

Trends



President Kitaoka visits Democratic Republic of the Congo and Republic of Rwanda



Visit to the National Institute of Professional Preparation.

JICA President Shinichi Kitaoka visited the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Republic of Rwanda between the 13th and 22nd of July, where he met government officials and conducted site visits to ODA projects and other ini-

tiatives in both countries. As his first stop, Dr. Kitaoka held a meeting with President Felix Tshisekedi of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and expressed his intention to further strengthen the 40 years of cooperation between the two countries. While in Kinshasa, Dr. Kitaoka made his way to sites of JICA's cooperation with the Democratic Republic of the Congo, including the implementation of job training programs, and the countermeasures being taken to fight infectious diseases such as Ebola hemorrhagic fever. Dr. Kitaoka traveled 350 kilometers outside the capital to visit the Matadi Bridge, the only bridge spanning the Congo River, which was constructed 36 years ago by ODA loan from Japan. Here he noted that the dutiful maintenance shown to this "bridge of friendship" by local engineers serves as a symbol of continuing cooperation between the two countries.

Dr. Kitaoka next visited Rwanda, fast

becoming known as the miracle of Africa for the rapid reconstruction and marvelous development achieved after the genocide. At Kigali, the capital of Rwanda, he met Prime Minister Édouard Ngirente. The two men confirmed that the countries would further enrich the relationship through development cooperation. Rwanda is promoting initiatives to utilize ICT and innovation for her development, and Dr. Kitaoka was able to observe initiatives underway at open technology hubs in the capital Kigali, where JICA has contributed to their establishment and operation. Next he visited an one stop border post to observe how JICA's cooperation has enhanced smoother logistics and trade between Rwanda and Tanzania. Finally, Dr. Kitaoka met with Japanese entrepreneurs operating their business in Rwanda, enjoying an exchange of ideas, and sharing high expectations for the country with all parties.



JICA Signs First Grant Agreement with UNIDO for Pakistan



The signing ceremony was held in Islamabad.

On August 5, JICA signed a grant agreement with the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) in Islamabad to provide grant aid up to 560 million yen for the Project for Ag-

ri-food and Agro-industry Development Assistance in Pakistan. This is the first time JICA has attempted a collaboration with UNIDO via a grant agreement. This 48-month project aims to improve the livelihood of farmers and workers in the agricultural industry in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the Balochistan provincial areas by spreading technology for the cultivation and processing of agricultural products. The agreement provides for the introduction of the equipment and capital needed to process, package and store these products, and also covers technical support that will be focused on developing sales channels.

The agricultural sector in Pakistan is a key industry, producing around 20% of GDP and supporting 43% of the employed population. Consequently, the Pakistan government has made agriculture a priority issue, identifying it is key

to increasing employment, reducing poverty, and promoting economic development for the nation. The target location for this project is the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the Balochistan provincial areas, where 60% of the population is involved in agriculture or agriculture-related work. However, these two provinces have traditionally used self-sufficient methods for the cultivation of crops, and with large variations in rainfall, cropping is notoriously unstable. Although strategies such as multi-cropping and mixed agriculture are widespread, many farmers and related industrial workers in these areas continue to face economic challenges. The prospects for effective cooperation are strong, as UNIDO has rich experience building agricultural value chains in Pakistan, and can activate community networks in order to address the relevant issues.