

Message from the Ambassador



Takeshi Akamatsu
Ambassador of Japan

Japan wishes to contribute to peace and stability in Africa with South Sudan

“Hand in Hand with a More Dynamic Africa”- The Fifth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD V), was held under this theme in Japan last June. During the TICAD V, Mr. Shinzo Abe, Prime Minister of Japan announced contribution of Japan to Africa over the next five years, totaling approximately 32 billion USD, including official development assistance (ODA) of around 14 billion USD.

Japan believes that in achieving development and prosperity of Africa, “peace and stability” are prerequisite, and in this context, peace and stable South Sudan is one of the most important, not only for the region, but for Africa as a whole. This is the backdrop against which Japan devotes itself in the cooperation with and support to South Sudan.

Since the establishment of diplomatic relations with South Sudan on the day of its independence, our bilateral cooperation, especially through ODA, has been expanding. And on 1st of July, the Liaison Office, established in 2011, was upgraded into an Embassy, and last month I was inaugurated as the first Japanese Ambassador to South Sudan. With new embassy established, Japan renewed its commitment in continuing support to South Sudan. In 2013 alone,

Japan has extended assistance of more than 220 million USD to South Sudan, largest contribution among African countries.

The 1st “Japan’s ODA Press Tour”, is co-organized by the Embassy of Japan, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and Japanese Contingent Engineer Company of UNMISS, and seeks to provide you, and through you to the people of South Sudan, with a firsthand knowledge about Japan’s ODA.

Joint efforts by the people of Japan and South Sudan –core value of Japanese ODA

Japan’s ODA started 50 years ago, about 10 years after having being helped by others to recover from the devastations of the WW II. With its experience of nation re-building and economic successes that followed, Japan, has been continuing to assist our friends in search for their prosperous future.

And it is no coincidence that Japan’s ODA started with technical cooperation, that seek to transfer our experiences and knowledge directly in building the capacity of the people of developing partners. Since then, Japan’s ODA is not implemented in one-way manner such as a donor giving “financial support” to the recipient, but is conducted as a “joint effort”, based on true partnership. This is, I hope, what you will discover during this tour.

Support does not come alone –accent on the importance of self-help efforts

Many people tell me that “South Sudan is a young country, with financial constraints, inadequate

facilities, human resources...etc.” the list is nearly endless.

It is true that South Sudan is now facing a vast challenge. But, it must be remembered that it is up to the people of South Sudan to take on responsibility for their future and exert efforts to bring their dreams come true. People of South Sudan must be at the helms of their future.

Underlying concept of TICAD process is “ownership” and “partnership”. And our projects are focusing on cultivating ownership and building the capacity of the people, as we believe, from our own experiences, it is crucial to put people in the center of all human endeavors.

Japan will always stand, side by side with the people of South Sudan

Development is not an easy target to achieve, especially so in a new country like South Sudan. This does not come in a day; it is a long enduring endeavor.

However, South Sudan is bestowed with many blessings; natural resources, fertile soil, sunshine, water, and people. Wisely utilizing and maximizing these potential is the biggest challenge for South Sudan and each and every South Sudanese. Japan will always stand by the people of this country, as a partner in such joint endeavor.

I sincerely hope that through this ODA press tour, you will become an able promoter of Japan’s joint approach with the people of South Sudan in building the bright future for this new born nation.