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Introducing New Director of JICA Research Institute, Akio Hosono

The directorship of the JICA Research Institute (JICA-RI) completed its transition on April 1st from Dr. Keiichi Tsunekawa to Dr. Akio Hosono. The following is a message from the new director Hosono.

Since its inception in October 2008, JICA-RI has striven to build a foundation as a new research institute through the establishment of research strategies, the creation of quality control systems, and the dissemination of research outcomes. I am honored to be a part of this challenging yet very rewarding endeavor.

With your support and expertise, I would like to take our work to a higher level: we aim to enhance the quality of researches to further produce useful studies that contribute to the improvement of efficiency and effectiveness in development assistance.

Specifically, JICA-RI pursues to facilitate interactive collaboration between development practitioners and researchers, and to provide a structure in which to frame information and knowledge related to the challenges faced by developing countries.

Also, with the aim to shape international assistance trends, JICA-RI will expand projects that offer pragmatic insights for efforts directed at restructuring aid frameworks.

In accordance with its core research philosophy established at the time of the institute's foundation, we at JICA-RI are committed to fulfill the institutional duty by taking advantage of the accumulated results and findings in order to bring you the most advanced research.



Akio Hosono
Director of JICA Research Institute

Born in 1940, Tokyo native Hosono earned his bachelor of Liberal Arts (1962) and Ph. D. in economics from the University of Tokyo (1984). After graduation, he served in a variety of posts such as vice-president at Tsukuba University in Ibaraki, Japanese ambassador to El Salvador, and professor at National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies in Tokyo, to name a few. He became a senior advisor at Japan international Cooperation Agency in 2007 and joined JICA Research Institute (JICA-RI) as a senior research fellow in the following year.

His field of research is international development theory, specifically on experiences of development and Japanese cooperation. At JICA-RI, he leads a project on revisiting the capacity development approach.

The list of his major publications includes; Saavedra, Neantro, Hosono, Akio and Barbara, Stallings, eds. 2001. Regional Integration and Economic Development. London and New York: Palgrave. Hosono, Akio, and Saavedra, Neantro, eds. 1998. Development Strategies in East Asia and Latin America. London: Macmillan Press.

Key: Appropriate Political Institution

Symposium on Africa's Conflict Prevention

On March 10, 2011, JICA-RI organized a symposium titled "State-building in Conflict-Prone Countries," to present the progresses of its three research projects focusing on peace building.

At the symposium, held at JICA-RI in Tokyo, visiting fellow [Yoichi Mine](#), senior research fellow [Shinichi Takeuchi](#), and research fellow [Satoru Mikami](#) shared the findings of their individual research. Also, JICA-RI special research fellows Keiichi Hashimoto and Daisaku Higashi, as well as Kobe University Professor Motoki Takahashi discussed their studies.

According to Mine, whose presentation was on "Inequality and Conflict Prevention in South Africa



Visiting Fellow
Yoichi Mine

and Zimbabwe," the condition of racial inequality between the black and the white has improved in both countries, yet a disparity among the black is growing.

Mine explained that after the end of apartheid in South Africa, a

coalition government was formed under a power sharing framework, which gradually shifted to a single-party government of the black-majority ruling party. Zimbabwe, on the other hand, which under a one-party rule had suffered from repeated occurrences of violent protest at every election, established a coalition government through the mediation of the Southern African Development Community. When examining the perception of the people's responses to this change in a survey, 80% of Zimbabwean interviewees welcomed the newly-established coalition government. With these survey results, Mine concluded that in a multi-ethnic society, a grand coalition can be an effective measure to avoid conflict.

Takeuchi presented his study on social transformation in post-conflict countries titled "Conflict and State-building in Rwanda and Burundi." Though the two neighboring countries share almost identical ethnic component ratios, they have applied contrasting political institutions -- the victor of the civil war has monopolized power in Rwanda, while Burundi adopted a power sharing system.

The key focus of Takeuchi's research is to examine how different political institutions are contributing to the resolution of ethnic issues. According to him, while positive effects of power centralization such as rapid economic growth and improvement in governance can be observed in Rwanda, a concern is growing over the spread of ethnic divides. Meanwhile, in Burundi, issues such as economic stagnation and political instability still remain, but, thanks to the power sharing system, the possibility of ethnic conflicts arising from the elite class has become unlikely. "In Burundi, the chance of ethnic conflict outbreaks is smaller than in Rwanda. With appropriate political institution designs, we can reduce the risk of violent conflicts," Takeuchi concluded.

Mikami introduced his research on the general public's perception of conflict in southern and eastern Africa. Based on the results of the surveys conducted in Nigeria, Ghana, Zimbabwe, and South Africa, he examined which social class feels socio-economic inequality and what sorts of an economic disparity exist in practice among various ethnic groups in the target countries.

The study revealed a considerable number of cases where people feel a disparity even when it doesn't exist. "A more transparent political institution has a potential of redressing or alleviating perceptions of economic disparities," Mikami said. "If we can mitigate perceptions of socio-economic disparities, and weaken the motives for discrimination between ethnicities, there is a good chance that the risk of violent ethnic conflicts can decrease," he added.

Workshop on Conflict Prevention in Africa Held in London

JICA-RI held a workshop on the research project “Prevention of Violent Conflict in Africa: The Roles of Development Cooperation” at JICA’s London Office on March 15-16, 2011. The workshop, attended by the research team led by visiting fellow Yoichi Mine and their advisors, was organized with the aim to discuss the progress of the research and compile the outcomes.

Among the participants were nine research members—JICA-RI visiting fellow Yoichi Mine, senior research fellows Shinichi Takeuchi and Yuichi Sasaoka, research fellows Satoru Mikami and Mari Katayanagi, and four researchers from outside institutions. With other three advisors, the attendees engaged in intense discussions to brush up on each study.

The objective of this research project is to explore the mechanisms leading to violent conflict in Africa and to explore what kinds of institutions are effective in preventing it. The members have begun the research by conducting surveys to look into “horizontal inequalities,” “political institutions,” and “people’s perceptions” in ten African countries. They are to integrate these three factors to examine the interface between the structures (socio-economic causes) and the processes (political causes) that lead to violent conflicts.

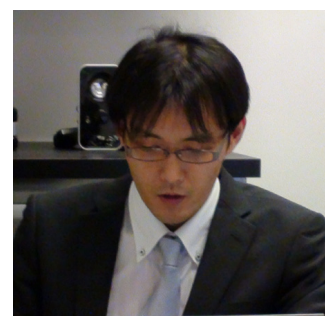
In this workshop, findings from comparative



Presentation on research results
at JICA Office in London

studies such as South Africa and Zimbabwe (Mine), Rwanda and Burundi (Takeuchi), and Uganda and Tanzania (Sasaoka) were presented.

Mikami, who specializes in quantitative analysis, focused on five African countries and made a presentation on whether socio-economic inequality exists between main ethnic groups and other groups, and how each ethnic group views it.



Research Fellow
Satoru Mikami

For example, the Hausa-Fulani people in northern Nigeria are believed to be poorer than the Yorubas and the Igbos in the south. However, the survey revealed that the Hausa-Fulanis do not necessarily think the same about themselves.

“The Hausa-Fulanis occupy relatively important political positions in Nigeria, and this may be one explanation,” Mikami pointed out of the seemingly contradicting result. “In other words, the real state of economic disparity is not always reflected in people’s perceptions. It is likely that the aspect of political equality largely affects the perception of economic disparity as well.”

Following the presentations, the participants discussed their findings so far, such as how pairing similar countries and comparing them helped illustrate the differences in each country, and how detailed and intriguing results were being collected from the perception survey. Consequently they confirmed the progress of the overall project,

The research team aims to finalize a paper by fall 2011. After JICA-RI convenes a symposium to disseminate the research findings in Japan, the outputs based on this paper will be published as an English book in 2012.

School of Their Own: Project History Looks at JICA-led Educational Transformation in Niger

Since 2010, JICA-RI has introduced selective JICA projects in its Project History book series (published in Japanese). This is to share the accounts of accomplishments narrated by the people involved, in a hope of applying their findings for future operations. This April welcomes the addition: *Japan-original Technical Cooperation that Changed the West Africa's Education*. Told by JICA visiting senior advisor Masahiro Hara, the book follows his challenge to create a cleverly-designed management system to improve primary schools in Niger by raising local people's participation, and to spread it to the entire country in less than four years.

The Republic of Niger is one of the poorest countries in the sub-Saharan Africa with 60% of its 1.4 million population living under US\$1 a day. Figures for academic standards mark low: the adults' literacy rate of 28.7% and the enrollment ratio for primary schools of 52% (UNDP 2008).

In 2003, the government announced a 10-year plan to ameliorate its education and has strived to meet their goals. To assist this effort, Japan started a technical cooperation project "School for All" from remote Tahoua Region in 2004.

By then, Niger implemented a management system by utilizing a committee of school representatives, parents and local residents called COGES, but it wasn't functioning. Hara's team learned the residents recognized the education's significance but were discontent with the inadequate conditions caused by issues like lack of fund and unmotivated teachers.

To vitalize the COGES function, Hara introduced a democratic secret ballot to select committee members. This was uncommon in Niger's traditional society, but worked tremendously

well. With its transparency, residents accepted it as legitimate and consequently became aware that the voice of every person, and not only that of people with power, matters to school management.

His team further navigated residents to make a realistic operation plan by tackling problems with limited resources available locally. This prompted parents and local residents to participate and discuss education more, and gradually to treat their children's school as the asset of their community. As a result, the increase of the Tahoua Region's enrollment ratio jumped to rank the highest in entire Niger during 2004-2006.

Additionally, Hara developed an overall monitoring system by forming COGES associations by city. This allowed each association to communicate regularly, and national and local officials to give appropriate advice if necessary.

In nine months, COGES with the JICA's approach was established at 329 primary schools in Tahoua Region, and later Niger adopted it as the national model with the World Bank's funding. As it mobilizes existing manpower, it's cost-effective, sustainable, and transferrable anywhere.

In the book, the author mentions the dedication of local Nigerien people for bettering their schools. Though stereotyped views towards them remain among some development professionals, they have successfully improved their children's school with their commitment and JICA's support.

As a result of this success, the "School for All" model is now in Senegal, Mali and Burkina Faso. In Niger, the project is on the second phase and JICA continues to help the country improve the access and quality of education.



Students standing before temporary straw-made classrooms in Niger