

## **Focus: Issues Currently Facing Africa (Summary)**

### **Essay: Where is Africa Heading? What Should Japan Do?**

**Shinichi Takeuchi** (Professor, African Studies Center, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies)

Africa's future and Japan's part in it will be examined in this article. Africa is expected to experience rapid population growth in near future. Although there is little possibility that this will lead to East Asian-style economic growth centered on manufacturing, the continent's economic scale will expand markedly. Africa will remain at the forefront of global issues such as political instability and conflict, development and global environmental problems. The era in which a handful of countries wielded overwhelming influence over Africa has long passed, and China, Russia, India, Turkey, the Gulf states and numerous others now compete with Western countries and with each other to build relationships with Africa. For its part, Africa will pursue ties with these countries based on practical considerations. Japan's connections with Africa are dominated by the government, and aid plays a major role. Accordingly, TICAD is an important framework for building bonds as a stable and reliable partner. Japan should make use of this framework and establish a human resources development system that will give it substance.

### **1 Instability in the African Sahel and Its Implications**

**Akira Sato** (Senior Researcher, Institute of Developing Economies, Japan External Trade Organization)

In the 2020s, a series of military coups took place in four Sahel countries: Mali, Chad, Burkina Faso and Niger. The resultant regimes have long remained in power despite moves to promote democracy in sub-Saharan Africa since the 2000s. This paper analyzes these four countries and shows that, while the background factors to these military coups are unique to each country and show little overlap, there are common elements in the prolongation of their regimes, including approaches to Russia and cooperative relations among military governments. The destabilization of the Sahel region shows that the environment in Sub-Saharan Africa today makes it more likely for military governments to persist, and that the pressure being applied by regional organizations to encourage these governments to undertake democratization is wavering. If the norms that value democratization and democracy are undermined, the risk of further political upheaval could well increase throughout sub-Saharan Africa.

### **2 China's Current Africa Policies and Economic Trends in Africa**

**Zhijia Yuan** (Professor, Faculty of Economics, Ritssho University)

China's political involvement in Africa and its economic expansion into the continent have been attracting worldwide attention in recent years. This paper examines two points: (1) China's current policies towards Africa, and (2) China's expansion into Africa and the resultant impact on Africa.

China's policy towards Africa up to the mid-1990s was characterized by a clear preference for pursuing political interests over economic interests and a strong leaning toward aid. From the mid-1990s onwards, China's policy aims underwent a major shift in focus from political interests to economic interests. Financial support for Africa has trended in line with the changes in China's policies towards Africa, from Stages 1 to 3 focused on aid to Stage 4 involving both aid and loans and then

to the current stage of providing aid, loans and direct investment simultaneously. This long-standing approach towards Africa has resulted in closer economic ties between China and Africa. Developing African countries could thus become more dependent on China in the future.

### 3 Africa's Current Economic Circumstances and Prospects

**Kazue Demachi** (Associate Professor, Institute of Global Studies, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies)

African countries face rising inflation rates and severe debt problems due to the reversal of financial flows and the depreciation of currencies in response to the global interest rate hikes since February 2022. The economic outlook for African countries appears not very bright, as Zambia entered the debt restructuring during the pandemic, followed by Ghana and Ethiopia. The international manners to deal with sovereign debts and the behaviours of the global financial market itself have changed through the experiences of the old sovereign debt crisis and the pandemic. African governments now need to behave appropriately in the even more influential market. There are signs of gradual progress in the environment of trade and investment in Africa, as they gradually move to form the African Continental Free Trade Area.

### 4 South Africa's Domestic and Foreign Policy Issues After the 2024 General Elections

**Kumiko Makino** (Senior Research Fellow, Institute of Developing Economies, Japan External Trade Organization)

In South Africa's 2024 general elections, the African National Congress (ANC), which originated in the liberation movement against the apartheid regime, lost its majority of seats for the first time since the country's democratization in 1994. A coalition government named the Government of National Unity (GNU) was subsequently formed with the participation of the ANC and nine other parties, including the Democratic Alliance (DA). This article will briefly examine economic and social challenges in South Africa over the 30 years since the country's democratization, and then reflect on the 2024 general elections and the GNU, aiming to contribute to better understanding of the domestic and foreign policy challenges facing South Africa. The ANC's acceptance of the election results that represented a historic defeat for the party as well as the GNU's creation through negotiations among political parties can be seen as signs of the soundness of South Africa's democracy. However, the GNU is confronting many difficulties both at home and abroad, not least policy conflicts among the GNU's constituent parties that have repeatedly brought the coalition to the verge of collapse and deteriorating relations with the United States under the second Trump administration.

### 5 Interlocking International Relations in North Africa and the Horn of Africa: The Geopolitical Impact of Middle Eastern Countries' Involvement

**Amane Kobayashi** (Senior Researcher, Middle East Research Center, The Institute of Energy Economics, Japan)

North African countries have been experiencing "authoritarian stability" — long-term governments and a consolidation of power in the hands of the president and the military — however, growing social discontent, fueled by economic problems, has become a destabilizing factor. In addition, there are concerns about the escalation of political division and civil wars in some countries. The political situation in North Africa, which is reaching a major turning point, has become intertwined to the multilayered geopolitical competition in the Horn of Africa and the Red Sea region arising from the military and political involvement of Middle Eastern countries and Russia in Libya, Sudan, and

Somalia. In particular, the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict, rapprochement between Turkey and its neighbors, and Russia's increased presence have changed the political and security dynamics in the region and further increased linkages. The chain of geopolitical competition in the vast space surrounding North Africa and the Horn of Africa, as well as in the Red Sea and Mediterranean Sea that border both regions, will have a major impact on international politics.

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|         |                              |
|---------|------------------------------|
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| 23年10月号 | 焦点：ウクライナ戦争後の安全保障戦略           |
| 23年12月号 | 焦点：新国家安全保障戦略と国際法             |
| 24年2月号  | 焦点：ウクライナ戦争とロシアのゆくえ           |
| 24年4月号  | 焦点：大国化するインドと「グローバル・サウス」      |
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