

# Peacebuilding

## Peacebuilding Support for Preventing Relapses of Conflicts



Of the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), relevant goals are shown in color.

Most conflicts are internal disputes that take place in developing countries, primarily in the poorest countries and regions. In such internal conflicts, not only combatants but also ordinary citizens and children become both victims and perpetrators. Consequently, the impact on people's lives is significant even after the conflict ends.

In order to contribute to the promotion of peace and the prevention of conflicts and their recurrence, JICA is making concerted efforts toward the reconstruction of social capital and economic recovery to solve economic disparities—one cause of conflict—and provide equal opportunities as well as to restore the state system and functions and enhance security.

### ● Overview of Issue

The majority of conflicts in the world today are internal conflicts in developing countries, most of which take place in the poorest countries and regions in economic terms. While an increasing number of ordinary citizens are victimized, the divide between the military and civilians is fading as the number of conflicts where ordinary citizens or children are perpetrators increases.

Armed conflicts do more than just destroy the infrastructure that serves as a foundation for people's livelihoods; they also tear the bonds holding the society together and increase mutual

distrust and hatred. They destroy and leave a bitter legacy on the path to reconstruction. According to some statistics, 44% of countries return to a state of war within five years after signing a peace or cease-fire agreement (World Bank, 2003).

Aid for peacebuilding requires a comprehensive approach that combines three frameworks: military, political and social/economic. Military measures and political methods, such as preventive diplomacy, are important factors in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and the consolidation of peace, as is development assistance to correct economic disparities, and improving unequal opportunities and other factors that lead to conflict.

### Case Study Cote d'Ivoire Support for Development of the Greater Abidjan for Peace and Stability

#### Project of the Development of Urban Master Plan and Project on the Reinforcement of Communities for Promoting Social Cohesion in Greater Abidjan

There are many problems in Abidjan, the economic capital of Cote d'Ivoire, ranging from poverty to a shortage of basic infrastructure facilities. JICA is providing support for the development of an urban plan for restoring urban functions.

The Republic of Cote d'Ivoire sustained a remarkable average annual economic growth rate of 8% after its independence in 1960 until the 1970s. The country was called "Ivorian miracle." Abidjan prospered and the city became known as the Paris of Western Africa. But following a 1999 coup d'état, there was political and economic turmoil that divided the country into halves. As a result, this once beautiful city became an enormous area of poverty. There is a shortage of basic social infrastructure components like schools, health centers, roads and drainage. In addition, there is an even more serious problem: stand-offs between regions and political parties resulting from turmoil that lasted more than 10 years. Furthermore, the limited labor market is unable to absorb the country's young people, former militants, and returning refugees.

Abidjan is the capital of the Cote d'Ivoire economy and is vital to the recovery and growth of the entire Western African economy. JICA supports the development of an urban plan for ending the prolonged stagnation, restoring its urban functions and quickly starting development work by using Japan's urban planning technologies and experience.

Resolving social instability is another

goal. As part of emergency support for this purpose, JICA is active in the two communes (Abobo and Yopougon) that were impacted most by the conflict. By rehabilitating the basic social infrastructure, creating more jobs and strengthening the capacity of city workers through implementation of projects, JICA plans to contribute to promoting social cohesion.



An evening traffic jam in the Plateau Commune, which is in the center of Abidjan



This market has formed on its own in Alepe on the outskirts of Abidjan.

## ● JICA Activities

JICA is working to contribute to the prevention of both the occurrence and recurrence of armed conflicts, taking into account the need for conflict prevention and pursuing positive impacts of the projects. JICA has assisted in attempts to alleviate the various difficulties faced by people during and immediately after conflicts and to subsequently achieve stable development over the medium and long term. Specifically, JICA supports 1) the reconstruction of social capital, 2) economic recovery, 3) rebuilding the governance system, and 4) security enhancement.

In recent years, JICA has been concentrating on extending support for advancing the peace process by using development projects that begin at the initial stage of reconstructing countries during or immediately after a conflict. One example is support for the peace process between the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and the government of the Philippines. MILF has been struggling with an armed force in the central and western part of the Mindanao region to demand independence (subsequently changed to a highly autonomous status). To provide support, JICA has been implementing a socio-economic development program (called J-BIRD) that

started even before the peace agreement was signed. JICA also has been dispatching its staff to the International Monitoring Team (IMT) in Mindanao. In October 2012, the Philippines government and MILF signed the Framework Agreement for Bangsamoro. JICA will continue to extend assistance for the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Compact. JICA also will contribute to the establishment of the Bangsamoro Government as a new autonomous political entity in 2016 and to sustainable development for the stability in the region.

In addition, JICA is reviewing its experiences in past projects and sharing the compiled results at international conferences. The objective is to identify lessons that can be used to conduct projects that are effective at improving livelihoods and securing jobs for the residents of post-conflict countries and regions.

Going forward, JICA will accumulate knowledge and strengthen its support in conflict-affected countries and regions. JICA will also intensify its support in the field of peacebuilding through efforts such as human resource development to supply experts who can become involved in the process.

### Case Study Support for Ethnic Minority People in Myanmar

#### Integrated Regional Development to Promote Peace

**Conflicts have been taking place for many years in the border areas of Myanmar and many ethnic minority people have been forced to leave their homelands. As a result, these people have become internally displaced persons (IDP) or refugees in Thailand and other countries. JICA is providing support to encourage the movement toward peace.**

It is said that Myanmar has more than 100 minority ethnic groups. In the seven states bordering Thailand, Bangladesh, India and China, people belonging to these minority groups outnumber the majority Burmese. There have been repeated conflicts between the central government and armed ethnic groups in these border areas. These armed conflicts have forced large numbers of people to leave their homes and become IDP and refugees in Thailand and other countries.

Following the establishment of a new government in 2011, Myanmar signed cease fire agreements with 11 major ethnic minority groups. The government continues to hold political dialogues with these groups that are aimed at reaching a peace agreement. In February 2013, JICA started the Preparatory Survey on Integrated Regional Development for Ethnic Minorities in the South-East Myanmar in Kayin State and Mon State, which are part of the region that ethnic minority groups that signed cease fire agreements have been controlling. In this region, a cease fire agreement was signed with the Kayin National Union (KNU), the largest armed group in Myanmar, for the first time in 63 years. JICA's objective is to provide assistance for social and economic development in order to promote actions that will lead to peace.

About 140,000 people live in refugee camps along the border between Myanmar and Thailand. Furthermore, some surveys

indicate that there are hundreds of thousands of IDP in other regions of the country. All of these people are in an unstable situation with no land or basic living environment. JICA is providing assistance to enable refugees and IDP to return and (re)settle in a sustainable manner. From a short-term standpoint, activities will include developing basic infrastructure such as water systems, road rehabilitation and schools as well as creating employment opportunities. To achieve stability from a longer-term perspective, JICA will work with both the Myanmar government and ethnic minority people, including returning refugees and IDP, to develop visions and goals with a time frame of 10 to 20 years for comprehensive regional development.

The aim of these socioeconomic development activities is to achieve regional



In an area with a cease fire agreement, Mr. Hashimoto explains that the government of Myanmar and armed ethnic minority groups will cooperate to provide assistance for improving the lives of residents of the region.

development while building trust among people and government institutions in these regions at various levels. JICA wants these programs to become models for development activities in states where other ethnic minority people live.

#### From Our Expert

##### Chief Consultant, JICA Study Team Tsuyoshi Hashimoto

This survey is highly significant from the perspective of the first development cooperation in Myanmar that covers a broad area. I think this development program will become a model for the benefits of development activities for other minority groups with respect to both its activities and the implementation system. I want to achieve tangible results that can be applied throughout Myanmar.



The survey team collects information about the lives of people in expected resettlement sites. (Photo by Akinori Sato)