Afghanistan & JICA

Reaffirming Our Commitment

Photo: S. SABAWOON/JICA
Imagine Afghanistan. What do you see? Conflict, terrorism, refugees, poverty… Through the media alone, it’s hard to see. But it’s important to try.

This is a nation that has been victimized by decades of conflict. But it’s also a nation of dignity and compassion. Despite their own suffering, Afghans looked outward after the Great East Japan Earthquake of March 11, 2011, offering support and prayers for the victims.

Linked by friendship, the international community aims to help prevent terrorism and conflict from further afflicting Afghans. To this end, JICA continues to support the rebuilding and revitalizing of Afghanistan. Through our shared efforts, we wish to bring about reconstruction and to further strengthen the bridge between Japan and Afghanistan.
Reconstruction: Foundations of hope

Afghanistan lies in the heart of Asia. Having for centuries been a crossroads of peoples, goods, and ideas, the nation is rich in culture and history. However, due to more than 20 years of conflict and chaos that began in 1979, people’s lives have been devastated.

Soviet Withdrawal

After the withdrawal of the Soviet military, several internal Afghan actors began to struggle against each other for power, spiraling into a civil war. The security situation had deteriorated to a point where even walking on the street was dangerous. Amid such confusion and social disorder, the Taliban were able to establish a hold on power, controlling up to 90% of the country by 1999.

Fact Corner

- Afghan lapis lazuli makes its way to Japan
- Foundation of Afghanistan as a “modern” state
- Japanese-Afghan diplomatic relations established
- Japanese provision of technical cooperation in such areas as agriculture and Judo
- Japanese assistance extended in the fields of agriculture and water-supply

Past

- Soviet invasion
- Japanese humanitarian aid continues through international organizations and NGOs until 2001
- Soviet withdrawal, civil war erupts
  - Taliban seize the capital, Kabul, extend control over most of the country
  - U.S. suffers the 9.11 terrorist attacks
  - Taliban regime falls

- The International Conference on Reconstruction Assistance to Afghanistan (Tokyo)

Creating a city of accommodation and inspiration

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The national flag of Afghanistan

The background colors represent the transition from chaos to stability and rebirth. The black represents the dark period of invasion and repression. The red symbolizes the blood of the people that was given for the country. The green is a representation of peace, prosperity, and affluence.

Afghanistan

Population living below $1 per day (%)

AFGHANISTAN

36%

(Afghan government)

GNI per capita (current USD)

AFGHANISTAN

$410

(United Nations)

Life expectancy at birth (years)

AFGHANISTAN

48.7 years

(United Nations)

Maternal mortality rate (per 100,000 live births)

AFGHANISTAN

1,400/100,000

(United Nations)

Under-five mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)

AFGHANISTAN

199/1,000

(United Nations)

Adult literacy rate, both sexes (% aged 15 and above)

AFGHANISTAN

26%

(United Nations)

Primary education completion rate (%)

AFGHANISTAN

34.1%

(United Nations)

Wheat yield (t/ha)

AFGHANISTAN

1.9 t/ha

(Afghan government)

Population without electricity (%)

AFGHANISTAN

85.6%

(United Nations)

Population without safe water (%)

AFGHANISTAN

52%

(United Nations)

Reconstruction: Foundations of hope

A pioneer in cooperation: Japanese agricultural expert Mitsuo Ozaki (front row, far right) and Afghan counterparts in the 1930s

Photo: Mitsuo Ozaki
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JICA has been investing in the betterment of lives now and future capacity by constructing hospitals and clinics, promoting healthcare, and providing children with better educational environments.

**Islamic Republic of Afghanistan**
- Capital: Kabul
- Population: approx. 26 million (by Afghan government, 2011)
- Area: approx. 652,000 km²

**Present**

**Agriculture and Rural Development Program**

Due to urbanization and the return of refugees, the population of Kabul has grown drastically, resulting in problems of overcrowding, such as traffic congestion and water shortages. The Afghan government and JICA have been working towards an inspirational and life-bettering solution: the development of the Kabul metropolitan area.

**Kabul International Airport**

Gateway to Afghanistan. The starting point of a transportation infrastructure boom, Japan’s support increased capacity, allowing this already critical airport to better address the expanding flow of travelers and goods, now servicing nearly 1.4 million users annually.

**Afghan wheat: cross-cultural cultivation**

Wheat is the main crop of Afghanistan and the most-necessary ingredient for its staple food - "Naan." In 1950s Japanese researchers made a scientific expedition to Afghanistan and brought back wheat seeds to Japan as part of their project to study and use them for future research. The result: the phenotypic characterization was carried out under the National Bio-resource Project, and now the genotypic studies are underway under the SATREPS project. The descendants of these 1950s seeds are being returned after 60 years and are now growing in the native weather conditions.

**Necessities for a successful society**

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**Fact Corner**

Some thirty years ago, Mr. Ahmad Shah Afghanzada received training on tuberculosis control in Japan. After returning home to Afghanistan with knowledge and new perspectives, the nation soon was engulfed by the long conflict. Now, as peace returns, Mr. Afghanzada has again started to disseminate the knowledge and skills learned in Japan, now to a new generation.

**Investment in knowledge generating renewed results**

Japan

Afghanistan

Islamic Republic of

ZFBST/FBSMZ˚

United Nations

Japan

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Agriculture is Afghanistan’s main industry. With the bulk of Afghanistan’s population involved in agriculture in one form or another, this sector’s level of prosperity has far-reaching impact for social and economic stability. The vestiges of conflict have left many lingering agriculture-related challenges, however, including destruction of irrigation systems and lack of administrative services. JICA’s assistance to this sector has focused on stabilizing lives in rural areas, creating food security, and improving administrative services in these areas.

Fostering the emergence of a pioneer in pest control

Mr. Parwiz Darbar has been pursuing a master’s degree at Tokyo University of Agriculture since October 2011. With the support of his professor, fellow students and other exchange students, Mr. Darbar was able to overcome the initial difficulties of adapting to the Japanese lifestyle: homesickness. He is now excelling in his studies, particularly focusing on crop-damaging pests. This program and the welcoming environment is nurturing a man that may well become a pioneer in the field of pest control in Afghanistan.