

Africa NOW #129

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pp. 3-17 Special Topic: Citizens Question the Significance of TICAD9

Thirty-two years have passed since the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) was first held in 1993. While the TICAD has been changing its objectives and agendas according to the development of Africa's global standing and its relationship between Africa and Japan, the TICAD celebrated its ninth meeting in Yokohama in August this year. Throughout the history of the TICAD, the Africa Japan Forum (AJF) has worked to connect Japanese and African civil society in preparation for the TICAD, organizing the activities of Japanese NGOs concerned with TICAD. This issue of "Africa NOW" presents a special feature titled "Citizens Question Significance of TICAD9". This feature examines the significance of TICAD9 from a citizens' perspective while reviewing the history of TICAD."

pp. 3-9 Inaba Masaki interviewed by Yamagata Shigeo: Pathways for TICAD10 in Africa: the lessons learned on TICAD9 from the view of civil society

Inaba Masaki, co-chair of AJF, has been involved in TICAD from the perspective of civil society since TICAD III in 2003. Inaba examines whether TICAD9 leveraged its advantage as a "multilateral initiative," if it worked as a "multi-stakeholder" forum from a civil society perspective, and how it addressed the Western Sahara issues from a "decolonization" viewpoint. Furthermore, his review examines the actions taken by Japan and Africa during the 32-years history of the TICAD, pointing out that civil society participation, which began from TICAD III, changed into a mere formality from around TICAD VII in 2019. As a result, it states that while the matter of "human security," one of the pillars of TICAD, has been losing interest, the major attention has moved toward business and infrastructure development.

pp. 10-13 Sceneries and voices around TICAD9 through 53 venues and 282 exhibits by Iwasaki Yuichi

Journalist Iwasaki Yuichi visited all the 282 exhibits (across 53 venues) related to TICAD9 in July and August 2025 to understand how TICAD is related to us, who it serves, and what was discussed. Iwasaki praised various events that help people integrate Africa into their daily lives. He noted his participation in and observation of numerous exhibitions and seminars, such as Tanzanian cooking classes, an exhibition of paintings by Botswana elementary school students, and presentations on Japan-Africa relations. However, he noted that ordinary citizens were unable to learn about what the plenary session at the TICAD was like. He also mentioned that even organizers of TICAD 9-related events frequently asked him, 'What is TICAD?'

pp. 14-15 Komivi Ayassou interviewed by Furihata Hiroaki: Disability movements and challenges in Africa, expectations to TICAD

Interview with Komivi Ayassou from Togo with visual impairment, an executive council member of the African Disability Forum, who participated in TICAD9. He introduced the activities of African disability rights' organizations, emphasizing the importance of advocacy and raising awareness to overcome discrimination against disabled people within local communities. Furthermore, he pointed out that his participation in TICAD9 demonstrates that 18 million people with disabilities in Africa must not be left behind in Japan's cooperation programs. He emphasized the importance of integrating people with disabilities into all cooperation programs, as well as strengthening the network between disability movements in Japan and Africa.

pp. 16-17 Youth Power paving the path to end NTDs by Kondo Yuya

Kondo Yuya, a member of NTDs Youth Organization, reported on 'The Future of Global Health: The Next Generation's Impact on World Health', a thematic event held as part of TICAD9. Through this event, he noted that: (1) African youth leaders were able to share successful examples and challenges within their own countries; (2) concrete "next actions" were defined and shared; and (3) after the event, leaders from more than ten countries expressed an interest in participating in further collaborations. He also points out that what remains a challenge is to sustain and expand support for neglected tropical diseases (NTDs), as their high prevalence among the poor makes it difficult to increase their policy priority.

pp. 18-23 Civic space in Africa: Focusing on NGO laws and anti-homosexuality laws by Tonegawa Yoshiko

Tonegawa Yoshiko, a researcher specializing in education and NGOs in Africa, examines the regulations concerning NGOs and their approaches to sexual minorities (LGBTQI+) in Africa. In Zimbabwe, President Mnangagwa signed the Private Voluntary Organisations (PVO) Amendment Act, in April 2025, restricting NGO activities due to concerns about links between NGOs and opposition forces. In Kenya, the 'Family Protection Bill,' which bans homosexuality, was submitted to the Parliament in 2023. In February 2024, the Parliament in Ghana passed the 'Human Sexual Rights and Family Values Act,' which prohibits same-sex sexual activity, marriage, gender-affirming surgery, or the like, and penalizes supporters of the LGBTQI+. In Uganda, President Museveni signed the 'Anti-Homosexuality Act' in May 2023, and it has already come into force. Through her examination of these cases, she highlights that the laws for setting a target for sexual minorities not only regulate minority groups, but also restrict the activities of dissidents, thereby reducing the scope of civil society.

pp. 24-25 My journey so far, rooted in Ghana by Yamada Taira

This is the 20th installment of "African Kids Club's Relay Essay." Yamada Taira was born in 2000 to a Ghanaian father and a Japanese mother. He grew up in Itabashi, Tokyo. When he was young, his father would take him to places frequented by Ghanaians and other Africans during the holidays. During his first summer vacation at primary school, he traveled to Ghana for the first time and met his grandparents. As a teenager, he often faced discrimination because he looked different and came from a different background to those around him. However, after reading Malcolm X's autobiography at university and studying abroad in San Francisco, he started to respond to unfair treatment with words. After returning to Japan, he conducted research on 'Ghanaians in Japan' at graduate school. He is currently planning to visit Ghana to make a documentary.

p. 26 No seeds, no future? The truth about seeds by Hosokawa Michi

Hosokawa Michi reports on the 6th seminar in the series 'The World Seen through Food,' organized by the AJF agriculture and food study group. The seminar, titled 'No seeds, no future? The truth about seeds,' was presented by Professor Nishikawa Yoshiaki of Ryukoku University. Professor Nishikawa drew on cases from Ethiopia, Burkina Faso, and Rwanda to illustrate how farmers' own seed-saving, selection, and exchange practices underpin resilient informal seed systems, even where governments promote improved varieties or formal relief schemes. He stressed that these systems, often dismissed as "backward," in fact embody rich knowledge and diversity and should be carefully linked with formal seed institutions rather than replaced, raising broader questions about who decides what to grow and how seed and food sovereignty are shaped.

p. 27 Talk about one's own book: Katayama Natsuki, *Rwanda no Gacaca Saiban/ Rwanda no Ima* by Katayama Natsuki

Katayama Natsuki introduced her own publications *Rwanda no Gacaca Saiban: Dialogue for Compensations of genocide crimes between victims and perpetrator* and *Rwanda no Ima: Genocide wo kataru bigaisha to kagaisha*. She lived in several rural Rwandan villages for two years, gradually building relationships with the local people. She conducted interviews with 97 individuals, focusing primarily on genocide victims and perpetrators who lived in the same villages, as well as judges from the Gacaca courts. After returning to Japan in 2020, she published *Rwanda no Ima*. In 2025, she published *Rwanda no Gacaca Saiban*, based on her doctoral thesis. The book includes a complete set of laws on the Gacaca courts, and its Japanese translation as well. In her own writings, she sees that, although the Gacaca courts concluded in 2012, the issue of genocide compensation remains unresolved. This has caused poverty for both victims and perpetrators, hindering reconciliation.

Back cover Afterword ('Hitotsu no musubime to shite' in Japanese) and a record of AJF's activities