

May is in the midst of the rainy season. I felt that this rainy season had considerably more rainfall than during my time living in Uganda. Until now, I had explained that Uganda's rainy season doesn't last as long as Japan's rainy season and isn't as humid. However, this year there were days when it rained all day like Japan's rainy season, and days with almost no sunshine. Of course, there are still sunny periods between the rains. However, there were also times when quite heavy rain fell immediately after those clear spells.

On May 12, the presidential inauguration ceremony for President Museveni, who won the previous election, was held. Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs Onishi Yohei attended from Japan. This will be reported in a special issue.

Many visitors came from Japan again this month, with various activities continuing actively. I would like to introduce these developments this month as well.

1. Provision of Ambulances and Fire Engines to Uganda

Japan has a system for providing used ambulances and fire engines that are no longer used domestically to countries that need them. For Uganda, with the Japan Fire and Disaster Management Association as the provider, using the "Recycling Grassroots Grant Assistance" scheme (one of the ODA schemes), a three-year plan from fiscal year 2023 to 2025 is being implemented to provide a total of 62 ambulances and fire engines. On May 5, as the first half of fiscal year 2025, 6 ambulances and 7 fire engines were delivered to Kampala. I attended the handover ceremony on this day, together with Uganda's recipient, Minister of Health Dr. Jane Ruth Aceng, Inspector General of Police Abbas Byakagaba, and people from local governments who will actually use these vehicles.

Uganda is experiencing remarkable economic growth and continued population increase. Accordingly, demand for emergency transport and disaster response is also increasing. The vehicles provided underwent various maintenance procedures before being handed over to Uganda and this time, the handover was successfully completed. Japan is not only providing these vehicles but also implementing technical guidance. In December 2025, members of the Japan Fire and Disaster Management Association visited and conducted training for Ugandan paramedics and firefighters.

The vehicles provided this time will be handed over to local governments and will be active throughout Uganda. Additionally, there are also cases where vehicles have been provided to

Uganda through the efforts of local governments throughout Japan. However, the number of vehicles is still insufficient to meet Uganda's nationwide deployment plan for ambulances and fire engines. We aim to deliver the final vehicles of the three-year plan by the end of this year.



Handing over ceremony

2. Visit from SK-KAWANISHI

SK-Kawanishi is a specialized manufacturer of water supply-related equipment headquartered in Takamatsu City, Kagawa Prefecture. They handle the design of water pipe joints (pipe fittings) and, with high technical capabilities, already hold a large market share within Japan.

Overseas, they have a related company in Taiwan, but last year (2025) they established a local subsidiary in Kenya. Last year in October and April this year, they visited Uganda's water authorities with the aim of expanding from their Kenya base into neighboring Uganda.

I also attended a product briefing session held by the company at a Japanese restaurant in Kampala on April 21.

Uganda is considered to have relatively developed water supply and sewerage systems compared to other African countries. Indeed, in the capital Kampala and major cities, water supply and sewerage facilities have developed to a certain degree, utilizing abundant water sources including the Nile River and Lake Victoria. However, once you leave the major cities, the reality is that people still rely on rainwater and well water. Even the water supply facilities in cities face major challenges in terms of facility enhancement and the introduction of new products and technologies. For example, measures against non-revenue water are also urgent in Uganda.

Uganda's water supply officials were enthusiastically exchanging views with the technical staff who brought in and explained their company's products. I hope that Japanese technology will

be utilized in this field as well.



Seminar at YAMASEN

3. Ac-Planta Inc., Development of Skeepon

This column has introduced the activities of Ac-Planta Inc., including Skeepon, on several occasions. (Please refer to the August 2024 issue.) Ac-Planta has completed trademark registration in Uganda and is about to begin full-scale sales in Uganda.

On April 27, Kim Jong-Myong, CEO and Representative Director of Ac-Planta and Associate Professor at the University of Tokyo, visited Uganda and energetically visited various places interested in Skeepon. Among these, I was able to accompany him to an opportunity to explain the usefulness of the product to General Salim Saleh, the younger brother of President Museveni. General Saleh is a national hero who led the NRA (National Resistance Army, the military wing of the NRM at the time and predecessor of the UPDF (Uganda People's Defense Force) when the NRM (President Museveni's ruling party) took power. General Saleh is currently working hard for Uganda's economic development and as part of this, he had great interest in Ac-Planta's products from the perspective of agricultural promotion.

At this briefing session as well, he was impressively listening to the presentation with interest. I hope that Ac-Planta's Japanese agritech products will further propel Uganda's agriculture forward.



With Gen. Selim Saleh

4. Refugee Support: Support through UN Agencies

As mentioned several times in this column, Uganda is Africa's largest refugee-hosting country, accepting nearly 2 million refugees from neighboring countries. Refugee influx continues even now and in response, Uganda has taken a generous policy toward refugees and asylum seekers called the "Open Door Policy." Nearly 2 million refugees is equivalent to half the population of present-day Yokohama City. Actually accepting refugees requires various mechanisms at border points and elsewhere. The Ugandan government, in cooperation with international organizations, has established transit centers and reception centers at border points and surrounding areas to provide temporary shelter and facilitate smooth acceptance into settlements. While these policies make a significant contribution to regional stability, support from the international community is also indispensable. Japan has provided active support for Uganda's efforts under the banner of the concept of "Human Security."

I held a press conference on May 7 to announce support from Japan approved as the fiscal 2025 (Reiwa 7) supplementary budget. This time, I announced support equivalent to approximately 6 million US dollars through UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees), WFP (World Food Programme), IOM (International Organization for Migration), and others. While it is true that UN agencies face various criticisms including demands for improved efficiency, they are essential partners for refugee-hosting countries like Uganda. UN agencies possess the actual know-how for refugee acceptance. It is hoped that support from Japan will alleviate the difficulties faced by refugees even slightly and contribute to peace and stability in the East Africa region.



5. A Unique Initiative: "My Well"

One of the challenges Africa is currently addressing is the water problem. This column has also introduced the efforts of SUNDA, a Japanese startup. (Please refer to the November 2024 issue.) Solving water problems is also one of the SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals) set by the United Nations. However, reality is harsh, and while progress is being made, there are still many difficulties in resolving the problem.

SUNDA's well management system that I introduced is also being deployed throughout Uganda. Even so, the absolute numbers are still insufficient. Therefore, a unique initiative has been started based on an idea from a Japanese resident in Uganda. The initial cost to set up public water supply facilities (with SUNDA) at existing wells is about one million yen in Japanese currency. This is not a small amount for African residents therefore, a movement has emerged to promote popularization by naming wells installed with SUNDA products, funded by supporters, "My Well" (officially called "My/Our Well Project").

The photo shows one of the wells installed under this idea. Supporters share the burden of installation costs and SUNDA installs them. Subsequent maintenance and management is carried out mainly by residents in addition to SUNDA. Supporters monitor these activities. I hope that such initiatives will speed up the resolution of water problems even a little.



Installed wells

6. Started "NUIKATSU"!

The Embassy of Japan in Uganda has engaged in various communications beyond this column. I am pleased to report that we have gained a powerful participant to support this. It is a Shoebill, which inhabits Uganda! Having already greeted many ministers, its debut has been made and from now on, it will see and experience the present Uganda together with us. As a bit of background, this Shoebill is a product of MOYOMOYO. MOYOMOYO is a brand developed by Mr. Jiro Nozaka and Mrs. Yukiko Nozaka together with Ugandan women.



What should we name the shoebill?

(End)