

JICA is helping to strengthen the administrative systems of both the government and the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) but Tomonori Kikuchi, JICA's senior advisor for reconstruction and development in Mindanao, said providing development aid can be a delicate and tricky issue in any poor region of the world, but particularly in one trying to emerge from conflict.

Any assistance including infrastructure projects or personnel training must be provided in a fair and equitable manner among all groups and communities concerned, he said, otherwise the proffered help could actually tip the region back into full-scale conflict. If applied evenly, development aid would provide not only practical assistance but could also foster mutual trust and cooperation and directly strengthen the peace process itself.

That is an aim of other projects continents away in Europe and the Middle East. The latter is one of the most turbulent

regions on earth but the so-called Corridor for Peace and Prosperity aims to bolster not only economic progress but also cooperation and conciliation between Israel, Palestine and Jordan.

The 'corridor' refers to the strategic Jordan Valley straddling Israel and Jordan and the project which involves JICA, Israeli, Jordanian and Palestinian officials and farmers aims to improve water resources, boost regional agricultural production and the establishment of an agro-industrial park which would export produce to surrounding countries, particularly those in the oil-rich Gulf region.

The development agency will shortly open its first office in Iraq to provide yen loan support and

research projects to help that country's traumatized population.

In Afghanistan, JICA is involved not only in rebuilding vital areas of the capital, Kabul, including the international airport, but also community projects in education, vocational training, health, agriculture, water supply and sewage clearance.



Road building in Sri Lanka

Bust to Boom *Juba is like a Western frontier town at the height of the Gold Rush*

From ghost town to boom city. At the height of decades of civil war during which an estimated two million people were killed and more than four million fled, the southern Sudan capital of Juba was virtually destroyed and abandoned.

The fighting ended in 2002 and as people gradually began filtering home Juba has become reputedly the fastest growing city in Africa with all the frenetic activity of a Western frontier town at the height of the Gold Rush.

The population soared above one million with hundreds more arriving

every day, old buildings have been patched up and new ones built. Hotels and nightclubs with the latest satellite communications cater to businessmen and entrepreneurs. Sixty kilometers of roads are being constructed and for the first time in decades the city has even begun to experience traffic jams.

The Japan International Cooperation Agency has played a key role in Juba's rehabilitation as part of its broad objective to help regions stricken by war to rebuild and to ensure long-term peace and stability. One of the major 'flaws' in international assistance has



Juba's new port

been what has come to be recognized as 'the gap' between emergency aid and more long-term permanent assistance. Many regions have fallen back into conflict once assistance is disrupted.

JICA, under the presiden-

cy of Mrs. Sadako Ogata, who was intimately involved in the region earlier as the High Commissioner for the U.N. Refugee Agency, tries to bridge this 'gap' in its field projects.

Its first activity in Juba

was to help 'reconnect' the city deep in the heart of the African savannah with the outside world via the River Nile by rebuilding a river port. Many heavy duty items for Juba and even surrounding countries

"For post-conflict peace building operations, development cooperation must deal with the root causes of the conflicts" – Sadako Ogata

In Africa, JICA is using a mix of major infrastructure projects, human resource development and grassroots programs—the concept of 'human security'—to foster sustainable community progress which the agency believes is the

key to long-term peace. The conflict in Darfur, for instance, was sparked by the fight for limited natural resources such as water between pastoralists and farmers and might have been avoided had the antagonists received assistance.

The agency is also active in three of the continent's other recent trouble spots. It opened offices in Democratic Congo, where it helped train 46,000 police officers to try to stabilize the country, and in Sudan where it is involved in projects in various parts of Africa's largest nation including the rehabilitation of the southern capital of Juba. In Rwanda, scene in the 1990s of a genocide in which at least 800,000 persons were killed, JICA has not only helped to rehabilitate former soldiers but also to develop a fledgling IT industry.

In one recent speech, JICA President Sadako Ogata outlined the greater role development assistance must play in conflict prevention and peace building. She emphasized "the close linkage of development and security. First, people should be regarded not only as objects or recipients of aid, but active bearers and promoters" — the concept of human security. "Second, to prevent conflict, development cooperation must be alert and responsive to significant trends of social, economic and political changes. Third," she said, "for post-conflict peace building operations, development cooperation must deal with the root causes of the conflicts, quick in response and straightforward in ameliorating the fundamental causes."

arrive via the Nile, a three week journey traversing burning deserts, savannah and swampland.

One Japanese expert, Kenji Isomoto said the new port had been a resounding success. "Initially, we expected the average monthly transportation would reach 10,000 tons by 2020," he said recently. "But we reached that figure almost instantaneously in September last year." There are now plans to extend the port.

In other infrastructure projects, JICA has helped to rehabilitate the Juba Teaching Hospital, the region's main medical facility and is studying

water and transportation rehabilitation programs.

At a multi-service training center JICA experts also organized basic skills training for hundreds of southern Sudanese in such skills as carpentry, cooking and computers, all necessary to help the region regenerate. But with so many people killed in the conflict and several generations of children denied even basic schooling for years, every basic skill is urgently needed.

"Trainers lost their teaching skills and motivation because of a 20 year-blank period," according to Sachio Yamamoto, the project's

chief advisor. "People became tired because of the civil war and lost their hope."

One person who did not is 25-year-old Celina Marchell who has already opened a small diner with her vocational training and now "I would love to take a dressmaking class. I finally realized that peace has come after I received the opportunity to take this training."

Mrs. Ogata visited the booming city recently and said: "Sudan is a huge country and it also has huge problems. But I am encouraged and Juba seems to be on the brink of very good things."

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