

At a seminar titled *Japan, Africa and the Free and Open Indo-Pacific* held on 24 March 2021 by Stellenbosch University and Embassy of Japan in the Republic of South Africa, H. E. Ambassador Maruyama made the following remark:

Good morning,

Thank you Professor Scarlett Cornelissen for your kind introduction.

I also would like to welcome Professor Hosoya Yuuichi, Dr. Veda Vaidyanathan and Dr. Cobus van Staden. I look forward to listen to your thoughts on FOIP.

The vision of “Free and Open Indo Pacific (FOIP),” was launched at Nairobi in 2016, by the then PM of Japan, ABE Shinzo, at the occasion of TICAD 6.

Since then, Japan has been promoting this vision focusing on three pillars

1. promotion and consolidation of fundamental principles of the international community,
2. pursuit of economic prosperity, including through ensuring connectivity, and
3. commitment to peace and stability, including maritime security.

FOIP is an inclusive concept, open to cooperation with any countries which share the same values and vision.

The world has become increasingly complex and uncertain. In the Indo-Pacific region, there are various challenges.

The importance of U.S. engagement is obvious.

The collaboration among like-minded countries is getting more and more importance these years.

Cooperation between Japan, Australia, India, and the US became active.

The Japan-Australia-India-U.S. Leaders’ Conference was held just a week ago.

ASEAN has its own ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP).

At the recent Japan-ASEAN summit meeting,

the leaders of Japan and ASEAN confirmed that
FOIP and AOIP share fundamental principles.

The interests in the Indo-Pacific is growing in Europe as well.

Foreign Minister Motegi Toshimitsu recently had a consultation with his EU counterpart, and FOIP was one of the important subjects of discussion.

So, how about Africa?

Namely, what about countries that share the Indian Ocean, such as South Africa?

What will be the interest be for South Africa to be part of it?

In which areas will cooperation be possible and constructive?

For the interests of those who will try to find an answer to the question I raised, I would like to share with the participants of today's webinar, four areas which Japan would like to promote in order to realize FOIP.

1. promoting and consolidating fundamental principles of the international community, such as democracy, human rights, and the rule of law;
2. maintaining and strengthening the multilateral trading system and international rule-making;
3. enhancing connectivity in the region;
4. and maritime security,

Concerning the connectivity in the region, especially between Africa and ASEAN, please have a look at the video uploaded on Ministry of Foreign Affairs website to get a clear idea.

You will see the Mombasa port in Kenya, and Thilawa SEZ in Myanmar, both of which received Japanese assistance.

I wish you all a fruitful discussion.

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