

South Asia



Minimizing the Adverse Effects of Instability through Diverse Nation-Building Assistance

The countries of South Asia face a raft of pressing issues ranging from achieving sustainable economic growth and addressing climate change to disaster prevention and peacebuilding. South Asia's high poverty rate and multiple, longstanding conflicts call for the flexible application of a diverse array of assistance programs. JICA strives to support each country in the region by responding to specific needs, thereby contributing to sound nation building.

Pillars of Aid

Poverty Reduction Efforts Centering on the Three Pillars of (1) Support for the Maintenance of High Rates of Economic Growth, (2) Measures to Address Climate Change and Disaster Prevention, and (3) Support for Peacebuilding

South Asia has a population of over 1.5 billion, of which it is estimated that approximately 500 million live in poverty. This stark reality places poverty reduction at the top of the agenda across the entire region. Many South Asian countries have low rates of primary education attendance and lack adequate social services, including public health and medical services. Hence, the development of basic social infrastructure and improvement of agricultural productivity are crucial. Furthermore, chronic political and social instability must be addressed through support for governance and the building of robust administrative systems and institutions.

JICA has established four priority areas in its assistance programs for South Asia: (1) poverty reduction measures through the strengthening of public services, community development and human resource development, (2) support for the maintenance of high rates of economic growth through the development of economic infrastructure, such as transport and electricity, and support for the private sector, (3) measures to address climate change and assistance for

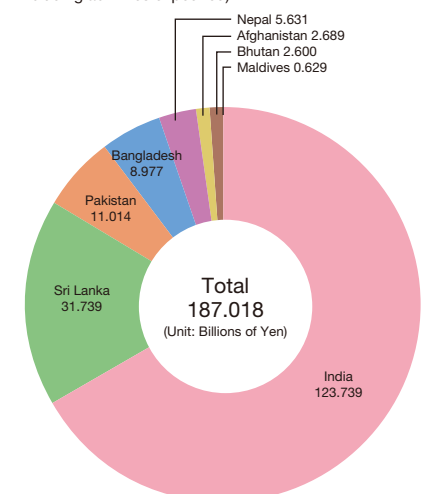
disaster prevention, and (4) support for peacebuilding that contributes to political and social stability. Indeed, all of these areas have an impact on poverty reduction.

The concept of human security underpins all of JICA's activities as it provides support in the priority areas outlined above. Specifically, support based on human security works to minimize the adverse effects of instability, and develop people's capacity to solve the problems they face. This in turn bolsters self reliance and enables people to improve their own lives.

In 1985, the countries of South Asia formed the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) as a framework for developing intra-regional cooperation in economic, social and cultural fields. Although SAARC initially focused on cooperation among member countries, it has recently begun to develop a more active dialogue with other countries and international institutions. Japan has expressed support for SAARC in such areas as democratization, peacebuilding, intra-regional cooperation and personnel exchanges.

Scale of JICA Projects by Country in South Asia in Fiscal 2008

Composition of JICA projects for each country based on total Technical Cooperation project expenses, ODA loans (executed amount), and Grant Aid (concluded Grant Aid including activities expedited)



* Excluding Technical Cooperation with multiple countries and international organizations

Priority Issues and Efforts

Poverty Reduction Measures Strengthening Public Services, Community Development and Human Resource Development

Measures to combat poverty are the primary focus in South Asia. The social services needed by people living in poverty are common to all countries of the region and the strengthening of these services is essential. JICA is providing

assistance to poverty-stricken communities that do not have to access basic social infrastructure, and to areas in which agricultural land has fallen into disrepair resulting in inadequate food production capacity. These programs target the upgrading of water-supply infrastructure, rural development and enhancement of access to social services.

In Pakistan, the country's troubled relations with neighboring India have long been a source of tension. However, in recent years, political instability and security conditions have significantly worsened as the Pakistan Army has stepped up operations to quell anti-government militant groups in areas along the country's border with Afghanistan. Against this backdrop, JICA

began a four-year project in January 2009 in Punjab Province—the main grain-growing region of Pakistan—where security conditions are relatively stable. This project aims to improve the operation and maintenance of irrigation facilities as well as bolster the water productivity achieved by rural cooperatives in the project's pilot areas. JICA has dispatched experts to these areas to conduct training that will assist rural cooperatives to develop their human resources. JICA plans to use the results of this pilot program as the basis for an expanded program covering a much broader area.

In Bangladesh, where 53% of the rural population lives in poverty, JICA has worked at the national and regional government levels as well as with local communities to provide comprehensive assistance for the development of a framework to facilitate improved access to public services. This assistance works to bring local residents and administrative agencies together by encouraging residents to think about the issues they face and then present their views to agency officials. When JICA commenced this five-year program in 2005, it focused on a limited number of issues. However, building on the achieved success so far, JICA aims to expand the program in the future to cover a wider range of issues.

Support for the Maintenance of High Rates of Economic Growth Promoting Economic Growth That Leads to Employment Creation

India's size makes it the dominant driver of the South Asia economy. Even during fiscal 2008, in the midst of the global financial crisis, India maintained a high GDP growth rate of 6.7%—second only to China—and is expected to remain the engine for economic growth in the region. Stable development driven by India's high rate of economic growth is crucial not only from an economic point of view but also from the perspective of overall peace and prosperity in Asia. However, India is still addressing a number of serious issues. Approximately 36% of India's population is living on less than US\$1 per day and the literacy rate for adults (over 15 years) is only 66%. To ensure India's stable development, ongoing support is required. In particular, Japanese ODA loans are needed to help bolster economic growth and reduce poverty. Moreover, to lift the performance of the South Asia economy as a whole, JICA is assisting other countries in the development of economic infrastructure, such as transportation and electric power, and supporting the development of the private sector. After the launch of New JICA in 2008, one of the first Japanese ODA loans sanctioned was for the Chennai

Metro Project, which entails the construction of a user-friendly underground and elevated railway network. This project aims to address the surge in transport demand in Chennai, the economic and political hub of Tamil Nadu State in southern India, by establishing a mass rapid transport system. This is expected to contribute significantly to the development of the regional economy and the improvement of Chennai's urban environment by alleviating traffic congestion and reducing pollution.

Measures to Address Climate Change and Assistance for Disaster Prevention

Raising Flood Forecast Accuracy and Educational Activities for Flood Evacuation

The countries of South Asia cannot ignore the impact of climate change, which must be addressed through a combination of mitigation measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adaptation policies for dealing with the impact of climate change. Moreover, South Asia suffers from frequent natural disasters. JICA responds by providing emergency aid and recovery and reconstruction assistance. JICA also provides disaster-prevention assistance and works to raise awareness of disaster prevention issues in way that will lead to practical measures.

Example

Afghanistan Improvement of Rice-Based Agriculture in Nangarhar Province

Dispatching Agriculture Experts and Supplying Equipment to Help Develop Human Resources in Afghanistan

In Afghanistan, security has deteriorated due to the impacts of incessant conflict and civil war. This prolonged period of harsh conditions has impoverished the citizens of Afghanistan. In the nation's reconstruction, food security and community development are essential. Increasing rice production is also extremely important. Current rice shortages—the result of devastated farmlands—are being met through the import of produce from neighboring countries. On this basis, community development and an increase in agricultural production are critical to Afghanistan's food security.

Nangarhar Province is situated in eastern Afghanistan. It has abundant water resources, boasts a favorable climate and, like the northern provinces of Afghanistan, is recognized as a major rice producing area. In the 1970s, Japan provided Grant Aid to assist in the construction of a rice-agriculture development center. In the aftermath of invasion by the former Soviet Union, however, agricultural facilities became run down and personnel left the area due to prolonged war-related turmoil.

Since the fall of the Taliban in 2001, JICA has initiated a program called Improvement of Rice-Based Agriculture in Nangarhar Province, which runs from September 2007 to March 2011. The project encompasses research, training and capacity development related to rice cultivation, and is designed to increase the volume and quality of rice production.

Currently, three Japanese experts are providing support to help strengthen the performance and functions of the Afghanistan Ministry of Agriculture's agricultural experiment center in Nan-

garhar. These experts are providing assistance in research and rice cultivation extension. In addition to the supply of agricultural equipment, steps are being taken to provide human resource training.

The results are remarkable, with JICA planning to expand this program to the northeast area of Afghanistan in the future.



A meeting among project-related personnel in Afghanistan

A case in point is the Lai Nullah River, a medium-sized river flowing through Islamabad, the capital of Pakistan, and the neighboring city of Rawalpindi. This river is subject to heavy monsoon-related rainfall from July to September each year, resulting in floods that occur on average once every three years. To address this situation, JICA carried out the Study on Comprehensive Flood Mitigation and Environmental Improvement Plan for the Lai Nullah Basin (the Master Plan Study) from 2002 to 2003. Based on this Master Plan, the Grant-Aid Project for the Improvement of the Flood Forecasting and Warning System for Lai Nullah Basin was implemented from 2005 to 2007.

Subsequently, from July 2007, JICA has implemented the Strengthening of Flood Risk Management in Lai Nullah Basin as a Technical Cooperation project to improve the accuracy of flood forecasting by utilizing observational data. The project is also working to raise awareness among local communities, expedite evacuation after a flood warning, promote cooperation among related administrative agencies and develop local policy-making capabilities for flood control. Prior to the 2008 monsoon season, JICA also conducted evacuation drills for approximately 100 local residents in the pilot area.

Support for Peacebuilding in the Aftermath of Conflict to Foster Social and Political Stability Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Programs Face Significant Challenges

Many countries in South Asia, such as Sri Lanka and Nepal, have recent histories of social and political instability. Consequently, a key issue is how best to effectively provide support for peacebuilding in such nations. Furthermore, in Afghanistan assistance programs must be conducted in an environment that lacks security and political stability. Hence, while implementing programs it is vital to closely monitor the political situation in Afghanistan and neighboring countries, such as Pakistan, as well as coordinate with other donor aid programs operating in the country.

In Nepal, civil war and unrest has recently ended after a decade of turmoil. In April 2008, Constitutional Assembly elections were held, with hopes high for the successful emergence of a newly revitalized nation. In Nepal, JICA has focused on democratization and peacebuilding, and has taken the initiative in supporting educational campaigns and human resource development as well as institutional development to support state building.

In May 2009, the civil war in Sri Lanka ended after government forces took control of parts of the country that had previously been held by the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), which was subsequently defeated. The deep scars of a war-torn nation remain, however, and the international community is seeking new platforms for assistance programs that can address the many challenges to be faced in rebuilding the nation.

In Afghanistan, Grant Aid from Japan was used to construct the new terminal at the Kabul International Airport, where facilities were substantially destroyed by civil war. JICA is also providing airport management training to employees of the Afghanistan Transport and Aviation Ministry. At the dedication ceremony of the new airport terminal in November 2008, JICA President Sadako Ogata stated, "This airport represents a gateway for interaction with the international community and will form a lifeline for reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan," emphasizing the significance of airport infrastructure to the recovery effort. The new terminal is expected to play a central role in reconstruction efforts throughout the country.

Example

Bangladesh Sustainable Arsenic Mitigation

Providing Safe Drinking Water to Those Dependent on Well Water

Of the nearly 10 million water wells in Bangladesh, some 29% are contaminated with amounts of arsenic that exceed acceptable levels (0.05mg/l) set by the government. Furthermore, estimates indicate that some 30 million people in Bangladesh are exposed to the dangers of contaminated water. The continued, long-term consumption of arsenic-contaminated water leads to arsenicosis (arsenic poisoning), which is contracted after arsenic enters the body through the skin or mucus membrane. Less severe symptoms can be treated by simply drinking safe, unpolluted water, but if left untreated, arsenicosis can result in serious health conditions, including liver damage and lung cancer.

In response, the government of Bangladesh launched an emergency arsenic mitigation program that established alternative sources of safe drinking water. Since these sources were limited in number, however, people living in disadvantaged communities had no choice but to use well water with unacceptable levels of arsenic for their drinking water needs.

With this in mind, JICA collaborated with the Japanese NGO Asia Arsenic Network (AAN) from 2002 to 2004 to further study local conditions, establish alternative water sources through community participation and conduct the diagnosis and monitoring of arsenicosis patients. Based on the results of these initiatives, JICA and AAN are moving forward with comprehensive arsenic mitigation through Technical Cooperation projects in the southwest region of Bangladesh. Focusing on Sharsha Upazila and Chowgacha Upazila within the Jessore District, these endeavors are being conducted under the auspices of local authorities.

JICA activities include the dispatch of experts in various fields, the creation of guidelines for arsenic mitigation based on community participation, awareness programs and the construction of alternative water sources. Complementing these efforts, JICA conducts training programs for the Arsenic Mitigation Committee and Department of Public Health and Engineering. Additionally, JICA has implemented specialist training programs for doctors and health-care workers as well as guidance for arsenicosis patients throughout the country. Buoyed by its endeavors, JICA hopes to continue efforts that help establish a sustainable, safe drinking water supply system.



A typical symptom of chronic arsenicosis is black spots on the palm of the hand

Example

India

Delhi Mass Rapid Transport System Project

Promoting Regional Economic Development and an Improved Urban Environment through the Development of a Metro System Connecting Central Delhi and Its Suburbs

In recent years, India has experienced extraordinary economic growth while at the same time facing a rapid increase in its urban population. The population of the Delhi metropolitan area, which was 6.2 million in 1981, had ballooned to over 16.3 million by 2006. This in turn led to a surge in the number of buses and private vehicles in the city. Railways in India, on the other hand, have traditionally been focused on long-distance passenger and freight transport. Even in Delhi, the short-distance railway network connecting the suburbs with the central area, and the inner-city railway network, had been underdeveloped. Consequently, residents had to depend on either buses or private vehicles as their primary means of transport. This led to an escalation in traffic congestion on roads and air pollution problems. To address this situation, the Government of India

launched plans to construct an efficient and reliable high-speed mass transport system—the Delhi Metro—to alleviate traffic congestion and reduce traffic pollution.

JICA had previously assisted in Phase I of the project in 1996 by providing ODA loans covering 59 km of the 65 km of line constructed. Opened in November 2006, it currently carries an average of 800,000 passengers daily. In addition, Delhi Metro is providing a boost to the regional economy as many metro passengers tend to take cycle rickshaws as a means of transport between stations and their destinations. At present, plans are moving forward for the Phase II extension of the project in order to cope with rising demand for public transport and to establish a more convenient transportation network. JICA has also supported Phase II since 2005 by providing ODA loans covering 83 km of the 125 km of line under construction. By the completion of Phase II in 2010, Delhi Metro will extend its operations across six lines with a total track length of 193 km. It

is expected to become a core transportation mode in Delhi City and contribute to regional economic development.

In addition to the Delhi metropolitan area, there are many other metropolitan areas with large populations in India. Based on its positive experience with Delhi Metro, JICA is currently supporting other projects in Bangalore, Kolkata and Chennai, which are also expected to promote regional economic development through the alleviation of traffic congestion and the reduction of traffic pollution.



A station on the Delhi Metro

Example

Sri Lanka

Promoting Community Participation Encompassing Agricultural Development for Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Based on a Community Approach in Trincomalee

Supporting a Community-Based Approach to Rural Village Management with the Aim of Fostering a Greater Sense of Self-Reliance among Citizens

Sri Lanka is a multiethnic country comprising three principal ethnic groups: Sinhalese (73%), Tamils (18%) and Muslims (8%). For the past 25 years, the ethnic majority Sinhalese and ethnic minority Tamils have clashed in a conflict that has resulted in significant physical and psychological damage across much of the country.

Trincomalee, the economic and political center of the Eastern Province of the country, has seen a major exodus of its population to other parts of the country or overseas due to the conflict and general civil unrest. With irrigation facilities left largely abandoned, the land has grown so desolate that agricultural production—the area's principal industry—is in jeopardy.

Since November 2005, JICA has dispatched experts and conducted local surveys targeting six

villages and three districts in Trincomalee, while also taking the initiative in building a development model for the region based on the reconstruction of agricultural infrastructure and farming villages. This wide-ranging project encompasses the following six focus areas: (1) drafting of village development plans by local residents; (2) construction implemented by the local community as well as maintenance and upkeep for irrigation facilities, rural roads, meeting facilities and agricultural wells; (3) support for the livelihood of rural women through food processing, handicrafts and textile industries; (4) implementation of a local-community action plan and enhanced local administrative competencies; (5) evaluation and monitoring of local-community action plans; and (6) construction of field offices for veterinarian clinics and agricultural support centers, as well as technical training for agricultural extension workers.

While it expects this project will be successful in strengthening local community organizations and improving agricultural technologies, JICA's true objective is to achieve peacebuilding through the collective reconstruction of agriculture and rural communities. Hopes are also held that local residents will take part in the drafting and implementation of key plans. To this end, JICA has given careful consideration toward creating an equitable ethnic balance in the selection of

program beneficiaries and has accommodated other unique local requirements so that assistance activities could be executed smoothly. Traditionally, this particular region of Sri Lanka has suffered from a low sense of community cohesion and the conflict only served to aggravate local relationships even further. As a result, local residents were initially reluctant to participate in the project. However, as more local groups—such as women's guilds and irrigation associations—were formed, the number of participants gradually increased, leading to greater solidarity among community members. Currently, local residents are actively and collectively participating in reconstruction efforts as well as the construction of irrigation channels and roadways. With further socioeconomic activity occurring, the villagers' sense of self-reliance is expected to steadily increase.



Local villagers undertaking a collective action plan