

JICA's Dedication to

JICA President Akihiko Tanaka

In 1954 Japan took important steps back into the international community following its defeat in World War II. The first of these was Japan's participation in the Colombo Plan, through which it began to provide technical cooperation. The second was its first financial cooperation, which came in the form of reparations it agreed to pay to Burma (today Myanmar).

Our country moved swiftly and surely to follow up on these steps. In this milestone year of 2014, we can proudly look back on six successful decades of Japanese Official Development Assistance (ODA). The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), too, celebrates its fortieth anniversary this year, providing the opportunity to revisit our accomplishments in pursuit of our vision of "Inclusive and Dynamic Development."

Just as importantly, we can use this year to look forward to the tasks that lie ahead. What philosophy must guide our ODA efforts in the years to come? In a rapidly shifting global landscape, how must we adjust our activities, and what must we strive to maintain?

Looking Back at Six Decades of Partnership

It is instructive to consider Japan's ODA history in three distinct phases. The first 20 years, from 1954 to the mid-1970s, corresponds with Japan's postwar reintegration into the international community. During this period the nation settled peace treaties with various countries, paid reparations, and made efforts to be recognized as a responsible partner to the rest of the world. Our implementation of ODA, starting with technical cooperation, symbolized this responsible approach and substantiated our intent to reenter the international community.

By the middle of the 1970s, Japan had become the second-largest economy in the so-called free world, next only to the United States. As an emerging economic power, we took on an important and responsible role in the maintenance of the international system. Japan's invitation to join the first G6 Summit in 1975 represented global expectations that it would serve as a responsible actor. And again, ODA was the symbol of Japan's willingness to play that role.

Prime Minister Takeo Fukuda announced in 1977 that Japan would enhance its support for Southeast Asia, conducting its efforts in the spirit of a "heart-to-heart relationship" with the region's people. Late in that decade Japan set the goal of doubling its ODA spending; that figure again doubled in the 1980s. All of this marked the second 20-year phase of Japanese ODA as one in which the nation responsibly played its growing role as an economic power.

Finally, the phase from the 1990s onward was a period when Japan had already achieved the status of a responsible, mature economic power. Our efforts extended to many areas in which we hadn't played a role in the previous two phases, with the scope of our cooperation expanded to include more attention to peace-building and to the necessity for inclusiveness. We also began to pay more attention to global issues, such as climate change.

Japan as a Consistently Responsible Actor

A key theme running through all three phases of our ODA history has been responsibility. During the first phase, Japan was saddled with its previous image as an aggressor. We had to establish ourselves as a partner to work with the rest of the world in a peaceful, productive manner, and showing this intention in our actual behavior was the way to fulfill our responsibility then. In the second

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phase, having become the world's second-largest economy, Japan could no longer simply display peaceful intentions but had to contribute meaningfully to the international economic system. And in the third phase of maturity, we fulfilled our responsibility not only by providing financial support and infrastructure but also by contributing to the advancement of science, technology, and know-how.

Most recently, JICA has started concentrating on ways to share Japan's experience in dealing with the issues peculiar to a mature economy and society, as well as on increased partnership with private-sector actors. We are also enhancing cooperative ties with academia—notably via the SATREPS (Science and Technology Research Partnership for Sustainable Development) program, which encourages scientists to innovate through international joint endeavors. While the form of responsibility may change, our dedication to fulfilling that responsibility remains unwavering.

Change and Continuity in Years to Come

The world today is naturally very different from what it was in each of these historical phases. History is not a mechanical process, of course, so we cannot say for sure that we are entering into a fourth clearly defined phase now—or that it will last for two decades. But there are certain new characteristics emerging. JICA's emphasis on new approaches based on scientific innovation, and its inclusion of an increasing number of stakeholders, including many from the private sector, might create the basis for a new phase in Japan's development assistance.

I believe that Japan's basic philosophies of international co-

Dynamism

operation will not change much. We will still emphasize recipients' ownership of the international cooperation process; we will continue placing importance on development of human capacity and on economic growth based on the provision of necessary infrastructure. But together with all our partners—in the developing world, in emerging countries, and advanced industrial nations—we might increase our focus on science-based, innovative approaches that lay the foundation for achieving the actual goals of development.

Japan is working to broaden the basis of its international contributions in the area of development assistance. Over the last two years, JICA has solicited many proposals from small and medium-sized enterprises for potential projects in such areas as infrastructure, health, and education in the developing world. One gets the sense that there is much useful technology and know-how that have not been tapped well by traditional ODA methods. We will be encouraging the participation of these smaller Japanese businesses as we explore ways to help develop the various areas of the world.

This ODA approach will help our partners around the world. And it will also serve to invigorate the Japanese actors that take part, creating a win-win situation. We will pursue this in the coming year as well.

Our Goals for 2014

In 2013 JICA set its sights on ODA approaches that would revitalize, or reenergize, all the partners involved—not only the recipients of ODA but also the Japanese participants. Japanese development assistance remains committed to this goal of invigoration for all. Last year I noted repeatedly the need for JICA to become a more robust organization in order to effectively and efficiently pursue this outcome. And I believe that JICA has grown stronger over the past year.

Now, at the beginning of 2014, I have a new resolution to make for JICA: to continue strengthening itself in order to dynamically implement its activities. The issues facing the world today cannot be sufficiently addressed by passive approaches, or through projects that adhere closely to the blueprints of the past. The dynamic implementation of JICA's activities in innovative ways will be a key to invigorating Japan and stakeholders all around the world.

In closing, I would note that dynamism is not a brand-new concept for the New Year. As I noted at the outset, our vision at JICA is "Inclusive and Dynamic Development." In 2014, and in the new phase of our history to come, we must rededicate ourselves to dynamism as a central theme for our activities.



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