

## Feature Ensuring Basic Human Rights

# A World in Which Everyone Can Shine

It is essential that we realize a world in which everyone is free from fear and want, can live in peace, and be part of a society in which their rights and opinions are respected. To this end, Japan is assisting numerous countries to develop their laws, policing practices, and media maturity to enable them to achieve these goals.

### Saving the World from “Fear and Want”

In order to realize basic human rights in developing countries, JICA provides cooperation in such areas as (1) legal and judicial systems, (2) policing, and (3) media/journalism. In recent years, JICA has also been addressing the issue of (4) businesses and human rights (see the table on the right page).

The underlying philosophy guiding our efforts is based on a section of the Preamble of the Japanese Constitution, which states, “We desire to occupy an honored place in an international society striving for the preservation of peace, and the banishment of tyranny and slavery, oppression and intolerance for all time from the earth. We recognize that all peoples of the world have the right to live in peace, free from fear and want.”

In order for “all peoples of the world to have the right to live in peace, free from fear and want,” it is essential for each and every person in the world to be guaranteed basic human rights. These rights include: the freedom of expression, the freedom to engage in economic activities; the right to participate in politics;

and the right to receive a fair trial.

Numerous developing countries have legal and judicial systems that are inadequate or incomplete. Problems also exist concerning the application and enforcement of the law, and hindrances to access of information remain. There are many people living in “fear and want” whose rights and freedoms are not guaranteed. They are discriminated against on the basis of race or ethnicity, and are subject to unfair restrictions.

### Working together with Developing Countries, respecting their social and cultural values and institutions

Japan has studied foreign laws and judicial systems since the Meiji Revolution in the mid-nineteenth century, and has incorporated those elements that are compatible with its society and culture. For example, in the middle of the Meiji era, a Civil Code drafted by a group led by a French lawyer was not enforced due to criticism that it was incompatible with the Japanese family system and society. Consequently, it was rewritten to better suit

## Aiming for a Society in which “No One is Left Behind”

### 1 Developing Legal and Judicial Systems to Protect Rights

The basis of these codes is “equality under the law” regardless of their family origins or their social standing. JICA is cooperating with developing countries in the development and operation of laws related to their civil and criminal matters. Let's look at two cases in West Africa. → case 1: P.4-5, case 2: P.6-7



### 2 Protecting People's Livelihoods based on Trust between Citizens and Police

The Police force is supposed to maintain law and order; if police officers wrongfully detain citizens and use violence against them, they are unable to live with peace of mind. JICA is working to improve law and order in Southeast Asia and Latin America by applying Japanese-style community policing. Let's take a look at initiatives such as those in El Salvador. → P.8-9



### 3 Realizing the Right to Access Reliable Information

If there are only state broadcasters, which are influenced by the government, or private broadcasters, which are influenced by sponsors, it is difficult for people to access accurate and impartial information. Let's look at the example of Ukraine, where JICA cooperation is helping to facilitate people's right to access information → P.10-11



### 4 Working with Businesses to Protect Human Rights

Both domestic and multinational corporations work to develop the economies of developing countries. However, in some cases workers are compelled to work under harsh conditions. In other cases, the environment is destroyed in surrounding communities. These are actual infringements of human rights. JICA has begun to seek new partnerships with companies. → P.12-13



conditions in Japan. This experience is unique to Japan, something that did not take place in other developed nations.

Because of these past experiences, Japan avoids imposing its point of view when supporting the development of laws in developing countries. Rather, Japan discusses each and every clause of the laws in great detail to make sure that the laws being written do not conflict with country's social and cultural values and institutions.

This stance can also be seen in Japan's cooperation in other areas, and is one of the reasons that Japan's cooperation has been welcomed in many countries throughout the world. Although such measures require significant time and patience, they can eventually lead to the realization of a society in which people can live safely with full peace of mind, and where basic human rights are respected.

Police officers teach children sportsmanship. In El Salvador, a trust is being built between local people and the police with the support of JICA.

