

**Supporting Peace and Development in South Sudan  
- A Japanese Perspective -**

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**1. Introduction**

It is a great honour for me to be invited by the prestigious Ebony Center for Strategic Studies for a Development Policy Forum event, which has a long history with distinguished members, many of whom kindly came over here today.

I was posted to South Sudan in April 2015. Compared to a long history of the path to South Sudan's independence in 2011 and its efforts of state building since then, two years and a half of my assignment in South Sudan are rather short. Still, I had a privilege of playing a role as representative of the Government of Japan in South Sudan to support peace and development in this country. Before leaving, I would like to share my thoughts and observations based on that experience, which I hope you may find useful in some ways.

My message is simple. Sustainable peace in South Sudan can only be achieved by fostering ownership and commitment by South Sudanese themselves, combined with ensuring cooperation and support from the international community.

In my understanding, major challenges of South Sudan are three-fold: (1) achieving reconciliation and collaboration among various groups in South Sudan; (2) facilitating mutual understanding and cooperation between the Government of South Sudan and the international community, and (3) improving the difficult economic situation in the country. In addressing all these, it is important for us not only to encourage good leadership of South Sudanese themselves but also to let them ensure that the international community is

strongly behind their efforts. It is my belief that only in this way can we together overcome such enormous challenges.

## **2. Supporting Peace in South Sudan**

(Promoting synergy of peace initiatives)

Currently, IGAD is taking the lead in the initiative to revitalize the Agreement on the Resolution of Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan, which is fully supported by AU, UN, and the international community, including Japan. H.E. the President launched the initiative of the National Dialogue, which is led by an independent Steering Committee and is now moving into grassroots consultations. In addition, the initiative to achieve reunification of SPLM is being facilitated by Uganda.

These are all genuine efforts with the same objective of bringing about peace in South Sudan. They would all contribute to making various opposing groups work together, helping them stop fighting among themselves, and enabling the Agreement to function when seriously undertaken and successful. What is important is to explore and facilitate synergy of these initiatives.

Japan, together with UN and Germany among others, has been extending support to the National Dialogue initiative for a number of reasons. First, it offers a good entry point for various groups, including those whose voices have not been fully reflected in the Agreement, and those who decided to leave the Transitional Government, to come on board. Second, it is essential to ensure grassroots participation through a bottom-up approach, in addition to a top-down approach, in order to address local confrontation and communal violence.

For the National Dialogue to succeed, the integrity of the National Dialogue Steering Committee is to be maintained, which has so far been successful. Ensuring inclusivity of this process is another critical element. It is my hope that the Government will continue to take concrete actions to ensure the conducive environment for the National Dialogue by maintaining and fully enforcing unilateral ceasefire, ensuring the freedom of expression, and

promoting local peace and reconciliation by addressing various grievances of the people. Such peace dividends or “collateral benefits” will help keep the momentum of the National Dialogue. I would also like to call the opposition groups to renounce violence and come on board for the National Dialogue.

Nevertheless, the National Dialogue itself is not sufficient to achieve peace. The IGAD revitalization initiative, with full international partners’ engagement, is indispensable not only to ensure support from the international community but also to put pressure on all the opposition groups to work together toward the future. Mutual engagement of the Government and other groups on the one hand and the international community as a whole on the other to promote peace can best be achieved through this revitalization process.

(Making use of UNMISS and RPF to enhance confidence and support)

It was fortunate that, after an incident due to misunderstanding between UNMISS and the Government about the Regional Protection Force (RPF), the Government expressed its full commitment to cooperation for UNMISS activities and RPF deployment. The international community, including Japan, expects concrete actions will follow.

Japan withdrew its Engineering Contingent from UNMISS after more than five years of service. Still, Japan continues to be a major contributor to UNMISS, making the third largest financial contribution and dispatching four staff officers to it. Prompt RPF deployment and its full operational coordination with the Government security forces will enhance confidence of the South Sudanese people as well as the international community about the security in Juba. It will not only benefit the National Dialogue but also give confidence to humanitarian, development and business partners. It will also enable some of the UNMISS units in Juba to be redeployed outside the capital, so that they can contribute to enhancing security on major roads and in less stable areas. I hope that the Government will capitalize on this opportunity.

(Need to address humanitarian issues seriously)

I am concerned about a persistent gap of understanding between the

Government and the humanitarian community on the issues of humanitarian access, security of humanitarian personnel and the treatment of NGO organizations and staff. This has always been one of the top agenda for the international community. It is my strong hope that Humanitarian Coordination Forum (HCF) and Humanitarian High-Level Oversight Committee (HHLOC), which just started to convene regularly, will promptly bring about visible outcomes. That will demonstrate the Government's sense of urgency and seriousness to address these important challenges. Otherwise, I am afraid that it could lead to diminishing resources from the international community for social services in South Sudan.

(Paving the way for Security Sector Reform)

As we make concerted efforts to bring about peace in South Sudan, one of the major issues which need to be addressed down the road is Security Sector Reform to make the peace sustainable. It goes without saying that a peaceful South Sudan would need a military of a smaller size, with professional discipline, and reflecting an ethnic balance of the country to ensure its credibility.

It is my understanding that the military transformation process needs to start now and accelerate its speed, as reliable security is the backbone of a new-born country. That is why Japan is working, together with AU, to extend support to SDRS Board among others in JMEC institutions.

Terrain Hotel case proceedings are the opportunity for the Government and the military to demonstrate their determination to enforce discipline in the armed forces. Japan monitors its development closely as it also affects the safety of aid workers.

(Fostering trust through accountability and communication strategy)

One thing that I tried hard myself was to receive a timely, factual and coherent explanation from the Government about its forces' advance toward Pagak in August. Responses were difficult to come by and accounts from various channels differed from one another. This reduced credibility not only of unilateral declaration of ceasefire by H.E. the President, which the international

community had wholeheartedly welcomed, but also of the National Dialogue process. Similar concerns were raised when the Government decided to increase the number of states or announced the increase of NGO-related fees.

I would like to support Government's decisions if they are made with sufficient grounds. If not, I would like to address the problem as soon as possible to resolve the differences. Whichever the case, I need to understand the background of such decisions, and it must be the same for other members of the international community. It is my hope that the Government would make clear and coherent account of any political and military actions which could cause concern among the international community. A good communication strategy will definitely benefit both of us.

### **3. Supporting Development in South Sudan**

(Consolidating peace through development)

Peace and development are interlinked. Still, it is difficult to extend development assistance where peace does not exist. How to advance peace and development in a mutually reinforcing manner is a big challenge.

Japan's development assistance has always centered on the principle of self-reliance or the principle of aid to end aid. We are also proud of our pragmatism and our approach to listen to the needs on the ground. Based on such a principle and approach, we have been extending assistance to South Sudan with the focus on four pillars: (1) economic and social infrastructure, (2) alternative industries, (3) social service and livelihood, and (4) governance and security. While our resources are limited, we have been making efforts to initiate programs in strategic areas which can demonstrate its impact and can be scaled up in collaboration with other partners toward the future.

As we continued our assistance, we have adopted some effective approaches to consolidate peace through development under the current challenging environment.

(Capacity- and institution-building)

First, even when we extend humanitarian assistance, we have tried to incorporate capacity- and institution-building elements, so that our support addresses short-term needs and enables long-term sustainable impact.

One example is our support for blood transfusion service in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and WHO. JICA's assistance for the renovation of Juba College of Nursing and Midwifery (JCONAM), the vocational training at Multifunctional Training Centre (MTC) behind Juba Football Stadium, the training of Teacher Training Institute (TTI) tutors and teaching material development for science and mathematics education are all addressing immediate needs as well as promoting long-term development.

(Human security through community empowerment and protection)

Second, we have found that human security approach of community empowerment and protection is effective under the post-conflict environment.

Japan, together with Germany, Sweden and the United States, in collaboration with UNDP, FAO, WFP, and UNICEF, are starting a multi-partner recovery and stabilization program in Aweil. A package of agricultural training and seed provision, vocational training, market improvement, and basic service delivery will enhance self-reliance and consolidate stability of targeted communities in relatively peaceful areas. I am hopeful that this approach will be scaled up soon in other parts of the country.

(Providing infrastructure of network)

Third, our focus is on providing infrastructure of network, which enhances the efficiency of both immediate humanitarian operations and long-term economic activities.

I recall with fond memory the inauguration ceremony of Mingkaman riverport in April last year, which we donated in collaboration with UNOPS. I was greeted with full of cheers, which demonstrated the impact it had on the local community and beyond. River network in South Sudan has a great potential.

Our Engineering Contingent of UNMISS supported the improvement of

road network in and around Juba for years. For JICA's major work on Freedom Bridge, Juba water supply and Juba riverport projects, the improvement of the security situation as well as the upgrading of safety measures are still essential.

Japan also supports border control: immigration with IOM and customs through JICA. This provides security and efficiency for international flows of people, goods and services. I am glad to see immigration officers smoothly processing entry and exit of passengers at Juba International Airport. Nimule checkpoint must be getting similar benefit, supporting the critical gateway for the economy.

(Promoting peace and unity through sports)

Last but not least, JICA started a new project for peace and unity through sports just after I came here two years ago. This project which attracted nationwide attention was to support the resuscitation of the National Unity Day. JICA also supported South Sudan's very first participation in the Rio Olympics.

Some people asked whether promoting sports should be a priority when providing basic services is still a big challenge. Still, I was moved when I witnessed young South Sudanese from nine cities got together and march through Juba Football Stadium in January last year. The event was indeed a symbol of peace and unity. Even after the evacuation of Japanese JICA staff from Juba in July last year, the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports successfully organized the second National Unity Day this year in collaboration with South Sudanese JICA staff.

As a matter of fact, Japan started its National Sports Festival in 1946 just after the end of the Second World War for the purpose of giving hope and courage to the people. I learned from the success of this JICA support that, even during difficult times, cultural activities energize and unite the hearts and minds of the people.

(Importance of Public Financial Management)

Apart from Japan's distinct approaches to support, I must still raise the issue of current economic difficulties. The Government of South Sudan is

making commendable efforts in macroeconomic stabilization despite tremendous challenges. Given the insecurity in the country, the decrease of oil production and low oil prices, it may take some more time to turn the tide of the economy.

To make most of scarce resources available, it is so important to ensure transparency and improvement of Public Financial Management. This is particularly important if the Government of South Sudan needs any external financial support for macroeconomic stability in the future. I am hoping that the leadership of South Sudan will continue to fully support all the necessary economic reform efforts to keep the macroeconomic stability, which is so critical for maintaining peace in this country.

#### **4. Conclusion**

Japan was a developing country 150 years ago when it opened its door to the Western world. We were successful in surviving the period of imperialism but we challenged the international order, advanced the road to war, and devastated itself 72 years ago. After the war, we have achieved tremendous economic growth under the principle of international cooperation. We know the benefit of working with the international community, and we also know the disaster when we work against the international community.

Despite two major setbacks since independence six years ago, South Sudan still enjoys tremendous goodwill of the international community as testified by significant humanitarian assistance combined with continued presence of UNMISS. It is my sincere hope that the Government, opposition groups and the entire people of South Sudan value such international support and work together in solidarity to achieve peace, unity and development of the country.

(End)