



Sakura-Meskel

Newsletter

Embassy of Japan in Ethiopia
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MESSAGE FROM THE AMBASSADOR

Dear Readers,



H.E. Mr. Kinichi Komano

I am writing this in Japan, where I am staying with my family for a vacation. During my stay here, I am planning to call on some people and visit some places with connection to Ethiopia.

One of these is the City of Oda, which is located in Shimane-Prefecture, and hosts a shrine associated with the legendary story of the birth of Japan. However my purpose in visiting the Shimane-Prefecture is to see the old Iwami Silver Mine, which was depleted a long time ago. But, recently it has been reborn as a UNESCO World Heritage site. When the Iwami Silver Mine was working,

the silver produced was exported from Oda Port, thus bringing about abundant wealth to the town. We can still see many rich wooden houses which were built in the town those days, one of which has been transported to Gondar and reassembled as the Japan-Ethio Cultural Center. The Fasilides Castle and the Iwami Silver Mine were both thriving in the 16th and 17th centuries when the Portuguese were active in both countries. Given these similarities in historical background, I hope that people-to-people and locality-to-locality relations between these cities will emerge in the future as a harbinger of relationships of the same kind.

During my vacation, I will also call on the "Tree of Life" people, who are introducing Berete-Gera forest coffee in Japan. Ethiopia used to be extremely rich in forests. Although this is becoming a story from the past, it is also true that there are still huge areas of the country covered with dense foliage, such as the Berete-Gera Forest near Jimma. JICA experts are there to support the local community in improving their livelihood while preserving the virgin forest. Local people are well aware of the importance of co-habiting

with nature. However, population pressure has obliged local people to cut down trees and clear the land for cultivation. This helps people temporarily, but not from the long term perspective. The purpose of the JICA project is to help the local community to find concrete ways and means for adding value to the local products, for the time being mainly coffee, such as getting certificates of authenticity for forest coffee and roasting it on the ground, instead of selling the beans.

The "Tree of Life" people are business people working to make aroma-therapy an industry. They are keen to support local communities in developing countries in the process by helping them add and create value by themselves in order to get more share from their products. For Berete-Gera forest coffee, they are going to support local people in roasting and packaging of the coffee themselves and marketing it in Japan.

All initiatives of this kind will help us in not only widening but also diversifying and deepening good relations between Japan and Ethiopia. Therefore, I have every reason to support them and hope for their success.

JAPAN EXTENDS 70 MILLION BIRR GRANT AID FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ADDIS ABABA

A grant agreement signing ceremony between the Government of Japan and the Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia took place on 21 May 2009, at the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development (MOFED). H.E. Mr. Kinichi Komano, Ambassador of Japan to Ethiopia and H.E. Ato Ahmed Shide, State Minister of Finance and Economic Development, signed the grant agreement.

Under the grant agreement, the Government of Japan extended a grant aid with an amount of 70 million Ethiopian Birr for the implementation of the Program for the Construction of Primary and Secondary Schools in Addis Ababa.

On the occasion of the signing ceremony, H.E. Mr. Kinichi Komano explained that the construction of these primary and secondary

schools is to contribute to the efforts of the Government of Ethiopia to promote quality education and expand access to education with special emphasis on primary education in underserved areas. Compared to other regions, in central Addis Ababa the student enrolment ratio is relatively good, however, on the outskirts of the city, there are still challenges for school age children to access school and for the provision of quality education.

THE LAUNCHING OF A BILATERAL INDUSTRIAL POLICY DIALOGUE

Prof. Kenichi Ohno

National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies (GRIPS)

Invitation to share Eastern experience

In July 2008, a number of Japanese economists, including myself, were invited to Addis Ababa to attend the African Task Force meeting of the Initiative for Policy Dialogue (ATF/IPD) co-organized by Prof. Joseph Stiglitz (Columbia University) and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). In that meeting we had the honor of explaining the East Asian experiences of industrial policy formulation in the presence of H.E. Prime Minister Meles Zenawi. He was particularly interested in skill and technology development, such as JICA's practical assistance to raise factory productivity in Tunisia. A few days later, the Prime Minister called Japanese Ambassador Kinichi Komano to request a two-pronged project to enrich Ethiopian industrial strategy with



Prof. Kenichi Ohno

Japanese knowledge. The first component was policy dialogue with GRIPS and JICA, and the second was a factory-level productivity improvement program called *kaizen*, similar to the one in Tunisia.

After months of intense preparation and discussion, on June 2, 2009, the first Ethiopia-Japan High Level Forum was held in Addis Ababa to officially launch the requested two-year bilateral cooperation. In the policy dialogue session of the Forum, we evaluated the current status of Agricultural Development Led Industrialization (ADLI), which is Ethiopia's economic policy backbone. Economic Advisor to the Prime Minister, Newai Gebre-ab, MOTI State Minister Tadesse Haile, JICA Vice President, Masafumi Kuroki, and Ambassador Komano presided at the session. Separately, I submitted my paper on Democratic

Developmentalism (DD) and ADLI to the Prime Minister. Five days later, he wrote me a long letter with many substantive comments. I have had many opportunities to discuss policies with leaders and ministers in various countries, but there is no prime minister like Mr. Meles anywhere in the world.

Inputs to Ethiopia's evolving policies

Ethiopia's development strategy has evolved steadily in response to changing circumstances and policy makers' cumulative knowledge on policy making. In the mid 1990s, a policy framework to upgrade smallholder agriculture, on which the majority of the population depended, was designed. In the early 2000s, the medium-term program to realize ADLI was initiated, and support measures for commercial agriculture and urban industries and SMEs (Small and Medium Enterprises) were added. In recent years, a number of industries such as leather and flowers grew rapidly albeit from a very low base. At the same time, step by step, the Ethiopian Government acquired the method of industrial policy through learning-by-doing and donor assistance. Now it wants to expand the policy scope further to include import substitution industries in addition to export-oriented ones.

Ethiopia plans to update its five-year development plan, called the PASDEP, for the period of 2010/11-2015/16. We hope that our policy dialogue will serve as a useful input to this effort, especially for drafting the industry chapter of the next PASDEP. There are fundamental differences between the East and the West in industrialization policy direction. East Asian experts often emphasize hands-on pragmatism, concrete aspects of industry and agriculture, and the desire to see the pupil catch up and graduate after a certain amount of assistance. Generally speaking, Japanese experts are better at supplying concrete ingredients than proposing a grand framework for development and ODA. We believe that the two approaches are complementary and that Japan can bring something new to Africa which has been immersed mostly in the Western way of development.

The next step in bilateral dialogue

In the next policy dialogue, expected in a few months, we would like to raise cross-cutting issues and alternative organizational arrangements for industrial policy formulation from the perspective of East Asia. In subsequent sessions, we will go deeper into the details of concrete policy issues. Japan has conducted development policy dialogues



Amb. Komano, Mr. Kuroki, H.E. Ato Nisut, and H.E. Ato Tadesse

with many countries: Argentina, Vietnam, Thailand, Indonesia, and Laos. Our team, the GRIPS Development Forum, also gives action-oriented advice to a number of countries in East Asia and Latin America. By the kind invitation of the Prime Minister, Ethiopia is now added to the list of countries which we will closely monitor. In the coming years, we will continuously study the most relevant issues raised by the Ethiopian authorities and travel to Addis Ababa every few months to exchange analyses and proposals with them.



Participants of the dialogue

GRIPS is a Tokyo-based graduate school specializing in policy formulation. The majority of the students are foreign and many come from Africa including Ethiopia. The study on industrialization strategies of latecomer economies is one of the most important topics of GRIPS researchers. We offer not only theories but also pragmatic advice to build public and private capabilities for development and industrialization.

GRASSROOTS HUMAN SECURITY PROJECTS (GGP)

Inauguration Ceremonies for Educational Projects Approved in 2008 took place in the Somali and Amhara Regions

Every year, the Embassy of Japan conducts around 25 Grassroots Human Security Projects in Ethiopia. This project is designed to provide assistance to development projects that are implemented by non-profit organizations, including non-governmental organizations, community-based organizations and local authorities. In the Japanese fiscal year 2008, the Embassy approved 24 projects and already three projects have been completed in the Somali and Amhara regions.

Somali Region

On 23 and 24 May 2009, H.E. Mr. Kinichi KOMANO, Ambassador of Japan to Ethiopia, attended two ceremonies to inaugurate educational projects in Jijiga and Gode, Somali Regional State. People in the Somali Region have been suffering from the difficulty in accessing basic social services, such as schools and hospitals for a long time. This project therefore focused on basic education for those who have been prevented from going to school so far for various reasons.

One project was implemented in the Waaji Kebele Jijiga Zone, which has a scarcity of educational facilities, including primary and secondary schools. Formal schooling is not available in this area. This project was designed

by an NGO called Save the Rural Society to construct school blocks and to provide school furniture.

The other project was implemented in the Gode Kebele, Gode Zone, which has overwhelming numbers of Internally Displaced People (IDPs) and repatriated people. As a result, the school cannot accommodate all school-aged children. To solve this problem, an NGO called Association Develop Horn (AD Horn) constructed additional school blocks funded by the Government of Japan. Now the school serves the educational needs of 320 pupils in these additional blocks.

The Government of Japan considers education

as a pillar of the future of every community, which eventually contributes to the economic and social development in Ethiopia. Supporting educational projects in the Somali Region, which has limited manpower, has a great impact on developing human resources in the area. In his remarks, H.E. Mr. Komano said he was pleased to see the completion of the projects and the students enjoying a better learning environment. He expressed his regards to these communities and woreda offices for their involvement in completing this project. Moreover, he sincerely hoped that the communities would maintain the schools in good condition so that they could provide educational opportunities for students in the area for a long time.



Amhara Region

An inauguration ceremony for a school construction and water project took place on 14 June 2009 at the Primary School in Basana Worana Woreda in the Amhara National Regional State.

Basana Worana Woreda is one of the areas which faces a shortage of primary schools as well as low quality of education. In particular, the quality of education has emerged as a great challenge for schools. For instance, in Basana Worana Woreda, children are forced to study in a dusty and dark classroom, which accommodates more students than it can comfortably hold. This school environment affects not only the children's health but also their comprehension of classes because less attention is given to each child in such a packed classroom. In addition to educational problems, the project

area is also suffering from the lack of safe water and a lot of children are forced to drop out of school because they are required to share the heavy burden of fetching water, walking a long distance every day.

In order to solve both the educational and water problems, Developing the Family Together, which is a local NGO working for women's rights, HIV/AIDS prevention, and income generating activities in the project area, requested the Embassy of Japan to construct a primary school as well as to drill a bore hole for a well for the Saria Community in Basana Worana Woreda in Amhara. The Embassy, moved by the strong incentive and motivation of the community, signed a contract on 8 September 2008, for the amount of 85,570 US dollars for the project named, "the Project for

the Saria Community development in Basana Worana Woreda, Amhara". It is expected that this school will provide better quality education to more than 600 children from around the project area and the drilling of a bore hole well will also improve access to safe water while contributing to reducing children's burden of fetching water.

Mr. Yoshinori Kitamura, First Secretary of Embassy of Japan, in his speech at the inauguration ceremony expressed his profound gratitude to the people in the Saria Community for their deep devotion to the completion of the project and stressed his sincere wish that the school and new well would greatly contribute to provide educational opportunities for more children in the project area as well as to improve people's life by having access to safe water.



INAUGURATION CEREMONY OF OLYSET NET STITCHING FACTORY

On 27 June 2009, the first Olyset Net Stitching Factory in Ethiopia was inaugurated in the presence of Japanese Ambassador H.E. Kinichi Komano, Minister for Ministry of Trade and Industry H.E. Ato Girma Birru and Minister for Ministry of Health H.E. Dr. Tewodros Adhanom at the premises of Kombolcha Textile S.C. in Kombolcha town.

This factory produces Malaria Bed Nets using the Long Lasting Insecticidal Net, Olyset Net, made by a Japanese company, Sumitomo Chemicals. Olyset Net is a proven, effective tool in the fight against malaria.

Olyset Net is fully recommended by WHO, confirming efficacy and durability.



Inauguration Ceremony

In this factory, with the technical cooperation of a Japanese staff member from Sumitomo Chemicals, 300 staff manufacture 3 million Malaria Bed Nets annually. It is expected to increase its production up to 10 million and to export Malaria Bed Nets to neighboring countries.



H.E. Ambassador Komano



Olyset Net Stitching Factory



Packaged Olyset Net

BOY'S DAY FESTIVAL (TANGO NO SEKKU)

May 5th, the Boy's Day festival has a long history of a thousand years, and began as a custom of the samurai, the military-based ruling class in the feudal period. It is one of Japan's seasonal festivals and people fly carp-shaped streamer, display Samurai dolls and eat rice dumplings wrapped in bamboo leaves (chimaki).



Armor, Sword, Bow and Arrows

The sword and armor were a spiritual symbol of the samurai as it protected them from injury or death while in battle. Nowadays, when a boy is born, the family displays an armored doll with an imitation sword, wishing the boy to be sound in mind and strong in body, because it is believed that the armor and sword will drive evil spirits out and protect their boy from bad luck.

The use of the carp-shaped streamer is connected with the amazing ability of the carp to survive; it can live not only in clean streams but also in swamps and ponds. Inspired by the legend that a carp swam up stream against a rapid current and became a dragon, people fly the carp-shaped streamers to wish their boy's success in life.

The Embassy of Japan held an event related to the Boy's Day festival on May 11th at the Ambassador's Residence. At the event the said carp-shaped streamers and the samurai dolls were displayed. The Ambassador also referred to the similarity between Japan and Ethiopia's culture. As a concrete example of this, a Japanese tea ceremony and an Ethiopian coffee ceremony were demonstrated.

Another example of the similarity seen in both countries' traditional music was also introduced. The event was successful in that it presented the cultural similarity between the two nations in the presence of esteemed guests such as the State Ministers of Culture and Tourism and diplomats from various countries as well.



Tea Ceremony



Coffee Ceremony