The Middle East, including Afghanistan, Iraq, and Palestine, has complex problems related to conflicts, which make it difficult to forecast a peaceful and stable future. The region also has a wide range of needs that differ from country to country. Therefore, keeping social stability and peace in the region in mind, JICA extends support to facilitate a smooth transition from post-conflict reconstruction to development support. At the same time JICA actively provides cooperation in various fields of development, in particular the management of water resources, environmental conservation, the promotion of industry, and human resources development.

From the standpoint of supporting the Middle East peace process, which is the region’s most critical issue, JICA is providing technical cooperation for Palestine by conducting training courses in the fields of vocational training and enhancement in legislative, judicial, and administrative capacities in Japan and Palestine’s neighboring country, Jordan, with support from the government of Jordan.

For Afghanistan, which is being reconstructed after more than 20 years of civil war, JICA has implemented projects in various fields of education promotion, recovery of medical services, empowerment* of women, and reintegration into society of demobilized soldiers for the purpose of stable security, along with support from the international community. Post-conflict reconstruction for Iraq is under consideration. For Iraq which is making an effort at new nation-building despite difficulties in security, JICA is creating a reconstruction plan for human resources development in cooperation with neighboring Arabian countries while collecting and adjusting information in neighboring countries.

In Saudi Arabia and other oil-producing countries, JICA supports the economic diversification efforts needed to enable these countries to break free of petroleum-reliant economies. Specifically, cooperation is centered on the training of engineers and technicians.

In countries with relatively high-income levels, such as Tunisia and Turkey, technical cooperation is being provided with an emphasis on human resources development that will lead competitive industries.

On the other hand, JICA provides technical cooperation and grant aid to countries with relatively low-income levels, such as Yemen. Cooperation relates to upgrading and expanding industrial infrastructure* and satisfying basic human needs (BHN)* in areas such as health and medical care.

### Middle East Peace Process is the Most Critical Issue

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Support Amount (FY 2003)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Afghanistan</td>
<td>2,644,794</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iran</td>
<td>1,671,850</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>846,434</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>427,081</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>351,152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Algeria</td>
<td>302,706</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yemen</td>
<td>233,602</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palestine</td>
<td>187,706</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sudan</td>
<td>51,753</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bahrain</td>
<td>15,520</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>13,981,586</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Numbers are in thousand of yen (T’ thousands of yen)
Current State of Development

Diverse Political and Economic Backgrounds
The Middle East, which consists of 22 diverse countries, extends over a very large area, from Afghanistan in the east to Morocco in the west, and from Sudan in the south to Turkey in the north.

The climate throughout most of the region is arid or semi-arid, apart from the Red Sea and the Arabian Gulf, where there is high humidity; North Africa, which has a Mediterranean climate; and the southern part of the Arabian Peninsula, which has a mountainous climate. Political systems include kingdoms, emirates, secular republics, and an Islamic republic based on clerical rule.

In terms of the economy, the Gulf states and the North African countries are blessed with extensive petroleum and natural gas resources. However, countries such as Yemen and Sudan are classified as least developed countries (LDCs)* since they lack natural resources and are lagging behind in socioeconomic development.

Varied Development Conditions
Many countries in the Middle East have rich histories dating far back to before the birth of Christ. They also have varied social and cultural backgrounds.

Since the end of World War II, the region has seen much conflict, including the Middle East war, the Lebanese conflict, the civil war in Afghanistan, the Iran-Iraq War, the Persian Gulf Crisis, the US military attack on Afghanistan, the Palestinian conflict, and the Iraq war. Uncertainties exist in the region, affecting the international economy, global peace and stability. The Middle East is thus a very diverse area, and the development picture it presents is in no way uniform.

For instance, in Afghanistan, the economic and social infrastructure and the basic system of administration were destroyed by the civil war, and no financial foundation is in place. To support reconstruction of a country with such problems effectively, what is required is not only the conventional type of recovery and reconstruction support, but also comprehensive support based on new ideas, including support for the peace process and public security as prerequisites.

Some of the Gulf states have pushed ahead with economic and social development using vast oil revenues gained from the development of petroleum resources, and this has enabled them to establish a high level of infrastructure. However, these countries urgently need to train human resources to support their nation-building efforts because of their small populations.

In contrast, there are also several countries experiencing difficult economic conditions where the provision of services remains inadequate with regard to basic human living conditions, such as basic health and medical care and a safe water supply.

Addressing Priority Issues in JICA Programs

Support for Peace in the Middle East
Since the 1993 Oslo agreement, Japan has actively taken part in multinational discussions by chairing the Environmental Working Group, which is one of five working groups (Environment, Regional Economic Development, Water, Arms Control, and Regional Security and Refugees) established at the Multilateral Middle East Peace Negotiations held in 1992 to support the peace process. Japan has also made an active contribution by providing support through international organizations.

Though confrontation between Israel and Palestine has intensified since September 2000, several subsequent events took place in 2003, showing progress in the promotion of peace in the Middle East. These events include approval of a roadmap for bilateral coexistence by both the authorities of Israel and Palestine in June, and a three-month cease-fire agreement in July. However, armed conflicts did not cool down afterwards, and the tense conditions still continue as the murders of Hamas leaders show.

Under such circumstances, with the policy of providing support according to the progress of a peace process, Japan has implemented Palestine reform assistance towards the nation-building of Palestine. Based on a series of policy framework such as the New Japanese Assistance Package for Restoring and Reforming the Palestinian Authority that was announced by Japanese Minister of Foreign Affairs Yoriko Kawaguchi in April 2003, JICA has provided training for Palestinians in such fields as democratization, auditing, financial and administrative operations, judicial system in Japan and Jordan. Keeping the strengthening of the relationship with Arab countries on mind, JICA’s assistance will focus on the stability of civil life and improvement of government administrative func-
Post-conflict Reconstruction for Afghanistan

The reconstruction of Afghanistan, which started in 2002, has made progress on various fronts in the past two years thanks to cooperation from donor countries and international organizations. First, the Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) of ex-combatants, which was the biggest concern for improving public security, commenced in October 2003. Afghanistan’s new Constitution was adopted in the Loya Jirga (National Assembly) in January 2004. From the reconstruction aspect, in particular, the urgently required reconstruction of 500km of the main trunk road between Kabul and Kandahar was carried out. With cooperation mainly from Japan and the US, the road is now open to traffic.

In spite of this progress, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) delegate reported that “the Human Development Index shows that Afghanistan is the second most underdeveloped country after Sierra Leone,” at the International Conference on Afghanistan (the president of JICA, Mrs. Sadako Ogata, attended as the Japanese delegate and co-chaired) held in Berlin at the end of March 2004. At the Berlin conference, donor countries and international organizations pledged 8.2 billion US dollars to support Afghanistan’s reconstruction for three years starting in 2004, including a contribution of 400 million US dollars for two years from the Japanese government.

JICA has implemented projects worth about five billion yen for the past two years. Reconstruction and rehabilitation of infrastructure such as roads, schools, and medical facilities were at the heart of these projects. While continuing these reconstruction projects, JICA will implement more projects from which the community will directly benefit in terms of literacy education, infection control centering on tuberculosis, and maternal and child health care. In addition, since Afghanistan is traditionally an agricultural country, cooperation for agricultural development and regional development needs to be strengthened to promote improvement of productivity and creation of employment.

Contribute to Nation-rebuilding in Iraq

Reconstructing Iraq, which has been debilitated for the past 20 years, as a peaceful and democratic nation, while at the same time securing unified sovereignty and territory, is extremely important to the people of Iraq and to the peace and stability of the Middle East and the international community. Accordingly, Japan has announced support of up to five billion US dollars, including 1.5 billion US dollars in grant aid as emergency support (focusing on reconstruction of basic living conditions for the people of Iraq, such as electricity, education, water and hygiene, health care, employment, as well as improvements in public security), and support of up to 3.5 billion US dollars mostly in the form of yen loans for medium-term reconstruction needs (rebuilding of infrastructure such as telecommunication and transportation is put into proper perspective).

JICA provides training in the medical field in Egypt for Iraqi human resources development in cooperation with Arab countries as well as training in Japan and basic studies for emergency support and medium-term reconstruction needs, thus contributing to human development and nation-building.

Cooperation in Water Resources

The Middle East is a region with a small amount of renewable water resources and the water resources necessary to support human activities such as agriculture, everyday life, and industry are strictly limited. In the Gulf countries and Jordan, the restriction of agricultural water that accounts for 70 to 80% of water use makes the food self-sufficiency target difficult to achieve, owing to increased food consumption due to population increases and improvements in income. The high growth rate of the population and increased urbanization it entails leads to an increased need for everyday water. Water intake from the rivers in urban areas and use of underground water do not correspond to these increasing needs, and to make matters worse, it leads to the deterioration of conventional water resources. Therefore a stable water supply and efficient water utilization have become urgent issues.

In response, JICA supports the establishment of the Water Resources Information Center in Syria to promote system-building for data collection and management of water resource information. Dispatch of experts and acceptance of technical training participants are carried out in cooperation for water supply projects in underdeveloped rural areas in Morocco, and technical support for water leakage in Jordan, one of the...
countries with the least amount of water resources in the world, to assist each country in addressing its water resources problems.

Environmental Conservation for a Wide Variety of Needs

The Middle East is characterized by various climate conditions: arid or semiarid areas with extremely little precipitation; the Red Sea and the Arabian Gulf, where there is high humidity; and North Africa, which has a Mediterranean climate. The progress of urbanization and industrialization also varies from country to country. Therefore, there is a wide range of needs in the environmental field depending on the situation in each country. JICA provides various means of cooperation according to the needs, such as forest protection control in Saudi Arabia and environmental administration capacity-building* in Jordan.

In many countries in the Middle East, urbanization and industrialization have advanced due to the recent economic development and rapid population increase, generating serious problems such as air pollution, water contamination, and waste management. To address these problems, JICA provides support by utilizing the past experience of Japan, which has overcome environmental problems by effectively combining the introduction of new regulations, promotion policy, and various advancements in environmental technologies, such as pollution reduction technologies and energy saving technologies.

Front Line

**Afghanistan**

Vocational Training for Demobilized Soldiers

Support Social Reintegration of Ex-combatants

Technical Cooperation Project

Process toward peace and recovery

Afghanistan was torn by conflict for more than 20 years. Disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) of the military clique are vital processes necessary to realize recovery and peace as well as the creation of a national army, rehabilitation of police forces, and the establishment of a judiciary and drug enforcement activities.

In addition to a contribution of about 7.2 billion yen (2003-2004), Japan, who became the leader of the DDR at the G8 security meeting in April 2002, established Afghanistan’s New Beginning Program (ANBP) together with the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), whose purpose is to implement neutral and functional DDR through collaboration with the Afghanistan government, major donor* countries, and aid agencies.

Vocational training in light industries

JICA conducted a fact-finding study to look into the background of the DDR request in February 2003 and dispatched an expert to make a DDR policy and aid plan to the Japanese Embassy in Afghanistan as a special representative of the Japanese government in March. Furthermore, JICA conducted project formation studies* in June and September for the purpose of planning a technical cooperation project to promote the social reintegration of demobilized soldiers. In this project, which is focused on agriculture, industry, and construction as priority fields for vocational training, JICA experts train local instructors in the capital, Kabul, and the instructors are then dispatched to regional vocational training facilities to offer vocational training to ex-combatants. It was decided that training in light industry, such as sheet metal, welding, and machine work, would be first implemented with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs.

At present, this instructor training facility is being repaired. This project gained attention as a collaborative project with German Technical Corporation (GTZ) that implements similar vocational training in the same facility. The facility built by Russia 25 years ago was destroyed by bombing right before its completion and had never been used. It is expected that the reconstruction of this facility will help local people realize the accomplishment of peace, and ex-combatants will learn skills to support their livelihood through training by trained instructors dispatched across Afghanistan. They will thus live peacefully with their families and people in the local communities.

(JICA Afghanistan Office)
Industry Promotion and Human Resources Development

The European Union (EU) has been promoting a free trade partnership in this region to achieve economic and social development and stability in the Mediterranean area. Tunisia (1995), Morocco (1996), Palestine (1997), Jordan (1997), Egypt (2001), and Algeria (2002) have already joined the partnership agreement. In the future, these countries are planning to further establish a Free Trade Area (FTA) to develop a full-scale free-trade system, and thus they require the development of domestic industries capable of meeting international competition.

In many countries in the Middle East, according to the rapid increase in population, young potential workers account for the majority of the population, and the problem of unemployment has become increasingly serious, becoming one factor for social anxiety. Therefore, it is urgent to alleviate unemployment through training technical manpower who will support various industries by themselves.

To cope with these problems, JICA assists human resources development such as automobile mechanics in Saudi Arabia, electrical and electronics engineers in Tunisia, and automatic control engineers in Turkey by providing vocational training and advice on policy-making in various industries.

South-South Cooperation

In the Middle East, technical cooperation provided by Japan so far has produced good results and there are countries whose technical level rose to such a level that they themselves can provide cooperation to other technically developing countries. Since they share common development issues with neighboring countries and within the region as mentioned above, technical cooperation between developing countries have been strengthened.

Front Line

Jordan
Training in Electricity Field for Iraq

Outcome of Technical Cooperation Delivered from Country to Country

Third-country Training

Serious situation surrounding electricity

On May 4, 2004, one year following the end of the major war in Iraq, third-country training* in the electricity field, which is one of the major pillars for Iraqi reconstruction support, commenced in Jordan, a country which has the strongest relationship with Iraq in terms of economics and history.

The functions of social infrastructure such as transportation, energy, and water have been drastically compromised due to repeated wars and economic restrictions over the past 13 years. Electric power, one of the most important lifelines of civic life, is not an exception, and only about half of the demand can be supplied at present. The Iraqi Ministry of Electricity has been requesting assistance from donor organizations, including those in the US and UK, so that electric power can be supplied to meet the demand in summer when demand increases for air conditioning. However, the internal security situation has hindered the progress of on-site reconstruction projects.

In this training course Iraqi engineers are invited to Jordan from the central power distribution center which controls and operates the electric power demand in Iraq to learn analysis methods for the electric power systems and system operating methods for the purpose of enabling more appropriate electric power supply for the summer when the supply-and-demand situation becomes strained.

Overcoming difficulties

There were many difficulties in the course of implementation. Since entry to Iraq is very difficult and communications are extremely poor, a needs study as well as communications and adjustments necessary for the implementation, had to be carried out remotely. This took substantial time and labor to refine the curriculum and adjust training implementation.

Additionally, right before the training course began the US army started its Falluja clean-up operation, and internal security worsened, thus requiring changes in schedules and means of transportation for training participants.

Nevertheless, these problems were solved thanks to the active participation of the Jordan National Electric Power Company (NEPCO), which implements training, and the training was successfully implemented with participation of all the trainees as planned.

Previously, JICA provided training facilities and dispatched experts to NEPCO. South-South cooperation was carried out successfully by utilizing and transferring from Jordan to Iraq the technologies that had been transferred from Japan.

JICA plans to continue positive cooperation in the electric power field in Iraq in cooperation with the NEPCO.

(JICA Jordan Office)

*Third-country training: Training delivered to a third country by the assistance agency or a developed-country government.

Iraq engineers taking training course in a neighbor country, Jordan
called South-South cooperation* is implemented as an effective and efficient method of cooperation. Tunisia and Morocco provide cooperation to neighboring Arab countries and West African countries, Egypt and Jordan to Arab countries and African countries, Turkey to Central Asian countries and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

At the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) III in October 2003, the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD), a development strategy devised by the people of Africa and shared by all African countries, was evaluated in terms of the emergence of ownership* of each country inside the region, and it was confirmed that the international community would continue its support. North African countries follow the framework of the NEPAD to strengthen the coordination and cooperation inside the region of Africa. With such a background, cooperation is provided to fields such as agriculture, medical care and welding in Egypt, maternal and child health and environment in Tunisia, and fishery and water supply systems in Morocco.

On the other hand, policy enhancement to promote the cooperation of Japan and Arab countries was announced when Prime Minister Koizumi Junichiro visited Egypt and Saudi Arabia in May 2003. Reconstruction assistance for Iraq and the promotion of cooperation with Arab countries for the support of the Middle East peace plan are government policies. In line with these policies, JICA provided training for 100 Iraqi people involved in medical care in Egypt and also training of electric power fields for Iraqi engineers in Jordan. Furthermore, both countries extend cooperation for Palestine in fields such as medical equipment, agricultural management, jurisdiction, finance and administration, and electricity.

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**Front Line**

**Saudi Arabia**

**Saudi-Japanese Automobile High Institute Project**

**New Project Receives Cooperation from Groups in the Private Sector**

**Technical Cooperation Project**

**Saudization: Saudi people employment expansion policy**

The Saudi-Japanese Automobile High Institute Project, unlike conventional JICA projects, has gained attention as a new type of project. The establishment of this institute originated from the conclusion of a joint announcement of bilateral cooperation for its establishment when Saudi Arabia’s Crown Prince Abdullah paid a visit to Japan in October 1998. New type means that groups in the private sector of both countries participated and cooperated in the JICA project. The institute opened in September 2002 and has been operated as a private automobile mechanics school with substantial support from the Japan Automobile Manufacturers Association, Inc. from the Japanese side and from the Japanese Automobile Distributors in the Kingdom from the Saudi Arabian side.

It is expected that young Saudi Arabians who graduate from this school will find employment at domestic automobile companies, thus contributing to the promotion of a Saudization policy, which the government of Saudi Arabia regards as the most important agenda in its national policy.

**Sustainable development of the institute**

In this project, experts on car mechanics recommended by the Japan Automobile Manufacturers Association, Inc. transfer skills to counterparts everyday. Their activities are diverse, and not limited to skills in the car mechanics field. They actively participate in the management of the institute, safety controls, and discipline education for students and school events, while also providing advice. The aim of this project is not only the improvement of the facilities of the institute and the skills of the counterparts. We would like all the people, including staff, counterparts, and students, to understand that they need to have affection for this institute for the purpose of sustainable development* after completion of the project implementation period.

Specifically, one of their activities is safety patrols which were invented by the experts. The patrol committee goes on patrol inside the institute once every three months to check that there are no hazards for students, and tries to find points that need improving for a better training environment. They are making efforts to raise the safety consciousness throughout the entire institute. Based on a proposal from the project experts, a skills contest carried out by the students will be held in July 2004 to demonstrate the results of the students’ training to many people in the form of a contest. This will surely help increase students’ motivation for study. Many other proposals have been presented and implemented. The experts are working hard on technology transfer* activities, believing that it is important for the management side of the institute, staff, students, and the project experts to share the idea of operating this institute together and that such unity makes it a better institute.

(JICA Saudi Arabia Office)