

Trends

Philippines

JICA President Kitaoka Visits the Philippines



JICA President Shinichi Kitaoka, center left, holds talks with Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte.

In April, JICA President Shinichi Kitaoka went to the Philippines to meet with government dignitaries and visit ODA project sites in Manila and Davao. He first had a meeting with President Duterte, marking their third meeting since the Philippine President's election in 2016. Since that year, JICA has committed over 400 billion yen of assistance in a wide range of sectors, including railway transportation, disaster management, and human development. Additionally, JICA, together with the Government of Japan, has been supporting the peace process and development in Mindanao since the 2000s. During the meeting, Dr. Kitaoka and President Duterte discussed the significance of a free and open Indo-Pacific, and the importance of establishing peaceful relations to maintain the international order. Dr. Kitaoka next held a meeting with Bangsamoro's Minister of Education Mohagher Iqbal, a key figure in the Mindanao peace process. Dr. Kitaoka reconfirmed JICA's commitment to the people of the Bangsamoro Region, and to the ongoing cooperation for helping deliver a peace dividend to each and every individual.

Dr. Kitaoka visited construction sites of the Davao City Bypass supported by JICA's loan assistance, and historic sites of the Japanese community's long-standing contribution to the socioeconomic development of the region. He also visited the Mindanao Kokusai Daigaku (Mindanao International College), a tertiary institution of the Philippine Nikkei Jin Kai (society of Japanese descendants) in Davao City. Then in Metro Manila, Dr. Kitaoka visited flood control project sites and observed the early warning system of the Pasig and Marikina Rivers, where he emphasized the importance of drawing on the experiences of Japan to help create a resilient Philippine society that can sustain high-quality growth. Mr. Kitaoka also visited the Mindanao Kokusai Daigaku (Mindanao International College), a tertiary institution of the Philippine Nikkei Jin Kai (society of Japanese descendants) in Davao City. Lastly, he went to the Research Institute for Tropical Medicine (RITM), which was established in 1981 through a grant-in-aid from Japan, to observe collaborative work being done on human rabies prevention.

Palau

JICA Assistance for Palau's Airport Upgrade



Signing ceremony. The project is Palau's first-ever major public-private partnership for infrastructure development.

Tourism is a core industry in Palau, representing nearly 75 percent of GDP, approximately 80 percent of foreign currency income, and about 40 percent of total employment. However, due to a steady rise in the number of tourists since the turn of the century, the country's sole international airport terminal has been working beyond its capacity. In peak season, the terminal suffers from long queues at immigration and check-in counters, making expansion of airport facilities a pressing matter.

JICA has signed a loan agreement in April, for the Renovation, Expansion and Management of Palau International Airport Project, which will be carried out by the Palau International Airport Corporation (a special-purpose company established by the government of the Republic of Palau) and the Japan Airport Management Partners Company Limited (JAMP). JAMP is joint venture of Sojitz Corporation, which brings extensive experience and provides access to a strong aviation

industry network, the Japan Airport Terminal Co., Ltd., a specialist in airport operations, and the Japan Overseas Infrastructure Investment Corporation for Transport & Urban Development. The project goals—reducing congestion at the passenger terminal, upgrading commercial facilities, and improving terminal convenience—will be achieved through the expansion, renovation, operation and maintenance of passenger terminal facilities.

The government of the Republic of Palau considers the expansion of its airport system to accommodate future demand a strategic priority in the Palau 2020 National Master Development Plan. The project is Palau's first-ever major public-private partnership for infrastructure development, and is expected to serve as a model for other projects. The year 2019 marks the 25th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Japan and Palau, and this project symbolizes the partnership between the two countries.

Nigeria

Nigeria to Strengthen Diagnostic Capacity with Biosafety Level-3 Laboratories



Signing ceremony held in Abuja on April 9.

In Africa, where infectious diseases are an ever-present threat, JICA has been supporting the improvement of laboratory capacities and infrastructure for their detection and diagnosis. Nigeria will be one of the countries supported by JICA to establish a diagnostic and research facility for the rapid and accurate detection of infectious diseases. On April 9, 2019, JICA signed a grant agreement with the government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to provide grant-in-aid of up to 1.58 billion yen for the Project for Strengthening the Diagnostic Capacity of the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC). The objective of the project is to improve infectious disease surveillance, which will significantly contribute toward the establishment of an integrated and resilient public health system in Nigeria.

In this project, a laboratory facility will be constructed in Abuja, on the grounds of the National Reference Laboratory, which belongs to the NCDC. The new facility

will include three biosafety level-3 (BSL-3) laboratories, three BSL-2 laboratories, and biobanks. Laboratories with a higher level of biosafety enable the handling of microbes that are more hazardous to humans, such as avian influenza, Lassa fever, Ebola virus disease, measles, and yellow fever. The project will enable the NCDC to conduct vital examinations and research, and is scheduled to be completed within 40 months. JICA will be closely involved in early-stage implementation, provision of constant technical guidance for facility operation and maintenance of equipment, and oversee the management system for hazardous waste treatment. By expanding the scope and technical capacities of the NCDC, Nigeria will be able to better support their neighboring countries in West Africa with its improved response time and ability to detect infectious pathogens, which will prove vital in times of public health emergency.