

Interview

Establish Japanese-style Manufacturing in Africa

What should be Japan's International Contribution?

Interview with Ambassador OSHIMA who has engaged long time in MOFA and JICA

Mr. Kenzo OSHIMA

Vice President, MNKK (Monozukuri Nihongo Kentei Kyokai)



Towards HRD in Development Assistance

➤ What was your focus in international cooperation?

When I was serving as a Director of MOFA (Ministry of Foreign Affairs), I strongly felt the need for human resource development in Japanese ODA (Official Development Assistance) in order to administer the huge ODA budget that was the top of the world in 1990s. This was finally realized with the cooperation of Keidanren (the Federation of Economic Organizations) by establishing FASID (Foundation for Advanced Studies on International Development), the regime for development assistance including human resource development.

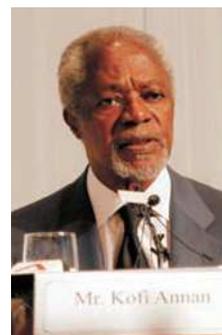
In 2007, I retired from public service at MOFA and became the Vice President of JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency) under the leadership of Ms. Sadako OGATA, President of JICA. She was leading the economic and technical assistance by JICA. She emphasized "focusing Africa" and "hands-on approach" .

Rice Production Doubled in 10 Years

➤ What was your major project for assisting Africa?

One of the projects I was involved for assisting Africa is CARD (Coalition for African Rice Development), the project to double the rice production in Africa in 10 years. The key issue was to find the right African partner. I recognized that the former UN General Secretary, Kofi ANNAN, was the head of AGRA (Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa), the organization to modernize African agriculture and to increase production. I

had worked together with him at UN for five years, so I immediately met him in Ghana and he agreed to plan a project to double the rice production in 10 years, from 14 M ton in 2009 to 28 M ton in 2018. It was approved at TICAD4 (The 4th Tokyo International Conference on African Development) held in 2009. This goal was successfully achieved in 10 years and the new project, Card2, was approved at TICAD7 held last year to further double the rice production in 10 to 12 years.



Former UN General Secretary, Kofi ANNAN
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High Evaluation & Great Expectation towards Japan

➤ What are the activities of MNKK (Monozukuri Nihongo Kentei Kyokai)?

The project of MNKK is MNK (Monozukuri Nihongo Kentei), or Manufacturing Japanese Certification Tests, targeting mainly at the local people or student working or wishing to work in a Japanese overseas company. It is an online education and training system, consisting of e-

learning and certification tests, with the intention of enhancing the person's ability of Japanese communication required at work and the knowledge of Japanese style manufacturing. In addition to Japanese version, English version has been started

➤ Intending to develop overseas manufacturing human resources?

Manufacturing requires technology, knowhow and experience. The superiority of Japanese manufacturing capability is widely acknowledged in the international community. In Africa also exists high evaluation and great expectation towards Japan. Through JICA assistance projects, such terminologies as "Kaizen" and "5Ss" (Seiri, Seiton, Seiso, Seiketsu, Shituke) are considerably widespread. The challenges of Africa are getting out of resource-dependent economy, promotion of trade and investment, and introduction of manufacturing. Which country, if any, should be relied on? China has extensive presence with the strategy of huge amount of material resources, but technology transfer by China seems less because human resources and materials are brought from China. In contrast, Japanese assistance, including technology transfer and human resource development, is extremely elaborate and of good reputation.

"ABE initiative" , the project to provide African students with practical training and internship in

(Kenzo OSHIMA) After entering MOFA, assuming the posts of: Minister of Japanese Embassy in USA, Director General of Economic Cooperation Bureau, UN Deputy Secretary General (in charge of personnel affairs), Japanese Ambassador to Australia. After retirement in 2007, Vice President of JICA, Member of National Diet of Japan Fukushima Nuclear Accident Independent Investigation Commission, Commissioner of Nuclear Regulatory Commission. Currently President of Africa Society of Japan

Japan, has accepted 2700 students since its start in 2013 and entered into the next stage with the further target number of 3000 students.

I wish not only that they will be employed by Japanese companies, but also that they will utilize their experience in initiating a startup company after returning back to their home countries. We already witness some actual examples. Free MNK online lectures will definitely be useful.

➤ Lastly, any advice to Japanese companies?

I feel that the interest of Japanese companies in Africa is steadily growing. However, there seems to be difference in attitude between the top management and those at practical business level. There still seems to be an image of Africa that it is "far, dangerous and of high risk" and people tend to be cautious. However, Africa is vast, diverse and with abundant chance. The African market is the last frontier and with large potential as a consumer market. The competition of expansion into African market by various countries is getting harder. I wish that Japanese companies will also not lose a chance but actively advance into Africa with the Win-Win attitude, responding to the expectations of the African side.

(Interviewer: Yoshiaki INADA, Senior Executive Director, JOEA)