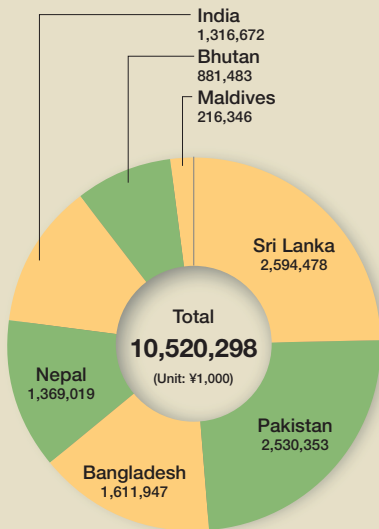


# Southwest Asia



## Pillars of Aid Priority Placed on Cooperation for Poverty Reduction and Economic Development

### ■ Cooperation results by country in Southwest Asia (FY2006)



\* This is the total amount of bilateral cooperation. The amount of cooperation provided to Asia including cooperation that covers a group of countries is 51,115,695 thousands of yen.

Southwest Asia has about 40% of the world's poor population. Development in health and education lags behind the rest of the world, and gender disparities still exist. Also, the region, where ethnicity, religion, and language are mixed, is politically and socially unstable and has conflict-ridden areas.

Given the fact that the tense relationship between India and Pakistan has eased since 2003, it is expected that economic activities in each country in the region will be activated and contribute to political stability in the region. Though the economy in the region has been comparatively good, as exemplified by India, which has achieved remarkable economic growth in recent years, the region is undermined by a vulnerable economic structure and both the trade balance and fiscal balances chronically show deficits.

Accordingly, JICA's cooperation will focus on poverty reduction and economic growth as two pillars of aid for Southwest Asia. Specifically, underlining the perspectives of human security and gender consideration in the area of poverty reduction, JICA provides support for the improvement of living conditions such as health/population, education and supply of safe water, community development, and human resources development.

As political and social stability is closely related to poverty, JICA's cooperation will proceed to that end, too.

In terms of economy, cooperation will be provided to develop economic infrastructure and promote investment and trade in the private sector with the aim of stable growth of the economy. In order to develop an economic infrastructure, JICA will further strengthen coordination with financial assistance projects. Support for economic development in Southwest Asia is also effective for promoting economic partnerships between Japan and the region, which are getting stronger particularly with India, and at the same time, is essential for facilitating reduction of the poor population of more than 400 million.

Support for peacebuilding and conflict prevention will also continue, mainly in Nepal where long-standing conflicts have almost come to an end, and in Sri Lanka where the impact of conflicts continues to be felt. In addition, JICA will continue medium- and long-term support for disaster prevention and reconstruction in response to the damage caused by the earthquakes that struck Pakistan in October 2005.

## Current State of Development

Southwest Asia has a population of approximately 1.3 billion and over 400 million people in the region are classified as poor. A development policy is being promoted for poverty reduction by each country and improvements have been made in areas such as education and health; however, development is still behind. In the region, various factors such as ethnicity, religion, language, and climate are complexly related to politics and society, contributing to social and cultural diversity and depth as well as instability of society.

For the past several years, the economic growth of Southwest Asia has progressed at a rate of about 5% annually and growth seems comparatively good. The recent economic development in India is especially outstanding and achieved 6% annual economic growth on average throughout the 1990s. After that, the service sector (IT business), which maintains steady growth, became a

leading force, and the gross domestic product (GDP) growth rate in fiscal 2005 reached 8.4% (anticipated value for fiscal 2006: 9.2%), placing it third in terms of GDP scale in Asia after Japan and China. As a result of such economic development, the middle class is swelling, whereas the poverty group still accounts for about 35% of the population. The present Manmohan Singh administration addresses rural development, employment measures, etc., as priority issues while aiming to maintain economic growth. Many countries other than India depend on exports of specific products, such as clothing and agricultural products. Given the fact that the tense relationship between India and Pakistan is gradually easing, the full-scale start-up of a South Asia free trade zone will stimulate economic activities in each country in the region and contribute to regional stability.

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# Addressing Priority Issues in JICA Programs

## Perspective of Human Security .....

In Southwest Asia, with its enormous poverty group, JICA will underline poverty control as a common priority issue, as well as formulate and implement projects by proactively incorporating the perspective of human security.

Specifically, support directly reaching the people and areas difficult to secure basic living conditions, including securing safe water, health and sanitation, is provided. One example is a project which focuses on rehabilitation of basic infrastructure and empowerment of community groups in Sri Lanka.

The poverty group is vulnerable to widespread infectious diseases and environmental contamination. JICA is supporting infectious disease control targeting filaria and tuberculosis in Bangladesh, and tuberculosis control and an expanded program for immunization (EPI)/polio control in Pakistan. Since contamination of rivers and underground water due to various factors such as population growth is developing into a serious problem, countermeasures against contamination of rivers, lakes, and ponds are supported in India, and arsenic contamination control in Bangladesh.

In Bangladesh, in particular, direct support for the residents who are under serious threat of contamination of vital drinking water is combined with support for the development of capacity of the central and local governments, with an aim to extend support to as many people as possible. JICA thus provides comprehensive support to extend and consolidate county-level outcomes at a prefectural level by combining various forms of schemes, including partnership with NGOs.

## Economic Development .....

In the area of economic development, infrastructure development and promotion of investment and trade are common issues among the countries in the region. Infrastructure supports economic growth of the country or region, and is a factor that induces investment in the private sector. In addition to economic infrastructure, improving governance, which is a prerequisite for sustainable development, will lead to the improvement of an investment environment, investment promotion, and improvement of productivity, and thus to economic growth.

In particular, the transportation and traffic sector is the core of the development of economic infrastructure. However, an underdeveloped road network constitutes the largest common concern in Southwest Asia. Thus, JICA promotes technical cooperation to develop roads, including bridges, in combination with yen loans and grant aid assistance.

In India, which maintains rapid economic growth, infrastructure development cannot keep up with the speed of economic development. Japan is supporting infrastructure development in the country mainly with yen loans. Since India has vast land areas with regional disparities, support for development and enhancement of arterial freight railway has been implemented. The purpose of this assistance is to contribute to the promotion of economic and social activities and the development of an investment environment by improving the efficiency of domestic distribution systems. In more concrete terms, a development study has been

implemented for high speed freight railway project on two routes, one between Delhi and Mumbai and the other between Delhi and Howrah (near Kolkata), which form in the north two sides of the "Golden Quadrilateral" connecting the four major cities (Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata and Chennai), which are the growing bases of the country. Assistance in a project formulation with yen loans based on the study results has been requested (see p.77).

Demand for development of economic infrastructure that will facilitate economic growth is expected to increase further in the future, and JICA will thereby promote cooperation in collaboration with yen loans.

## Peacebuilding and Support for Democratization

In Nepal, a rebel conflict has continued for the past 10 years, claiming about 14,000 lives, causing massive internal displacement, and destroying facilities. In November 2006, however, a historic peace agreement was concluded between the antigovernment force and the government, and Nepal took the first step toward new nation-building. Subsequently, in January 2007, the interim parliament was set up with the participation of the former antigovernment force, and in April, an interim government was inaugurated. Now preparations for the implementation of a constituent assembly election that will determine the new shape of the country are taking place. For the people to build a new nation with hope and confidence, realization of a fair and free election is vital. JICA is thus providing assistance that is required for the implementation of the constituent assembly election, such as strengthening the capacities of the Election Commission and support for voter education. With the aim of reducing disparities between urban and rural areas, which is considered to have been a structural factor of the conflict, JICA will provide assistance specifically focusing on improvement of livelihood of the people in the area more affected by the conflict (see p.17 and p.75).

As far as conflicts in Sri Lanka are concerned, an indefinite cease-fire agreement was reached between Sri Lanka's government and the ethnic Tamil rebels called the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in February 2002. Five years after the conflict was suspended, the peace talks between the government and the LTTE are in a static state. Since the conflict was suspended, JICA has continued to support war-affected people and refugees. JICA makes the utmost efforts in the projects that empower communities in the areas affected by the conflict. Together with direct



A seminar related to democracy and election systems in Pokhara, a city in western Nepal

support for residents, JICA provides training for administrators who deal with residents' groups to empower communities and municipalities so that they can resolve various problems and issues that they face through their own wisdom and power.

In recent years, the trend for democratization is accelerating in this region as well, and delegation of authority from the central to local governments is in progress. In support for governance improvement, JICA is implementing the Decentralization Support Program with citizen participation in Pakistan and Bhutan for the purpose of capacity building in local governments.

### Post-disaster Reconstruction and Disaster Prevention

At 8:50 A.M. on October 8, 2005, an earthquake of magnitude 7.6 on the Richter scale centered about 20km north-northeast of Muzaffarabad struck northern Pakistan. The number of people killed by the earthquake in the entire country was reported to be

about 73,000 and the Muzaffarabad area received the most damage. In response, JICA has provided seamless support from emergency relief to reconstruction using Japan's experience.

For the catastrophic damage in Sri Lanka and Maldives caused by the Major Earthquake off the Coast of Sumatra and Tsunami in the Indian Ocean in December 2004, Japan has continuously provided support for model building for reconstruction assistance through communities, and cooperation through personal contacts including advice in relation to disaster prevention.

In the area of disaster prevention, JICA is addressing flood and cyclone control in collaboration with financial assistance in Bangladesh and is supporting landslide disaster mitigation and road disaster prevention planning in Nepal. JICA will continue to provide integrated measures making use of technologies in Japan as an advanced nation in disaster prevention, and promote support focusing on strengthening the disaster response capacity of the local community.

## Front Line Pakistan

### Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Assistance for the Pakistan Earthquake (Oct. 8, 2005)

#### Assistance Utilizing Japan's Experience as an Earthquake-prone Country

#### Continuous support from emergency relief to rehabilitation and reconstruction assistance

For the Pakistan Earthquake, which occurred on October 8, 2005 (the death toll was about 73,000), the JICA Pakistan Office is providing continuous seamless support, from emergency relief immediately after the earthquake to rehabilitation and reconstruction in collaboration with various organizations, including the government of Pakistan.

For example, in the Batagram District in a province on the northwestern frontier, where rescue and medical teams of the Japan Disaster Relief Team worked, a needs assessment study and an outline design study for reconstruction of health and medical facilities and educational facilities were swiftly implemented. The results were utilized in the decision to implement Non-project grant aid (¥4 billion provided) by the Japanese government (the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) three months after the earthquake. Reconstruction of more than 100 schools and about 20 medical facilities have been scheduled, and JICA is thereby providing various types of support for smooth implementation.

#### Town planning for disaster mitigation utilizing Japan's experience

Based on a project formulation study implemented immediately after the earthquake (October to November

2005), JICA is working on various kinds of assistance utilizing Japan's experiences as an earthquake-prone country.

Specific projects that have been implemented include support for orphan children and persons with disabilities affected by the earthquake, taking advantage of Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers; technical instruction in standard design and construction techniques for building health and medical facilities utilizing a new concept of earthquake-resistant design and barrier-free construction; and demonstration of low-cost earthquake-resistant construction technology for general housing, etc.

At the epicenter, Muzaffarabad, the Urgent Development Study on Rehabilitation and Reconstruction in Muzaffarabad City was implemented with the basic policy of building a town resistant to disasters. Activities related to disaster prevention from the standpoint of affected citizens are being widely implemented, such as (1) formulation of a rehabilitation and reconstruction master plan including a hazard map and land use plan, (2) proposal of an urgent reconstruction project for the west bank bypass road, etc., which shall serve as an evacuation route in the wake of a disaster and a relief supply route, as well as implementation of related studies, (3) rubble removal with the participation of

citizens, introduction of advance alarm system for landslide and execution of evacuation drill, construction of the Sathi Bagh Government Girls High School (the first permanent educational facility built inside the city after the earthquake) as a model school for earthquake-resistant design construction technology and disaster prevention education, development of disaster prevention education texts and teachers manuals, etc. Furthermore, on the Jehlum Valley Road connecting Muzaffarabad to India, JICA is implementing a pilot project for the purpose of technology transfer in bridge rehabilitation in a landslide hazard area as part of the National Transport Plan Study. These efforts have been highly praised by the government of Pakistan.

(JICA Pakistan Office)



Students looking at photos of the construction process, after the handover ceremony of the Sathi Bagh Government Girls High School