

Social Development

Governance/Gender Support/Urban and Regional Development/Peacebuilding, Reconstruction Assistance/Transportation/ICT/Japan Center/JICA-Net Program



Construction site of a water supply facility: Development of basic infrastructure is urgently required in Sudan. (Emergency Study on the Planning and Support for Basic Physical and Social Infrastructure in Juba Town and the Surrounding Areas)

Overview of the Social Development Field

In many developing countries, basic systems and the framework of society, such as administrative systems and basic infrastructure, are underdeveloped or incomplete, hindering development. In the context of capacity development, which forms the core of JICA's activities, this is deemed to be capacity issues of society.

JICA provides cooperation in the social development field as a program that aims for the capacity development of society. Establishment of appropriate social systems and frameworks under adequate governance, and building networks of transport

and traffic infrastructure and information communications based on proper regional development plans are important to achieve the capacity development of a society. In recent years, demand has grown for cooperation in the field of post-conflict or post-disaster reconstruction and peacebuilding, and it is necessary to improve facilities, systems, and networks comprehensively by viewing society in a cross-cutting manner.

In this section, overview, priority issues, and activities for each social development field are introduced.

Governance

Overview

Since the 1990s governance has been a focus of attention as something that can have an impact on the effectiveness of development and assistance. Governance is the concept that pays attention not only to the efforts made by the government and administration, but also to the entire framework of social management, including the general public and the private sector. Governance includes fostering civil society organizations and the promotion of participation of the general public in the policy process, in addition to such themes as reform of the public sector and decentralization, as well as privatization.

In the sector of governance, support is provided to establish and improve basic national systems and develop and improve a framework or a system for the provision of public goods and services in line with public needs. The history of support for governance is young in the world and many donors are still exploring effective methods of assistance.

JICA's Efforts

In order to improve governance in developing countries, JICA

implements assistance mainly for building institutions and organizations and developing human resources through technical cooperation. Since the initiative of the developing country is important in this sector, instead of introducing specific systems and policies into developing countries as they are, possible options are presented through dialogue or communication to help the partner country make a choice and establish and improve the system on its own.

Specifically JICA's assistance in the governance sector covers the following three categories: development of legal systems, improving administrative functions, and building democratic systems (see Figure 3-4).

Development of Legal Systems

Support for developing legal systems is provided in four areas: (1) development of laws and regulations (development of legislation); (2) development of legal organizations (organizational development); (3) development of legal professionals (development of human resources); and (4) legal empowerment of the society (improvement of access of people to legal and judi-

Figure 3-4 Assistance Areas in Governance

Support for Governance						
Major Assistance Issues	Development of Legal Systems	Improving Administrative Functions		Building Democratic Systems		
	Law and jurisdiction	Administrative foundation	Local administration	Statistics	Public safety	Improvement of policy process
	Drafting and enactment of legislation, training for legal professionals, reform of judicial system, penal and judicial administration, etc.	Management of development projects, development plan and policy, revision of the public servant personnel system, audit, etc.	Local administration and decentralization, capacity development of local administration, etc.	General statistics, poverty monitoring, etc.	Civilian police, maritime safety, fire safety, emigration and immigration control, etc.	Election system and management, strengthening of legislative body, enhancement of media services, fostering civil society organizations, etc.

cial systems). Assistance is provided mainly to the countries in transition to market economies, with an aim to develop social infrastructure as a basis for establishing the rule of law. For example, support for the drafting basic laws such as civil codes and

related laws and enactment of legislation and nurturing legal professionals (judges, prosecutors, lawyers) are provided in Viet Nam and Cambodia. Examples of support for legal empowerment of the society are support for enhancing the settlement system in

The Project for Cooperation in the Legal and Judicial Field in Viet Nam CASE STUDY

Viet Nam has been pushing forward a market economy policy called “Doimoi” since the 1980s and Japan has thereby been supporting the development of civil and commercial laws and regulations and the development of legal professionals for more than 10 years.

Japan has experience in adopting legal systems from Europe after the Meiji Restoration and from the US after World War II and adapting them to its own society and culture. The project features support in the form of joint research between Viet Nam and Japan based on the experience of Japan.

Some of the achievements of the support thus far include the enactment of a Revised Civil Code in May 2005 and the enactment of a Civil Procedure Code in May 2004. During the process of drafting the laws and their enactment, Japanese legal scholars and legal professionals offered technical guidance, which has been highly acclaimed by Viet Nam.

Traditionally, judges, prosecutors, and lawyers were separately trained in Viet Nam, but the government of Viet Nam decided to set up an institution to comprehensively train and develop profession-

als, modeled on Japan’s legal training system in Japan. In response, JICA provided support for developing curricula and teaching materials for comprehensive training. This effort is for human resources development who will be engaged in legal services in the future.

Starting in April 2007, judicial practices and law enforcement duties have been monitored in a pilot district in the suburb of Hanoi, aiming for appropriate legal practices including trials, in accordance with the laws and regulations enforced. Based on the monitoring result, JICA will undertake various activities in order to improve surveillance and support systems for central judicial institutions.



Workshop held to support drafting of the national redress law

Front Line Honduras The Project for Capacity Development in the Western Region

Aiming for Local Administration that Fights Poverty

Small and vulnerable administrative offices in municipality

Honduras is one of the poorest countries in Latin America. There are 298 municipalities throughout the country, but most of them are staffed only with several officers, including the mayor. Although the system of administrative offices is small and vulnerable, decentralization has progressed and movements have taken place to delegate most of the administrative services, such as health and medical care and education, to municipal governments. However, most of the administrative offices are not equipped with the capacity to develop and implement development plans, though a framework of allocating development budget to municipalities is in place. Accordingly, in 2006 JICA started a project to develop the capacity of local administrators in the Western Region, where poor municipalities are particularly concentrated in Honduras.

Consolidate development administration model in municipalities

The purpose of the project is to con-

solidate a development administration model in municipalities. In this project, a survey was conducted to grasp the living conditions and the progress of development (targeting about 9,000 households in the target municipalities). JICA assisted the municipalities with planning, implementing, and evaluating community participatory development projects based on the results of the survey through guidance and training, as well as organizing experiences in implementing development. At the same time, JICA intends to contribute to poverty reduction in local areas through dissemination of this development model.



Construction site of a primary school, which is assisted by the project with the participation of the community

The survey that was conducted to understand the situations from the second half of 2006 to the first half of 2007 gained the participation and cooperation of 272 leaders from the target municipalities. Also, women’s participation and cooperation were promoted to incorporate the gender perspective, and as a result, one-third of the participating leaders were women (teachers and nurses, etc.). This survey allowed residents to objectively understand their own development conditions and to nurture trusting relationships by working with municipal stakeholders. While developing the capacity of administrative organizations and local human resources, development projects are proceeding smoothly, boosting the expectations from others. While decentralization is progressing at a sluggish rate, the progress of this project is drawing much interest from other donor countries and agencies that are planning to input a considerable amount of funds to support the central government, municipal association, and decentralization of Honduras.

(JICA Honduras Office)

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Indonesia and strengthening the legal aid system through supporting the Law Society in Mongolia.

Improving Administrative Functions

Support for improving administrative functions focuses on strengthening the administrative foundation to appropriately allocate and manage national budget and personnel; enhancement of local administrative functions to effectively provide public goods and services; improving transparency and the promotion of citizens' participation.

As for the support related to strengthening administrative foundation, support for improving statistics capacity of the government is being implemented in Cambodia, and support for improving the public servant personnel system associated with administrative reform is being undertaken in Viet Nam.

With respect to enhancement of local administration, support is provided to local administration bodies in Honduras and Tanzania for developing human resources, organizations, and systems to deliver public goods and services in line with the needs of local communities. Also, in support for improving transparen-

cy and promotion of citizens' participation, JICA assists with the promotion of collaboration between administration and communities in Indonesia and strengthening anti-corruption measures in Thailand.

Building Democratic Systems

JICA's support for building democratic systems focuses not on reforming the political system itself, but on assisting in building a system that allows for the involvement of the general public in the policy process and can win their trust.

Specifically, support is provided in two areas: (1) support for ensuring safety of the people (public safety); and (2) support for building a system and institution in which the people can participate in the policy process as a government open to the public (support for democratization). In the area of public safety, support is provided to the police department in Indonesia to develop a model of civilian police fully trusted by the public. An example of support for democratization is the media support for a constituent assembly in Nepal.

Gender Support

From the viewpoint of reviewing social and economic structures, systems, and policies as the source of gender disparity, JICA provides gender support. In Afghanistan where many years of conflict have ended, JICA is implementing support for the economic empowerment of women through community development with the counterpart, the Ministry of Women's Affairs. This is an effort to achieve independence and improve the livelihoods of women whose opportunities for education and employment were lost under the Taliban regime. In Cambodia, JICA is assisting staff

members of the Ministry of Women with various skills from data collection and analysis in gender statistics to policy making, implementation, and evaluation. This aims to strengthen the functions of the Ministry of Women for making policy recommendations to and coordinating with other ministries and agencies and encourage the government to incorporate a gender perspective into policies, development plans, and projects, and give due consideration to the perspective.

Urban and Regional Development

Overview

The world's population is estimated to have exceeded 6.5 billion in 2006, of which more than 50%, or 3.3 billion people, reside in urban areas. Population growth and urbanization are notable particularly in developing countries. Nearly 40% of urban populations were concentrated in the developing world in 1950, but the percentage is estimated to jump to 80% in 2030, indicating future progress of rapid urbanization in developing countries.

The advancement of urbanization brings about economic development through scale merit or synergic effect on the one hand, but on the other hand, it causes deterioration in the living environment, heavy traffic, the deterioration of public security, and the emergence of slums (a settlement of homes where people with low incomes live in a poor environment). The concern is that these problems may slow down economic and industrial development at the regional and national level.

Ensuring sustainability of projects is important in order to push forward the development of urban or specific local areas. Though community participation in development, appropriate local administrative systems, and improvement in administrative capacity of local governments are all necessary, appropriate development doesn't take place in developing countries due to a lack

of sustainability in many cases.

The problems that occur in urban and regional development are an inter-affected complex of various phenomena and solving these problems one by one has limitations. It is necessary to take a comprehensive approach incorporating capacity development of local administration bodies in addressing development issues from a medium- and long-term perspective.

JICA's Efforts

JICA contributes to economic growth and improvement in living standards of a developing country through the development of urban and specific areas of the country.

In the sector of urban and regional development, in order to proceed with economic and social development focused on those who live in urban and specific areas, JICA implements technical cooperation related to the formulation of urban development master plans and a comprehensive regional development plan, development of local administrative systems, and human resources development, by designating the following five priority issues.

- a. Comprehensive and exhaustive approach to various issues in urban and specific areas
- b. Emphasis on capacity development of the entire society toward

- urban and regional development, including administrative agencies, regional social organizations, and communities
- c. Development of local administrative systems appropriate to national conditions
- d. Balanced regional growth and correction of disparities among areas, reflecting the perspective of local residents
- e. Balanced development with a minimum negative impact from urban development

More specifically, urban development master plans and comprehensive regional development plans include analysis of issues and tasks of urban and regional areas, creating medium- and long-term visions, formulation of development policies, sector-specific plans, and recommendations for concrete action plans to realize them. Through the process of formulating a master plan, development of human resources and capacity development of organizations in charge of formulation of urban development and regional development plans take place. Furthermore, JICA is

working to disseminate planning skills involving collaboration between the government and communities, in order to incorporate the perspective of communities into the development plans that traditionally have been formulated mainly by the administration.

In addition, JICA is involved in developing a framework for local and central governments and local financial systems suitable for national situations, as well as capacity development for local administrative bodies including nurturing administrators. Capacity development of administration is sought to carry out efficient and effective projects from the stages of planning to implementation.

JICA also implements cooperation for capacity development of organizations that conduct research and development of new technologies related to housing development and for developing highly accurate geographic data (topographic map) which is the basis for development planning, in order to improve living environment of urban residents, including the poverty group in urban areas.

Peacebuilding and Reconstruction Assistance

Overview

Japan's ODA Charter adopted in 2003 identifies peacebuilding as a new priority issue. The Medium-term Policy on ODA announced thereby in 2005 defines the objective of peacebuild-

ing as to prevent occurrence and recurrence of conflicts, alleviate various difficulties that people face during and immediately after conflicts, and subsequently achieve long-term stable development. Peacebuilding requires assistance in accordance with the stage;

Front Line Nepal ● Support for Constituent Assembly Election

Realizing Democratic Elections

Multiple support constituting human resources development and provision of materials and equipment

On November 21, 2006, a comprehensive peace accord, including permanent cease-fire arrangements, was signed between the government and Maoist rebels, ending an 11-year civil war in Nepal. The comprehensive peace accord guaranteed an election of members to the Constituent Assembly. Since no democratic elections had been held in Nepal for more than 10 years and a combination of proportional representation and prefectural constituencies was being attempted for the first time in the country, the government of Nepal requested support from other countries and development organizations.

A free and fair election for the Constituent Assembly is important in the process of democratization in Nepal. In response to a request from the Nepali government, JICA is multilaterally supporting the election board with human resources development and provision of materials and equipment.

Training and study tours in Japan

JICA provided computers and pro-

jectors used for training in registration work for officers of the election board, and invited the operation officer of the election board to Japan for training. The training participants received lectures on elections and the role of the government, as well as election systems, and had an opportunity to see the actual setting up of voting stations and vote-counting work during the Aichi Governor's Election. After returning to Nepal, they compiled reports on the training and made recommendations to the election board about the method of election and election management.

Some of the factors that caused insurgency in Nepal include regional disparities and social expulsion of caste groups, ethnic groups, and women. To incorporate the opinions of these people into the decision-making process is an issue for Nepal in the process of nation-building. JICA, therefore, invited specialists from both Japan and Nepal as lecturers and co-hosted seminars on elections and democracy with the election board. Various people from the media and civil organizations, as well as academic scholars, participated in the seminar and

actively exchanged opinions.

Japanese experts, dispatched to the western region as members of the UN election support team, are working as advisors on voter education, too. In addition, JICA has provided equipment such as recorders and assisted the national radio station in producing programs related to voter education.

Although there are many problems to be resolved before the Constituent Assembly election takes place, the Nepali government highly appreciates the package support that is being implemented jointly by the Japanese government (Ministry of Foreign Affairs) and JICA in the combinations of provision of equipment and human resources development.

(JICA Nepal Office)



Discussions were held about the significance of elections in new nation-building at the seminar hosted by JICA.

prevention of occurrence and recurrence of conflicts, reconstruction immediately after conflicts, and medium- and long-term reconstruction and development. In particular, immediately after conflicts, when central and local governments often have difficulties in functioning properly, the peace and stability of a society can be realized by achieving outcomes that allow the people to feel peace (dividend of peace) with speed and flexibility while dealing with changes in situations.

Besides conflicts, support for reconstruction from damage caused by large-scale disasters such as earthquakes is also identified as a priority issue in the ODA Charter in an effort to address global issues.

JICA's Efforts

Peacebuilding efforts take place in a series of processes from emergency of tension, outbreak of conflict, cease fire, and reconstruction based on peace accords to subsequent development, in three areas: military framework (such as cease-fire monitoring groups), political framework (such as preventive diplomacy and settlement), and socioeconomic framework (such as humanitarian relief and development assistance). JICA, based on the Medium-term Plan on ODA mentioned earlier, conducts peacebuilding assistance, mainly focusing on development assistance following peace accords (see p.15-17). Particular importance is placed on the following four points.

1) Support for reconstruction of social capital

By rehabilitating and reconstructing war-torn basic infrastructures (roads, bridges, water supply, health and medical care, and educational facilities), JICA secures the basic conditions of reconstruction projects and encourages people to feel the dividend of peace as soon as possible in implementing a project.

2) Support for restoration of economic activities

Support for improving agricultural productivity and vocational training is provided.

3) Support for recovery of governing function of the government

Support for conducting elections and the development of

democratic administrative systems is provided.

4) Support contributing to increased public security

Skills training for social reintegration of demobilized soldiers and support for democratic police are provided.

In conducting these projects, JICA takes an approach with the following five points in mind, in order to incorporate particularly the perspective of human security.

- a. Contributing to rapid and seamless implementation of human-centered assistance that will definitely reach people in need
- b. Focusing on the socially vulnerable, thus contributing to their own efforts for capacity development
- c. Providing support for the community and people, as well as for the government
- d. Providing support not only for a conflict-ridden country, but also for neighboring countries and regions where necessary, in view of the conditions of the people in those countries and regions
- e. Taking note of support which helps prevent occurrence or recurrence of conflicts, instead of promoting the occurrence or recurrence of conflicts

In particular, when considering the prevention of occurrence or recurrence of conflicts, the peacebuilding needs and impact assessment (PNA) is performed to analyze the factors of the conflicts before full-fledged implementation of a project, in an effort to understand specific points for consideration.

At the same time, in response to large-scale disasters caused by earthquakes or tsunami, emergency reconstruction plans for affected cities and regions are formulated and support is given in close cooperation with Japan's financial cooperation. In the area of disaster prevention, Japan has the world's leading technologies, experience, and human resources, and projects are being implemented utilizing these resources, which has been widely recognized by the parties concerned.

Transportation

Overview

To support sustainable development and growth in developing countries, it is essential to develop transportation infrastructure that serves to transport goods and people (roads, railways, ports, airports, etc.). The demand for improved transportation infrastructure remains substantial in developing countries. The need for maintenance, management, repair and modernization of aging facilities is expected to increase rapidly.

However, development of a transportation infrastructure has the potential to cause environmental problems and it is therefore necessary to consider the impact on natural environment and social development and countermeasures to deal with problems.

In addition, transportation infrastructure development requires a substantial amount of funds and securing financial resources for that is a big issue. It is difficult to develop all the necessary infrastructure with limited public funds. It is becoming important, therefore, to consider securing various financial resources, for example, introducing private funds, in providing transportation services

expected by users sustainably and efficiently.

JICA's Efforts

JICA's cooperation in the sector of transportation aims mainly to vitalize economic and social activities, which leads to improvements in income and living environments of the people by transporting people and goods swiftly, smoothly, and safely.

Through the development of a transportation infrastructure and related human resources in developing countries, credibility of infrastructure and safety of people's living situations are improved and smooth transportation and development of the living environment are promoted, contributing to economic growth and improvement in the standard of the living environment at the same time. In providing cooperation, infrastructure focusing on users and people in the vicinity is developed, and community participation and cooperation with NGOs are actively promoted.

Considering transportation infrastructure as the infrastructure that contributes to the happiness and convenience of the people,

The Feasibility Study on the Development of High-Axle Load Multimodal Dedicated Freight Corridors with Computerized Control for Delhi-Mumbai and Delhi-Howrah Rail Routes is an 18-month project launched in May 2006 based on the Eight-fold Initiative for Strengthening Japan-India Global Partnership signed between the Prime Ministers of two countries in April 2005 (see p.46).

India faces the issue of a delay in its manufacturing industry and agriculture, while experiencing remarkable economic growth. In 2005, the government of India, which works hard on infrastructure development, announced a plan to develop high-speed railways connecting four major cities in the country, in order to correct the distortion in growth. Among the railways, JICA is implementing cooperation, including feasibility studies and training, for the East-West corridor (Mumbai-Delhi-Kolkata), which stretches for more than 2800km. While reviewing the high-speed freight railways that are being designed by the Ministry of Rail Transportation of India, JICA is making recommendations for improving not only the railway systems but also ports and distribution systems by introducing Japan's technologies with an emphasis on environmental and social considerations and is conducting studies aimed for distribu-

tion reform in India.

When this plan is substantiated, distribution issues within the country will be resolved, and at the same time, smooth distribution of goods beyond national borders including neighboring countries will be promoted in the future. It is expected to play a significant role not only in the growth of a regional economic zone, but also for peace and security.



Unloading containers onto trucks: Discussions will be undertaken about the optimal freight handling system at cargo terminals.

JICA carries out the following technical cooperation covering a wide range of activities, in addition to traditional cooperation for hardware such as roads.

- a. Support for improving capacity of the transport administration (**capacity development in transportation**)
- b. Support contributing to globalization and regionalization with the aim of promoting the globalized transport of goods and people and development of regional economic zone (**international transportation**)
- c. Support for ensuring fair mobility of people and harmonious land development (**national transportation**)
- d. Support for sustainable growth of urban areas and improvements in the living standard environment (**urban transportation**)
- e. Support for developing the basic transportation infrastructure with the aim of improving living standards in local areas (**local transportation**)

In order to solve today's increasingly diversified and complicated issues related to transportation, it is considered effective to pay attention to the characteristics of transportation and take appropriate measures by categorizing them into the five groups as mentioned above, instead of just examining transportation means.

Cross-border Transportation Infrastructure

Though cross-border transportation infrastructure can be

simply interpreted as trans-national transportation system, JICA instead interprets it in a broader meaning, as a transportation system that spreads across national borders and facilitates regionalization. In the context of cross-border transportation infrastructure, not only infrastructure development along national borders, but also development of software, such as formation of regional network, safe transportation systems, and the development of legal framework for fair economic activities are considered.

Advancement of cross-border transportation is expected to contribute to economic vitalization of less-developed countries and regions, correction of regional disparities, regionally coordinated development, and poverty reduction.

As cross-border transport advances, the possibility of investment from the region with a strong economy to that with a small economy increases. On the other hand, there emerges a risk of increased economic disparity among regions, with benefits disproportionately vested to the region with the strong economy. An increase in the volume of traffic across national borders may have a negative impact, such as the spread of crime and infectious diseases like HIV/AIDS. Therefore, when providing support for cross-border transportation infrastructure, it is considered necessary to pay full consideration to the negative impacts entailed by the expansion.

ICT (Information and Communication Technology)

ICT and Socioeconomic Development

Information and communication technology (ICT) is applied in various fields such as administration, education, and medical care, contributing to the improvement of socioeconomic development. However these benefits are not available to many people in developing countries, generating a digital divide.

IT Strategy Headquarters was installed in the Cabinet Office in response to the Okinawa Charter on Global Information Society adopted at the Kyushu-Okinawa Summit in July 2000. Cooperation for bridge digital divide is promoted in developing countries mainly in Asia as an international policy.

JICA's Development Strategies

JICA identified five development strategy goals according to Japan's policies for bridging digital divide.

The first goal is capacity building in the area of ICT policy formulation. JICA dispatches advisors for making national ICT strategies, telecommunication policy, ICT industry development policy, etc.

The second is human resources development in the ICT sector. To spread ICT to all the citizens, JICA cooperates in training technicians, policymakers, etc. The human development project for the purpose of improving capacity of ministries and agencies, training centers and universities is at the heart of cooperation. Human resource development has gained importance in technical cooperation in the ICT sector.

The third is development of a communications infrastructure. In order to develop the backbone communication network and the rural communication infrastructure, JICA assists in the formulation of a master plan of the communication network and supports strengthening the maintenance and operation system.

The fourth is improvement of efficiency and benefits through

ICT use in various sectors. JICA supports the introduction of ICT in administration and utilizes ICT in cooperation in the sectors such as education, medical care, commerce, thus leading to improved efficiency and effectiveness of projects.



Japanese expert giving practical guidance (The Project on ICT Human Resource Development at ICT Training Institute in Myanmar)

The fifth is the use of ICT to improve aid efficiency and effectiveness. The JICA-Net (distance technical cooperation) Program corresponds to this.

JICA continues to implement various cooperation to connect ICT to effective socioeconomic development by selecting appropriate ICT in line with the actual situation of a country and region while considering the initiative of the partner country.

Japan Center

Japan Center was envisaged as a base to support human development responding to the transition to market economies in East and Central Asia and the Indochina area. It also serves as a place for exchange and mutual understanding between people of the partner country and Japan. The Japan Center is wide open to the general public by introducing each country's society and culture, as well as providing Japanese language courses.

JICA commenced Japan Center projects in September 2000. At the moment nine centers in eight countries are in place and operating (Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh in Viet Nam, Laos, Cambodia, Mongolia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Ukraine). Business program, Japanese language courses, and mutual understanding promotion program form the core of the basic activities at all the centers.

In these countries, it is an urgent matter to foster human resources who support the real economy and the business program is expected to offer necessary knowledge and know-how for such human development in the private sector. Lectures regarding the Japanese style of management, and practical contents including corporate diagnosis, have been praised greatly by local small and medium-sized enterprises and economic organizations and as a result, there has been a case where former students formed "Kaizen Association" to spread the Japanese style of management

by themselves to a wide area. The Japanese language course leads to broad opportunities for jobs and studying in Japan. Through support for local Japanese language teachers, the center also plays a role as a base for Japanese language education in each country. In the mutual understanding promotion program, provision of information on current situations and study programs in Japan, etc., an exchange of opinions from students of both countries are conducted by hosting study tours in the country and using the JICA-Net.

JICA is working to generate synergy effects by combining these activities in different areas (Business Japanese Course, Japanese course for prospective students who are coming to study in Japan, and preliminary orientation before coming to Japan, etc.).

Some centers have been operating as long as seven years, and it is fair to say that their function as a contact point for Japan in the country has been consolidated. In order to further strengthen this function, it is increasingly necessary to proceed with projects in concerted cooperation and partnership among all levels of Japanese society, including administrative agencies, local governments, educational institutions such as universities, and private corporations in Japan.

JICA-Net Program

In the JICA-Net Program launched following the G8 Kyushu-Okinawa Summit 2000, distance technical cooperation using TV conference systems is implemented and promoted, and multimedia contents for improving the quality of JICA's projects are developed. This new type of technical cooperation utilizes ICT to complement JICA's projects by overcoming constraints in terms of time and distance and to improve aid effectiveness and efficiency. In fiscal 2006, 577 distance lectures and seminars, which

constitute a central part of cooperation for remote technical cooperation, were conducted and cumulatively 129 multimedia contents had been developed by the end of fiscal 2006, indicating the consolidation of JICA-Net Program as part of JICA's projects. The number of network centers for TV conferences expanded to 90 from the initial number of six. The JICA-Net Program is required to strategically support country- and region-specific programs in pursuit of higher effectiveness for the future.