

African Science and Technology Research Mission Overview

May 8, 2009
Cabinet Office

Period of Dispatch: February 18 to March 8, 2009

Visited Countries: Ethiopia (AU Headquarter), South Africa, Botswana, Kenya, Uganda, Egypt, Ghana

Mission Overview:

1. African Union

- 1) Meeting with Dr. Abdul-Hakim Elwaer, Director of Human Resources, Science & Technology (HRST), African Union Commission (AUC) (February 19)

The Mission members met with Dr. Elwaer, Director of HRST and exchanged opinions on the future course of Japan-Africa S&T cooperation. Regarding the hosting of the second Japan-Africa Science and Technology Ministers' Meeting, we agreed that AU would make final decision on and contact Japan with regard to the date and other details of the second ministerial meeting by the end of March after further consultations among African countries. We also exchanged with respect to Technical Working Groups (TWGs) that would be held between the Ministers' Meetings.

- 2) Courtesy call to Prof. Jean-Pierre Ezin, Commissioner of HRST, AUC (February 20)

The Mission members paid a courtesy call to Prof. Ezin of HRST, and exchanged opinions on the future of Japan-Africa cooperation in the field of S&T and the concept of a Pan-African University, which AU is now promoting.



Meeting with Dr. Abdul-Hakim Elwaer



Courtesy call to Commissioner Ezin

2. South Africa

- 1) Regional Seminar on South African Development Community (SADC)-Japan Collaboration on Science and Technology and Innovation (February 23)

The Regional Seminar was held with the participation of representatives from science and technology ministries of nine countries, including South Africa, Botswana, Malawi, and the NEPAD (New Partnership for Africa's Development) Secretariat. First, SADC gave a briefing on the mission, activities and strategic plans of SADC and areas in which future cooperation with Japan could be possible. Then, the NEPAD Secretariat introduced approaches to the Africa's Science and Technology Consolidated Plan of Action (CPA). SADC side expressed the importance of cooperation with Japan at a sub-regional level as well as regional (Africa-wide) or the existing bilateral ones. The Mission members explained about Science and Technology policy in Japan, overview and international cooperation activities of their institutions, etc.. Moreover, both sides discussed on future cooperation areas and confirmed continuing collaboration for sustainable development.

2) Visit to research institutions (February 24)

In accordance with their areas of specialty, the researchers were divided into five groups -Industry/Resources, Environment, Biotechnology/Astronomy, Medicine, and Agriculture-, and each group visited major research institutions in South Africa. They received explanations on their research activities and deepened their understanding of those institutions.

3) 3rd Japan-South Africa Joint Science and Technology Committee Meeting (February 25)

The 3rd Japan – South Africa Joint Science and Technology Committee Meeting was held on the 25th February. The Japanese side co-chaired by Minister Miyashita of the Embassy of Japan and attended by members of the Embassy, ministries and research institutions involved and JICA discussed actively about current Science and Technology policies and future cooperation areas with the South African side, co-chaired by Deputy Director General Auf der Heyde of the Department of Science and Technology and attended by members of Department of Science and Technology (DST), Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) and National Research Foundation (NRF).



Regional Seminar on SADC



Site Visit at Agricultural Research Council

3. Botswana

1) Botswana Seminar (February 24)

The Ministry of Communications, Science and Technology of Botswana hosted a seminar and exchanged opinions on science and technology policy and the Botswana Innovation Hub with the Mission members. Japan introduced various measures, such as regional innovation and business-academia-government collaboration, as well as approaches in the field of ICTs, space, energy, nanotechnology and infectious diseases. The Botswana side presented on the Botswana Innovation Hub and the concept of the Botswana International University of Science and Technology.



Botswana Seminar



Site Visit at the Remote Sensing Center

4. Kenya

1) Courtesy call to Dr. Kilemi Mwiria, Assistant Minister for Ministry of Higher Education, Science

and Technology (February 27)

The Mission paid a courtesy call to Dr. Kilemi Mwiria in the presence of Mr. Iwatani, Ambassador of Japan to Kenya. The Assistant Minister mentioned the importance of cooperation in terms not only of hardware but also of software such as human resource development. Prof. Crispus M. Kiamba, chair of the AMCOST steering committee, who was present, expressed his gratitude for the support of Japan particularly for the major research institutions for agriculture and medicine in Kenya.

2) Japan-Eastern Africa Regional Science Seminar (February 27)

The Seminar was attended by a total of about 50 participants, including government officials in charge of science and technology of Kenya and Tanzania, researchers from principal Kenyan research institutions and the Japanese Mission members. First, each country introduced their science and technology policies and the frameworks of international cooperation. Then, Japan gave an explanation on the overview of each research institution and international cooperation activities. After that, representatives from Kenyan research institutions introduced the outline of their institutions and the areas in which future cooperation with Japan could be expected. African side expressed their expectations about the second Japan-Africa Science and Technology Ministers' Meeting, further utilization of existing schemes and establishment of a framework for enhancing future cooperative relations between East African countries and Japan.

3) Visit to research institutes (March 1)

All Mission members visited the Kenya Agricultural Research Institute (KARI) and the Kenya Medical Research Institute (KEMRI) and received comments on these institutes' current status of research and development, securing of human resources and cooperation with other countries. Some medical researchers visited Kenya Trypanosomiasis Research Institute (KETRI) and researchers in the field of industrial technology visited the Kenya Bureau of Standards (KEBS).



Eastern Africa Regional Seminar



Site Visit at KEMRI

5. Uganda

1) Exchange of Ideas with Space-Related Ministries and Organizations in Uganda (February 25)

A meeting was held with the participation of space-related ministries and organizations in Uganda and participants exchange ideas about future cooperation for space exploration. Japan introduced space projects, made proposals for space exploitation and exchanged ideas about future cooperation in the field of space with Uganda's Ministry of Information and Communications Technology.

2) Meeting with Uganda's Ministry of Health (February 25)

Japanese members studied the medical needs associated with space exploitation. Japan introduced several examples of international cooperation in this area. Both sides concluded that we would continue the exchange of opinions as to what cooperation with Japan is feasible for their needs.

6. Egypt

1) Courtesy call to Minister Helal and exchange of ideas with government officials (March 2)

The Mission members visited Egyptian Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research and exchanged ideas with officials of the Ministry, including Prof. Maged, Assistant Minister for Scientific Research. Japan explained the purpose of the Mission and Japan's science and technology policy. The Japan Science and Technology Agency (JST) and the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS) described the framework of cooperation with Africa. Egypt gave an explanation regarding its policy on science and technology, and the current situation of cooperation with the EU, and introduced the Science and Technology Development Fund (STDF), a newly established funding body. Then, we exchanged ideas about promotion of future S&T cooperation between Japan and Egypt. This was followed by a courtesy call to Dr. Hany Helal, Minister of Higher Education and State for Scientific Research.

2) Visit to Research Institutions (March 2)

Researchers were divided into six groups in accordance with their area of specialty: energy, water, space, medicine/bioscience, agriculture and atomic power. They visited major research institutions in Egypt, observed current research and development activities and exchanged opinions on the possibility of future cooperation.

3) Regional Seminar on Science and Technology Cooperation between Japan and North African Countries (March 3)

The Seminar was attended by a total of about 70 participants. From the Japanese side, Deputy Director General Iwahashi and Japanese Ambassador to Egypt Ishikawa and from the Egyptian side, Minister Helal delivered speeches. Then, the Cabinet Office, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, JST and JSPS introduced the current status of Japan's science and technology and the framework of cooperation with Africa. From the African side, Egypt, Algeria and Tunisia gave explanations on the priority areas for science and technology of each country. In the afternoon, researchers were divided into small groups based on their specialty and introduced international cooperation of the respective research institutions and held discussions on future cooperation.



Courtesy Call on Minister Helal



North African Regional Seminar

7. Ghana

1) Exchange of Opinions with Government Organizations and A Visit to The Noguchi Memorial Institute for Medical Research (March 5)

The Director of the Noguchi Memorial Institute for Medical Research (NMIMR), founded in 1979 by Japan's ODA technical cooperation project, gave an introduction of each department followed by a site-visit to the facilities. The introduction included research priorities and research cooperation with developed countries, including Japan, the U.K. and the U.S. This was followed by a courtesy call to Ms. Sherry Aryitete, Minister of Environment Science and Technology.

2) West African Regional Seminar (March 5)

From the Japanese side, JST and JSPS introduced Japan's science and technology policy and the framework for cooperation with Africa. Then, Japanese medical and agricultural researchers made their presentations about the current status of cooperation with Africa. From the Ghana side, Director Salif of Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) and Prof. Nyarko of NMIMR talked about the science and technology policies of Ghana and the current status of research activities. Both parties exchanged opinions concerning future S&T cooperation.



Site Visit at NMIMR



West African Regional Seminar