

BOP Business in African Countries

— Discussion on how can Partnerships between Public and Private Sector Contribute to Creating Social Value and Enhance Development Effects —



The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), held a seminar with the theme of “BOP Business in African Countries” (see Note 1) at JICA Yokohama at 13:30 on June 1.

In the first session of the seminar, Takayuki Hotta, Councilor, International Relations Group, Panasonic Corporation, introduced the solar lantern business in Kenya, which was followed by a panel discussion joined by Sahba Sobhani, Acting Programme Manager of UNDP. In the second session, Yasuhiko Toride, Director, Nutrition Improvement Projects, Associate General Manager, R&D Planning Department, Ajinomoto Co., Inc. made a presentation on the nutritional improvement of food business in Ghana as an example of guiding successful business in nutrition through public-private partnership. The following panel discussion was joined by Birgit Poniatowski, Manager of Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN), Jay Singh, International Development Counselor of USAID and Katsuro Sato, General Manager of Plan Japan. From JICA, Jin Wakabayashi, Director of Private Sector Partnership Division, Private Sector Partnership and Finance Department, joined them on the stage as moderator, as well as introducing JICA’s role in supporting the BOP business in Africa.

BOP business is attracting attention from companies conducting business development in various developing countries including Africa as a business that contributes to the resolution of various development issues related to poverty reduction and growth while pursuing the interests of the company. This side event was held to discuss partnership formation and the roles of the public and private sectors in achieving success in BOP businesses, as well as business models undertaken to resolve issues faced by developing countries.

Hotta from Panasonic explained his project as “a business that grows with the local people” and while utilizing the support from UNDP and JICA, emphasized the importance of continuous partnership among these actors during the scaling-up phase. Sobhani of UNDP expressed the importance of building “ecosystems” through information, policies, investment and implementation support in order to enable inclusive business at scale.

Toride explained the business by Ajinomoto as a sustainable “social business” which

contributes to addressing the solution to development issues, and pointed out the importance of sharing values among the parties involved and innovation through co-creation with local partners. Poniatowski of GAIN, Singh of USAID and Sato of Plan Japan also agreed to the importance of co-creative approach while each actor defines their specific role based on their speciality in the value chain related to nutrition.

■ Speakers at this Event:

Panelists:

Session1

- Takayuki Hotta, Councilor, International Relations Group, Panasonic Corporation
- Sahba Sobhani, Acting Programme Manager of UNDP

Session 2

- Yasuhiko Toride, Director, Nutrition Improvement Projects, Associate General Manager, R&D Planning Department, Ajinomoto Co., Inc.
- Birgit Poniatowski, Manager, Investment & Partnerships, GAIN
- Jay Singh, Counselor, International Development, USAID
- Ikuro Sato, General Manager, Plan Japan

Moderator:

- Jin Wakabayashi, Director, Private Sector Partnership Division, Private Sector Partnership and Finance Department, JICA

Note 1: Business can improve the issues facing the poor earning less than \$3,000 per year (BOP: Base of the Pyramid) which is said to be about 4 billion people in the world.

Note 2: Preparatory survey (BOP Business Coordination). Assist the survey from market research, business formation, to development of project implementation plans for companies that are considering the implementation of "BOP business" that will contribute to the resolution of development issues (income improvement, improvement of educational standards, and the dissemination of safe water, etc.). For details, refer to the following website: http://www.jica.go.jp/activities/schemes/priv_partner/BOP/index.html