Promoting Japan's National Interest in Africa: A Review of TICAD

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Abstract

The Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) was launched by Japan in October 1993. Five follow-up Conferences were held in 1998, 2003, 2008, 2013 and 2016 (TICAD II, III, IV, V, and VI). This article challenges the Japanese claim that the TICAD process is a mechanism for focusing global attention and mobilising international support for Africa. Rather, the TICAD process is seen as signifying a shift in Japan's policy towards Africa, hitherto defined within the context of the Washington Consensus. It is argued that, in the process, Japan is developing an African policy which is directed at serving its national interest.

Résumé

La Conférence internationale de Tokyo sur le développement de l'Afrique (TICAD) a été lancée par le Japon en octobre 1993. Cinq conférences de suivi ont eu lieu en 1998, 2003, 2008, 2013 et 2016 (TICAD II, III, IV, V, et VI). Cet article conteste l'affirmation japonaise selon laquelle le processus de la TICAD est un mécanisme permettant d'attirer l'attention du monde et de mobiliser le soutien international en faveur de l'Afrique. Le processus de la TICAD est plutôt perçu comme un changement dans la politique du Japon à l'égard de l'Afrique, définie jusqu'à présent dans le contexte du consensus de Washington. Ce faisant, le Japon élabore actuellement une politique africaine visant à servir ses intérêts nationaux.

Introduction

The Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) initiative was launched by the Japanese government in October 1993 as a forum for actualising a global partnership for African development in the

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post-Cold War period. It brings African countries and African development partners together in an atmosphere of mutual understanding to dialogue on promoting democracy, good governance and economic development in the continent. In planning TICAD, the Japanese government was aware of its limitation in dealing directly with issues affecting Africa and its peoples. It was also driven by a desire to organise a conference that is different in scope and emphasis from the usual donors' consultative conferences often organised by the OECD/DAC. This explains why the Japanese government sought the collaboration of the United Nations Office of the Special Coordinator for Africa and the Least Developed Countries (UN/OSCAL), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Bank and the Global Coalition for Africa (GCA) in organising the conference. In other words, Japan is seeking, through the TICAD process, to strengthen its bilateral relations with African countries using the instrumentality of a multilateral initiative aimed at promoting African development.

This article reviews the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) against the claim by the Japanese government that the process is an altruistic initiative based on African 'ownership and partnership' and aimed at demonstrating international commitment towards positive political reform and economic transformation in the continent (Koizumi in MFA 2003a). On the contrary, it is argued that Japan's engagement in Africa, through the instrumentality of TICAD, is aimed at promoting Japan's national interest in Africa in the post-Cold War period by seeking to serve its economic needs and the pursuit of international prestige.

TICAD and Japan's National Interest

In order to situate and understand Japan's motivation for launching the TICAD initiative, it is important to bear in mind that in their foreign policy pursuits, countries are first and foremost concerned with measures that will promote their national interest (Burchill 2007: 27–28). In the case of Japan, its major interest lies in securing its economic growth and prosperity. Therefore, in its relations with African states, Japanese efforts, through the TICAD process, are directed at seeking trade and investment opportunities and are focused on the search for procurement access to secure sources of supply for oil and other strategic mineral resources that are critical to its industrial production and economic survival. Japan's major instrument of international diplomacy in the pursuit and projection of its national interest in the global contest and competition for African raw materials and mineral resources is its overseas development assistance programme (Owoeye 1995:

39–49). Indeed, it is Tokyo's deliberate strategy to ensure substantial flow of its overseas development assistance especially towards resource rich African states (Ampiah 2005). This is in order to ensure guaranteed and secure supply access to these states' oil, gas and other natural resources.

Another national interest to which the TICAD initiative is directed at serving relates to Japan's long-term quest for international recognition and prestige. This is in fulfilment of a recommendation by the Maekewa Report[1] of April 1986 that Japan should use its economic superpower status and clout to gain global influence and prestige (Seeman 1986). Japan's drive towards achieving this objective is reflected in the quest for a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) (Burchill 2000). To be sure, Japan's desire to widen the scope of its activities within the UN by aspiring to become a permanent member of the UNSC with veto power was always an open secret (Ogata 1996: 231).[2] Since its first election onto the UNSC in 1958, two years after joining the UN in 1956 as the Asian regional representative, the country has served ten times[3] as a non-permanent member of the UNSC, conferring on it the status of the most permanent but non-permanent member of the Council.

However, in getting itself elected as a non-permanent member of the UNSC, Japan had always adopted a 'soft and laid-back diplomatic approach'; an approach that was sorely tested in October 1996 during the election of the UNSC non-permanent seat for the Asian region. In that election, Tokyo had to embark on an adroit diplomatic campaign, involving open and intense lobbying among the African states that constitute 25 per cent of the General Assembly, to defeat India by 142 votes to 40. Although Japan's victory was undoubtedly a diplomatic setback for India, which was last elected to the UNSC in 1990, this has not dampened Delhi's aspiration to be a non-permanent member of the UNSC in future (Mitra 1996). Subsequently, and in direct reaction to the Indian challenge, Japan was pushed towards raising its diplomatic profile in Africa in particular and the developing world in general as it began to project itself as a champion for the course of economic development in the developing world (Schraeder 2001: A143–49). The success of this strategy is aptly demonstrated in Japan's subsequent election onto the UNSC in 2004 and 2008. By and large, it is evident that the TICAD process is not an altruistic endeavour, but a diplomatic instrument consciously developed by Japan to serve its national interest. It confers certain influence and opportunities on Japan in its quest to protect itself against externally induced threats to its prosperity and wealth (Winter and Bremmer 2007: 6–7) by cultivating a positive image and diplomatic goodwill for itself in Africa.

The TICAD Conferences: An Overview

This first conference (TICAD I) was held in October 1993. The main objective of the conference, according to the Japanese government, was to demonstrate the solidarity and support of the international community for Africa. The conference was attended by more than 1,000 delegates from 48 African countries, 13 donor countries, ten international organisations, and about 45 observer countries and organisations. According to the then Foreign Minister, Tsutomu Hata, TICAD was convened with the aim of making positive contributions to Africa's political reform and democratisation process, as well as to provide assistance towards human resources development and economic reforms in the continent.[4]

The Tokyo Declaration on African Development was adopted at the end of the conference in which the African states pledged to strengthen the process of political and economic reform and affirmed their commitment towards democratisation, respect for human rights, good governance, with particular reference to transparency and accountability in public administration, human resources and social development, as well as economic diversification and liberalisation (MFA 1993). The African development partners at the conference, on the other hand, declared that sustainable economic growth can only be achieved in Africa through open, accountable and participatory political systems. They therefore tasked the African states to put in place the necessary reforms for the realisation of these objectives, promising to give priority support to countries that undertake effective and efficient political and economic reforms (*ibid.*).

The second conference (TICAD II) took place in October 1998 and was aimed at developing a blueprint for poverty reduction in Africa and for increased integration of the continent into the global economy. The conference was attended by official delegations from 49 African countries, including 13 Heads of State and Government, 11 Asian countries, 16 donor countries, as well as participants from the private sector, international and non-governmental organisations and civil society groups. At the end of the conference, the Tokyo Agenda was adopted which stressed the question of 'ownership and participation' by African countries in the continental development process (MFA 1998). It focused attention on policy co-ordination, regional integration, South–South (Asia–Africa) co-operation, and capacity building and identified areas of priority for enhancing African development in the twenty-first century. These are socio-economic and human capital development, the promotion of democracy and good governance, as well as the establishment of effective conflict prevention and conflict management mechanisms (*ibid.*).

The third conference (TICAD III), whose main objective was to mobilise international support for the newly inaugurated African initiative, the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD), was held from 29 September to 1 October 2003. TICAD III was the largest international gathering in the diplomatic history of Japan, attended by over 1,000 delegates from 89 countries, including 50 African countries and 47 regional and international governmental and non-governmental organisations (MFA 2004: 128–9). The conference reviewed the impact of the entire TICAD process on African development ten years after the adoption of the Tokyo Declaration on African Development in October 1993. The TICAD Tenth Anniversary Declaration adopted at the end of the Conference reaffirmed the role of the TICAD process in providing a coherent philosophy on African development, as well as in raising awareness among the international community towards African development and broadening international support leading up to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the G8 Africa Action Plan (MFA 2003b). It was also agreed at the end of the conference that, thenceforth, TICAD would stand on three pillars: consolidation of peace, human-centred development and poverty reduction through economic growth (*ibid.*).

Post-TICAD III Anxieties and Permutations

In the period after TICAD III, there developed some level of uncertainty about the future of the process, especially following the inauguration of NEPAD in October 2001. With the inauguration of NEPAD, which is aimed at promoting sustainable economic development, peace, stability and democracy in Africa, the expectation was that the African Union would progressively assume ownership and control of the continental developmental process (NEPAD 2001). Furthermore, the post-TICAD III period coincided with a time when Japan was facing economic stagnation which should have precluded the Japanese government from embarking on any 'diplomatic jamboree'. Conventional wisdom therefore suggests that Japan would allow the TICAD process to fizzle out so as not to provoke negative resentment towards Africa among its population which is often more insular in times of economic difficulty. But this was not to be as the top bureaucrats in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, convinced of the tangible diplomatic rewards that had accrued to Japan through the TICAD process, stepped in to persuade the government against jettisoning the process. The force of their argument convinced Prime Minister Koizumi to announce that Japan would organise TICAD IV in 2008 during the Africa-Asia Summit in Bandung, Indonesia in April 2005.

The interest and conviction of the Government of Japan in preserving the TICAD process is attributable to a number of factors. Perhaps the most crucial of these was the unflinching Japanese desire for a UNSC permanent seat and the continuing lack of consensus on the scope and nature of the UN reform process. It should be recalled that following the expansion of the Security Council from 11 members (five permanent and six non-permanent) to 15 members (five permanent and ten non-permanent) in 1965 to reflect increased membership of the UN and the new economic/regional power realities, there had always been talks of further expansion of the membership of the Security Council to 24 consisting of five permanent and 19 non-permanent members (Weiss *et al.* 1994: 93–4). However, all efforts at reorganising the UN and expanding the membership of the Security Council to reflect equitable and regional representation are yet to yield any tangible results. It was only in 1993 that the issue became a major agenda during the 48th Session of the General Assembly in the face of an urgent need to put in place a new international collective security system in the post-Cold War era. Since then, the issue of reforming the UN and expanding the Security Council has been bogged down and the General Assembly has been unable to reach definitive conclusion on the matter (Weiss *et al.* 2007: 95–129).

Closely related to this is the need for Japan to protect its pre-eminent diplomatic position of influence and economic interest in Africa in the face of the increasing and aggressive Chinese and Indian diplomatic offensive in the continent. Although not openly stated, Japan's announcement that TICAD IV would be held in 2008 must have been prompted, among other factors, by the Sino-African Summit in 2006 and the India-Africa Summit scheduled for 2008. Undoubtedly Japan correctly perceived the two proposed Summits as a strategic move by both China and India to enhance their diplomatic profile and promote their economic interest in Africa (Africa Confidential 2006; 2007). Acutely aware of the increasing global interest and competition for African resources and against the background reality that it can no longer continue to depend solely on the Asian region for the supply of critical mineral resources, Japan's preparedness to hold TICAD IV should be seen as a calculated diplomatic riposte, especially against China and India in Africa (Donnelly 2008a). It was Tokyo's calculation that hosting TICAD IV would not only present it with another opportunity to showcase its leadership position in promoting African development, but it would also provide it with an opportunity to develop new initiatives towards projecting its national interest in Africa through investment in infrastructural development.

TICAD IV with the theme 'Towards a Vibrant Africa: A Continent of Hope and Opportunity' was held in May 2008. It was attended by more that 3,000 participants with delegations from 51 African states, that included 41 Heads of State and Government, as well as by participants from 34 Asian, European and G8 countries, 74 international and regional organisations; representatives of the private sector, academic institutions and civil society groups from Africa and Asia. The hype and publicity of the conference gave Japan the opportunity to reinforce its position of influence in the continent with the announcement by Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda of the intention to double aid flows to Africa by 2012. This was aimed at boosting progress towards the attainment of the MDGs in the continent (MFA 2008c). Fukuda also announced that Japan Bank International Cooperation would establish a loan facility for the promotion of Japanese private investment in Africa. This is in addition to US$4 billion in 'yen loans' for infrastructural development in the continent. At the end of the conference, the 'Yokohama Declaration: towards a Vibrant Africa' was adopted. It spelled out specific efforts that Japan would undertake in Africa to boost economic growth, ensure human security and attain the MDGs' benchmarks, consolidation of peace and good governance, as well as addressing issues relating to the environment and climate change (MFA 2008c).

The Future of TICAD and Japan's Relations with Africa

As laudable as the TICAD process is, there are doubts as to the capability of Japan to sustain the process on a long-term basis and its ability to ensure the realisation of some of its goals. Perhaps the most difficult challenge confronting TICAD is maintaining, in real terms, the volume of Japan's net aid flow to Africa. Although Mochizuki *et al.* (2007) have argued that the volume of Japan's aid allocation to Africa increased by 370 per cent from 2002 to 2006, selected figures of Japan's aid allocation to the various regions of the world between 1990 and 2004 (Table 1) show that the overall average per cent of aid allocation to Africa between 1990 and 2004 remains fairly constant at 11.5 per cent. It was only in 2006 that Japan disbursed US$2.55 billion, or 34.2 per cent of its total aid budget of US$7.48 billion to Africa; superseding the aid allocation to Asia (26.8 %) for the first in the history of Japan's aid programme.5 However, hopes that the 2006 aid allocation level could be maintained were dashed because by 2007 Japan's total aid budget went down to US$5.77 billion, with a corresponding decrease in the volume of aid allocation to Africa which shrank to US$1.70 billion, amounting to 29.4 per cent of total aid budget.

Table 1: Geographical distribution of Japan's bilateral ODA (net disbursement) in million US$

Region/year	1990	% of ODA	1993	% of ODA	1995	% of ODA	1998	% of ODA	2001	% of ODA	2004	% of ODA	2006	% of ODA	2007	% of ODA
Asia	4117	59.3	4861	59.5	5745	54.4	5372	62.4	4220	56.6	2544	42.7	2002	26.8	1634	28.3
Middle East	705	10.2	522	6.4	721	6.8	392	4.6	287	3.9	1030	17.3	1049	14.0	948	16.4
Africa	792	11.4	966	11.8	1333	12.6	950	11.0	851	11.4	646	10.9	2558	34.2	1700	29.4
Latin America	561	8.1	737	9.0	1142	10.8	552	6.4	738	9.9	309	5.2	431	5.8	226	3.9
Oceania	114	1.6	138	1.7	160	1.5	147	1.7	101	1.4	42	0.7	76	1.0	70	1.2
Europe	158	2.3	124	1.5	153	1.5	143	1.7	116	1.6	140	2.4	220	2.9	48	0.8
Unclassified	494	7.1	816	10.0	1303	12.3	1048	12.2	1137	15.3	1239	20.8	1146	15.3	1152	20.0
Total	6940	100	8164	100	10557	100	8604	100	7452	100	5954	100	7482	100	5778	100

Source: Japan's Official Development Assistance Annual Reports 1990–2007 (Tokyo, APIC)

In spite of the promise made by Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda in his opening speech at TICAD IV that Japan would double its aid flow to Africa by 2012 (MFA 2008b), the volume of Japan's aid to Africa may actually not see any upward movement in the coming years. The worsening Japanese economic situation had thrown the country into its worst economic crisis in decades[5] leading to further reductions in the aid budgets for 2008 and 2009.[6] The signs of increased aid flow to Africa is therefore not encouraging, especially when it is considered that economic downturn often makes increased expenditure on development assistance very unpopular amongst the Japanese. Although the Japanese government was able to somewhat raise the volume of aid flow to Africa in the 1990s, the Japanese population would have certainly opposed such increases if they were aware of the amount involved. With a shrinking current account surplus, rising level of unemployment, declining trade and investment opportunities and an aging population, it is sheer *Senden gaiko*, or public relations diplomacy, for the Japanese government to promise any increase in the level of aid flow to Africa in the near future.

Another challenge confronting TICAD, as noted by President John Kufour of Ghana in October 2003, is the lack of a concrete institutional structure and machinery for managing the process. In spite of the promise made by Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi that Japan will institutionalise TICAD as a means of strengthening its follow-up mechanisms and making it more dynamic (MFA 2003a), it is intriguing to note that this issue was not addressed in the ODA Implementation Reform of August 2006 that was designed to strengthen MFA's ability in planning and implementation of the ODA policy (MFA 2007: 5). While the reform made some structural reorganisation in MFA with the establishment of the International Cooperation Bureau to take charge of bilateral and multilateral economic cooperation activities, no institution or agency was directly saddled with the responsibility of managing the TICAD process or for monitoring progress towards the attainment of the set developmental targets in the various action plans. This means that the management of the TICAD process will continue to reside with the Directorate General for Sub–Sahara African Affairs in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which is grossly understaffed and has no expert on African affairs among its senior staff.[7] Several African Heads of State observed this development, prompting them to call for the establishment of concrete monitoring mechanisms for the TICAD process during TICAD IV in May 2008 (MFA 2008d).

Another question mark on the future of TICAD is Japan's lack of adequate personnel with administrative capability and knowledge of Africa's political and socio-economic conditions. In spite of the best efforts of the Japanese government to develop a domestic interest in African affairs, ordinary Japanese people, who are inherently isolationist in disposition, are even more so with regard to Africa. In fact, less than 10 per cent of the population seems to understand issues relating to the continent (Sato 1994: 105; Morikawa 1997: 206). They not only consider the continent to be far away and for there to be no compelling reason to study and understand the continent, they are very reluctant to engage in cooperative activities with African people (Eyinla 1999a: 42; 2005). This means that there are very few Japanese with adequate knowledge and direct experience in Africa; a requirement for the effective implementation and evaluation of aid projects. This explains why Japan often relies and continues to rely mostly on the Specialized Agencies of the UN to execute its development aid projects in many African states (Yamaza and Hirata 1992). It is commendable that the country's aid implementation agency, the Japan International Co-operation Agency (JICA), has progressively improved its presence and capacity in Africa by increasing its staff strength from a total of 330 in 1990 to 628 in 2007 (JICA 2007). These staff have also been able to acquire some capability in project cycle management, especially in areas of providing basic education, health and medical care delivery, water resources management, agricultural and infrastructural development and environmental protection.

However, when JICA is compared with the aid implementing agencies of Britain (DfID), France (CFD), Canada (CIDA) the United States (USAID) and those of the Scandinavian countries (NORAD, SIDA and DANIDA) it is evident that its reach and scope of activities remain limited indeed. In spite of the increasing numbers of university students that are now showing interest in African Studies and the growing number of Japanese Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCV) present in the continent, there is still a dearth of young and energetic Japanese experts to meet the challenges of JICA's operations in Africa. The scenario painted by Tokyo within the context of TICAD is that it seems contented with providing the money for project implementation without adequate Japanese manpower to drive and oversee the process. This contrasts sharply with the level of personnel, latitude and efficiency that the US, Canada and the Scandinavian countries have attained in the implementation and monitoring of their aid programme in Africa. In short then, Japan is ready to drop the moneybag and run away, as if to say, 'well, Africa needs money for development, here is our own share of the money, but look elsewhere for the personnel to spend the money' (Sesay 2000: 41).

This issue of suitable personnel becomes even more critical when it is considered that apart from its traditional responsibility for implementing all tasks relating to technical cooperation, the August 2006 ODA implementation reform further saddled JICA with the administration of grant aid and yen loans (MFA 2007: 5). JICA's continued lack of human resources and expertise on Africa will definitely hinder its capability to discharge these responsibilities in a timely and efficient manner. This means that Japan will, in the foreseeable future, continue to rely on the instrumentality of UN Specialized Agencies such as UNDP, UNIDO and WHO, the know-how of Britain and France, as well as on the dispatch of third country experts from other Asian countries to execute many of the proposed assistance programmes in the TICAD initiative. Such practice provides loopholes for mismanagement and misapplication of funds through unethical practices, corruption and waste and drives up the cost of project appraisal and implementation. The continuous availability of funds from Tokyo and the sustainability of such project are then circumscribed by the extent to which the implementing agency is effective and accountable in utilising allocated resources.

Another issue confronting the TICAD process is its emphasis on the assumed capacity of African states to rise above the limits and constraints of their development capacity, as well as the ability of donors to overcome the problem of cooperation and coordination to meet set targets. Apart from the wide differences in the level of political stability and socio-economic development among African states, their ability to mobilise enough internal financial and human resources to meet the fundamental demand of the TICAD process is rather doubtful. The lack of adequate infrastructural facilities and low aid absorptive capacity in many African states therefore poses a serious challenge to the attainment of set targets.

On the issue of donors' cooperation and coordination, Olsen (2005: 134–6) has demonstrated how difficult and problematic this can be in Africa within the context of the European Union's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). Although, there is an increasing level of collaboration between Japan, and other donor countries and international organisations in executing certain projects in specific African states, this has not resulted in an increased level of aid policy coordination among donors. Thus, in spite of the pledges by Africa's development partners to fulfil their side of the bargain set out in the TICAD action plans, mobilising necessary resources to pursue some of the institutional and capacity building initiatives in the TICAD process may not be forthcoming from African development partners in the near future. Apart from this, there is also the question of the

trend towards the emergent triple core/multi-polar global system conferring spheres of influence on regional hegemons. The evolution of this trajectory will restrict Japan's sphere of influence to the Asian region, while Africa will come under the sphere of influence of Western Europe and the influence of the US will be limited to Latin America. The notion of mutual exclusivity in each other's sphere of influence will mean that Japan could be cut off from Africa and denied access to its huge resources. Perhaps it is to preclude such developments and to consolidate its influence and position in Africa that Japan has been trying, albeit in a subtle and low-profile manner, to encourage African states to adopt the Asian model of development strategy of poverty reduction through economic production, among other measures.

In assessing the future of the TICAD process it is very important to point out that Africa is not short of bold and strategic socio-economic conjectures that are based on optimistic assumptions for promoting continental development (UNECA 2008). Such documents include the Lagos Plan of Action of 1982, the African Alternative Framework to Structural Adjustment Programme for Socio-Economic Recovery and Transformation of 1989, the Protocol for the Establishment of Africa Economic Community of 1991 and NEPAD of 2001. Several attempts are being made to organise the continent into viable regional economic groupings and free trade zones as a way of optimising the continent's economic potential. What is particularly sad is that none of the documents on Africa's economic integration ever went beyond the realm of theoretical abstraction after the signature ceremony. It remains to be seen if the optimistic assumptions of the TICAD process will become a reality or fizzle out to become another failed project, bogged down in theory and politics and another missed opportunity for real socio-economic development in Africa. By and large, in spite of its seeming altruistic intentions, it is a fact that the TICAD process is Japan's main instrument for cultivating the goodwill that is necessary to ensure the support of African states in its bid to secure access to raw materials, expand its overseas market and investment opportunities and to actualise its global political/diplomatic objectives.

Conclusion

As a new initiative on African development that is strategic and action oriented, the TICAD process has become the centre-piece of Afro-Japanese relations in the last 26 years. Over this period, the Japanese government has convened four TICAD Conferences (1993, 1998, 2003 and 2008), and disbursed close to US$15 billion in development assistance to Africa which is an indication of its commitment to the process and the demonstration of its place and

position as an important development partner and donor of consequence to Africa. It is also an affirmation of Tokyo's continued preparedness to assert its agenda-setting position in leading the international community to meet the developmental challenges of Africa in the twenty-first century. An indication to this effect was given by Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori during his visit to Kenya, Nigeria and South Africa in January 2001. According to Mori, there can be no stability and prosperity in the world unless the problems of Africa are addressed and resolved. He also acknowledged that the challenge of attaining some of the laudable objectives in the TICAD process will test the merits of Japan's foreign policy (Mori 2001).[8]

Nevertheless, a review of the TICAD process shows that it is an important instrument for the pursuit of Japan's national interest in Africa. It is being used to promote Japan's long-term national economic interest and in its quest for an international role and prestige. Even in the face of economic stagnation and decline, Japan has found it useful to continue promoting the process in order to meet the challenge and increasing competition with the US, the European Union, China and India for a share in Africa's market potential and access to raw material resources (Donnelly 2008b). This was aptly demonstrated at the end of TICAD IV when Japan announced that it would embark on the implementation of measures that are directed at promoting the activities of Japanese private companies in Africa. Such measures, which are aimed at doubling Japanese private investment in Africa through a public-private collaborative activity, include the reinforcement of trade insurance and guaranteed financing of US$2.5 million to private investors in Africa over a period of five years (MFA 2008d).

While it is arguable whether the TICAD process as a whole can spur other development partners to come together and make genuine efforts at building global support for Africa's development, there is no doubt that through the TICAD process, Japan has been able to establish for itself a leadership and an agenda-setting position in assisting Africa to overcome some of its developmental challenges. It has achieved this by projecting the TICAD process as an important forum for promoting a collaborative and integrative global approach for the evolution of a multilateral framework for resolving some of these developmental problems. In pursuing this objective, it is important for Japan to put in place adequate measures to ensure that the TICAD initiative is well established and imbued with adequate institutional structures and carrying capacity. To be sure, one of the greatest issues that will continue to challenge the TICAD process is the ability of Japan, as well as African states and other African development partners, to muster sufficient political will and economic resources to attain some of TICAD's

modest goals. The failure of Japan to meet this challenge will bring into question the whole essence and credibility of the TICAD process. Then it will amount to no more than a crude public relations gimmick by Japan to advance its national interest within an international political economy characterised by dramatic changes unleashed by the forces of globalisation.

Notes

1. The report, named after the Chairman and former Governor of the Bank of Japan, was to respond to Japan's ballooning trade and current account surpluses and resulting economic friction with the United States.
2. The quest by Germany and Japan for a permanent UNSC seat is underlined by their status as economic superpowers in comparison to Britain and France whose global political and economic influence has diminished, but continues to be permanent members of Security Council with veto power.
3. These are 1958–59, 1966–67, 1971–72, 1975–76, 1981–82, 1987–88, 1992–93, 1997–98, 2005–06 and 2009–10.
4. *The Japan Times* (Tokyo), 4 October 1993.
5. In 1994 Japan's GDP accounted for 17 per cent of the world's total. By 2007, this share had fallen to 8.1 per cent.
6. Japan's ODA General Account Budget, http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/oda/budget/2008-3.pdf.
7. Interview with Professor Eisei Kurimoto (Director, Global Collaboration Centre of the University of Osaka), Johannesburg, October 2008.
8. It is noteworthy that Japan has committed huge resources in grant aid, technical assistance and debt forgiveness in the post-TICAD period as part of its contribution to the attainment of these objectives.

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