

June seems to be the end of Uganda's rainy season. It sometimes rains, but it has a lot of sunny days. During the dry season, temperatures do not exceed 30 degrees, but the shadows feel cool with the wind. The British Winston Churchill called Uganda "The Pearl of Africa" because of its warm climate and green natural environment when he visited Uganda in 1907 as Deputy Secretary of State for Colonial Affairs. Even today, the Ugandan government uses "The Pearl of Africa" when promoting tourism. I have chosen this title to convey the current situation in Uganda.

### 1. World Refugee Day @ Uganda

Uganda has more than 1.6 million refugees currently, making it the largest refugee host country in the world. In conjunction with the World Refugee Day on 20 June, I attended an event at the Rhino settlement in West Nile, one of the refugees' host communities. When I think of refugees in my generation, I remember Ms. Sadako Ogata, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, who in her tenure from 1991 to 2000 dealt with the issue of Rwandan refugees. This geographical area was where she took charge as head of the UN agency.

When you talk about refugee camps, what comes to your mind? The situation of sleeping in temporary shelters surrounded by fences and struggling with daily food and water. I visited Rhino Settlement in the imagination of such a scene. However, no fences in Uganda's refugee settlements. The refugees, who have been evacuated from neighbouring countries, live with the locals in Uganda, and they are allowed to use land and buildings. The refugee hosting area is called the Settlement. Refugees are allowed to move within Uganda on their own responsibility. There are several of these areas in Uganda, and one of them is the Rhino Settlement, where the ceremony took place. With the support of local governments, international organizations and non-governmental organizations, refugees and host communities are living together. Such a tolerant attitude and policy towards refugees is rare internationally and is considered a model case for refugee policy.

Uganda had previously suffered from civil war, and its citizens were forced to flee to neighbouring countries as refugees. One of the local politicians present at the ceremony said that Uganda is now returning the favour by accepting refugees.

The reality is that countries like Uganda, which have been so successful in hosting refugees so to speak, are conversely less likely to attract the attention of the international community. It is not easy to continue to support over 1.6 million refugees without missing a single day. The international community relies on the generosity of the Ugandan people partially. As a responsible donor to the international community, it made me think seriously about what kind of support we should provide in the future and what kind of policies would be best for a fundamental solution to the refugee problem.

Rhino Settlement Perspective



Fashion show by young people



## 2. Support for the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) / Save the Children.

I attended the project launch ceremony of the UNFPA and the opening ceremony of NGO Save the Children project on World Refugee Day in West Nile. UNFPA started its project to defend sexual and reproductive health and rights in Rhino settlement and to secure access to services to address gender-based violence, based on contributions from Japan. The project includes visiting some settlements to check up beneficiaries, health consultations, family planning advice and guidance, diagnosis, and care for pregnant women. As mentioned earlier, the project accepts applicants from both local and displaced populations including refugees. The ratio of refugees to locals, depending on the location, is four to one, or five to one. The local communities can also use the clinic.

During the project launch ceremony held at one of the clinics, thanks were expressed for the Japanese assistance, and songs together with other performances were given by refugee youth.

Save the Children is implementing a child protection strengthening support project in Arua district. In cooperation with local authorities, police and social welfare workers, Save the Children is responding to child protection cases and carries out patrols. The temporary child protection centre was handed over and Some motorcycles were donated during the ceremony. The constructed centre and these motorcycles are used for patrolling for the temporary protection of young people who have problems at home.

Gender-based violence and the strengthening of child protection is not an issue limited to African countries. Developed countries, including Japan, also face similar social problems. Japan is in a position to provide support, but I felt that we could learn from the situations of other countries facing similar problems.

UNFPA event in Rhino settlement



### Save the Children's Protection Centre opening ceremony



### 3. Japanese start-ups blossoming in Africa (Part 1)

The large numbers of start-ups are growing in Japan. Some of the start-ups are also active in Uganda. RICCI EVERYDAY employs local women in Kampala (most of whom are single mothers), to produce fashion items using gorgeous African print fabrics and sell them in Japan. We had the pleasure of meeting Ms Chizu Nakamoto, who heads the company, in Kampala. Pop-up events are now held in major department stores in Japan. Ms Nakamoto has also published a book about her experiences.

African prints are also gaining popularity in Japan. We hope that initiatives such as this company's, where business can also support social issues, will become more and more popular.

In the future, I would like to introduce the initiatives of start-ups and Japanese companies activities in Uganda.



With Ms. Nakamoto