

KEY QUESTIONS

the big six

2

What are Japan's priorities for global development?

Japan focuses its ODA on Asia; support is increasing for economic development in Africa

Japan's long-term development objectives are defined in its 'Development Cooperation Charter', last updated in 2015. They include a strong focus on involving the Japanese private sector in development cooperation, particularly in Asia, to support sustainable and inclusive economic development in developing countries and to promote the national interests of Japan.

These priorities were reaffirmed by Foreign Minister Taro Kono in a speech given in January 2019. Kono further emphasized human security and African development as thematic priorities of Japan's development cooperation. He also discussed the importance of accountability to tax payers and plans to promote the creation of a new financing mechanism to channel the "benefits brought by globalization to resolve global issues".

Japan has strengthened its development focus on Africa in line with its foreign policy, the 'Free and open Indo-Pacific' strategy, announced in 2016 by Prime Minister (PM) Shinzo Abe. The strategy focuses on connecting Africa and Asia to promote sustainable growth in the two regions. ODA will play an important role in the strategy and will involve capacity strengthening and infrastructure building in Africa and Asia. Following the sixth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD VI) in August 2016, the government announced that Japanese corporations had signed memoranda of understanding with 26 African nations and international organizations for knowledge and expertise exchange. This approach is relatively new: Japanese companies have traditionally invested mostly in Asia.

Japan's short-term development priorities are set in its annual 'Priority Policy for International Cooperation' and are foreshadowed in the annual budget released

Key priorities of Japan's development policy:

- **Free and open Indo-Pacific:** ODA will contribute to Japan's overarching foreign policy strategy by supporting economic development in Africa and Asia and connectivity between these two regions.
- **Global health:** Prime Minister Abe announced a commitment of US\$2.9 billion in funding for global health in December 2017 at the Universal Health Coverage (UHC) Conference.
- **Infrastructure:** In 2017, 32% of bilateral ODA (US\$4.8 billion) went to infrastructure development projects; the bulk of this funding goes to middle-income countries in Asia.

some months earlier. The Priority Policy is released annually and has contained the same broad priorities since FY2016: peace and stability within the international community, response to global challenges, economic diplomacy, and promotion of 'high-quality growth'. The Priority Policy for FY2019 is expected to be published in April or May 2019.

In the Development Cooperation Charter, and reiterated in the Free and open Indo-Pacific strategy, the government emphasizes the role of ODA as a strategic diplomatic and economic instrument. This means, for example, making greater use of bilateral ODA over multilateral and the approval of using ODA to support foreign military forces for "non-military purposes." This, alongside the explicit references to promoting Japan's national interest, has signaled a more nationalistic shift in Japan's approach to ODA.