



# Sakura-Meskel

## Newsletter

Embassy of Japan in Ethiopia

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December 2008

### MESSAGE FROM THE AMBASSADOR

Dear Readers,



H.E. Mr. Kinichi Komano at the Centre Connection ceremony of New Abay Bridge

If people look back at the year 2008 in a decade or so, it will be remembered as the turning point in the bi-lateral relationship between our two countries of Japan and Ethiopia, for it has entered a new era in this year, coinciding with the Ethiopian Millennium.

This year, Japan hosted two big events related to African development; TICAD IV (Tokyo International Conference on African Development) in Yokohama and the G8 Summit in Hokkaido in which African development featured as the major topic in the deliberations by the G8 leaders. On both occasions, Prime Minister Meles visited Japan and actively participated in the events. From Japan, too, former PM Mori visited Ethiopia on the occasion of the 10th AU Summit as a special guest and met African leaders, among others, the PM of Ethiopia. As a follow-up to the commitments made by the Japanese Government on these occasions, a public and private joint mission for promoting trade and investment, including around 25 Japanese business people, visited Ethiopia as the first ever delegation of this kind and had a series of fruitful discussions with government officials and business people of Ethiopia.

The Millennium year according to the Ethiopian calendar, has brought about an important outcome for the Ethiopia people; a rediscovered confidence of Ethiopians in their history and culture and at the same time for their future. The new Abay Bridge over the Blue Nile River, which Japan supported in the construction phase, has just been completed, its center connection taking place on the eve of the new century. It has been named the Hadese Bridge (Renaissance Bridge), in order to symbolize the ushering in of a new era for the country and, of course, as the symbol of ever-lasting friendship between Ethiopians and Japanese.

In addition to the exchanges of personnel from different levels of government of both countries, this year witnessed the diversification and deepening of bi-lateral development cooperation. First and foremost, a new aspect has been added to the menu of cooperation. Food security has long been put at the center of bi-lateral cooperation as agricultural and rural development, and water resources development, health and education and infrastructure such as road and bridge construction, being the major areas of cooperation. Now, intellectual intercourse for enriching the development strategy of the country by infusing the experiences of Japan in its own development and its development cooperation with South-Eastern Asian economies, and technical cooperation for promoting industrial productivity in the country have been put on the cooperation agenda. Through adding this cooperation to the existing ones, our hope is that Ethiopia will be able to become a model country for Africa like Japan is in Asia.

If Ethiopia succeeds in achieving its goal of becoming a middle-income country, keeping a large ambition and well-prepared agenda in mind, first and foremost, it should overcome the immediate hurdles such as inflation and food shortages. Japan, in order to support the efforts underway, handed over 7,200 metric tons of fertilizer and 9,600 metric tons of wheat in the recent past. Japan is planning to pledge an additional US\$ 8 million worth of food and US \$ 10 million worth of equipment for the increase of food production.

### JAPAN ELECTED AS NON-PERMANENT MEMBER OF THE UNSC



United Nations Security Council

On October 17, Japan was elected as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) at the elections held during the 63rd Session of the UN General Assembly. Japan will serve a two-year term in the UNSC starting from January 1 next year.

Japan presented its candidature for this election with a view to making further contribution to international peace and security. The result of the election shows that the international community recognizes Japan's long-standing commitment and enthusiasm toward the goals of the UN, and that it expects Japan to make further contributions to this end. With this successful election, Japan will assume non-permanent membership in the Security Council for the tenth time, the most frequent among all the members of the UN.

Today, the international community faces many complex challenges such as terrorism and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, which cannot be dealt with properly by individual state or region alone, as well as regional conflicts, and it is important for the international community to unite and cooperate in order to tackle these challenges effectively. As the body endowed with primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, the UNSC is expected to play a particularly important part in this regard. Japan is committed to making proactive and constructive contributions to the work of the Council.

## JAPANESE BUSINESS DELEGATION VISITED ETHIOPIA



Joint Meeting of Ministries



Joint Meeting of Ministries

companies. In addition, the Joint Mission visited a flower farm and the Ethiopian Commodity Exchange, which was established in April 2008.

This dispatch of a Japanese Joint Mission is the first time such an opportunity has been created in Ethiopia, and is considered a first step to strengthen business relationships between Japan and Ethiopia. Previously, there have been private visits from some Japanese companies but they have been few in number. We expect that many Japanese businesses will now take a cue from the dispatch of this Joint Mission, and that many Japanese private companies would be interested in visiting Ethiopia to promote trade and investment. By expanding trade and investment between our two countries, we hope to help develop economic growth in Ethiopia to overcome issues of poverty reduction for the country.

The Embassy of Japan would like to strongly and continuously support these business activities.

Japanese Joint Mission for Promoting Trade and Investment visited the East African Region from the beginning to the middle of September, coming to Ethiopia for 3 days from 14 to 16 September 2008.

The dispatch of the Joint Mission was announced by the then Prime Minister Mr. Yasuo Fukuda at TICAD IV, which was held in May 2008. The Joint Mission is the first and the largest follow-up plan launched at TICAD IV to accelerate economic growth and promote trade and investment in Africa.

The itinerary for the Joint Mission included Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia and Tanzania, and the total number of participants was 60. Mr. Nobuhide Minorikawa, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs, headed the Joint Mission which comprised officials of relevant ministries, governmental institutions and representative from 25 Japanese private companies.

In Ethiopia, the Joint Mission held talks with H.E. Ato Girma Wolde Giorgis Lucha, President of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and executed a Joint Meeting of Ministries (MoTI, MoFED, MoME and MoARD). Views were exchanged and a network for expanding trade and investment between Japanese private companies and Ethiopian government officials was established. The Ethiopian government expressed its expectation to develop the economic growth of Ethiopia and expand trade and investment bilaterally.

The Joint Mission also visited the Addis Ababa Chamber of Commerce, and exchanged views freely between Japanese and Ethiopian private



Meeting with H.E. Ato Girma Wolde



Visiting Flower Farm

## ENTREPRENEURIAL TRAINING FOR LEATHER-SHOE AND GARMENT ENTREPRENEURS

Tetsushi Sonobe

Foundation the Advanced Studies on International Development (FASID), Japan



Opening Ceremony



Trainees of the Program

On November 3, 2008, an entrepreneurial training program sponsored by JICA began with impassioned opening speeches by Minister Tadesse and Ambassador Komano. All the 90 participants in the training are entrepreneurs in the leather-shoe industry and the garment industry. They will receive intensive training for 2.5 hours everyday for 24 days at FeMSEDA from three Japanese experts in (1) business strategy and marketing, (2) quality and production management, and (3) financial management.

I proposed this training to JICA because the case studies of these industries I conducted in 2005 and 2007 in collaboration with the Ethiopian Development Research Institute (EDRI) clearly indicated that the first step toward the dynamic industry growth was to strengthen the ability of entrepreneurs, just as it was in Japan and other parts of East Asia. Entrepreneurs see opportunities when others see problems. Entrepreneurs take initiative to transform these opportunities into profitable business situations. It is true that entrepreneurship is difficult to teach, but effective teaching methodologies have been developed in Japan by continual series of trials and errors.

Having observed the first three training sessions, there seems to me no question that this training program will succeed in increasing the participants' potentials enormously, because they are extremely highly motivated, and because the Japanese instructors are highly qualified and devoted. A major question arises as to how much the participants can translate into action the knowledge that they learn from the training. I would like to come back to Addis Ababa several months later to measure the effects of the training on the behaviors and business results of the participants.

## CENTRE CONNECTION OF "HEDASE BRIDGE"

On 10 September, 2008, the Ethiopian Millennium Eve, the Ceremony for the Center Connection of the Hedase Bridge was held. H.E. Ambassador Kinichi Komano together with H.E. Ato Meles Zenawi, Prime Minister of Ethiopia, celebrated the ceremony and the Finale of the Millennium year. The Hedase Bridge (length 303m) is the first Extradosed Bridge in East Africa, which has been financially supported by Japanese ODA, a part of the project for the Rehabilitation of the Trunk Road, Phase III.



H.E. Ato Meles, H.E. Dr. Kassu Yilala and  
H.E. Mr. Komano

On the occasion, Ambassador Komano explained this bridge was not only technically remarkable by using advanced bridge construction technology, but also remarkable in different senses as well. This bridge connects the regions both sides of the river and facilitates further integration of the whole area. At the same time, this bridge is considered as connecting the past of Ethiopia with its future not only by replacing the old Abay Bridge but also by ushering in a new era when new technologies and skills will be widely put into use for the development of the country.



Old Abai Bridge (Left) and Hedase Bridge (Right)



Hedase Bridge



H.E. Ato Meles Zenawi

Prime Minister Meles said that this bridge had introduced 21st century technology to Ethiopia and was not only serving to cross the river, but also would speed up the development of the country. He also expressed his appreciation of the support of the Government of Japan for assisting the Ethiopian government's effort in developing the country. The construction in the Abay gorge had been especially difficult because of its geological nature, and the consultants and the engineers engaged in the project did a great job to achieve what we were able to see on the day of ceremony. Finally, the Prime Minister named the bridge "Hedase", which means "Renaissance" in Amharic.

Japan has been supporting the rehabilitation of the Addis Ababa - Debre Markos Trunk Road, including the Hedase Bridge, since 1998, improving accessibility and encouraging development. The Hedase Bridge will be opened to traffic in a few months.

## GRASSROOTS HUMAN SECURITY PROJECTS (GGP) IN JFY 2008



Signing Ceremony

On 8 September and 15 October, a signing ceremony for the Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects (GGP) took place at the Embassy of Japan in Ethiopia. Currently, a total of 8 projects out of the 25 projects have been approved. The Embassy of Japan has been implementing these integrated development activities with various not-for-profit organizations throughout Ethiopia.

One of the organizations, a Japanese NPO "Furato Fund for Forests (FFF)", has just started constructing an elementary school in Neakuteleab, North Wollo, Amhara, supported by Japanese Official Development Assistance (ODA).

The Government of Japan has promised continuous support for social and economic development in Ethiopia. Development activities are implemented through a people-centered approach, which seeks to promote the protection and empowerment of vulnerable people and communities.

These projects are expected to contribute to improving the lives of the most vulnerable and marginalized people and communities in Ethiopia. Furthermore, they are also aimed to achieve a better and decent life for people in Ethiopia not only through this scheme but also through various other kinds of support from the Government of Japan.



Signing Ceremony

## GRASSROOTS HUMAN SECURITY PROJECTS (GGP) IN JEY 2008

Signing Date of the Grant Contract	Project Name	Recipient Name
8 September, 2008	Saria Community Development in Basona Worana Woreda, Amhara	Developing the Family Together
	Bitta Secondary School Expansion and School Water Supply, SNNPRS	Association for Integrated Development - Ethiopia
	Hamancho Village Water Supply, Kembata Tembaro Zone, SNNPRS	Kembata Temro Malmat Mahber
15 October, 2008	Constructing Primary School in Waaji Kebele, Jijiga Woreda, Somali Regional State	Save the Rural Society (SRS)
	Self-Reliance Support for the Women's Group in East and West Harerge Zones, Oromia	National Project Service Unit, Natural Resources Management Department, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
	Constructing Primary Schools in Horo-Guduru Wallaga Zone, Oromia	Gurmuu Development Association
	Building Students' Hostel in Gurra Dhamole Woreda, Somali Regional State	Partnership for Pastoralists Development Association (PaPda)
	Constructing Primary School in Gode Kebele, Gode Woreda, Somali Regional State	Association Develop Horn (AD Horn)

# JAPANESE CULTURE

## TEA CEREMONY - "SADOU"

The Japanese tea ceremony, *Sadou*, entertains guests with green tea in accordance with traditional ritual.

It is not only to enjoy the taste of tea, but also to feel the spirit of *Sadou* which is based on the spirit of Zen and focuses on the Japanese 'wabi', a simple and calm state of mind.

The spirit of the tea ceremony is also represented by the phrase, 'icigo ichie' which means 'One Time/ One Meeting'.



It indicates that the encounter of the host and the guests in a tea ceremony is a special occasion which occurs only once in a lifetime.

Another delight of the Tea Ceremony is Japanese style confections (called *wagashi*) imitating flowers and so forth as they change from season to season. Eating these sweets prior to drinking the slightly bitter powdered tea (*matcha*) brings out and intensifies the taste of the tea.

