

Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.

1. Understanding of the present situation

(1) Why is it necessary to support gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls?

Gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls are both recognized as urgent issues for building an inclusive society and a strong economy in many developing countries. This is mainly because of the following:

- Of the 173 countries in the world, 155 countries have some sexually unequal laws.
- In 141 countries, the number of female deaths from natural disasters is greater than the number of male deaths. This gap is closely related to women's sexually unequal social positions.
- Reduction of the gender gap in employment makes it possible to increase GDP in both developed and developing countries.
- According to some research, if the gender gap in the access of agricultural inputs, such as fertilizer and farming machinery, is reduced, the gender gap in productivity will also be reduced.¹

According to para. 8 of the SDGs, it is stated that “every woman and girl enjoys full gender equality and all legal, social, and economic barriers to their empowerment have been removed,” and the realization of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls will make “a crucial contribution to progress across all the goals and targets” (para. 20).

(2) Japan's efforts

The basic policy of the Development Cooperation Charter (2015) is that “Japan will thus focus its development cooperation on individuals - especially those liable to be vulnerable such as children, women, persons with disabilities, the elderly, refugees and internally-displaced persons, ethnic minorities, and indigenous peoples - and provide cooperation for their protection and empowerment so as to realize human security.” In addition, the Development Strategy for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, which was published in May 2016, places importance on the following fields in particular:

- Promoting Gender Responsive Infrastructure and Safe Communities: maternal and child health service, Maternal and Child Health Handbook, construction of women-friendly infrastructures
- Promoting the active role of women: in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields and careers
- Advancing women's leadership: disaster risk reduction, peacebuilding and, anti-trafficking in persons, etc.

(3) JICA's strength

¹ See Fact Sheet 1.

As efforts to realize the concept of human security in projects, JICA aims to carry out projects that will provide benefits to various groups of people such as women, men, the poor, the disabled and ethnic minorities by clarifying their issues and needs, and including them in the activities of the projects. This will also contribute to improving the project results.

In addition, when making efforts for gender equality, it is important not only to merely transfer knowledge and ideas but also to strive for an equal society based on the ideal image of society in developing countries. For this purpose, it is important to have the view that new knowledge should be created through mutual study between developing countries or between Japan and the developing country. JICA has adopted co-creation programs for training projects, etc. (“Gender and Diversity towards Disaster Resilient Communities” “Africa-Japan Business Women Exchange Seminar”)

2. Priority targets

JICA will focus on the following targets of Goal 5:

- 5.1 End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere
- 5.2 Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation
- 5.4 Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure, and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate
- 5.5 Ensure women’s full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic, and public life
- 5.6 Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and rights

In addition, from the viewpoint of gender mainstreaming, it is important to incorporate the viewpoint of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls into all the goals other than Goal 5.

3. Priority efforts to achieve the goals

JICA has been focusing on five priority areas to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women as follows:

- (1) Women’s economic empowerment
- (2) Women’s rights and security (protection from conflict, natural disasters, and trafficking in persons)
- (3) Women’s education and lifetime health
- (4) Gender responsive governance
- (5) Gender responsive infrastructure, especially for the improvement of women’s lives

Working toward the achievement of Goal 5, JICA continues to focus on these five priority areas. JICA also places importance on discussions with developing countries as to how to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women effectively based on each country's social and economic structure.

(1) Women's economic empowerment

Economic contribution to Target 5.5:

Even though in many countries, most women are engaged in agriculture or small-and-medium enterprises (SMEs) as their economic activities, their productivity is lower compared with men's due to the fixed roles of women in society and their limited access to opportunities to acquire skills and financial resources. From the experience of JICA's projects, it is evident that cooperation between men and women in making decisions about farm management and in agricultural works leads to improving the farmers' productivity. In addition, if women engaged in SMEs such as food processing companies, acquire knowledge and skills and increase production and sales, this will not only increase their incomes but also vitalize the local economy as a whole.

Based on this view, JICA's agricultural, rural, and industrial development will all promote women's participation in economic activities as described in Target 5.5. In addition, if women acquire knowledge and skills and contribute to production and income, they can strengthen their influence in the household and in society, and increase their "leadership" to help improve the issues they face.

In private-sector partnership projects also, paying attention to women's needs will lead to the development of new demands. In addition, the promotion of women's employment will lead to the empowerment of women.

(2) Women's rights and security (protection from conflict, natural disasters, and trafficking in persons)

Political and public contribution to Target 5.5:

Although conflict and natural disasters have different impacts on men and women, they, together with the social structure, frequently limit the participation of women, ethnic minorities, and the poor, etc. in efforts for reconstruction and prevention (risk reduction).

When providing support for peace-building, disaster prevention, and reconstruction, JICA aims not only to restore communities to their original condition before the conflict or natural disaster but also to create communities that are resilient to artificial or physical shocks. This requires the enabling of various different levels of society, such as women, ethnic minorities, and the poor, to participate in the various decision-making processes in political, economic, and social fields. From the viewpoints of human rights protection and support for long-term issues—the prevention of conflict and the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster

Risk Reduction—JICA will make active efforts to promote “women’s full and effective participation” and to strengthen their “leadership” as described in Target 5.5.

Contribution to Target 5.2:

Trafficking in persons occurs all over the world, because it is closely related to poverty, social and economic disparity, discrimination, labor mobility, natural disasters, and conflict, etc.; and it may be said that it is a structural problem rooted in the serious violation of human rights, gender issues, and social and economic structures. In addition, trafficking in persons is also related to not only sexual exploitation but also various types of labor exploitation, such as in the agricultural and fisheries industries, factories, and family labor.

To prevent trafficking in persons and to protect and rehabilitate victims in the Mekong Region and ASEAN countries, JICA has made efforts to strengthen the systems and capacity to provide support from the viewpoint of the victims and will contribute to protection and empowerment against trafficking in persons.

(3) Women’s education² and lifetime health

Contribution to Target 5.6:

JICA regards maternal and child health as one of the priority issues in the health sector and has made efforts to strengthen the system to provide health services (including the construction of obstetrical facilities, nurses, who are usually female, and training of midwives), such as continuous mother-child care, vaccination, and mother-child nutrition improvement during the antenatal, postnatal, childbirth, newborn, and child periods, promote collaboration between administrative agencies, medical institutions, and communities, and make use of Maternal and Child Health Handbook. Such efforts not only contribute to the promotion of the health of women and children, but also to the improvement of welfare. In addition, it improves the status of women who contribute to society as health and medical resources.

Important efforts include not only improvements by the supply side of maternal and child health services but also awareness-raising activities on the demand side, such as women, men, families, and communities. Such efforts support the improvement of women’s knowledge, the strengthening of women’s decision-making to use the health services to protect themselves and their children, and the promotion of men’s and communities’ understanding. Maternal and Child Health Handbook is a tool for supporting continuous perinatal care and is learning material for health education. In the “Project for Improving Reproductive Health with a Special Focus on Maternal and Child Health” in Palestine, Maternal and Child Health Handbook includes information on family planning in addition to information on pregnancy, childbirth, and the child’s health.

(4) Gender responsive governance

² For JICA’s efforts to empower gender equality, women, and girls in the education sector, see the position paper for Goal 4 “Education.”

Contribution to Target 5.1:

Laws and the judicial system not only stipulate property rights, inheritance, other rights, and family relations, such as marriage and divorce, but are also important to ensure equality and remove all aspects of discrimination, such as in education, economic opportunities, including employment and wages, and the prevention and control of violence and punishment for violence, etc.

JICA places importance on the establishment of a legal and justice system, and has supported the establishment of a Civil Code and other laws that stipulate property rights and family relations, the development of legal human resources, such as judges and lawyers, and the improvement of legal access, such as the dissemination of information on laws and regulations and the improvement of legal services. Through such support, JICA will contribute to establishing rules and systems that will realize gender equality. In addition, to facilitate the execution of these laws, JICA will make efforts to make the legal system easy to use by both men and women and provide support to the police to prevent violence against women.³

(5) Gender responsive infrastructure development

Contribution to Target 5.4:

In many countries, women are engaged in domestic labor, including childcare and nursing care, for many hours. A lack of infrastructure development, such as electricity and water supply facilities, sewerage, roads, and transport facilities, can be the reason their housework is too much of a burden. Infrastructure as a basis for life contributes to a reduction in the amount of housework. In addition, the development of public transport facilities leads to women's greater participation in society. The construction of agricultural infrastructure, such as irrigation facilities, and its equal access to assets leads to improved agricultural production.

For infrastructure development, it is important to fully understand the needs of vulnerable people, such as women and the disabled, in order to improve their convenience and to provide fair utility charges, and this should be considered from the planning stage. In addition, the employment of women on infrastructure projects and women's participation in construction work will lead to women's economic empowerment.⁴

³ Also see the position paper for Goal 16 "Access to Justice For All," which will be completed later.

⁴ Also see 3. (1) of the position paper for Goal 11 "Sustainable Cities."