

Rebuilding Liberia

At the height of its civil war, Liberia was one of the world's most frightening places. The bulk of its civilian population fled their homes, 250,000 persons were killed and virtually the entire infrastructure of the country was destroyed. The conflict finally ended in 2005 and, strengthening ties which first began in 1972, JICA recently opened a field office to help the West African nation continue its long recovery. The agency is helping to rehabilitate the Liberian-Japanese Friendship Maternity Hospital which was built in 1981 with Japanese grant aid, is undertaking the restoration of various other facilities in Monrovia, the capital, and has sent more than 30 Liberians to Japan for training in various fields.



Bringing the Land Back to Life

One of Asia's grandest rivers, the Irrawaddy, flows majestically past one of the world's greatest ancient civilizations, the ruins of Bagan. But because of a severe climate with limited rainfall and population increase large swathes of this landscape in central Myanmar are denuded and increasingly hot. JICA is providing local training and advanced technology and techniques to sink some 100 new wells and rehabilitate a similar number of older tube wells to provide more drinking water for the approximately one-third of Myanmar's population which lives in the region. Other experts have been involved in a four-year project to recover some 4,000 acres of bare landscape to combat desertification and mitigate the effects of drought.



Three New Challenges

JICA President Sadako Ogata says donor countries face three relatively new challenges. One is the adverse impact of population and economic growth on the environment. "One of our greatest challenges is to discover ways to combine economic development with environmental protection," she told a meeting in Berlin. The second is the "shocking truth" of the widening gap between rich and poor particularly in Africa. "Why don't the benefits of economic growth flow back to the people in Africa as they did in Japan, Korea and Taiwan?" she asked in demanding new industrial and social insurance policies to tackle the problem. The third was the number of conflicts "hindering sustainable growth." Development aid to create "a basic living environment and balanced socioeconomic foundations" must play a large role in both preventing conflicts and in reconstruction, she said.



Photo: WFP-Mesele Awoke

Lifeline

Dengue fever in Latin America. Widespread flooding in the Pacific. Conflict in the Middle East. During the first several months of the year JICA sent emergency assistance to the victims of each crisis as part of its regular program to help people caught in natural or manmade disasters. In February, thousands of people in Bolivia were struck with dengue fever after heavy rains created ideal conditions for the breeding of virus-carrying mosquitos. JICA dispatched portable sprays to fight the outbreak. When heavy rains lashed Fiji and then the Solomon Islands killing at least 20 people and displacing thousands, the agency dispatched blankets, sleeping bags, water purifiers and water tanks. And after the latest heavy fighting in Gaza, members of JICA's local alumni association made an emergency assessment for the needs of families who lost relatives or their homes.



The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) is the world's largest bilateral development organization operating in some 150 countries to help some of the globe's most vulnerable people.

Publisher: Juro Chikaraishi, Office of Media and Public Relations
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A WAR TO END WARS

Fighting disease



Bosnia's War
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