ramen Factory, although doing so requires reservations. For younger visitors, there's also the Cupnoodles Park, a sort of play area mixed with an obstacle course that simulates the process of preparing instant ramen, ending with a slide modeled after a roller conveyor belt.

The next destination is a bit farther away, so the best option is to back up and board the Minatomirai Line subway at Minatomirai Station. Purchasing the Minato Mirai Line One-Day Ticket will offer unlimited rides for an entire day. People can board the train bound for Motomachi-Chūkagai and get off there to start exploring one of Yokohama's most famous attractions — Chinatown.

The roots of Yokohama's Chinatown go back to 1859 when the city's port was opened and welcomed hundreds of immigrants and visitors not just from Western countries, but also from Shanghai, Hong



Minatomirai offers an abundance of entertaining facilities for tourists including shopping malls and observatories. GETTY IMAGES

Kong and mainland China. This proved to be a blessing for the city as, at the time, most Japanese people didn't speak English and never had business dealings with Westerners. But the Chinese immigrants did, and they wrote some of the same Chinese characters that Japanese people used. Soon, many of them became translators and intermediaries between Japanese and Western merchants, helping Yokohama flourish. The area they chose to live in eventually became the city's Chinatown, the entrance to which is today marked by four big, ornate gates dedicated to Chinese guardian deities, with six more colorful gates being found inside the Chinatown perimeter.

Today's Chinatown is home to about 620 shops, of which several hundred are restaurants, cafes or other businesses dealing with food. It's hard to recommend

one place to eat at when visiting the area, but some of Yokohama Chinatown's top-rated restaurants include Manchirō, Saikoshinkan and Hotenkaku, the last of which serves assortments of xiaolongbao pan-fried dumplings filled with hot soup. Hotenkaku well exemplifies the food culture of Yokohama's Chinatown, as it deals their food out of a window, allowing guests to eat outside from take-out containers. Chinatown puts a lot of focus on street food, from steamed *nikuman* buns to sesame balls or the popular tapioca bubble tea.

Unique attractions

From Chinatown, people can take the Minatomirai Line and get off at Nihon-odori to relax at the Osanbashi Yokohama International Passenger Terminal. An important ship terminal, Osanbashi is an oasis of peace when it's not taking in cruise ships. The curved pier, made from resilient Brazilian wood and featuring patches of green grass, is also known as the "Whale's

Back" because of its shape. It's a great place to sit back and enjoy a beautiful panoramic view of Yokohama's waterfront.

To finish off the day in Yokohama, visitors should once again board the Minatomirai Line, get off at Yokohama Station and head on up to Asobuild. A fairly new addition to Yokohama's entertainment repertoire, Asobuild is a multistory entertainment and arts center for the entire family. On the lowest level is the Pitch Club, an amusement bar advertised as a "quality playground for adults" with leather chairs, billiards, and a fully stocked bar. Above it is a children's play area, a restaurant floor and the Unko Museum (*unko* literally means "poop"), an interactive establishment tastefully celebrating the power that scatological humor has in bringing people together. After a day of taking in all the amazing, delicious and awe-inspiring things that this port city has to offer, why not wrap up exploring Yokohama with a good laugh? (The Unko Museum is open for a limited time only until Sept. 30).



Yokohama's Chinatown is home to more than 600 shops, a large number of which specializes in different kinds of food. GETTY IMAGES



Left: Japan's first gas lamps were installed in the Bashamichi area in Yokohama. Right: Osanbashi offers a relaxing reprieve from the city's bustling locales. GETTY IMAGES



PLAY

Gorgeous night views, an amusement park, the Yokohama Museum of Art, and plentiful shopping and dining — **MINATO MIRAI 21** has enough to keep you entertained for days.

Minatomirai Station

RELAX

From **Akarenga-Soko** to **Yamashita Park** the waterfront is a popular venue for events and a great place to relax during any season. The night view from **Osanbashi Pier** is not to be missed.

Bashamichi Station & Nihon-ōdōri Station

EXPLORE

With hundreds of restaurants and street vendors to choose from, Yokohama's **Chinatown**, the largest in Japan, has endless dining options and is a center of activity throughout the year.

Motomachi-Chūkagai Station

Shinjuku
Yamanote Line
Shinjuku
Shibuya
Yamanote Line
Yokohama
Shinjuku-Basen
Minatomirai
Bashamichi
Nihon-ōdōri
Motomachi-Chūkagai

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