

Japan holds development conference in Africa

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Japan's Foreign Affairs Minister Koichiro Gamba AFP
RABAT —

Japan is this year giving \$1.3 billion in aid to African nations to help combat the effects of climate change, Japan's Foreign Affairs Minister Koichiro Gamba said in Morocco on Saturday.

Speaking at the start of the Tokyo International Conference on African Development, which is being held in Marrakech, Gamba noted Japan had also given \$340 million (260 million euros) to fight major diseases on the continent and had provided aid to countries in the Horn of Africa region to tackle droughts.

Several African countries are facing food shortages as conflict and climate-related crop failures take their toll. The United Nations' food agency last week launched an appeal for funds for Africa, and said 265 million people on the continent regularly go hungry.

Started by Japan in 1993, the Tokyo conference aims to drum up investment and keep development of Africa at the top of the global agenda.

Erastus Jarnalesse Mwencha, the deputy chair of the African Union Commission, noted that many African nations were recording a positive economic growth rate, despite difficult conditions.

"Sustainable development from now on depends on the consolidation of security and peace, and the processes of democratisation and good governance," he said.

This year's conference is being attended by 51 African nations and co-hosted by Morocco.

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