

Japan and Sudan have Nurtured Friendly Relationship since We Recognized Sudan in 1956: Amb. Hattori

We are going to focus more n the health sector

*Japan and Sudan have nurtured a friendly relationship since it recognized Sudan in 1956 and that strong and distinguished relationship still going on and always gets stronger. There is a mutual cordiality exchanged between two peoples of the two countries and that can be shown in the assistance and helps provided by Japanese Government to Sudanese people in terms of projects and investments. For all what has been mentioned, Sudanese Voice news paper interviews his Excellency the Japanese Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary **Mr. Hattori Takashi**. The interview comes out with the following contents:*



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Interview by Mohamed Babikir

Q: Sudanese-Japanese relations are deeply rooted relations. Where do relations stand now?

A: Japan and Sudan have nurtured a friendly relationship since we recognized Sudan in 1956. We have been committed to the steady development and stabilization of this country through various economic cooperation schemes throughout our bilateral history, and now that Sudan is in an epoch-making process of democratization and reformation, we recognize this period to be the most salient time to boost our relations. As a member of the Friends of Sudan, we have made pledges, for example, in response to the desert locust outbreak or COVID-19 pandemic, taking it as our responsibility to provide further support for this country to achieve the goals of the revolution. Additionally, as we expect Sudan comes back to the international business forum after being deleted of its name from the SSTL soon enough, Japan hopes to strengthen not only the intergovernmental relationship but also private sector partnerships.

Q: Japan has extended its hands (assistance) to Sudan in the fields of water, health, education and environmental services. What are the projects you are planning to implement in the coming period in Sudan?

A: The areas you mentioned are the conventional fields on which the government of Japan puts emphasis of its overseas assistance. We will surely continue our supports in these sectors as they consists the foundation for all kinds of development. For example, in the water division, we are implementing the purification facility improvement, and in the near future we are going to offer a project for upgrading the clean water supply system. As for the health sector, envisaging the vast needs for post-pandemic medical system upgrading, we are

planning to implement some projects as well. Above these, we are setting new pillars for cooperation in the health system, agriculture and vocational training. We believe that all of which are the sectors whose improvement is essential for the stable development in this country not only in the short run but also for a long term take-off, hence we are going to focus in these areas from now on.

Q: Sudan is a country that is rich in its natural resources and it is well known that Japan is the top country in modern techniques, industries and information tech-

nology. Why the two counties don't think about signing an integration agreement that gathers benefiting from techniques and utilizing natural resources in the best way for the benefit of the two countries?

A: We are undoubtedly interested in having partnerships that bridge the strong-points of each country. As my background is in the private sector, I deem my mission in Sudan is to pave the ways to build such mutually benefiting relations, specifically in the business context, needless to mention that Japanese firms had been discour-

aged to come and do business in Sudan because of the existence of SSTL and other conditional barriers. However, with the international community, we are determined to backup the efforts of Sudanese government to revamp its business environment, and moreover, as the SSTL now has been decided to be lifted, we are at the stage to explore the large possibilities for the collaboration between two countries. For my initial approach, I am visiting a lot of private companies in Sudan to study about the investment environment of this country as well as to share our aspiration for future collaborations.

Q: The wastes project in Sudan is a big project implemented by Japan and it is a vital project for



environment. What is your plan in the coming period for this project taking in consideration that getting rid of wastes has always been a headache for the Sudanese governments?

A: We are now preparing another project for the waste management in Sudan, as we also consider that our previous project had a positive outcome and the demand for the next step is high. What I personally believe, is that it is integral to be able to draw more comprehensive picture for the entire waste management system, meaning that we should contemplate not only on collecting the trash but also on how to dispose and, even further, how to utilize it, for instance using the heat from burning the waste as an energy for electricity. Though, of course, providing effective system and hardware for waste collection is the very first step, the government should not forget to plan for setting up such an overall scheme.

Q: It is well known that Japan constructed private hospitals in a number of states of Sudan. What is your

plan for this sector next year? Which states you will target in the future?

A: As I touched upon earlier, as we are going to focus more on the health sector as our scope of cooperation, we are at the planning level for the next project in medical field. The vital problem we witnessed especially through the response to the COVID-19 pandemic is the vulnerability of medical service in this country. People in Sudan are unfortunately still exposed to a number of contagious diseases, which implies that both curative and preventative capability should be strengthened. In this view, we highly value the efforts made by the international agencies to provide humanitarian supports like vaccination for the population at risks widely in the country. At the same time, it is absolutely necessary to upgrade the existing medical facilities and equipment not only in the capital but in the rural localities, and we are surely committed to such activities.



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