Bhutan is a country often visited by natural disaster such as cyclone, earthquake, rainstorm, GLOF, land slide and earthquake for many years. With the enactment of Act in 2012, disaster management is rapidly being tackled with the formation of disaster management committee at every Dzongkhag and adopting disaster risk reduction measures in the Dzongkhag and Gewog development plans.

Reflecting such preparatory measures taken at the Royal Government, JICA has initiated the three years project to capacitate emergency response against GLOF/rainstorm flood to Department of Hydro Met Services under the Ministry of Economic Affairs. Based on the agreement signed earlier, project experts presented the detailed project activities to the relevant agencies, i.e. DHMS, DDM, DoES, DHS, GNHC and NLCS.

The project experts will work closely with the DHMS officers as the central counterpart on strengthening of NWFFWC (National Weather Forecasting and Flood Warning Center) through networking of Bhutan’s meteorological data to GTS (Global Telecommunication System) and capacitating weather forecasting techniques. In addition, set-up of early warning system and conducting CBDRM activities (Community Based Disaster Risk Management) will contribute to the quick emergency response at the basin communities along the two river basins of Mangde-chu and Chamkhar-chu.

“We sincerely hope that this project contributes to the disaster-prepared society where Japanese experiences are fully disseminated and effectively utilized” said Ms. Asakuma, Chief Representative of JICA Bhutan Office during the Inception Meeting held on October 17, 2013.

The inception meeting of the project “Capacity Development of GLOF and Rainstorm Flood Forecasting and Warning in the Kingdom of Bhutan (2013-2016)” was held on 17 October 2013 in Thimphu.

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In response to the request from the Government of Bhutan for the food security project for underprivileged farmers, the Government of Japan decided to send a preparatory mission from October 7 – 12, 2013. The team held a series of discussions with the officials of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forests, Gross National Happiness Commission and Ministry of Finance.

The project for food security for underprivileged farmers so called 2KR since 1984 is one of the longest and successful projects providing labour-saving farm machineries to economically vulnerable farmers thanks to Agricultural Machinery Center’s strong efforts to distribute and maintain the power tiller procured by the cooperation. Japan has been conducted 2KR in many countries and Bhutan is one of the most successful countries of 2KR project and Japan will continue to focus its assistance on rural development through further agriculture mechanization as long as Bhutan felt the need for this. This year Bhutan had made a ‘big request’ for 2KR grant to meet the government’s pledge of “at least one power tiller for one village”. JICA will continue to support this policy as far as possible.

The study team signed Minutes of Discussion with the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry on October 12, 2013 to confirm the requests of the project components by Royal Government of Bhutan. The JICA study team was led by Ms. Yumiko Asakuma, Chief Representative of JICA Office in Bhutan.

**News in brief**

1. JICA fielded two Experts for environmental consideration of developing Special Economic Zones at the request of DHI Infra. Mr. Tsuyoshi Ito is an expert on Environmental Impact Evaluation and Mr. Yukihisa Sakata is specialized on Pollution Control. The experts will improve on the environmental assessment report for Jigmeling SEZ and enhance capacity of officials of Ministry of Economic Affairs and DHI owned companies.

2. Ms. Mariko Kamano, the volunteer (JOCV) behind the art festivals across the Bhutan has left for Japan on 2nd October 2013, after completion of her tenure (three years) with Department of Curriculum Research and Development, Paro.

3. Making people (public at large) conscious about their waste, the Solid Waste Management Expert, Mr. Akio Kashiwagai, Senior Volunteer with Thimphu Thromde left for Japan on 4th October 2013, after completion of his two years ten months in Bhutan.

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**For more information**

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