Africa is ready to welcome more Japanese made products, including electric vehicles (EVs), as a game-changer in the energy sector, transport system, climate outlook and also a catalyst of the energy transition.

Japan’s automotive components industry encompasses good diversity, with companies whose business areas include chemicals, electronics, textiles, and mechanical components. As a result, many companies manufacturing goods for various industries are nevertheless strenuously reliant on the automotive industry.

As most of African countries have vowed to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, experts gathered in Tunis, Tunisia on the sidelines of the Eighth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD8) are convinced that electric vehicles have become more of a necessity for these countries to meet these targets.



At the last TICAD8, in Tunis, Tokyo sought to move from a policy focused on official development assistance (ODA), to a private investment-based approach.

In 2021, Japan’s automakers manufactured approximately 204.63 thousand vehicles at production facilities located in Africa, increasing from 153.39 thousand in the previous year. In said year, the overseas production volume of Japanese automobile manufacturers recovered globally.

While limited industrialization is still Africa’s Achilles heel, experts gathered at TICAD8, pointed out that Japanese vehicles on the continent are easy to repair and get replacement parts when compared to other spare parts imported from other parts of the world.

Latest official estimates show that vehicle sales have jumped in developing markets like China, India and Brazil over the last decade, growth in Africa has remained relatively slow.

But Japanese manufacturers believe their low-cost car models will have the advantage, while others are betting on the electric car.

Green mobility

In a report entitled: “Africa’s Automotive Industry: Potential and Challenges”, the African development bank stresses that the market for cars and commercial vehicles [in Africa] is growing rapidly but for the most part is supplied by imports of used vehicles especially from Japan

The issues facing the industry in Africa are somewhat different to regions that industrialized previously because of the huge trade in imported used cars, according to the bank.

Experts gathered on the sidelines of TICA8 believe that with the new Japanese investment in exporting electric vehicles to Africa, this would help address the many challenges affecting the transport and environmental sectors across the continent.



The automotive industry is an essential pillar of Japan’s economy. Companies like Toyota, Honda, and Nissan are already manufacturing giants, but they also consolidate thousands of substantial suppliers, many of them small- and medium-sized enterprises in Africa.

Other popular brands include Mazda, Mitsubishi and Daihatsu; as well as high-end used Japanese cars in Africa such as the Hilux Surf, Mitsubishi Pajero, Subaru and Isuzu

Land Cruiser Prado has also been making a steady climb to the top, but it is still yet to hit the right notes as Toyota and Nissan have on the continent. (END)