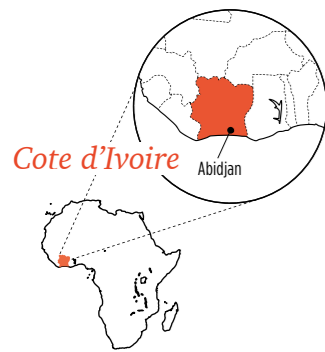


Fighting Against Transnational Crimes



Fighting against terrorism is a serious concern among African countries. In recent years, countries with common concerns are acting hand in hand to strengthen the criminal justice systems in each country as well as to implement training for the promotion of closer collaboration.

THE BEST OF THE JUDICIAL PROFESSIONALS GET TOGETHER MAKING HEADWAY TO ESTABLISH A COOPERATIVE STRUCTURE

The Sahel region stretches on the southern edge of the Sahara Desert. Among African countries, this is a severely impoverished area and faces rising threats of the Islamic militants who are expanding their sphere of influence.

Responding to such concerns, in 2013, the Fifth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD V) in Yokohama set “Peace and Stability” as one of the main objectives. In order to tackle transnational organized crimes and terrorism, cross-regional collaboration among neighboring countries is essential. In 2014, JICA, in collaboration with the United Nations Asia and Far East Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders (UNAFEI), began implementing

program, coordination of its implementation, and follow-up activities.

Hara adds, “For the participants in the third seminar, we chose at least one participant who attended either the first or the second seminar from each of the eight countries so that they can share the outcomes of previous seminars. Their comments made arguments practical and they reaffirmed opinions on various concerns. Some participants commented that they first thought they had nothing further to learn, but that there were actually many more issues to be discussed.” At the end of the seminar, each country made a presentation on the action plan on how to improve the judicial process in their country. In addition, they have released a joint declaration on the cooperation in the judicial field among countries. They presented a new step toward building a cooperative structure among the eight countries.

THE FIRST LEGAL ADVISOR DISPATCHED TO AFRICA REGAINING TRUST IN THE JUSTICE SYSTEM

In Côte d'Ivoire, the hosting country of the third seminar, a Steering Committee mainly consisting of the participants of previous seminars was organized to assist in implementing the training program. At the closing ceremony, many participants of the seminar dressed up with the clothes tailored by themselves using the same fabric according to the local tradition. This custom is so-called ‘uniform’ to show the sense of solidarity, which actually had built up among the participants.

Due to the internal conflict that had lasted for ten years since 2002, many of the courts and prisons in Côte d'Ivoire were destroyed and many legal professionals fled to the safer places. As a result, criminals were often left unpunished and people's confidence in the judicial system was damaged. Being hosted by a country under such current situation, this seminar would be more effective to promote ownership of the participating countries and to build a real network among criminal justice professionals in the region.

In addition to assisting the implementation of the seminars, Hara also works to improve access to justice, which is specified under the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). During the training programs held in Japan, participants visited the Japan Legal Support Center (Houterasu), which provides legal support services to the general public.

Hassane Diane, Chief of Cabinet of Ministry of Justice in Côte d'Ivoire, reported on the training programs in Japan to the Minister and elaborated a plan to set up a call center in his country, referring to the system of Japan. Currently, in addition to continue emphasizing on setting up the operation of call center, the Department of Civil and Criminal Affairs is pushing forward to establish a system to provide legal information to the public through various means such as telephones, leaflet distribution and a website. Hara explains, “We always try not to impose Japanese systems or Japanese ways of practice as they are, but to share our experiences. If some of our experiences correspond to the needs of the partner country, we proceed with it.”

The plan to establish the call center has been re-



Above: JICA Expert Hara, a legal advisor, together with Ngolo Klofanhan Daniogo (left), Director of the Department of Civil and Criminal Affairs, and Saboré Kourouma Guiro (right), the Sub-Director. Tackling improvements for access to justice.

Below: Leaflet on the legal proceedings for crime victims, prepared with the support of Hara.



February 2016, a two-week seminar on criminal justice was held in Côte d'Ivoire

criminal justice training for eight French speaking countries mainly in the Sahel region: Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal, Mali, Niger, Chad, Burkina Faso, Mauritania and Democratic Republic of the Congo.

JICA Expert Wakaba Hara, lawyer in Japan, was dispatched to the Ministry of Justice in Côte d'Ivoire as a legal advisor in 2014 for two years. She explains, “The purpose of this training is the capacity development of personnel in charge of tasks in the criminal justice such as investigation, prosecution, and court proceedings. The first and second seminars were held in Japan; from the third seminar

onwards, it was decided to hold them in Abidjan in Côte d'Ivoire.” For the third seminar, which was held in 2016, there were three main subjects: (1) Basics on investigation, prosecution and court proceedings, (2) Measures against organized crimes, (3) Anti-terrorism measures. About thirty professionals consisting of police officers, public prosecutors and judges from the eight countries participated in the seminar. In addition to the lectures given by UNAFEI instructors and selected lectures, experts from Côte d'Ivoire also led a session on a panel discussion. Hara supported planning of the training



Diane who is the focal point for JICA in the Ministry of Justice



Members of the Steering Committee. Nine members who had a training in Japan also participated in the committee.