

Summary of “Africa-Japan Ministerial Dialogue Meeting on STI for SDGs” hosted by Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT)

■ **Outline of the Meeting**

1. Date: August 28th, 2019

2. Venue: Yokohama, Japan

3. Organized by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT)

Co-organized by the Japan Science and Technology Agency (JST), Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS), Japan Agency for Medical Research and Development (AMED), and Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)

4. Participating countries/organization on the African side

Angola, Cameroon, Congo Republic, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gabon, Kenya, Lesotho, Mali, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, Tunisia, Uganda, Zimbabwe (17 countries), and African Union (AU)

5. Participants on the Japanese side

- Mr. SHIBAYAMA Masahiko, Minister of MEXT
 - Mr. YAMAWAKI Yoshio, Senior Deputy Minister of MEXT
 - Prof. KISHI Teruo, Science and Technology Advisor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs
 - Dr. NAKAMURA Michiharu, Member of the United Nations 10-Member Group supporting the Technology Facilitation Mechanism for STI for SDGS
 - Mr. MATSUO Hiroki, Director General, Science, Technology and Innovation/ Atomic Energy Policy, Cabinet Office
 - Dr. SATOMI Susumu, President, Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS)
 - Prof. HAMAGUCHI Michinari, President, Japan Science and Technology Agency (JST)
 - Ms. SUZUKI Noriko, Senior Vice President, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), and others
- (Positions are at the time of the meeting.)

■ Summary of the meeting

After opening remarks by MEXT Minister SHIBAYAMA Masahiko, Prof. KISHI Teruo, Science and Technology Advisor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, and Prof. Sarah Anyang AGBOR, Commissioner for Human Resources, Science and Technology at the African Union Commission (AUC), the dialogue meeting proceeded according to the agenda as follows.

Session 1: Policy brief (recent trends and efforts on STI for SDGs)

Session 2: Good practices on Japan-Africa S&T Cooperation

Session 3: Dialogue

This meeting was organized in cooperation with the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Cabinet Office, which showed the intention of the Japanese government to promote cooperation on STI for SDGs between Japan and African countries.

Opening Address

Minister SHIBAYAMA stated that STI for SDGs and human resources development are the keys for achieving the AU's AGENDA 2063 and the UN's SDGs. He also expressed his expectations that through this dialogue meeting aiming to share good practices and policy measures for advancing Africa-Japan cooperation, Japan will be a better partner for self-reformation by African countries.

Prof. KISHI Teruo, Science and Technology Advisor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, introduced 'Recommendations towards TICAD7: Achieving an Innovation Ecosystem together with Africa' formulated by the Advisory Board for the Promotion of Science and Technology Diplomacy of Japan. He added that Japan should contribute to resolving global challenges by using STI, and that African countries and Japan should think together to build an innovation ecosystem.

On behalf of the African participants, Prof. Sarah Anyang AGBOR, Commissioner for Human Resources, Science and Technology from the African Union, made opening remarks. She stated that innovations are required for promoting the economy, education, science and technology and emphasized the importance of cooperation with Japan for achieving them. She also said that it is vital to exchange opinions on what can be done through STI towards addressing challenges such as climate change

and infectious diseases that should be considered as global-chain issues.

Session 1: Policy brief (recent trends and efforts in STI for SDGs)

Japanese participants introduced trends and efforts for STI for SDGs within Japan and the global communities, and the Minister from Kenya, one of the pilot countries of the Global Pilot Programme on STI for SDGs roadmaps, explained the draft STI roadmaps currently developed. Following that, MEXT explained cooperation between Africa and Japan in higher education and for science and technology. MEXT also introduced a new initiative under the Science and Technology Research Partnership for Sustainable Development (SATREPS) program that will encourage joint research between Japanese and African institutions through active utilization of ICT from the next open call in September 2019, based on the Recommendation towards TICAD7 by the Advisory Board for the Promotion of Science and Technology Diplomacy of Japan.

In addition, the Japan Science and Technology Agency (JST) and the National Research Foundation of South Africa (NRF) jointly announced a new framework to promote joint research between African countries and Japan, named the African-Japan Collaborative Research, or AJ-CORE, and its first public open call will be sometime in the fall this year.

From the perspective of human resource development and capacity building, representative examples of efforts and cooperation were presented, including: 1) JICA's activities on human resource development in the area of science and technology in Africa, such as the Egypt-Japan University of Science and Technology (E-JUST) and 2) cooperation for fostering young researchers between the Mathematical Society of Japan and the Africa Institute of Mathematical Sciences (AIMS). Finally, the Egyptian minister introduced Egypt's National AI Strategy, one goal of which is to lead and support the African and Arab countries in AI education, research and innovation.

Session 2: Good practices on Japan-Africa S&T Cooperation

In Session 2, Japanese and African researchers presented jointly two good practices of collaborative research on STI for SDGs: 1) research for eradication of the parasitic Striga plant, including their recent field experiment in Kenya, which is expected to contribute to solving food problems, by a research team at the Institute of Transformative Bio-Molecules (ITbM) of Nagoya University and the Kenya

Agricultural and Livestock Research Organization (KALRO), 2) early-warning systems to prevent health disasters such as malaria, based on a climate forecast jointly developed by the Institute of Tropical Medicine at Nagasaki University and the Applied Centre for Climate and Earth System Studies (ACCESS). It was mentioned that this system was being applied in South Africa and Mozambique and also had the possibility of application to other areas in Africa and other fields such as agriculture.

Session 3: Dialogue

After the two sessions, ministers exchanged their opinions towards promoting science and technology cooperation between Japan and Africa. Some of the remarks by ministers from Africa are summarized as follows: 1) recognition of the importance through this meeting of science and technology for achieving the SDGs; 2) recognition that African countries should also work together to maximize the outcomes from science and technology for SDGs; 3) expectations for the sharing of information on Japan-Africa collaborative activities implemented in African countries; and 4) hopes for further Japanese support to promote human resources development and human exchanges between Japan and Africa towards achieving the SDGs.

Closing remarks

Lastly, MEXT Minister Shibayama reiterated the possibilities to apply joint research results of the good practices between Japan and Africa to the respective countries and suggested the utilization of the Japan-Africa cooperation tools presented in the meeting. He also stated that MEXT would support the activities that various stakeholders such as researchers, the private sector and relevant ministries and agencies of each country will cooperate and collaborate on, based on the research results on SDGs, so that MEXT will contribute to the achievement of the SDGs by expanding the dimension of Japan-Africa cooperation.