

Where next for TICAD: Building lasting partnerships

By Fletcher Tembo

This is an historic year for Japanese and African cooperation. Japan will be chairing both the Fourth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD IV) in May and the G8 Summit in July. It is a unique chance for African development to benefit from the strengths of both meetings.

These events serve two complementary audiences, with Japan acting as an important intermediary. For TICAD IV, more than 50 leaders from African countries have been invited, while the G8 is an important mechanism for coordinating actions between some of the largest donor countries. Each meeting also works toward related but very different outcomes. Agreements from TICAD tend to add the necessary qualitative depth not always found in the high-level agreements of the G8.

ODI has been exploring and engaging various stakeholders in 2008 through a series of Japan–Africa dialogues, drawing together academics, politicians, civil society and the private sector to discuss the complex relationship between Japan and Africa. ODI is also supporting a group of Southern think tanks and civil society organisations (CSOs) through the Evidence Based Policy in Development Network (ebpdn), which is using research-based evidence to influence Japanese aid policies in the context of the 2008 G8.

This background note synthesises the main issues emerging from these initiatives and draws on evidence from literature to emphasise the important role that TICAD plays in allowing greater African ownership in the development process and mobilising strategic partnerships with Africa from the international community. It then discusses how these core values could provide the driving force behind the policy positions that TICAD IV will develop along its key pillars of ‘Boosting Economic Growth’, ‘Ensuring Human

Security’ and ‘Addressing Environmental Issues/Climate change’. The note ends with suggestions on how the TICAD process could evolve into a more robust mechanism for continuous partnership.

Africa in 2008

Entering 2008, there were many reasons to be optimistic for African development in terms of economic growth and better governance. In general, African countries are experiencing record broad-based economic growth, at a rate of more than 5% and above (The Economist, 2008) for 25 countries in the past four years (APF, 2008a). This is linked to the high prices of commodities (the so-called ‘commodity boom’), increased access to services (te Velde, 2008) and increasing domestic consumption. As Norbrook suggests, ‘the growth of internal markets has created new opportunities for local non-commodity companies to spread their wings’ (Norbrook, 2008).

In terms of governance, Africa adopted the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) in 2003, with 25 countries signing up for review. More recently, the 2007 Potsdam G8 Action Plan for Good Financial Governance in Africa was also agreed, comprising ten action areas to support reform of public finance systems and facilitate increased aid flows to Africa. These developments, alongside the leadership from the African Union and the Regional Economic Communities, reflect progress. However, significant governance challenges remain.

At the same time, Africa faces new global challenges such as climate change and rising food and oil prices. In terms of food prices, it is clear that net food importers – which includes most sub-Saharan African countries – will struggle to meet domestic food demand and that the poorest people will be the most affected (von Braun, 2008; Wiggins and Levy, 2008). The combined effects of rising oil and food

prices threaten African gains in economic growth and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (Kaberuka, 2008). TICAD IV and the G8 must, therefore, factor these new challenges in to any meaningful framework for African progress.

Japan and Africa

Japan is a major donor to Africa, as shown in the 2006 figures for Japanese official development assistance (ODA) (see Figure 1).

Within Africa, Japanese aid goes to most of sub-Saharan Africa. In 2006, Japan contributed more than \$2.6 billion to Africa, according to the OECD (2008) (see Figure 2 for geographic distribution). Leaving aside the dollar amount, Japan’s long-term support for Africa gives it authority and credibility in taking the TICAD process forward.

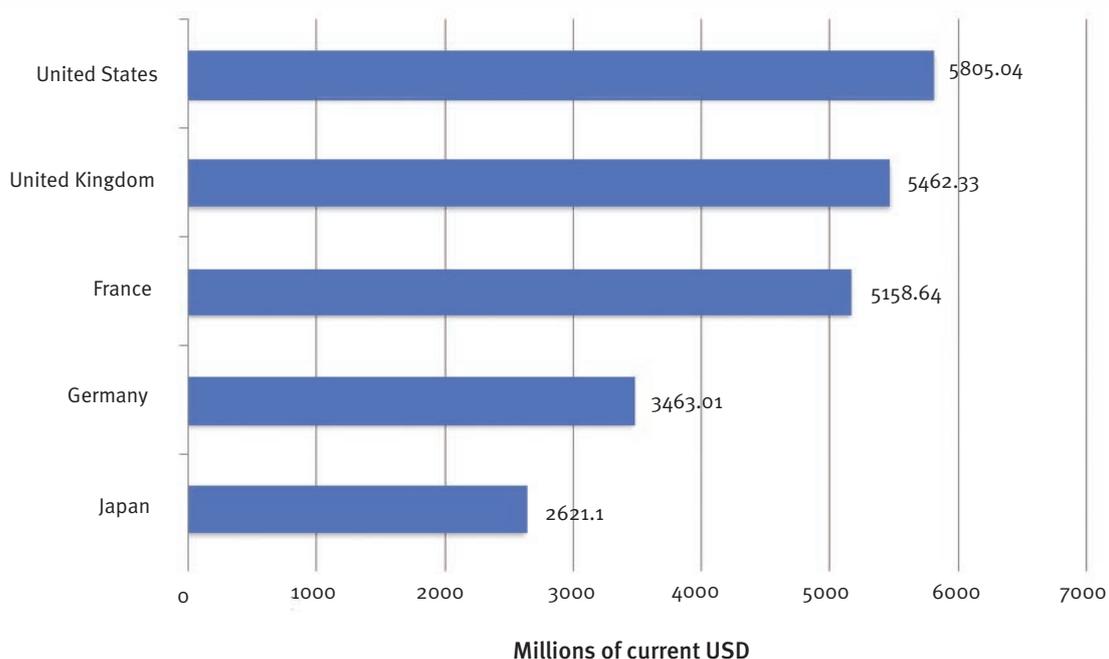
A large proportion of Japanese aid to Africa goes to infrastructure (e.g. road networks, electricity, telecommunications), water supply, health, food production, emergency relief, grassroots human security projects, education, support to Japanese NGOs and debt relief. Some assistance takes the form of technical cooperation or development studies. Japanese ODA is generally characterised by its high ratio of concessionary loans (in relation to grants), through which it mobilises a large share of its bilateral aid to developing countries. As demonstrated in Vietnam,

where Japan has committed total cumulative loans of ¥1152.86 billion (one yen is equivalent to just under one US cent) to date, large resources can be very effective in promoting broad-based growth when combined with a good country-owned growth strategy (JBIC, 2007; Ohno, 2007). Given this history and experience of development – one based on strong ownership (Ohno, 2005) – Japan is in a position to add value in this critical area of African development through the TICAD process. While the process has moved in this direction, it has yet to achieve its potential to provide the depth of ownership needed to create a sustainable ‘Vibrant Africa’.

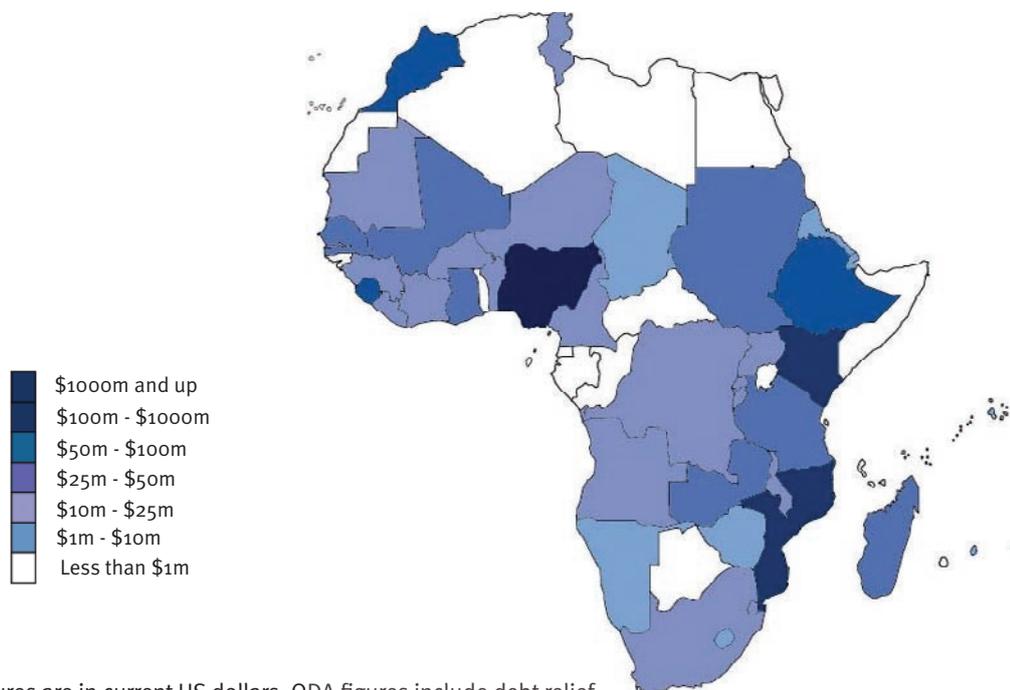
Ownership and partnership in the TICAD process

The TICAD process has sought to bring African development to the attention of both Japan and the wider international community, including governments, businesses and civil society. It has taken a four-pronged approach: promoting values of self-reliance and ownership of development within Africa; projecting a positive image of Africa’s progress to the external world; promoting South–South Cooperation between Asia and Africa; and mobilising the international community to partner with Africa. This has contributed to the emergence of the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD), whose philosophical princi-

Figure 1: Top five donors to Africa in 2006 by net ODA*



*These figures include debt relief.
Source: OECD (2008)

Figure 2: Japanese net ODA to African countries in 2006

* These figures are in current US dollars. ODA figures include debt relief.
Source: OECD (2008)

ples resemble those of TICAD II, and programmatic initiatives such as New Rice for Africa (NERICA) and One Village One Product. According to JICA and Mitsubishi (2007), the mobilisation of the international community through TICAD has helped to reverse negative trends in Africa, and the G8 meetings have followed suit. TICAD has also influenced international agreements that benefit Africa, such as the Global Health Fund, MDG targets and the OECD-DAC focus on aid quality (ibid, 2007).

'Ownership' is at the heart of the Japanese approach to working with developing countries, and can be seen in the notion of 'supporting self-help efforts' emphasised in TICAD. Here, TICAD makes a significant contribution to the OECD articulation of the ownership concept reflected in the Paris Declaration (ibid, 2007). In fact, according to Sunaga (2004), 'while [self-help efforts share] ... much in common with what the donor community advocates as ownership', the Japanese concept connotes broader action, largely because it stems from Japan's own reconstruction experience after World War II.

Japan's approach to ownership in its own economic development stressed graduation from aid and selective adaptation of external advice to the Japanese context (Ohno, 2006). In this way, Japan dealt with ongoing global processes without losing its grip on the direction of its own policies. In other words, Japan did not take external advice as a whole, but only where it was a

good fit with the goals and practices defined by Japan itself. Whereas elements of this approach are visible in some of the Asian countries that Japan has supported, such as Vietnam, the general weakness of country ownership in aid to Africa is evident, for example, in the quality of Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs). African countries largely replaced their national planning frameworks with PRSPs as a framework for development to qualify for debt relief. However, this resulted in many countries becoming more accountable to donors than to their own country processes and citizens (World Bank, 2005). More national-led plans on economic growth for poverty reduction are emerging in Africa in the form of second or third generation PRSPs, but with different labels. It is important that they emerge from the country's own strategy as defined by its society and culture, an approach promoted by Japan within its ownership approach.

The TICAD process needs to address the untapped potential of CSOs for policy innovation and experimentation in African countries. Japan has not emphasised the role of civil society in its ODA policy-making or implementation, despite alluding to it in the ODA Charter (Akiyama and Nakao, 2005), nor has the TICAD process itself. The TICAD Civil Society Forum (TCSF) was created to carry the voices of civil society and African grassroots movements to Japanese citizens and policy-makers and some TICAD IV preparations, as shown in reports from regional consultations meet-

ings conducted in Gabon, Tunisia and Zambia, have included such voices. These processes, however, have not been mainstreamed in African civil society institutions.

The history of TICAD

The first TICAD meeting in 1993 emerged after the Cold War as a response to ‘aid fatigue’, when assistance to Africa was waning, and contributed to re-focusing and re-energising donor countries’ interest in African development.

The TICAD process also influenced the adoption of the goals at the 2000 UN Millennium Summit, following the Tokyo Agenda for Action of TICAD II. MDGs have become a key framework in Africa’s country development plans, and they clearly relate to the MDGs as shown in Box 1 below. However, there has been no appropriate mechanism to monitor progress towards these goals on the part of the TICAD process.

The TICAD process has also been instrumental in building business partnerships, enabling South–South learning on critical issues such as public–private partnerships and linking Asian and African business enterprises. One significant TICAD initiative was the Asia–Africa Trade and Investment Conference in 2004, where outcomes included: a) formulation of an appropriate policy for industry promotion, b) product development based on comparative advantage, c) empowerment of small and medium enterprises, and d) promotion of social contribution by private enterprises. Other fora under the auspices of the TICAD process include the Asia Africa Forum, the Africa Asia Business Forum (AABF), the Asia Africa Investment and Technology Promotion Project, the TICAD Exchange Network and the Japan–France–Malaysia Trilateral Cooperation (JICA and Mitsubishi, 2007). These have had significant influence on Asia–Africa relations. For example, the Asia–Africa Business Forum (AABF) held in Tanzania resulted in 118

Memoranda of Understanding, pledging deals worth around \$156 million. The key challenge, however, has been lack of a proper communication and monitoring mechanism on the part of both Africa and Japan.

Japan has also facilitated South–South partnership between Asian and African countries. For example, the Triangle of Hope (TOH) programme is designed to enable Malaysia to share its experience of industrialisation with Zambia (Jegathesan and Ohno, 2008). In addition, the One Village One Product scheme is based on lessons from Japan and other Asian countries (such as Thailand) on how to add value at the community level (Kurokawa et al., 2008).

Finally, there are growing partnerships between countries in Africa and the emerging economies of China and India. These include agreements with China (Moyo, 2007) and the new India–Africa partnership, established under the ‘Delhi Declaration’, and the ‘Africa–India Framework of Co-operation’ in April 2008. These could be seen as part of the South–South partnerships facilitated by TICAD (JICA and Mitsubishi, 2007), but their influence on Africa’s ownership of its development path is unclear.

The TICAD process has also been fundamental in profiling African issues at the G8 meetings. It was at the Japan G8 in Okinawa in 2000 that Africa leaders (South Africa, Nigeria and Algeria) first attended, leading to the adoption of the G8 Africa Action Plan in 2002. Africa has remained on the G8 agenda, leading to some of the major G8 Summit decisions around debt relief and the creation of the Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

TICAD IV: An opportunity for ownership and partnership

TICAD IV is a chance to revisit the practical application and value of ownership and partnership in enhancing the agenda: ‘Towards a Vibrant Africa’. It

Box 1: Numerical goals in the Tokyo Agenda for Action

1. By 2005, ensure that at least 80% of children complete primary education, with universal primary education by 2015.
2. By 2005, reduce adult illiteracy to half of the 1990 level, emphasising improvements in female literacy.
3. Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education by 2005.
4. By 2005, reduce maternal mortality to half of the 1990 level, and half again by 2015.
5. By 2015, reduce the mortality rate for infants and children under the age of five years to one-third of the 1990 level.
6. By 2005, provide access to safe water supply and sanitation for at least 80% of the population.
7. By 2015, reduce by half the number of people who are malnourished.
8. By 2015, reduce by at least two-thirds the number of women living in poverty.

Source: JICA and Mitsubishi (2007, p.33)

has three overarching objectives: boosting economic growth; ensuring human security; and addressing environment and climate change issues. Following these three general themes, at the ODI event in March – ‘Africa in the driver’s seat: The TICAD process and the road to the G8 Hokkaido Toyako Summit’ – Ambassador Odano enumerated seven priorities for Japanese cooperation in Africa: regional infrastructure in road and power networks; ODA to trigger private investment; support for agriculture and rural village development; tackling infectious diseases and promoting maternal, new-born and child health and related human resources; achieving Education for All (EFA) and promoting education linked to growth and self-sustainability; improving access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation; and supporting the consolidation of peace. The following sections examine these priorities and how they can be strengthened through deeper ownership and partnership.

Boosting economic growth

Generating growth through infrastructure, and using ODA to stimulate private investment and promote assistance for agriculture and rural villages, requires African ownership of the related strategies. As pointed out, Japan’s contribution to the growth of Asian economies was through infrastructure funded by loans. However the distinctive feature of these loans, which supported greater ownership by such countries as Vietnam, was their long-term nature (up to 40 years). Following the Heavily Indebted Poorest Country (HIPC) programme, Japan has favoured grants over loans in Africa. These grants, however, have tended to be small, short-term and unpredictable, even within the year they are provided, and countries may be unwilling to use them for long-term investments (Tembo, 2007). Although further research-based evidence is required, long-term grants could provide the guaranteed investment needed for long-term development, without risking a future debt-burden (Morrissey and M’Amanja, 2007). This would allow African countries greater ownership and control over their own investment and development strategies.

As outlined in the TICAD IV agenda, one strategic area of focus for ODA investment is infrastructure to stimulate pro-poor growth through increased regional trading. The Japan–Asia experience of regional trading is characterised by the ‘Flying Geese’ phenomena (Ohno, 2008), with each country under pressure from other countries moving ahead, motivating them to link up their different levels of industrialisation, from the garment industry at the bottom to the car industry at the top. However, this has not happened in Africa, even in the context of the EU-supported Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) (Souare,

2007). From an ownership perspective, Africa needs to understand and define its own trade and market logic, which other countries can then support. Africa’s regional economic communities must be part of this logic if they are to deliver value to African countries at different levels of development. This is not to say that Africa should copy Asia, but it could and should use the TICAD framework to define and promote its own market logic, with infrastructural development as a critical component.

Promoting agriculture in the TICAD framework can contribute to overall economic growth, as most of Africa’s poor live and work in rural areas. Effective agriculture creates the demand for non-agricultural goods and services and reduces overall poverty. NEPAD (2008) research, however, shows that investments in agriculture have been low and that many African governments have not yet fulfilled their Maputo pledge to allocate 10% of their national budgets to agriculture by 2008. This suggests that, while agriculture is an important area for TICAD IV, there is a need for TICAD to articulate how African countries could prioritise agriculture initiatives. Innovative programmes, such as NERICA, should be supported by the international community with the TICAD framework playing a critical information sharing and coordination role.

Japan has undertaken to use TICAD IV to promote rural village development through the ‘One Village One Product’ (OVOP) movement. Through OVOP, Japan provides assistance to improve production techniques, organising and training people to produce high-quality local products in rural African villages. The value added through technology leads to greater marketability of village products and higher incomes for local people. OVOP is linked to the local government structure, with the President of Malawi on the national committee (Gwaza and Kumbatira, 2008). This secures political will at the highest level – a significant step towards country ownership. More empirical studies are, however, required to ascertain the economic significance of the OVOP as an approach to enhancing private sector development in Africa (Kurokawa et al., 2008).

Human Security: Water, education and health

2008 marks a milestone in the push for the MDGs, after wide recognition that the world is not on track to meet the goals, as of the MDG midpoint in 2007. Japan intends to focus on health, water, and education at the G8 Summit from the perspective of human security, drawing on its successful experience in addressing infectious diseases in the TICAD process. This year, Japan aims to add safe motherhood, child health and human resources for health services to its list of initiatives. This is important for sub-Saharan

Africa where, despite some progress on child survival, little progress has been made on maternal mortality.

Prime Minister Fukuda's proposed framework for action to raise the overall level of health care systems with the participation of all relevant stakeholders is significant for mainstreaming ownership on human security issues in TICAD. These stakeholders include international organisations and health policy experts, CSOs and private sector entities. For Southern civil society and think tanks to actively participate in these sectors, however, they need support through appropriate and flexible mechanisms. The TICAD framework would provide a mechanism to articulate these spaces for participation at policy and implementation levels, leveraging country-level spaces for civil society and private sector participation in sustainable human security.

Environment and Climate change

Japan's 'Cool Earth 50' initiative aims to halve the country's greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 and it has pledged support to developing countries through technological competence for mitigation and adaptation. The three parts of Japan's approach to the environment and climate change are: post-Kyoto framework; international environment cooperation; and innovation. Each is linked to a financial commitment such as the Cool Earth Partnership, which commits \$10 billion to help developing countries reduce greenhouse emissions, and the proposal to invest \$30 billion through the 'Innovation' initiative for technologies.

For its part, Africa contributes less than 4% of total global greenhouse gas emissions but is the region most vulnerable to its effects, including reduced agricultural production, increased flooding and drought, and the spread of disease (APFSU, 2007; APF, 2008b). The focus within Africa, therefore, is to mainstream adaptation in national planning and get external support for risk management, while the continent contributes to clean energy development. A recent ODI Opinion paper on climate change argues that mitigation policies could have as bad an impact on the poor as climate change itself, if not carefully managed (Prowse and Peskett, 2008). An understanding of the true impact of climate change policies on Africa's poor requires greater involvement of African think tanks and citizens, rather than just the G8 countries. Support to such think tanks would represent support for African ownership, paving the way for international financial support.

A TICAD mechanism for continuous partnership

TICAD is held every five years and is interspersed with thematic ministerial and Asia–Africa business meetings. At the 2008 World Economic Forum in Davos,

Prime Minister Fukuda called for a different approach:

'The time has now come for TICAD to make a significant leap forward. In order for our ideas not to end up as failed dreams of what might have been, and in order for us to effectively take up mid- and long-term issues for five or ten years into the future, it is necessary to have a mechanism by which our eyes can stay wide open at all times. One of the tasks that the upcoming TICAD must take on is hammering out just such a mechanism.'

A mechanism that would hold the attention of many actors on a permanent basis must be robust, focused and engaging. It would have to focus on: periodic reviews and synthesis of how African ideas are identified and supported within the TICAD process; the practical, programmatic application of TICAD and G8 commitments; transparency and accountability of the TICAD process to wider stakeholders; and monitoring African partnerships with other regions in terms of their modalities and implications for Africa ownership.

Such a mechanism would help the TICAD process achieve some key objectives. It could, for example, facilitate or support the translation of new PRSPs into comprehensive strategies that: chart a course for aid graduation; show strong donor management and national control of policy content; support creativity on African ideas around agriculture; and encourage public–private relationships in delivering services (Ohno, 2005). These would enable the ownership thinking, promoted by TICAD at regional level through the AU-NEPAD mechanism, to become a reality at national and grassroots levels, creating a proper nexus between bottom up and top down development plans.

The mechanism could help define a Regional Economic Community's market logic, founded on strong national areas of comparative advantage and drawing on locally produced commodities, as in Japan's One Village One Product approach. This is crucial for prioritising the infrastructure needed to link Africa's grassroots, national and regional growth capacities.

The mechanism could also strengthen engagement with CSOs in TICAD and national processes and programmes. Most CSOs work directly with poor people on specific projects, and working more closely with CSOs could unleash their potential. Donors such as DFID are exploring ways to support CSOs as a form of investment in democratic ownership and accountability (Tembo and Wells, 2007). Japan could use the TICAD framework to champion working with CSOs in policy innovation around specific sectors, with actors ranging from communities to policy-makers, especially in education and health where Japan already works with many developing country governments.

TICAD-supported processes, such as the Civic Commission for Africa, could be built into a stronger Economic and Social and Cultural Council, a unique provision for African civil society input into the African Union that has, until now, lacked an effective voice (World Vision, 2005).

Several Asia–Africa partnerships are emerging, with no evidence on how TICAD influences their impact on Africa. The G8 has accommodated India and China as part of the G8 plus outreach, which is useful for managing the global influences of these emerging economies, but lacks the depth of focus required to manage their influence on Africa. An effective TICAD mechanism would ensure that African-owned frameworks and policies are promoted within such partnerships.

What would the mechanism look like?

Most existing mechanisms have tended to rely on accountability in general, and mutual accountability in particular. The G8, for example, launched the Africa Partnership Forum (APF) in November 2003 in the wake of the Evian G8 Summit, broadening the existing high-level G8/NEPAD dialogue to include Africa’s major development partners. The APF aims to strengthen partnership efforts for African development and is a key forum at a senior political level for discussing and monitoring policy issues, strategies and priorities. Its members (African Union, G8, OECD and other development partners) work as equals and ensure synergies and coherence with other international fora. It meets twice a year and is co-chaired on an alternating basis by representatives of the African Union and by OECD member countries. As an accountability mechanism, its core task is to monitor how commitments are taken forward and establish outcomes against which progress can be tracked. In its assessment work, the APF highlights lessons learned and identifies priorities for action, as well as responsibilities for implementation.

Similar mechanisms include the Africa Progress Panel (established in 2006 by former UK Prime Minister Tony Blair to monitor delivery on commitments by world leaders); the African Monitor (launched in 2006 to monitor international funding commitments and their impact at grassroots level) and the Strategic Partnership for Africa (established in 1987 as an informal group of donors and their African government counterparts to raise new resources and monitor commitments). A review by Droop et al (2008) of these mechanisms across a scale of ‘evidence’, ‘ownership’, ‘debate’ and ‘behavioural change’, shows that few facilitate behavioural change among stakeholders, even when the quality of debate and evidence within the forum is high. Some, such as the Africa Progress

Panel and Africa Partnership Forum score well on the ‘ownership scale’. However, these measures tend to focus on North–South representation, especially of committee leaders. This method does not address all the issues around ownership discussed in this paper.

A TICAD mechanism would, therefore, have to address these shortcomings and find its niche to avoid becoming just another addition to the long menu of systems for working with Africa. While existing mechanisms are driven by the premise of partnership and accountability, the TICAD mechanism must aim to deepen ownership within Africa and facilitate responsible partnerships. Its energy would have to come from a broad-based forum including the private sector, civil society and country representation, in addition to the AU and NEPAD. It would need to deepen the originality and generation of ideas within Africa while allowing for third party checks and balances. Other processes, such as the Ministerial meetings and AAFIV business fora, would continue. There would, however, be the addition of processes within civil society linked to Africa’s greater ownership, such as the Civic Commission for Africa. These processes need to provide momentum to the already established institutions of the African Union, such as the Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOC), while recognising their need for independence.

A TICAD secretariat would need to ensure coherence around TICAD processes and feed into other processes such as the G8. Japan could play a key role in establishing this mechanism to mainstream ownership and partnership principles. However, Japan would also apply these principles through a gradual exit from guiding the process, leaving Africa to take the lead through its growing institutional structures. This would not require an over-reliance on political leaders, who have historically focused more on country-level activities than regional ones. The proposed ‘New JICA’ (to be launched in October 2008) is an opportunity for Japan to establish this country strength (Group for Renovating Japanese ODA, 2007).

Conclusion

This background note has examined 2008 as a significant year for Japan and Africa. Japan is unique among the G8 countries in principles of development that are derived from its own history. These principles, however, need to be translated into an African reality.

A unique mechanism is needed to deepen African ownership at regional, national and within country levels. This would include stakeholders in government, regional institutions, civil society and businesses, enabling Africa to develop value-added partnerships with governments and organisations in the rest of the

world. The mechanism would draw its strength from this broad base. The TICAD process will then be active between the international conferences every five years and feed into other existing annual processes, such as the G8, and those that take place at different intervals, such as the High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness and the UN Summits on MDGs. In short, a TICAD mecha-

nism that is rooted in African ownership and partnership would enable Africa to do the things it needs to do, in the way they need to be done.

For more information contact Fletcher Tembo, ODI Research Fellow (f.tembo@odi.org.uk) or visit www.odi.org.uk/rapid. This note is based on an event held at the ODI in March 2008 with the support of the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

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Useful links

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