



New Year Message by Ambassador ITO Takako

January 2023

At the outset of the year 2023, I would like to share the achievements in 2022 and the expectations for 2023 concerning Japan-Ethiopia relations.

Regarding the situation in Northern Ethiopia, the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (CoHA), the Nairobi Declaration and TOR for the Monitoring, Verification and Compliance Mechanism have put Ethiopia on the right track from conflict to peace and reconstruction. The Government of Japan welcomes such developments and sincerely hopes that these agreements to be faithfully implemented.

Japan continues to assist in the peace and stability of Ethiopia, with a focus on human security. For instance, in January 2022, Japan's humanitarian assistance of USD 26 million for Northern Ethiopia and other regions was provided through international organizations, and in July, another USD 3.3 million in emergency food aid was provided to the Somali Region through the WFP. In December, Japan decided to provide approximately USD 25 million through international organizations for conflict and drought affected areas in Ethiopia.

In consultation with the Ethiopian Ministry of Health, Japan announced in September the provision of mobile clinic vehicles and equipment to hospitals in five regions of the country where the maternity mortality rate is high and the health coverage is low. Provision of additional school buildings vocational training centers and small bridges for local communities are some of the examples of projects that were completed and handed over last year after fruitful cooperation between Japan and Ethiopian local NGOs or municipal governments, or are now in the pipeline for this year's implementation.

I strongly hope that Ethiopia's national dialogue process, which is to begin in 2023, will be truly inclusive, transparent and meet its goals. To assist in its activities, Japan will provide buses for the Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission so that Commissioners as well as other participants who might have difficulties accessing the venue for the national dialogue can have a mode of transportation.



At the 8th Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD 8) held in August 2022, the Japanese Prime Minister H.E. Mr. KISHIDA Fumio announced the appointment of Japan's Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa. The newly appointed Special Envoy Ambassador H.E. Mr. SHIMIZU Shinsuke will soon be working with us to support Africa's efforts towards a peaceful and stable Africa, and of course Ethiopia is one of the most important countries to work with in that respect.

Japan's cooperation with Ethiopia in the field of PKO has been ongoing for 10 years now. The Japanese government continues to provide educational support to the FDRE International Peace Support Training Institute, Peacekeeping Centre, and high-level PKO officials from the two governments made mutual visits and discussed further PKO cooperation last year.



TICAD 8 was also an opportunity to draw attention of Japanese investors to start new business in Africa, especially with the announcement of an investment of USD 30 billion by the Japanese public and private sectors in Africa over the next three years. The number of Japanese business people visiting Ethiopia to seek business opportunities has increased compared to the last two years. Safaricom Ethiopia, which has a 27% investment from Japan's Sumitomo Corporation, officially launched its service in October last year. I hope the success of this FDI will become a good example and attract more FDI to Ethiopia in the near future.

The Embassy conducted a few public relations events, including an Ikebana workshop in May and a public lecture on Japan's foreign policy at Bahir Dar University in November. The JICA Chair Program, which started at Addis Ababa University in 2021, held two lectures last year to share Japan's experience of a non-western country becoming truly democratic and economically advanced, while maintaining its own traditions and culture. Now that the risk of COVID-19 is being reduced, the Embassy plans to organize various Japanese cultural events in 2023, such as a Japanese food demonstration, Karate demonstration and a Japanese film festival. The Japanese government and Japanese volunteers are also planning to restore the Japanese Garden in the Presidential Palace. I hope that more Ethiopians have the chance to enjoy the beauty of the garden.





There were occasions to express our appreciation for those who contributed to Japan-Ethiopia relations. In May last year, the decoration of the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Star was conferred to the former State Minister for Science and Higher Education, Prof. Afework Kassu, for his achievements in promoting bilateral relations. In August, the Japanese Foreign Minister's commendations were announced for Dr. Firew Tegegne, the President of Bahir Dar University, for his contribution to inter-university collaborations and for The Ethiopia Karate Federation for its long years of effort to promote Karate in Ethiopia.

In the Chinese zodiac, the year 2023 is “the Year of the Rabbit”, which is said to be a year in which our past efforts begin to blossom and bear fruit. I hope that 2023 will be a fruitful year for Ethiopia and for all of you.