

Digest Report

High Level Policy Dialogues on Sustainable Blue Economies and Food Security in Africa, Japan 2025

Africa, a region with buoyant population and economic growth has a great potential of promoting sustainable blue economies by enhancing marine and aquatic food production while safeguarding ecological integrity, biological diversity and socio-economic equity. The Sasakawa Peace Foundation and the Nippon Foundation spearheaded high level policy dialogues in 2025 as a way to forge international partnership toward achieving sustainable development, promoting sustainable blue economies and enhancing food security in Africa. Here are brief highlights.

High-Level Expert Group on TICAD

The High-Level Expert Group on TICAD met 4 times to exchange viewpoints and mobilize ideas to enhance Africa – Japan partnership and produce a draft policy recommendation. Subsequently, consultations were held with the African Diplomatic Corp in Tokyo. The policy recommendation entitled “Toward the Promotion of Sustainable Development in Africa: Strengthening the Japan-Africa Partnership and Enhancing the Effectiveness of the TICAD Process” was finalized and submitted to the then Foreign Minister Takeshi Iwaya of Japan on 25 July 2025 in Tokyo. The recommendations presented a wide range of suggested actions and underlined the important of strengthening cooperation between Japan and Africa under an All-Japan approach involving multi-stakeholders of Japan in priority areas for Africa where Japan has comparative strengths such as food security and a sustainable blue economy. Such collaboration will enhance the effectiveness of TICAD and Japan – Africa partnership. It was also stated vital to facilitate leaders’ dialogues and at the same time to foster regular and institutionalized engagement with private sector actors, NGOs, and other stakeholders. It was also suggested to pursue collaboration with key partners such as the African Development Bank in the areas of advancing impact investment, startup support, and human resource and leadership development where both the Sasakawa Peace Foundation and the Nippon Foundation are expected to make constructive contributions.



High-Level Expert Group on TICAD

Eminent Persons Meeting on Sustainable Development and International Partnerships for Africa

The eminent persons meeting entitled “The Eminent Persons Meeting on Sustainable Development and International Partnerships for Africa – Towards enhancing food security and promoting sustainable blue economies” was held in Hakone, Kanagawa from 22 – 24 July 2025. The Meeting was attended by Excellency Olusegun Obasanjo, former President of Nigeria, Excellency Ibrahim Hassane Mayaki, former Prime Minister of Niger, Excellency Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete, former President of Tanzania, Excellency Jorge Carlos Fonseca, former President of Cabo Verde, Dr. Donald Kaberuka, former President of the African Development Bank, and Dr. Geraldine Fraser-Moloketi, former Minister of Public Service and Administration & Minister of Welfare and Population Development of South Africa. The Meeting was co-chaired by Mr. Yohei Sasakawa, Chairman of the Nippon Foundation and Dr. Atsushi Sunami, President of the Sasakawa Peace Foundation.

Building on more than 32 years of the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) process and the momentum of the TICAD 9, there was a strong shared emphasis on the importance of putting forward proposals to strengthen Japan–Africa cooperation in areas that respond directly to Africa’s needs. Ebullient discussions highlighted effective approaches to promoting a sustainable blue economy and improving food security as core pillars, taking into account Africa’s population growth, climate change, and food supply challenges. It was also stressed that advancing a sustainable blue economy requires improvements in fisheries and aquaculture, measures against illegal fishing, and strengthened international cooperation, drawing on Japanese experiences such as community-based initiatives involving artificial fish reefs and coral restoration. It was repeatedly noted that innovative technologies, financing mechanisms, and collaboration with local communities are key to reconciling marine resource conservation with economic development. Within Japan–Africa cooperation under the TICAD framework, the importance of strengthening food security and marine resource management was underscored, alongside the need for practical, cross-sectoral capacity building, leadership development, and human resource development through startup support and entrepreneurship promotion. A wide range of proposals were put forward, including the establishment of an “Africa–Japan Blue Innovation Fund,” increased investment in innovative food and ocean systems, enhanced education and knowledge exchange, support for fragile states, institutionalization of dialogue, and mechanisms for progress monitoring. Discussions focused on the importance of pursuing these initiatives to enhance the effectiveness of Japan–Africa cooperation. A statement incorporating these points was issued and presented to then Foreign Minister Takeshi Iwaya on July 25, and its contents were also announced at an international conference held later that same day.



Eminent Persons Meeting (1)



Eminent Persons Meeting (2)



Eminent Persons Meeting (3)



Eminent Persons Meeting (4)
 Excellency Olusegun Obasanjo, former President of Nigeria(center) and Excellency Jorge Carlos Fonseca, former President of Cabo Verde (left)



Eminent Persons Meeting (5)
 Excellency Ibrahim Hassane Mayaki, former Prime Minister of Nige (center) and Excellency Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete, former President of Tanzania (left)



Eminent Persons Meeting (6)
 Dr. Geraldine Fraser-Moloketi, former Minister of South Africa

Special International Symposium “Forging a Sustainable Future through Africa–Japan Collaboration - Towards enhancing food security and promoting sustainable blue economies”

Special International Symposium “Forging a Sustainable Future through Africa–Japan Collaboration - Towards enhancing food security and promoting sustainable blue economies” was

held from 15:00 – 16:30, Friday 25 July 2025 at Sasakawa Peace Foundation – International Hall. Mr. Hisayuki Fujii, State Minister for Foreign Affairs made guest remarks underlining the importance of Japan – Africa partnership and welcomed the discussions on sustainable blue economies and food security in Africa in the context of facilitating the preparation for the 9th International Conference on African Development (TICAD9). The participants of the Eminent Persons Meeting presented the highlights of their discussions including the calls for increased actions aimed at improving food security and nutrition, promoting sustainable blue economies by fostering sustainable fisheries building upon traditional small-scale fishing and incorporating technology-driven practices, promoting empowerment and education of women and youth, and enhancing investment and trade involving Africa.



Special International Symposium (1)



Special International Symposium (2)



Special International Symposium (3)
Dr. Donald Kaberuka, former President of the African Development Bank (center)



Reception after the Special International Symposium (4)

TICAD Partner Event on Impact Finance to Promote Sustainable Blue Economies

The TICAD Partner Event entitled “Leveraging Impact Finance and Empowering Communities to Improve Food Security and Promote Sustainable Blue Economies” was held in Yokohama on 19 August 2025. Experts from various organizations including those from Kenya, Nigeria, international NGOs/organizations and JICA attended, presented their activities and discussed the ways forward toward enhancing impact financing in the context of improving food security and promoting sustainable blue economies in Africa. The speakers addressed diverse challenges

in Africa including conflicts, climate change, marine plastic waste and energy shortage that adversely affect efforts to promote sustainable blue economies. It was underlined that it is vital to pursue integrate, long-term and coherent approaches and engage and motivate stakeholders and communities including women by demonstrating tangible benefits of jobs, income and food. It was also said critical to link stakeholders with finance, markets, and technology to enhance the impacts of blue financing. Greater partnership was called for as a way to enhance the impact of blue financing in the context of promoting sustainable blue economies and enhancing food security in Africa.



Impact Finance Seminar (1)



Impact Finance Seminar (2)

TICAD 9 Thematic Event on Food Systems anchored in the Blue Economy and Agriculture

TICAD 9 Thematic Event entitled “Building Sustainable, Resilient and Inclusive Food Systems and Local Economies in Africa anchored in the Blue Economy and Agriculture” was held on 20 August 2025 in Yokohama prior to the opening of the 9th Meeting of the International Conference on African Development (TICAD9). Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba addressed at the meeting. President William Ruto of Kenya, Prime Minister Elijah Ngurare of Namibia, Prime Minister of José Ulisses Correia e Silva of Cabo Verde, Minister of Economy, Planning and Regional Integration Soares SAMBU of Guinea-Bissau, and Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. MATSUMOTO Hisashi of Japan presented their views at the event. Dr. Atsushi Sunami, President of the Sasakawa Peace Foundation and Mr. Yohei Sasakawa, Honorary Chairperson of the Nippon Foundation and the Sasakawa Peace Foundation also joined in the discussions. The speakers underlined a wide range of policy priorities. They underlined: (i) food security and the sustainable blue economy were reaffirmed as priority areas where Africa and Japan can achieve tangible results through closer cooperation under the TICAD framework, (ii) human resource and leadership development—particularly for youth and women—was emphasized as the foundation of resilient food systems and inclusive economic growth, (iii) Japan’s comparative advantage lies in its community-based, on-the-ground approach and co-creation of solutions, illustrated by agriculture, fisheries, and aquaculture initiatives, (iv) mobilizing impact finance, innovation, and public–private partnerships, including support for startups and SMEs, is critical to scaling sustainable agriculture and blue economy value chains,

and (v) it is vital to move from dialogue to action by institutionalizing multi-stakeholder collaboration and delivering measurable outcomes through the TICAD process.



High Level Thematic Event (1)



High Level Thematic Event (2)
Then Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba



High Level Thematic Event (3)



High Level Thematic Event (4)
President William Ruto of Kenya



High Level Thematic Event (5)
Prime Minister Elijah Ngurare of Namibia (right) and Minister of Economy, Planning and Regional Integration Soares SAMBU of Guinea-Bissau (left)



High Level Thematic Event (6)
Prime Minister of José Ulisses Correia e Silva of Cabo Verde (center)

Policy Recommendations by High-Level Expert Group on TICAD

It is important to note that four sessions of the High-Level Expert Group on TICAD were convened in Tokyo between August 2024 and January 2025. The core members of the Expert Group comprised Mr. Yohei Sasakawa, Chairman of The Nippon Foundation, Mr. Mitsuya Araki, Advisor to International Development Journal Co., Ltd., Mr. Masato Kitanaka, President of the

Sasakawa Africa Association, and Dr. Atsushi Sunami, President of the Sasakawa Peace Foundation. The sessions were attended by 12 other participants, including senior officials and managers from government and public organizations, business leaders, and representatives from academia. The Expert Group meeting participants engaged in intensive discussions covering a broad range of issues, with particular emphasis on food security, sustainable blue economies, and international partnerships for Africa. Based on these deliberations, a draft policy recommendation was developed, comprising 28 action points organized under seven thematic areas. The policy document also included a list of Expert Group members and a summary of the key points discussed. In addition, consultations were undertaken with the Chair of the African Diplomatic Corps in Tokyo. The final policy recommendations were presented to the then Minister for Foreign Affairs, H.E. Mr. Takeshi Iwaya on July 25, 2025, as described in the preceding sections.



Chairman Yohei Sasakawa handed in the policy recommendation to Foreign Minister Takeshi Iwaya

Exhibition at TICAD Ministerial Meeting 2024

As part of the preparations for the High-Level Expert Group on TICAD, the Sasakawa Peace Foundation (SPF), acting as the secretariat of the Expert Group, prepared a policy analysis on sustainable blue economies and food security in Africa. This analysis was presented at the exhibition space during the 2024 Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) Ministerial Meeting, held in Tokyo from 24 – 25 August 2024. SPF jointly organized a booth with the Sasakawa Africa Association. The booth was visited by the then Minister for Foreign Affairs, H.E. Ms. Yoko Kamikawa, Dr. Akihiko Tanaka, President of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) as well as other Japanese government leaders, African ministers, and development partners.

Through a series of policy dialogues, leaders and stakeholders reaffirmed their convergent views on some of the concrete policy recommendations and actions and move forward to the next steps to materialize them and share the achievements at the next dialogue sessions.



SPF Exhibition, H.E. Ms. Yoko Kamikawa, then Foreign Minister (3rd from right)



SPF Exhibition, Dr. Akihiko Tanaka, JICA President (4th from left)