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Japan's National Economic Identity and African Development

An Analysis of the Tokyo International Conference on African Development

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Abstract

Japan has emerged in recent years as a leading donor country to African countries. At one level, Japan's renewed assertiveness in providing foreign aid to Africa is on par with the more active approach by other donor countries. Some might argue that Japan's motivations to lend capital and technical assistance to African countries are shared by all lending countries. However, I argue that Japan's official development policy and, in particular, the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) process, seek to break away from the acceptance of the Washington consensus and to demonstrate Japan's particular leadership position in the donor community.

Rather than to focus on domestic bureaucratic politics to explain Japanese ODA or on the specific targets of foreign aid, this paper seeks to identify the basic features of Japanese national identity that explain its aid policy to Africa. These features will be highlighted through an analysis of the TICAD process. Taken as a whole, the TICAD process represents the Japanese government's response to perceived inroads by globalization and neoliberal economic ideology.

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But TICAD is more than a simple response to complex global forces. Japan's foreign aid policy draws extensively from the so-called Asian development model as Japan hopes to influence African societies. Moreover, by carving out a developmental niche away from the conventional World Bank pattern of financial assistance, Japan also hopes to highlight its global strategic position as it seeks to have greater influence in Africa and other developing regions.

Acronyms

NERICA	New Rice for Africa
ODA	official development aid
SAP	structural adjustment policies
TICAD	Tokyo International Conference on African Development

1   Introduction

Japan has emerged in recent years as a leading donor country with African countries. At one level, Japan's renewed assertiveness in providing foreign aid to Africa is on par with the more active approach by other donor countries. It might appear to some that Japan's motivations to lend capital and technical assistance to African countries are shared by all lending countries. However, I argue that Japan, its official development policy and, in particular, the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) process, seek to break away from the acceptance of the Washington Consensus and to demonstrate its particular leadership position in the donor community. As one well regarded Japanese economist claimed recently, Japan has been 'walking the splendid path of isolation' (Ishikawa 2005: 34).

Rather than to focus on domestic bureaucratic politics to explain Japanese official development aid (ODA) or on the specific targets of foreign aid, this paper seeks to identify basic features of Japanese national identity that explain for its aid policy to Africa. These features will be highlighted through an analysis of the TICAD process. Japan now has had nearly fifteen years of organizing global conferences on African development. Since the early 1990s, Japan has been the only developed country to consistently hold major international conferences on African development. In fact, it has held three conferences, scheduled every five years in 1993, 1998, and 2003. A fourth TICAD is planned for 2008. Given that Japan only provides about 10 per cent of its ODA funds to Africa and given the severe economic pressures with which the country was burdened for much of this period, the reasons for organizing these major development conferences are not self-evident. In fact, most studies only mention TICAD in passing, as it relates to other development issues (Morikawa 1997). Despite the budgetary constraints and cutbacks in Japan's ODA in the last several years, Japan has remained consistent in scheduling these conferences. Rather than turn its attention away from Africa during this economic slump, Japan has moved forward with its aid policies towards Africa.

2   Themes of Japan's national economic identity

2.1 Historical lessons

One underlying theme in Japanese foreign aid is its history towards economic development both within Japan and towards Asia. Some observers point to the 1868 Meiji Restoration and the experiences of post-Second World War development as lessons for successful economic strategies. In both cases, the push for growth was derived from the importation of foreign technology, high productivity, low consumption, and a dualistic structure of the economy (Okita 1980: 116). The initial principle of Japanese economic growth at that time was production-oriented policies that led to rapid economic growth. As Okita describes the process, the government at that time focused on basic industries, then the modernization of those industries, followed by the establishment of new industries, which led eventually to export promotion policies (ibid.: 127).

2.2 East Asian experience

One of the more important aspects underlining Japan's ODA policy is its relationship to the 'Asian economic model'. Former Prime Minister Koizumi said in a speech at the 2005 G8 summit that 'Asia's post-war experiences in economic development are valuable assets for us in assisting African development' (Koizumi 2005: 3). He went on to argue that 'in view of Asian experiences, the key to African economic development is to foster the private sector through the promotion of trade and investment' (ibid.).

The East Asian economic miracle was a powerful force in linking African and Asian societies. According to Japanese economists, 'a key lesson from East Asia is that if aid is to be effective in the long run, it would have to lead to private capital formation, both domestic and foreign' (Hino and Iimi 2006: 16). Moreover, the East Asian experience has affected Japan's approach to development and aid in Africa. In particular, the main characteristics of Japan's ODA facilitate self-help and partnership through industrialization and trade. Experience has shown that Japan puts a high priority on economic infrastructure development with a heavy emphasis on loans.

As one Japanese economist noted in regards to Japanese policy to Ghana, 'based on its own and East Asian catch-up experiences, Japan considers it essential to address the structural problems of the Ghanaian economy and support its economic growth and attainment of self-reliant and sustainable economic development' (Ohno 2006: 18). Given its success in East Asia and its own economic history, Japan has increasingly shown assertiveness in the donor community. The organization and commitment to the TICAD process has been one important and visible affirmation of Japan's self-identity as a leading donor country.

Compared with the neoclassical orthodoxy that stresses macroeconomic stability and free markets, the emerging Japanese view is distinct in its primary pursuit of long-term real targets, acceptance of different economic policies for different conditions of development, and emphasis on the active role of government as an initiator of change.

2.3 Japanese model as distinct from other donors

Japan has tried to carve out its own separate path of ODA policy. Two historic factors make Japan's aid and development vision distinctive from those of other donors. Japan is the only non-western country with a history of successful industrialization and Japan's postwar decision to abandon military forces implies that ODA plays a special role in Japanese diplomacy. Japanese officials moreover have at times distanced themselves from the dominant policy prescriptions embedded in the Washington consensus. The Washington consensus has been widely criticized in Japan as being ineffective and unfair in its application to African countries. The typical structural adjustment programme (SAP) may be most effective in middle-income economies, but it is less effective in low-income economies with underdeveloped markets. An influential Japanese economist has suggested that in such economies there is a need to build appropriate institutions. These country-specific institutions should be based on a 'proper understanding of cultural values and social norms (Hayami 2005: 56).

In this departure from the Washington consensus framework, government officials in Japan also advanced poverty reduction, not as an immediate objective of development

assistance, but as a consequence of economic growth. 'If poverty reduction is considered an overarching objective, nonmarket instruments may have to be used to redistribute market-produced income in favour of the poor' (Hayami 2005: 57). What this entails for Japanese aid agencies is a justification of a 'new paradigm which emphasized strengthening the voice and power of poor people (empowerment) and maximizing the initiative of aid-recipient communities (ownership) in the design of development assistance' (ibid.). Japan's ODA White Paper for 2005 asserts that poverty reduction should be carried out through economic growth. It highlights the experience of East Asia where development was based on economic growth which ultimately contributed to poverty reduction (MoFA 2006: 13). Koizumi (2005: 1) took the lead in this discussion in 2005 when he declared in a speech that 'the Japanese government has been leading international discussion on African development by advocating the importance of ownership of Africa and partnership with the international community' (Koizumi 2005: 1).

My argument builds on the research conducted by a number of Japanese scholars who interpret Japanese foreign aid policy as providing a useful and important alternative to that of the World Bank. Ohno makes a vigorous claim that Western and World Bank ODA positions do not reflect Japan's economic interests or its political leadership abilities. 'Every few years (the donor organizations) come out with new assistance strategies, which in many cases do not match the sensibilities of the Japanese. We have left the control to other nations, and Japan's role is not more than that of a timid copilot at best' (Ohno 2002: 1). Additionally, Ohno argues that 'Japan … makes past experience its starting point, perceives value in diversity, and emphasizes issues of the real economy involving the fostering of industry' (ibid.: 2). The divergence between Japan's objective of a development assistance strategy and that of the World Bank is significant. Ohno concludes that 'in the field of ODA, Japan cannot manifest its true character as long as it perceives only two passive options to pick between—toeing the line of the World Bank's strategy or complaining about that line' (ibid.: 4).

Other Japanese scholars similarly note Japan's distinctive features of its ODA programme. As this study will examine in more detail, Japan's ODA policies have reflected its emphasis on self-help. The basic position of self-help is meant to separate Japan's policies from the west. By shifting responsibility to the recipient, self-help is meant to allow for more autonomous decisionmaking on the part of the receiving country. But more importantly, as Nishigaki and Shimomura have written, 'in contrast to the traditional western view that aid is an obligation that those who are fortunate owe to those who are not, the Japanese concept is that aid means helping those who help themselves' (Nishigaki and Shimomura 1999: 152-3).

This paper draws from the view that Japan's ODA strategy seeks to create an alternative to the dominant World Bank/Washington consensus arguments. In particular, the paper explores the evolution of the TICAD process with close attention paid to the three conferences by asking the following question. In what way does the TICAD agenda attempt to position Japan's ODA strategy and policy as separate and unique from the western ODA efforts? The conferences often have been discussed in the context of the Asian model of development. To what extent has this model been raised by the TICAD process? This article seeks to explain and understand this question by examining the evolution of Japan's ODA policy towards Africa and the history of the TICAD process covering the three TICAD meetings.

3 TICAD I

With a formal statement in place to facilitate policy dialogue with other donors and with recipient countries, Japan turned its attention to Africa. In 1992, Japan called for an international conference involving the donor community, African governments, and non-governmental organizations. While previous aid conferences typically involved the donor community speaking among themselves or a summit held by an OECD country (such as the UK or France) with participation by former colonies, Japan intentionally sought a broad and inclusive conference format. Japan asked the United Nations and a non-governmental organization (the Global Coalition for Africa) to serve as co-sponsors. One analyst suggested that by enlisting the involvement of these agencies, the 'TICAD initiative was not a unilateral act, but that it was essentially consistent with the priorities of the entire UN system of organizations' (Mulikita 1999: 52). Moreover, it was held in Tokyo in order to raise public awareness of African issues. According to the MoFA official in charge of the first TICAD, Japan's motivation to organize this conference was three-fold. Japan clearly saw the humanitarian needs in Africa and given Japan's economic wealth, it could create a positive aid environment. Second, Japan desired to be treated as a major global power by both other powerful countries as well as by the majority of countries in the world. As a latecomer in providing aid to Africa, Japan needed Africa as a means to inject itself as a leading donor country. Third, as part of its strategic plan to position itself as a major Asian power, Japan used TICAD as a platform to put forward the so-called Asian development model. During the 1980s, Japan began to criticize the negative impact of structural adjustment policies in Africa and, in more general terms, criticizing the so-called Washington consensus and neoliberal policies. Japan's view of the Asian development model offered an alternative to African countries. This new view will be discussed later in this section.

One observer wrote that, by the early 1990s, 'a consensus began to develop in Japan on the measures that must be taken to prevent Africa from "falling off the map" ' (Eyinla 1997: 39). One important measure was a coordinated effort by donor countries led by Japan to focus a new aid strategy towards Africa. In October 1993, Japan convened the first TICAD. The conference consisted of nearly 1000 participants from 48 African countries, thirteen major donors, ten international organizations, and more than 45 NGOs. The most important outcome from this conference was the approval of the document, 'Tokyo Declaration on African Development'. This document broke new ground in terms of a global and collaborative approach to international aid to Africa. Its themes emphasized partnership, ownership, and the Asian model of development.

The preamble of the Declaration states that the participants believe the document will 'serve to strengthen an emerging new partnership for sustainable development of Africa based on self-reliance of African countries and the support of Africa's development partners' (TICAD 1993). Partnership implied equivalent influence and input into the development process. In contrast to the traditional World Bank and International Monetary Fund approach which dictated policies to recipient countries, TICAD's framework explicitly called for mutual interaction as equal members. The Declaration also states that 'with the end of the cold war, African countries and the international community now have an opportunity to share a broader common understanding of the need for dynamic development cooperation'. Japan's view of partnership was also broad and inclusive. It called for a more vigorous incorporation of non-governmental organizations into the development process. Governments are only one agent in the development process. The end of the cold war demonstrated to Japan the importance of

persuading public opinion, civil society, the private sector, and NGOs to act as participants in this process. The Declaration calls for 'full participation by the people at all levels, who should be galvanized towards action as agents for progress'.

The concept of ownership was an implicit principle in the Declaration. It emerged as an identifiable concept in later ODA documents. A TICAD II paper referred to ownership as being 'derived when development priorities, as set by Africa are pursued. This ownership should be based on continuous dialogue between government, the private sector and civil society' (TICAD 1998a). But for Japan, ownership was used strategically to direct attention towards its request-based aid policy. Instead of going directly to African countries with money and specific projects, Japan waited for those governments to take 'ownership' of their development needs, decide on targeted projects, and then approach the Japanese aid agencies. As we will see, by the late 1990s, this emphasize came under heavy criticism by both recipients and by the donor community.

The Asian model of development was inserted into the Tokyo Declaration on behalf of the Japanese government. In light of its criticism against the over reliance of structural adjustment policies (SAP) and its interpretation of Asian economic development during the 1980s, the Japanese government offered an alternative development strategy. Eyinla notes that 'in order to avoid some of the greatest pitfalls associated with the failure of the structural adjustment programme, the declaration recognized the linkage between political and economic reforms' (Eyinla 1997: 41). In contrast to the World Bank's separation of political from economic reforms, the participants of TICAD specifically recognized the necessity of these reforms as well as the painful consequences resulting from their implementation. The Declaration called for greater consideration of the 'specific conditions and requirements of individual countries' by SAPs. Japan used this criticism to launch what it called 'the Asian experience of economic development'. In examining the success of Asian countries, the Declaration noted that 'the backdrop of development success lies in the combination of a strong commitment by the leadership and the people to economic prosperity, appropriate long-term development strategies and functional government administration to purse these strategies coherently'. This assertion, with Japan's own experience as central, has been extended and elaborated in latter TICAD documents.

What were the results of the first TICAD? According to a noted scholar on Japanese foreign policy to Africa, there were few concrete gains for Africa since TICAD I. 'The results of the conference have more symbolism than substance, because the effective, results-based initiatives were not forthcoming, neither from the African nor the international communities' (Morikawa 1997: 205). While specific gains were lacking, TICAD did have broader outcomes. The development momentum initiated by TICAD led to the promotion of African-Asian dialogues. A TICAD II document stated that 'a more concrete outcome of the TICAD I process was the emerging South-South partnership forums which emerged to facilitate the transfer of knowledge and skills from Asian to African countries' (TICAD 1998b).

Yet, more concrete and tangible outcomes did emerge from TICAD such as several post-TICAD initiatives centred on institutional building. These included the Partnership for Democratic Development, conflict prevention and resolution activities, and the African Aid Initiative. And Japan achieved several concrete objectives as a result of its leading role in the conference. Despite the intentional statement of TICAD being a non-

pledge conference, African countries look favourably upon Japan's initiatives and aid philosophy. As one government official commented in an interview, TICAD I was 'good PR'.[1] This good will translated into favourable votes on behalf of Japan. Although Japan failed to win a seat on the Security Council, one scholar observed that 'there is strong inference that TICADs were electioneering activities for gaining a permanent seat on the UN Security Council—a supreme wish for the government of Japan leaders' (Takahashi 2002: 8). However, Japan did prevail in other areas. In 1996, Japan relied on Africa's bloc voting to win the Asian region non-permanent seat on the Security Council, the election of Shigeru Oda as Justice of the UN International Court of Justice, and the election of Sadako Ogata as head of the UN High Commission for Refugees. But more importantly, these initiatives underscored Japan's willingness to pursue its strategic objectives by positioning itself as an alternative to the dominant ODA institutions.

At the end of TICAD, the government announced it would host TICAD II in 1998. TICAD II would not only assess the implementation of the Tokyo Declaration, but it would 'chart strategic direction for African development into the twenty-first century (Mulikita 1999: 53). Despite the government assurances, I interviewed several government officials involved in the TICAD meetings who felt that, at the time, there would not be a TICAD II.[2] Yet the positive experience felt by the Japanese government, the donor participants, African governments, and NGOs propelled discussion towards a second TICAD. An official with the Japanese Bank for International Cooperation commented that TICAD itself was 'stunning and remarkable'.

The first TICAD conference is suggestive of Japan's interest to claim its role and to increase its visibility in Africa. Japan's criticisms of conventional structural adjustment policies and neoliberalism emerged at this time. These criticisms led to the promotion of Japan's own 'Asian model of development'. Moreover, Japan initiated new language that focused on partnership and ownership with Africa to highlight the important distinction from western aid agencies and governments.

4   TICAD II

The period between TICAD I and II (1993 and 1998) represented a different geo-strategic and financial environment than the one leading up to the first conference. The end of the cold war had created new and long-lasting pressures on official development assistance. Financial resources were being redistributed towards Eastern European countries while the world's attention was increasingly on the situation in Iraq. Moreover, the financial constraints remaining from the East Asian crisis became more permanent in Japan. Africa was on the back burner. ODA had dropped from US$23.4 billion in 1994 to US$15.3 billion in 1999 (TICAD 2001: 1). Japan's ODA budget was cut by 10 per cent in 1997. Yet, Japan continued to press for an Asian development plan that could be utilized by African recipients of Japanese aid. The Tokyo Declaration on African Development emphasized the 'relevance of the Asian experience for African

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[1]   Interview with MOFA official (April 2003).

[2]   Interview with JICA official (February 2003).

development'. Moreover, 'the backdrop of development success lies in the combination of a strong commitment by the leadership and the people to economic prosperity, appropriate long-term development strategies, and functional government administration to pursue these strategies coherently' (TICAD 1993: 4).

Post-cold war trends both in the international community and in Japan forced the Japanese ODA administration to re-evaluate ODA both generally and in terms of Africa. The ministry of foreign affairs sponsored a reassessment which was published in early 1998. The report made clear that the East Asian financial crisis had placed serious financial constraints on the government's ability to finance aid. The report noted that while Japan's economy accounted for a significant portion of global GNP, it plays a marginal role in international defence and security affairs. 'Today, Japan should be striving to meet its obligations to the world by pursuing and implementing ODA reforms that reflect recent domestic and global trends, and that enable it to better satisfy the genuine needs of international society' (MoFA 1998: 4). In particular, the report accurately described Japan's earlier ODA strategy to emphasize self-reliance, debt repayment, and the promotion of economic production. The government following TICAD I began to re-evaluate this strategy. Japan examined certain political conditions, including human rights, efforts by the recipient to democratize or adopt a free market system and trends in the development of weapons for mass destruction.

The ODA Reforms report stated that 'Japan needs to explore the long-range prospects for economic independence while also furnishing emergency humanitarian assistance, and should prioritize aid for the satisfaction of basic human needs, human resources development, and other areas that can be expected to facilitate the eradication of poverty' (ibid.: 7). In other words, Japan began to move away from a strict implementation of economic development policies to a strategy that combined both economic development and poverty eradication. In a list of ten ODA objectives, the report places poverty elimination and social development as the first one. Yet the second objective is infrastructure development. As the report states, 'economic advances are essential to the goal of human-centred development; in this respect, ODA-backed infrastructure projects can be expected to retain their value for some time to come (ibid.: 9).

In its conclusion, the report urged the Japanese government to assume a leadership role in 'forming global partnerships by assisting efforts in south-south cooperation, coordinating aid with other industrial powers, and collaborating with multilateral institutions' (ibid.: 27). As part of its leadership position in ODA, Japan introduced a third way for economic development in the developing world. According to one observer, Japan used the East Asian miracle as justification for its FODA policy in the 1990s. Japan made the implicit argument that the neoliberal economic strategy was not the only way to achieve economic development. In fact, the business community in Japan criticized the government for providing resources to too many high income developing countries that in turn competed directly against Japanese firms on aid projects (Katada 2002: 335). Instead, in 1996 the Economic Cooperation Committee of the ministry of international trade and industry recommended that Japan's ODA strategy should be used primarily to lower risks of infrastructure investment undertaken by private investors. The TICAD process and series of conferences related to African aid and development mirror this recommendation. Indeed, TICAD II's primary theme was 'poverty reduction through accelerated economic growth and sustainable development,

and effective integration of African economies into the global economy' (TICAD 1998a: 1).

TICAD II was held in October 1998 with over 400 delegates including representatives from 120 countries and international organizations. The theme of the conference was 'Poverty Alleviation and Integration of Africa into the Global Economy'. The primary objective was to emphasize the poverty reduction strategy through increased economic growth, not just debt relief or grants. The second objective was to shift the burden of planning and decisionmaking to African countries. Ownership of the development process was again highlighted at this conference. A third objective was to establish an African-Asian partnership as central to economic development process. In particular, Japan's view on this objective was to apply what it considers successful development experiences in Asia to the development activities in Africa (TICAD 1998b: 7). As the report states, the underlying principles of TICAD II were ownership and partnership. It makes the point that 'ownership is derived when development priorities, as set by Africa, are pursued. This ownership should be based on continuous dialogue between government, the private sector, and civil society (TICAD 1998a: 2).

The primary document laid out at the conference stated that 'TICAD I involved outlining the problem areas in African development and tried to focus on the general means for addressing these issues. TICAD II aims to focus more specifically on the areas to be developed, using the framework outlined in TICAD I as a basis for cooperation' (TICAD 1998b: 9). The document suggests an action plan, but with no concrete financial commitments, the recommendations were fairly empty. However, as a form of logic and direction for the development process, the 'Tokyo Agenda for Action' achieved some goals.

TICAD II illustrates the wide gulf between the development strategies and policies of the World Bank and those of the Japanese government. The government argued during TICAD II that reduction of poverty should be viewed as a result of economic production. It should not be solely a target of development through debt relief and the extension of new grants. A second difference is the emphasis placed on governance as a condition for new financial assistance. Japan expressed doubts on the ability and appropriateness of governments and international organizations to measure good governance. Finally, they differed over the meaning of globalization and whether it is effective in reducing poverty.

One analyst wrote that 'the Archilles heel of the agenda lay in determining where the enormous resources to implement its laudable objectives would come from' (Mulikita 1999: 53). In other words, the conference 'neither yielded any dramatic increases in official development assistance to African countries, nor did it result in practical measures to deal with the crushing debt burden which most Sub-Saharan African countries have to bear' (ibid.: 51). But following the kinds of achievements resulting from the first TICAD, TICAD II actually led to a deepening of understanding of the development problems in Africa and building on Asia-Africa cooperation. Moreover, the Japanese government focused explicitly on promoting Asia-Africa cooperation. The conference document stated that 'one of the main goals of TICAD I was to promote Africa-Asia cooperation, and this has improved substantially in the last five years so that Asia is now a major investor in Africa' (TICAD 1998b: 14). In particular, TICAD II developed a partnership with Africa based on its rice production. The New Rice for Africa (NERICA) has been discussed as a major and practical achievement of

the TICAD process. NERICA emerged as a powerful agent linking the government's objectives of Asia-Africa cooperation, the growing role of NGOs, and positive publicity. TICAD II set the stage for the development of NERICA as this important agent. According to one Japanese development economist, NERICA was a 'brand new idea' that sprung from the synergy of Japanese leadership and financial support and Japanese rice production experience. The chair of TICAD III stated that 'NERICA is an excellent example of how a variety of partners—African governments, farmers, international agencies, and donors—can work together on actions with potential for quick development impact'.[3] This cooperative endeavour that led to NERICA also has established links with the New Economic Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) and TICAD III. A NEPAD official said that 'NEPAD is therefore keen to explore further how NERICA can be integrated into the existing varietal portfolio of African farmers with complementary technologies, sound natural resource management practices, and improved rice marketing and distribution systems (Mkandawire 2003).

TICAD II also created confidence in Japanese foreign policy to either initiate new foreign policy endeavours or to partner with other foreign governments. For Japan, TICAD solidified for Japan its pre-eminent role in world affairs. While TICAD I had links to NGOs, TICAD II extended cooperation with them and the creation of new aid initiatives. In particular, the ministry of foreign affairs sought to bring together the global commitments from TICAD II and the focused objectives of NEPAD (MoFA nd). NEPAD was formally endorsed by the Organization of African Unity in July 2001 and now has links to many aspects of Japanese policy towards Africa (Kanbur 2002). The principles of African ownership fit into Japan's overall framework of providing assistance to Africa. A Japanese ambassador commented that 'Japan has advocated consistently since the first TICAD in 1993 that the most essential principle for African development is: First, Africa would exert its ownership, and then, the international community would extend cooperation through partnership (Enoki 2002: 3). The TICAD guideline is meant to bridge Japan to international initiatives, such as the G8 Summit talks, the Strategic Partnership with Africa, and South-South Cooperative Initiative. In particular, Japan used TICAD II as a means to present its plan for debt relief. Japan has been the largest among G7 creditors in providing bilateral loans to the 40 heavily indebted poor countries. It thus became the leading contributor in terms of bilateral debt relief under the initiative. However, the Japanese government had previously resisted calls for debt relief. As a top donor, it feared it would have to cover a disproportionate share of the cost. More crucially, aid administrators were reluctant to write off loans to poor countries for 'fear of encouraging moral hazard or discouraging fiscal discipline' (Castellano 1999). Yet, the government successfully presented its plan to the 1999 G7 summit although differences remained based on the best ways to promote development in the developing world and on the difference between grants and loans. Japan remains committed to economic production to pull Africa out of its poverty and focuses on loans as a means to ensure correct economic policies. TICAD II illustrates the tension exhibited by Japan's emphasis on its self-help approach on the basis of request-based aid and the pressures from other OECD states to be more proactive and multilateral in providing aid.

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3 www.warda.org/warda1/main/Achievements/nerica.htm >.

Immediately following TICAD II, MoFA issued a statement declaring 'solidarity between Japan and Africa' with attention to 'concrete actions' (MoFA nd). The development objectives focused on enhancing the linkage between the NEPAD and TICAD processes. In particular, the government of Japan committed itself to spend US$750 million over a five year period between 1998 to 2003 to invest in basic human needs areas. The government also pledged US$2 billion to implement a new initiative on education in Africa. A third step was the promotion of Asia-Africa cooperation. MoFA used this plank to share Asia's development experiences with Africa especially in the areas of rice production (NERICA) and Asia's development experiences.

At the time of TICAD II, the Asian financial crisis created barriers for increased growth in aid, yet Japan still pushed at least in its documents for a strengthened partnership with Africa based on Asian economic policies and values. Additionally, Japan continued to break from the Washington consensus emphasis on debt relief. Instead, Japan sought to reorient discussion towards its own approach of expanding economic production.

5   TICAD III

Although many Japanese participants in TICAD assumed it would disappear, the process continued albeit slowly and with uncertainty. In 1998, the possibility of a TICAD III was not even mentioned by officials in MoFA. Indeed, one observer wrote in 1999 that 'the aim of TICAD III would essentially be to reinforce Tokyo's credentials as a responsible major power constructively contributing to global order and governance. If on the other hand, it is judged that the vote to enlarge the UN Security Council will not take place in the foreseeable future, then Tokyo might well discreetly jettison the TICAD initiative by pleading domestic economic constraints and conveniently transfer operational responsibility to a multilateral diplomacy (Mulikita 1999: 54).

Despite the continued slump in the Japanese economy, the government pursued the policies derived from TICAD. A common theme among those interviewed concerned Japan's interest to obtain a seat on the Security Council. The Japanese government viewed TICAD I and II as means to showcase its leadership as a major international donor. Japan sought entry into the ODA process in order to demonstrate its leadership on the world stage, to highlight what it considered the success of the Asian development model, and to secure a seat on the UN Security Council. Japan's approach during the period of the first two TICADs remained bilateral though it had the appearance of multilateralism with the invitation to co-sponsor the initiative to the Global Coalition for Africa, the United Nations, and the World Bank. Yet, following TICAD II, pressures mounted on Japan to alter its foreign aid approach in general and to Africa in particular. The government was careful not to set up a bureaucratic conference secretariat. In part, it did so to minimize administrative costs, but it also sought to keep administrative control in the hands of Japanese bureaucrats, especially in MoFA. Given the absence of any new money contributed to TICAD's initiatives, simply offering to host a third TICAD was a government's goal.

Two factors motivated the Japanese government to consider organizing TICAD III. In the few years following TICAD II, the aid initiatives received a boost from the creation of the African Union and the formation of the NEPAD. They both reinvigorated the

ODA process by formalizing Africa's willingness to assume ownership, partnership, and governance over ODA. An African diplomat wrote that 'the underlying principles of ownership and partnership in TICAD and NEPAD are essential for helping Africa deal with the various challenges militating against its sustainable economic growth (African Diplomatic Corps 2002). This view was formalized at the TICAD Ministerial-level Meeting in December 2001. The chair's statement 'also welcomed … NEPAD launched by African leaders as a concrete commitment to assume effective leadership and accountability in realizing the principles of ownership and global partnership'. NEPAD is an amalgam of debt relief measures proposed by South Africa, Senegal, and Nigeria. Ownership and partnership are key concepts emanating from what President Mbeki of South Africa refers to as a 'new paradigm shift of Africa'. In contrast to previous SAPs which were externally imposed on African governments by international organizations, NEPAD's approach places emphasis on self-responsibility and, equally important, on active participation based on a perceived stake in the process and outcome of development. A Japanese diplomat at TICAD writes that 'the basic attitude of Japan to fully respect the ownership of the recipient government in conducting development aid is derived from her own historical experiences in the modernization process. The modernization process of Japan since the Meiji Era was a history to harmonize through exercising full ownership the introduction of modernization and the preservation of traditional culture' (Enoki 2002: 4). With the end of the cold war, ownership is to be understood within a democratic context. Pressure increased in the late 1990s by both donor governments and recipient countries to democratize Africa and to reform its administrative structure.

A second factor derived from the change in the request-based lending approach. Academics and some policy officials have criticized the long standing policy of waiting for African governments to initiate request for specific amounts of aid. What some have suggested is that Japan should publicly utilize its development experiences by sharing them with African countries. As one high official in the Japan Bank for International Cooperation said in an interview, 'the ODA community should use our role and our own experiences'. The evolution of thinking is related to a cultural argument expressed by many officials. A more direct approach to lending money has been tied to a Japanese-based view of development knowledge and experiences. Some have expressed the importance of cultural identity in the TICAD process. A few former MoFA officials commented on the Asian identity as a departure from western views on development and foreign aid. Indeed, another MoFA official mentioned that 'the 'Asian experience' means bring alternative approaches to development and the ODA process'.

Although one MoFA official stated in an interview that as late as 2002, few government officials believe TICAD III would be scheduled, the conference was in fact organized. And these factors were imbedded in the third conference. In the first planning document for TICAD III, MoFA officials listed TICAD's aims as:

i)   to awake international attention towards Africa;

ii)   to promote African ownership; and

iii)   to strengthen international partnership. These objectives were then tied to the so-called pillars of TICAD III.

They were the synergy between TICAD and NEPAD; Japan's leading role in the ODA process; expanded involvement of civil society and the private sector; and renewed

international partnership (MoFA 2002). Interestingly, when asked in an interview about the selection of these four pillars with two high ranking MoFA officials involved in the TICAD preparation, both replied there was no particular reason for their selection. The public objectives of TICAD were for consumption by domestic and foreign interests. According to these MoFA officials, TICAD III had a 'hidden agenda'. In the absence of financial support for its commitments, Japan has to rely on the good intentions of the TICAD process and on the positive view from African countries of Japan's leadership role. As they said, 'TICAD has name value, but there is no money in our pocket'.

TICAD III was held at the end of September 2003. As the largest of the three conferences, more than 1000 participants attended representing 89 countries, including 23 heads of state from Africa, 50 African countries, and 47 international organizations.

Foreign Minister Kawaguchi formally presented TICAD III's objectives to the African Union in August 2002. These objectives had changed from the ones the MoFA staff expressed in interviews. Japan, in its view, would give priority to:

i)   Asia-Africa cooperation;

ii)   human-centred development; and

iii)   efforts to consolidate peace (Kawaguchi 2002).

The first is a common theme in Japanese statements and interviews with officials. The main claim is that Africa can learn from the development experiences of Japan in recent decades. As Ms Kawaguchi remarked in her speech, 'we believe that Asia's experience and expertise in development may also be useful for African development in the twenty-first century, because Asia, in the latter part of the twentieth century, approached development challenges that are similar to Africa's situation'.

In regard to human-centred development, the foreign minister stressed the solid initiatives introduced by Japan following TICAD II. In particular, she pointed out funded projects in the areas of education, health, and the supply of safe water. Her statements were supported by the final TICAD III agenda. Human-centred development emphasized human resources, water, and health and medical care. A related theme was entitled 'poverty reduction through economic growth'. Of these pillars, this one in many ways is the most significant and it also illustrates Japan's departure from more conventional development stances. As the statement declares, 'without economic growth, poverty reduction cannot be realized'. The lessons of Japan's economic success have been attributed to research and development, the development of special strains of rice, the development of basic infrastructure, increased trade and investment with Asia, debt relief, and the promotion of economic growth.

She was the briefest in discussing the third objective of efforts towards the consolidation of peace. Japan has had limited experience in this area and has introduced few measures. Since TICAD II in 1998, Japan has supported a number of initiatives aimed towards conflict resolution. These schemes have included the Landmine Trust Fund, the Grant Aid for Conflict Prevention and Peace Building, and the UN Small Arms Fund.

As the government moved closer to TICAD III, it drew on previous international conferences and aid commitments. A TICAD III 'concept paper' drew attention to these

recent initiatives. The Millennium Development Goals adopted in 2000 followed by the International Conference on Financing for Development held in Monterrey, Mexico and the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg discussed African development. Additionally, the G8 in 2002 adopted the 'Africa Action Plan'. The concept paper stated that 'TICAD III will maintain and further strengthen this momentum and contribute to reaffirming the partnership in the international community assisting NEPAD'.

These themes were reinforced in the TICAD Tenth Anniversary Declaration published in October 2003. 'Thus, the TICAD process has contributed to enhancing ownership and partnership to develop genuine solidarity that leads to expanded and multi-layered cooperation in support of African development'. The Declaration points to the four pillars of TICAD. First, it breaks from the Washington consensus policy prescriptions of strict privatization and neoliberal policy objectives. 'This challenge can best be met by adopting a mutually reinforcing combination of two approaches: state-led development based on leadership and democratic governance, on the one hand, and community-based development based on the empowerment of individuals, on the other'. This viewpoint stems from the Japanese government's emphasis of its own historical path of economic development and which has constituted an alternative to neoliberalism.

Second, conflict and security issues dominate the development process. The declaration emphasizes the role of international partnership in 'extending comprehensive and integrated assistance to African countries'. Clearly, this newly inserted objective derived from 9/11 and the perceived link between poverty and terrorism.

Third, human security is a broad set of objectives that highlight problems such as poverty, hunger, infectious diseases, and a lack of education. These objectives have been highlighted by the international community at least since the Millennium Summit in 2000.

Finally, the declaration emphasizes African ownership of the development process. The TICAD process should encourage and strengthen Africa's confidence by recognizing the force of African-owned development. Ownership has been an integral component of all three TICAD meetings.

The final TICAD III agenda had something for nearly every participant. It first laid out the accomplishments of the previous TICAD meetings, including the financial commitments made by the participants with special focus on Japan's contribution. The document then articulated the 'TICAD's Approach' towards assisting African countries in their development process. The TICAD approach fundamentally implies cooperation between African countries and Asian countries based on the twin principles of ownership and partnership. By establishing and deepening the policy dialogue with African countries through NEPAD, the long-term objective is to institutionalize the TICAD process. The Tenth Anniversary Declaration highlighted this claim. It said that 'one of the ultimate goals of the TICAD process is to forge solidarity between Africa and the rest of the international community based on ownership and partnership because African development can be achieved only by the concerted efforts of Africa and its development partners'. In practice, this approach implied the transfer of 'Asia's experiences and development strategy' to African countries.

During this last conference period, Japan continued its focus on ownership, partnership, and governance, especially by joining the momentum behind both TICAD and NEPAD. Japan linked its ODA policies to those generated from the Millennium Development Goals and other international aid initiatives. It became clear that some of the language and values used by earlier versions of Japan's ODA policies made their way into these newer international aid documents.

6   Conclusion

The TICAD process provides an intriguing and informative opportunity to examine Japanese ODA strategy. As the country emerged into a dominant donor government in the 1990s, it sought to engage the other donor countries and institutions in a new dialogue on the scope and direction of foreign aid. Japan has made moves in recent years to counter the neoliberal policy emphasis on structural adjustment with a more nuanced approach emphasizing self-help policies, loans, and poverty reduction through industrial development. Taken as a whole, the TICAD process represents the Japanese government's response to perceived inroads by globalization and neoliberal economic ideology. But TICAD is more than a simple response to complex global forces. Japan itself draws extensively from its perceived model of national and regional economic development as it hopes to influence non-Asian societies as in Africa. Moreover, by carving out a developmental niche away from the conventional World Bank pattern of financial assistance, Japan also hopes to highlight its global strategic position as it seeks to have greater influence in Africa and other developing regions.

To a great extent, the TICAD process reflects Japan's national economic identity and the influence of Japan's Asian development strategy on its ODA policy to Africa. Through its long standing commitment to hold conferences on African development, the Japanese government significantly contributed to make the challenges of Africa better known in the international community and to present an alternative strategy to the Washington Consensus ideology.

The success of TICAD can be seen in the diffusion of its core concepts to other aid agencies. The primary concepts of ownership and partnership have been incorporated into several international meetings, including the International Conference on Financing for Development in Monterrey, the World Summit on Sustainable Development, and three consecutive G8 Summit meetings, beginning in 2002. In an independent review of TICAD, the author argued that 'the twin objectives of ownership and partnership promoted by TICAD have now come to be accepted principles in development planning and cooperation … The advent of NEPAD has a number of positive implications for future cooperation within the TICAD framework, as TICAD is expected to serve as a major platform for global support for NEPAD' (Rasmusson nd).

In July 2005, the G8 summit illustrated a common approach to this mode of analysis by recent foreign aid and debt forgiveness policies. The G8 countries importantly backed UK Prime Minister Tony Blair's call for a doubling of foreign aid from US$25 billion annually to US$50 billion by 2010. Blair also recommended a further increase of another US$25 billion annually to be achieved by 2015. US President George W. Bush initially resisted Blair's goals, but recently announced he would ask Congress to double US support for Africa from US$4.3 billion to more than US$8.6 billion in 2010. And

the G8 as a group promised to write off US$40 billion in debt that 18 of the world's poorest countries owe.

During this fifteen year period of holding TICAD meetings, the Japanese government sought to promote an alternative financing and development approach. In contrast to the views commonly referred to as the Washington Consensus, Japan relied on its own development experiences as a guide in assisting African countries. Its experiences suggest to the Japanese government that state administrative functions have a crucial role in the development process. In particular, the state role can facilitate needed economic production as it appeared to occur in Japan and other Asian countries. What the Japanese government and the TICAD process are promoting, in part, is the reduction of poverty through economic production instead of direct funding of poverty programs. From Japan's perspective, this emphasis adheres to the concept of ownership also highlighted in TICAD. As one review commented, 'ownership is the premise of a 'developmental state'. In other words, that the state has a positive, facilitating role in the economy' (Rasmusson nd). In interviews with TICAD and MoFA officials, they repeatedly commented on the necessary role of the state as both a lesson from the Asian experience and an important objective for African states. In a more recent statement at the 2004 TICAD Asia-Africa Trade and Investment Conference, the Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry commented that 'I very much count on the initiatives of private players for the promotion of trade and investment; however, when the country's economy is just about to take off, the role of the government in efficiently allocating the limited resources for the promotion of trade and investment that would prompt economic growth is important' Nakagawa (2004: 2).

The TICAD process has been a valuable means by which Japan has asserted itself as a world leader in the area of African economic development. As the government moves to hold TICAD IV in 2008, we will see greater attempts to consolidate and institutionalize Japan's capacity as a leading donor country. The bureaucratic reforms taking place today among the donor agencies, the creation of ODA task forces for targeted African countries, and the continued emphasis on technical support underscore Japan's commitment to the TICAD process.

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