

# 2010: Year in Review

JICA President **Mrs. Sadako Ogata** recently sat down to review development issues during the last year and to look ahead to 2011.

**Question: In the global development world, what was the single most important trend during the last year?**

**Mrs. Ogata:** Until now development tended to be looked upon as an 'addition' or a 'hang on' which might sort of help national policy, but it was never central to it. Now, in countries like the United States and Japan, development has become a major policy pillar along with diplomacy and JICA is taking responsibility for a good part of Japan's development aid.

**From JICA's perspective, what was the most positive development?**

JICA merged with the Japan Bank for International Cooperation in 2008 allowing 'New JICA' to provide technical assistance, grant aid and yen loans for the first time. That is a most positive development and no one is questioning the utility of the move. Administratively, we completed our reorganization in 2010 and have now become 'one' and it is time to begin to deliver practical results.

**What does this mean going forward?**

Now, the challenge going forward is to make sure we deliver clear and positive results from that integration, to reinforce the substance. We are beginning to readjust some of our policy priorities. Until now we have concentrated on Asia, with excellent results. But following the merger there are certain things that require more emphasis and others which should be considered as done. Offices around the world, particularly in Asia, have been re-examining their overall structure and expected project results.

**Will this entail structural and personnel changes?**

Despite strict budgetary constraints we would like to strengthen our field presence, to expand project programs in developing countries. This has been examined

and discussed and that implies personnel reductions at headquarters and more staff operations in the field. This is complex and a big challenge to us because after the merger we began to administer 'soft loans' and this requires a heavy staff commitment to oversee all the necessary planning and implementation process.

**Were there any setbacks in 2010?**

Following the installation of a new government, there was a major examination of JICA's activities. I accept there were areas which could be improved and a reasonable cutting back which has already started. But in terms of particular programs, we were not able to convince the legislative branch as much as we had hoped about the importance of various field priorities.

**Were there any major strategic or geographical shifts by JICA in 2010?**

There were no major changes. Supporting the world's least developed countries is our basic obligation. At the same time we must ensure that the needs of countries with different priorities are also met. We must maintain a global antenna.

**In difficult economic times**

**it is vital to convince the general public of the importance of development assistance. Is this happening?**

We are struggling. We are struggling because we have not been able to explain the relevance of our work sufficiently well and the challenges in a rapidly globalizing world. It is a complex situation to explain the importance of helping developing countries at a time when Japan itself is being 'hollowed out' by the direct investment of Japanese industries to some of those same nations. Unless Japan's own economic situation improves we will find it increasingly difficult to justify large-scale development assistance. We have to prove this global give-and-take will be mutually beneficial.



**What are the immediate challenges going into 2011?**

We have completed our administrative reorganization. Now we must closely examine our operational commitments—geographical and project priorities—and this will result in moving perhaps another 100 staff into field positions in the very near future.

**What will be the effect of the recent Nagoya conference on global biodiversity on JICA operations?**

It has become widely recognized that 'biodiversity' impacts daily on the lives of everyone, and as such the issue has become important to JICA and it will probably result in a higher priority. As will our efforts to achieve the 2015 U.N. Millennium Development Goals where Japan has made a very clear commitment. Results thus far have been mixed. Some targets—the MDGs aim to drastically reduce global poverty and related health, education, gender, environment and other issues—require a lot of time. However, it has to be understood that these goals can only be achieved within the context of overall economic development.

**Will you continue to focus on Africa?**

Many basic development objectives have already been achieved in Asia. In contrast, Africa is still in the 'spreading out' phase of development. Only a modest amount of the world's ODA (official development assistance) goes to Africa though JICA's own technical operational budget to the continent has increased rapidly to around 33% in fiscal 2010. We will continue to advance new projects and new areas of development though the budget will probably remain stable for the moment. Next year we will review our achievements and examine where we should go from here in time for the 2013 Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD). That meeting will agree a road map for the continent for the next four years.

**There has been a lot of speculation about China's role in Africa.**

There is a lot of work required in Africa. We have opened

up some windows of consultation with China. Healthy competition would be a very good thing for the continent.

**JICA is increasingly emphasizing the importance of closer cooperation in development. Does this include China in Africa?**

As far as possible joint projects go, why not for the future? Though I don't think it's quite gotten to that stage yet.

**What is the situation regarding Afghanistan and Pakistan?**

Afghanistan is very important and is JICA's largest challenge. We have been engaged in areas such as agriculture, urban development and water supplies, and we must ensure, in close cooperation with the Afghans themselves and a whole range of international play-

ers, that what we are doing remains relevant to the overall situation. The related issue of Pakistan is also very high on the agenda. Many of the issues facing the two countries are related, but at the same time they must be approached independently and with flexibility.

**And other areas?**

It will be important to devote more attention to Sri Lanka as that country stabilizes (following the end of the prolonged civil war there). We are also reviewing how to cooperate more fully with regional structures such as the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) while maintaining traditional bilateral ties.

**What is the situation in Iraq and the Middle East?**

We opened an office in northern Iraq two years ago and have made a lot of progress there. Hopefully we will soon have representation in the south. Despite its oil, agriculture was important to Iraq before it was destroyed and helping to restore that in the coming year will be important. There is the Corridor of Peace in the Middle East (a Japanese initiative to promote closer ties between Israel, Jordan and Palestine) and in the Jordan Valley JICA is helping to improve agriculture and establish an industrial park there. Despite all sorts of hurdles we are making slow but steady progress.

**Development aid was never central to national policy. Now it has become a major pillar along with diplomacy.**

Continued from  
page 4

ferred its message—one of both warning and of hope—to the global stage.

For the last decade government officials, city fathers and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) have invited officials and experts from Asia, Africa and the Americas there to attend regular training programs to study sustainable city environmental planning.

Recently, technical researchers, architects, administrative officers and waste management experts from Bangladesh, Mexico, Morocco and Viet Nam were in town, studying everything from environmental education in local schools to garbage collection and disposal (see page 11).

That program is only one of a veritable smorgasbord of training courses JICA offers each year in Japan to qualified candidates who include government officials, academics and experts in their field.

This year around 12,000 participants attended some 1,300 programs which covered virtually any activity or problem faced by developing countries—

from environmental activities, to studying means of combating corruption or piracy on the high seas, to establishing new legal frameworks, and other environmental, health, agricultural and educational projects.

Participants spend an average of two months in Japan but some courses last just one week while highly specialist programs continue for three years.

### From the Rubble of War

A DECADE AFTER THE END OF World War II Japan was still a badly crippled country with factories, homes, railroads and schools still being rebuilt and large numbers of the

Japanese population dependent on imported food donations from the United States and international organizations.

Nevertheless, in 1954 Japan rejoined the mainstream international community by becoming a member of the Colombo Plan for Cooperative Economic and Social Development in Asia and the Pacific. Tokyo dispatched some experts overseas and invited a group of foreign nationals to Japan for training.

That first program was a modest one with 138 trainees from nearby countries studying such topics as agricultural development. Japan itself was still so poor that the United States and the participating countries themselves picked up most of the expenses.

But the program has blossomed from one of Japan's first post-war forays into the oldest component of the country's Official Development Assistance (ODA) and reputedly the world's largest training program of its kind with a 2009 budget of some \$276.7 million.

Since the training program began more than

# Learning From Past Mistakes Building a Better Future



"Back to the Future"

to study sustainable city environmental planning.

The key for Minamata City is not only the involvement of government, educational and other official institutions, but also **the active and long-term involvement of individual cities and communities.**

Minamata serves as both a stark warning of what can, and often does go wrong as urban centers grapple with rising populations, industrialization, pollution and climate change, but also some of the solutions to these challenges.

Recently, officials from Mexico, Morocco, Viet Nam and Bangladesh—countries which all face major environmental challenges—spent part of their six-month project in Minamata City studying its approach to the problem.

They viewed a local community pickup point for trash. Nothing unusual in that, perhaps, but local authorities have divided rubbish collection into 23 separate categories.

Most industrialized centers divide garbage into 3-6 categories of waste.

One woman told her visitors she had been voluntarily helping collect rubbish since 1993. Why? She looked a little perplexed at the question. Finally she said, "Because we all have to help each other. This is real community." Several teenagers by now were working at the street-corner collection point, one of more than 300 scattered around the city.

Did the participants have anything similar in their countries? It was time for the trainees from Mexico, Morocco and Bangladesh to look puzzled and laugh nervously. "Never happen," they agreed and Md. Asger, a waste management specialist from the city of Dhaka in Bangladesh, said, "Every single day we have to dispose of

4,000 tons of waste in my city. Imagine."

**JICA, in fact, has been involved in developing waste management systems in Dhaka and in Viet Nam.**

The participants visited the Fukuro Junior High School which has an active environmental program. Students visit nearby mountains, forests and rivers and are taken on sea-diving excursions to view nature in the raw and learn how human activities such as fishing and logging can be integrated in a sustainable way.

"We have very little environmental education in Morocco," architect and environmentalist Yasmina Merroun said as she watched the teenagers learning how the surrounding mountains 'work'—through photosynthesis and the patterns of rainfall.

"We have so little of this kind of information and very little direct participation," she said. **"My job now will be to take back everything I have learned here and make sure the information is passed on and shared."**

Emphasizing the participation of all segments of the community, including individuals, local artisan Hiroko Kanazashi showed her visitors how to make yarn, dyes or wash paper without chemicals and pesticides and while this started as a local enterprise, she and her husband have visited areas such as the Amazon rainforests and Uzbekistan to promote the concept of utilizing local skills and traditions to promote new economic activity.

Many of her methods date from the 17th-19th centuries in Japan and she explains cheerfully, "To build viable societies maybe we have to 'go back to the future.'"

### It is a nightmare developing communities around the world fear.

As the globe rushes towards urbanization—for the first time in history more people now live in cities than in rural areas—new industries, social and political infrastructures are developed to meet the changing patterns of human settlement. They sometimes end in disaster.

Minamata City, a sleep little town tucked away in the southern part of Japan's Kyushu Island, faced its moment of truth early in that country's industrial renaissance following World War II.

Locals there began to complain of headaches, tiredness, forgetfulness and loss of sense and smell. Some babies were born with severe handicaps.

In 1956 the cause was found. Large quantities of fish and shellfish locals normally ate were contaminated with mercury which was being discharged into the local bay by a chemical company.



Garbage collection and disposal

To date, 12,615 people have been diagnosed with an ailment named after the town—Minamata disease—and 1,246 of them died.

**Minamata City, however, decided to fight back and became the first Japanese city to establish environmental management as a priority of city planning.**

Today, it is one of 13 urban centers certified by the government as an Eco Model City and since 2000 has been the site of an annual JICA program for overseas participants



Hospitality,  
Japanese style



School kids and nature



Trainees learn new forestry and agricultural techniques



260,000 people have attended courses in Japan.

Other traditional donors such as the United States and United Kingdom also have ambitious programs, but they emphasize local courses in developing countries themselves.

To be sure, JICA conducts similar exercises. Last year, 14,254 people attended 'in country' training and an additional 3,406 went to third countries under the auspices of JICA.

Chosen trainees sometimes undergo instruction in several locations, both in Japan and overseas. Increasingly, the organization has encouraged so-called triangular field projects and training courses where, for example, an Indonesian IT expert who initially received training from JICA may be sent by the agency to Rwanda to teach African students.

### Home Advantage

NEVERTHELESS, THE PERCEIVED ADVANTAGES for both trainees and the host population remain deeply rooted in JICA's decision to offer courses in Japan.

Hiroyuki Mori, deputy director general for JICA's training affairs and citizen participation department,

**This year around 12,000 participants have attended some 1,300 programs which covered virtually any problem faced by developing countries.**

explained that during the 1868-1912 Meiji period, as Japan opened up to the outside world, nearly 25,000 young Japanese went abroad to study.

"It was important for them to see the reality of western civilization at the time," he said. "They had to live there, talk with the people, make mistakes, be cheated and survive to understand the differences. Ex-

change of people as well as exchange of ideas are important both for the developing world and for us."

A JICA Global Network—Social Networking Services system has been developed, a kind of private Facebook with each training course developing its own community of participants, lecturers and JICA staff who continue to exchange ideas, opinions, reports and documents both during the training course and when they return home.

A key element to the program is not only the training itself and JICA's involvement, but the participation of other segments of Japanese society.

JICA administers the training through 13 domestic centers, but an estimated 300 other organizations ranging from the central government, local governments, founda-

# An Ancient Himalayan Land Gets a New Legal System

**When more than a decade of civil conflict ended in 2008 in the isolated Himalayan state of Nepal, the nation faced an enormous task: building a virtually new country.**

After more than two centuries of royal rule, a democratically elected government needed new economic and social policies and, crucially, a new legal structure to govern a nation of 23 million people wedged into a beautiful land of broad valleys nestling between eight of the world's 10 highest peaks and neighboring India and China.

Mainstream development work is often interpreted as building a new hospital, road or school, but JICA has also placed emphasis on helping nations such as Viet Nam, Cambodia, Laos, Uzbekistan, Indonesia, China and Mongolia to create or strengthen their legal frameworks.

Currently, the only major laws in Nepal are a temporary constitution and a 1953 Country Code or 'Muluki Ain' which was shaped around ancient Hindu doctrine covering both criminal and civil issues.

The entire system is considered outdated and following its installation in 2008, a new government has been working with JICA to

establish a civil code to meet the fundamental human rights of ordinary citizens and internationally accepted standards.

**Among other aims is the removal of discriminatory provisions against women in marriage and divorce, clarification of land ownership and use and the resolution of contract disputes.**

A Japanese advisory group of academics and legal experts and a Nepalese Civil Law Reforms and Improvement Task Force held a series of meetings, seminars and teleconferences before a draft civil code and civil procedure code were submitted to the country's prime minister in August of this year.

Japan is in a unique position to offer legal guidance, having selectively adopted continental European, British and American systems since the end of the 19th century. The JICA advisory group has provided the



Nepalese not only with the outlines of Japan's own hybrid legal system but also those of other countries to allow them to select those options best suited to Nepal's own circumstances.

National consultations with the public, judges and attorneys are underway after which the draft will be refined and parliament will then enact legislation. In addition to the civil code, the Constitutional Assembly is also working on a permanent Constitution with a deadline set for May 2011.

**JICA's assistance will continue until March 2012 and during that period law reform will be promoted among the public even as judges and legal officials undergo enhanced training.**

# Japan Centers

## An Auspicious 10th Anniversary

**W**hen the Soviet Union collapsed some of its former satellite countries, particularly in Central Asia, faced a particular problem: how to transform rigid, communist systems into so-called free or market-based economies.

Some Asian countries such as Viet Nam and Mongolia faced the same problem.

In the late 1990s, Japan developed the concept of establishing "Japan Centers" to help these countries make the painful and complex transition.

This year marks the 10th official anniversary of the opening of the first of the Centers.

JICA has helped establish and administer Japan Centers in Viet Nam (one in Hanoi and a second in Ho Chi Minh City), Laos, Cambodia, Mongolia, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Mongolia.

**More than 66,000 people studied specific courses**, but in Viet Nam alone nearly half a million people attended various center activities.

"Ten years ago there were around 20,000 companies in Viet Nam. Today there are maybe 500,000" said Satoru Kohiyama, who spent nearly four years as a Center director until August 2010. "It was an age of innocence. The economy was expanding rapidly and diversifying and they urgently needed trained people at all levels. This is where the centers came in."

**Effectively the centers operate as schools of business excellence to nurture a whole new class of skilled business personnel in each country**—shop floor workers, managers and administrators of small and medium sized companies and, latterly, CEOs and other top officials of major companies.

Japanese experts are on hand to teach the latest Japanese-style market-oriented management techniques including the concept of 'kaizen'—the continuous im-

provement of processes in such fields as manufacturing and engineering.

**Too, the centers are outposts of Japan and its culture.** They provide Japanese language courses and information, host cultural events and act as a conduit between the general public of recipient countries and Japanese counterparts.

Japan Centers are operated through JICA's technical cooperation system and since projects are not 'open ended' emphasis has been placed on strengthening the ability of local partners to maintain the centers once this cooperation ends.



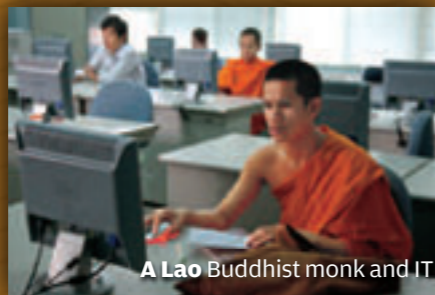
Senior Vietnamese business executives graduate

A class at the Hanoi center



**The centers deal not just with business theory but also business reality.**

The Mongolia-Japan Center recently undertook with the National University of Mongolia and the country's largest mining company, the Erdenet Mining Corporation, a project to help strengthen its top management and develop a business plan for the next fiscal year.



A Lao Buddhist monk and IT

It signed another agreement with a local gold-mining company to upgrade that company's management. Mongolia is a major potential supplier of natural resources for Japan.

**Japan has also placed great emphasis on the development of the Mekong Region** and centers in that region work regularly to strengthen the aims of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) by fostering closer ties through such activities as holding joint seminars through the JICA-Net communications system.

According to Hiroaki Nakagawa, director of JICA's public policy department, "The centers are a great resource both for the Japanese public and private sector organizations interested in expanding their activities in these regions."



Helping to protect the world's dwindling coral reefs and mangrove forests

tions, associations, universities, non-governmental organizations and the private sector are also deeply involved as lecturers, administrators and personal hosts.

### Welcome to Japan

STUDENTS ARE EXPECTED to study the latest technologies and practical training but are also introduced to domestic Japanese culture, visiting homes, schools and factories.

Host communities such as Minamata City emphasize that it is a learning experience for them as well, with local Japanese being exposed to people from some of the most remote regions on earth.

Hiroko Kanazashi teaches traditional methods to make yarn, dyes or washi paper without chemicals or pesticides as her personal contribution to making the city so eco-friendly. She also epitomizes the two-way nature of the training program.

As she hosted the training participants from Bangladesh, Viet Nam, Morocco and Mexico in her workshop she encouraged them: "We in the industrialized world have a lot we can learn from you. Cherish your traditions. They can help the environment. Avoid the same mistakes we have



**Since the project began more than 260,000 people have attended courses in Japan.**



Engineering skills

made as we became 'developed.'"

All training participants are expected to make an action plan which they are expected to implement when they return home, in addition to dispersing as widely as possible any new information, ideas and plans they have learned during their stay in Japan.

After participating in a course in firefighting techniques, participants from Myanmar, Armenia, Jamaica and the island of St. Christopher-Nevis in the Caribbean returned home with plans to introduce new rope techniques and indoor search and rescue techniques, improved first-aid capabilities, better safety control and command theory, improved fire investigation procedures, safety controls and fire prevention systems.

"For me, this was a real eye opener," said fire officer Rommel Renford Williams from St. Christopher-Nevis. "Some of the equipment here was amazing" but he was also intrigued by the discipline and organization here ("which is awesome").

"And the raw fish is not too bad either," he joked as he and his colleagues lined up for one last time with their Japanese colleagues in formation before planning their return home. ■

JICA's WORLD

**Publisher:**  
Noriko Suzuki  
Office of Media and Public Relations

**Editor:**  
Raymond Wilkinson

**Art Director:**  
Vincent Winter Associates

**JICA'S WORLD**  
is published by

**JICA**  
Nibancho Center Bldg  
5-25, Niban-cho  
Chiyoda-ku  
Tokyo 102-8012 JAPAN

TELEPHONE:  
+81-3-5226-6660-3  
FAX: +81-3-5226-6396  
INTERNET:  
<http://www.jica.go.jp>

**Comments:** [jicagap-opinion@jica.go.jp](mailto:jicagap-opinion@jica.go.jp)

**Cover:** Some of JICA's hundreds of training programs available in Japan for participants from around the world.  
Photos: JICA



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.