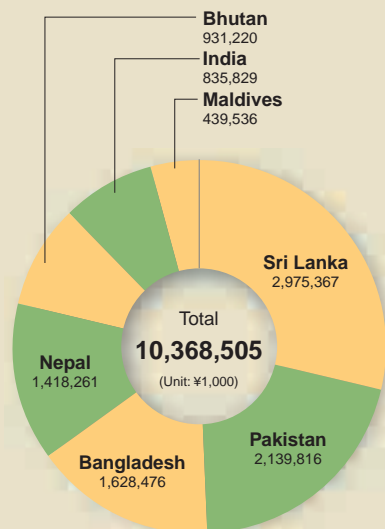


Southwest Asia



Pillars of Aid Priority Placed on Cooperation for Poverty Reduction and Economic Development

■ Cooperation results by country in Southwest Asia (FY2005)



*This is the total amount of bilateral cooperation. The amount of cooperation provided to Asia including cooperation that covers a group of countries is 54,091,326 thousands of yen.

Southwest Asia has about 40% of the world's poor population. Development in health and education lags behind the rest of the world, and gender disparities still exist. Also, the region, where ethnicity, religion, and language are mixed, is politically and socially unstable and has areas of conflict.

Given the fact that the tense relationship between India and Pakistan is gradually easing, it is expected that economic activities in each country in the region will be activated and contribute to political stability in the region. The economic growth has been comparatively good for the past several years but with a vulnerable economic framework the balance of payments and fiscal balances are chronically deficit in every country.

Considering these situations, JICA's cooperation focuses on poverty reduction and economic growth as two pillars of aid for Southwest Asia. Specifically, underling the perspectives of human security and gender consideration in the area of poverty reduction, JICA provides support for the improvement of living conditions such as health/population, education and supply of safe water, community development, and human resources development. As poverty issues are

closely associated with political and social stability, JICA promotes cooperation towards that end.

In terms of economy, JICA will provide cooperation to develop economic infrastructure and promote investment and trade in a private sector with the aim of stable growth of the economy. At the same time, JICA will further strengthen coordination with financial assistance projects to develop economic infrastructure. Support for economic development in Southwest Asia is effective for promoting economic ties between Japan and the region, which are getting stronger particularly with India, and is essential for facilitating reduction of the poor population of more than 400 million.

Support for peacebuilding and conflict prevention also continue, mainly for Sri Lanka. JICA will continue support for Sri Lanka and Maldives, which were damaged by the Great Sumatra Earthquake and Indian Ocean Tsunami Disaster in 2004, and provide medium- and long-term support for disaster prevention and reconstruction in response to the damage caused by the earthquakes that hit Pakistan in October 2005.

Current State of Development

Southwest Asia has a population of approximately 1.3 billion and over 400 million people in the region are classified as poor. A development policy is being promoted for poverty reduction by each country and improvements have been made in areas such as education and health; however, development is still behind. In the region, various factors such as ethnicity, religion, language, and climate are complexly related to politics and society, contributing to social and cultural diversity and depth as well as instability of society.

For the past several years, the economic growth of Southwest

Asia has progressed at a rate of about 5% annually and growth seems comparatively good. However, many countries depend on exports of specific products, such as clothing and agricultural products, and with a vulnerable economic framework the balance of payments and fiscal balances are chronically deficit. Given the fact that the tense relationship between India and Pakistan is gradually easing, the proposed establishment of a South Asia free trade zone will stimulate economic activities in each country in the region and contribute to its stability.

Addressing Priority Issues in JICA Programs

Perspective of Human Security

In Southwest Asia, with its enormous poverty group, JICA will underline poverty control as a common priority issue, as well as formulate and implement projects by proactively incorporating

the perspective of human security. Specifically, support directly reaching the people and areas difficult to secure basic living conditions, including securing safe water, health and sanitation, is provided. One example is a project which focuses on rehabilitation



Water contamination study for improving the quality of lake water (The Project for Strengthening Capacity on Restoration and Management of Hussainsagar Lake in India)

of basic infrastructure and empowerment of community groups in Sri Lanka.

The poverty group is vulnerable to widespread infectious diseases and environmental contamination. JICA provides support for infectious disease control targeting filaria and tuberculosis in Bangladesh, and in Pakistan JICA supports tuberculosis control and an expanded program for immunization (EPI)/polio control. Since contamination of rivers and underground water is developing into a serious problem, countermeasures against contamina-

tion of rivers, lakes, and ponds are supported in India.

In Bangladesh, JICA combines direct support for the residents who are under serious threat of contamination of vital drinking water and support for the development of capacity of the central and local governments, with an aim to extend support to as many people as possible. JICA thus provides comprehensive support to extend and consolidate county-level outcomes at a prefectural level by combining various forms of schemes, including partnership with NGOs.

Post-disaster Reconstruction and Disaster Prevention

An earthquake of magnitude 7.6 on the Richter scale struck Pakistan in October 2005, leaving catastrophic damage mainly in the northwestern frontier of Pakistan and Kashmir. In response, JICA has provided seamless support from emergency relief to reconstruction using Japan's experience. The support includes the reconstruction of schools and medical facilities immediately after the earthquake, as well as the formulation of reconstruction and rehabilitation plans for Muzaffarabad City (administrative and commercial center of Kashmir) (See p. 11).

For the catastrophic damage in Sri Lanka and Maldives caused by the Great Sumatra Earthquake and Indian Ocean Tsunami Disaster in December 2004, Japan has provided seamless assistance from emergency relief to reconstruction and devel-

Front Line Pakistan

The Support Project for the National Institute for Handicapped

Activities in the Affected Areas Utilizing the Strength of JOCV

Support for handicapped people

The earthquake that hit the northern part of Pakistan on October 8, 2005 claimed an estimated 7,300 lives and many people became handicapped due to injuries to limbs and spines. For five months starting in February 2006, JICA Pakistan Office implemented a post-disaster reconstruction assistance project, in which a JOCV team and field coordinators carried out activities based at the National Institute for Handicapped.

Many spinal-cord-injury victims whose lives were saved thanks to the activities of various organizations were placed in three national hospitals located near Islamabad (capital of Pakistan). Among them, the National Institute for Handicapped played a central role. Since many affected people were forced to use wheelchairs, hospitals needed a large number of physical therapists, occupational therapists, and nurses.

Rehabilitation for patients and their families

Since many organizations started relief activities immediately after the disaster, human and material support had

already made significant progress when JICA started cooperation. Thus, JICA set an aim to provide need-based cooperation by making use of JOCVs' strength in understanding the social and cultural background and being able to communicate in the local language.

The project focused on the patients and their families. In view of in-hospital life and village life after discharge, not only medical therapy but also daily life-related support activities including shopping, cooking, and playing sports and

games were carried out, bringing smiles to their faces. Even though some time has passed since the earthquake, the psychological wounds suffered by patients and families are deep. The rehabilitation offered was so fun that they can almost forget their painful memories. Hospital staff and patients' families were always involved in these activities so that support for patients will continue to be provided even after the project terminates.

(JICA Pakistan Office)



Outdoor cooking attended by patients with hand paralysis



Virtual experience of being handicapped to help the families of patients understand the handicapped

opment by comprehensively combining various assistance schemes, including grant aid, yen loans, and technical cooperation. Among these activities, JICA conducts activities such as feasibility studies and project design, which are necessary to implement prompt financial cooperation, provides support for model building for reconstruction assistance through communities, and offers cooperation through personal contacts including advice in relation to disaster prevention, thereby playing the role of lubricant for post-disaster reconstruction assistance under the All-Japan banner.

For instance, the government of Japan has been building the Japan-Sri Lanka Friendship Village with non-project grant aid. In support of this project, JICA primarily provides hardware assistance, such as study and design for housing, access roads, a community hall, etc., and at the same time provides some software assistance, including livelihood and community reconstruction activities. Since software support is essential for the Japan-Sri Lanka Friendship Village to effectively function, JICA will continue cooperation in the future to maintain and strengthen these activities.

In the area of disaster prevention, JICA provides support for measures against flood and cyclone related disasters in collaboration with financial assistance in Bangladesh and support for landslide disaster mitigation in Nepal. JICA will continue to provide integrated measures making use of technologies in Japan as an advanced nation in disaster prevention, and promote support focusing on strengthening the disaster response capacity of the local community.



Needs survey targeting tsunami-affected people who are scheduled to move to the Japan-Sri Lanka Friendship Village (Recovery, Rehabilitation and Development Project for Tsunami Affected Areas in Sri Lanka)

Peacebuilding

In Sri Lanka, a civil conflict that continued for the past 20 years has caused a great number of deaths, and internally displaced persons and many other refugees. However, in March 2002, an indefinite truce agreement was reached between Sri Lanka's government and the ethnic Tamil rebels called the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). The Tokyo Conference on Reconstruction and Development of Sri Lanka was

subsequently held and the international community demonstrated a uniform commitment to support the consolidation of peace in Sri Lanka.

Since the conflict was suspended, JICA has continued to support war-affected people and refugees. JICA makes the utmost efforts in these projects to empower communities in the areas affected by the conflict. Together with direct support for residents, JICA provides training for administrators who deal with residents' groups to empower communities and municipalities so that they can resolve various problems and issues that they face through their own wisdom and power. Four years after the conflict was suspended, the peace talks between the government and the LTTE are in a static state; however, the life of the people in the conflict-affected areas is steadily improving. Desires not to restart the war and to improve the standard of living are steadily growing in the hearts and minds of the people. Meeting face-to-face with the people, JICA will actively continue to implement its projects to empower communities.

Also in Nepal, a project related to peacebuilding continues to be formulated carefully.

Economic Growth

In terms of economic growth, infrastructure development and promotion of investment and trade are common issues in the region. Infrastructure supports economic growth of the country or region, as well as the business environment that induces investment in the private sector. In addition to economic infrastructure, improving governance, which is a prerequisite for sustainable development, will lead to the improvement of an investment environment, investment promotion, and improvement of productivity, and thus to economic growth.

In particular, the transportation and traffic sector is the core of the development of economic infrastructure. However, an underdeveloped road network constitutes the largest common concern in Southwest Asia. Thus, JICA promotes technical cooperation to develop roads, including bridges, in combination with yen loans and grant aid assistance.

For example, India, which is experiencing rapid economic growth, has vast land areas with regional disparities. Therefore, the priority issue is the promotion of economic and social activities by improving the efficiency of domestic distribution systems and JICA is supporting the development and enhancement of major freight railways.

Demand for development of economic infrastructure that will facilitate economic growth is expected to increase further in the future, and JICA will thereby promote cooperation in collaboration with yen loans.

In recent years, the trend for democratization is accelerating in this region as well, and delegation of authority from the central to local governments is in progress. In support for governance improvement, JICA is implementing the Decentralization Support Program with citizen participation in Pakistan and Bhutan for the purpose of capacity building in local governments.