Chapter 2 • Middle East

Middle East

Pillars of Aid
Assistance for Regional Peace and Stability and Response to Common Needs

The Middle East not only is a region where ancient civilizations such as Mesopotamia and Egypt flourished but it also has played a geopolitically important role in connecting eastern and western civilizations, which is why it is called the Crossroads of Civilizations. The Middle East, which holds approximately 60% of the world’s crude oil deposits, is also an indispensable region for future development and stability of the world economy. On the other hand, as represented by the Palestinian issue, this region has conflicts owing to various factors, including ethnicity, religion, and politics, which has had great impact on world politics and economies.

The stability of this region is very important for the energy security of Japan, which receives approximately 90% of its oil from the Middle East. Unlike European societies, Japan occupies a neutral position with regard to the Middle East, both historically and politically. Therefore Japan can play an important role as a member of the international community in building a good relationship with countries in the Middle East and contributing to the stability and development of the region.

For the purpose of program implementation, JICA defines the Middle East as the region stretching from Morocco in the west, through the countries of North Africa, and on to Afghanistan in the east and Turkey in the north. This region includes various countries who have different relationships with the neighboring world as well as different political and economic situations. Therefore, there is a wide range of aid needs depending on the situation in each country.

Among these, JICA places the utmost priority on peacebuilding and reconstruction assistance for Afghanistan, Iraq, and Palestine as the key to stability of the Middle East.

In addition, in the fields of water resource management, industrial promotion, human resources development, and environmental protection, all of which are vital needs common to the region, JICA implements cooperation in line with these needs, including the Volunteer Program.

Current State of Development

The Middle East accommodates high-income countries, most of which produce oil, as well as less developed countries, most of which do not produce oil. Each country has diverse ethnicities and cultures comprising a complex social structure. Therefore, detailed cooperation in line with the actual conditions of each country is necessary. It is an unstable region that has seen much conflict since World War II, including four Middle East wars, the Lebanese conflict, the Iran-Iraq War, the Persian Gulf Crisis, the Yemen conflict, and the Iraq war. Unstable political conditions continue in Palestine and Iraq. After the fall of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, multi-layered and multi-faceted reconstruction assistance has been provided by the international community, including Japan. However, security conditions are still harsh, thus making the progress of development assistance difficult.

Recurrent terrorism and conflicts in the Middle East have a tremendous impact on the stability of the world economy. Therefore, support for reconciliations among different ethnic groups, religions, and social classes leading to the regional stability are called for.

In the oil producing countries where finance is relatively adamant, infrastructure such as transportation and information network is developed at a high standard; however, human resources development in the public sector is a big task. On the other hand, in relatively low-income countries without the blessings of resources, the priority tasks are to address issues in health and education as well as poverty and the delay in rural development. There are also some cases where development assistance is greatly affected by political situations and security conditions such as in Palestine and Afghanistan. It is necessary to implement development assistance under appropriate policies based on accurate understanding of different situations from country to country.

As for reconstruction assistance for Iraq, JICA continues to support the development of human resources in the public sector based on Japanese government policy by collaborating with yen loans and grant aid. With regard to assistance in Palestine, based on the Corridor for Peace and Prosperity concept proposed by then Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi in 2006, JICA started cooperation in the agricultural sector in March 2007 with an aim to promote regional development of the West Bank, mainly in Jericho.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Total Cooperation (¥1,000)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>2,719,543</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saudi Arabia</td>
<td>1,146,594</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Algeria</td>
<td>685,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oman</td>
<td>540,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bahrain</td>
<td>425,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>275,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Libya</td>
<td>150,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>1,400,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>1,224,180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>457,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yemen</td>
<td>589,282</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>874,873</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>918,811</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sudan</td>
<td>607,462</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tunisia</td>
<td>577,323</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Libya</td>
<td>1,119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>12,919,696</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* This is the total amount of bilateral cooperation. The amount of cooperation provided to the Middle East including cooperation that covers a group of countries is 12,908,898 thousands of yen.
Addressing Priority Issues in JICA Programs

Efforts by Area

Palestine: Jericho Development

Following the Palestinian legislative election in January 2006, despite some obstacles such as interruption of direct assistance by the international community, a general strike by Palestinian Authority organizations, and confrontations between Fatah and Hamas, assistance partly restarted in June 2007 and hope for peace in the Middle East is rising.

Through technical cooperation projects in local administration, maternal and child health, and waste control, which started in fiscal 2005, JICA has enhanced various administrative services offered by the Palestinian Authority, for example, rehabilitation of local finance, distribution of maternal and child health handbooks, and improvement of waste control services, and has supported the improvement of livelihood, especially in Jericho. In March 2007, based on the Corridor for Peace and Prosperity concept, technical cooperation for improving agricultural skills, a study for building an agro-industrial park in the future, and a study for comprehensive water management in Jordan Valley started. These projects aim to develop agriculture and other related industries as the primary industry in the regional economy of the Jordan valley, including Jericho, and have been implemented from the perspective of a program approach in which the cooperation is organically coordinated with assistance in various sectors such as governance, agriculture, and tourism to boost project effects.

Sustainable development of the Palestinian economy requires...
evolution of its relationship with Israel and building an economic structure that benefits both sides. Therefore, JICA’s cooperation considers confidence building between the two governments.

As for the Gaza Strip, where security conditions are unstable, because implementation of technical cooperation through the dispatch of Japanese experts is difficult, follow-up cooperation such as support for activities of the former training participants’ alumni association (see p.116) is the core of the assistance.

Afghanistan: Mid- and Long-term Development

Approximately five years have passed since 2002 when the international community, including Japan, started to provide assistance to Afghanistan, whose situation deteriorated due to the long-lasting conflict following the fall of the Taliban regime. In the past five years, a democratic nation was built through establishment of a constitution, election of a president, and establishment of congress; and currently the gross domestic product (GDP) of the country is growing at a rate of over 10% per year (13.8% in fiscal 2006). The country also has seen outstanding reconstruction, for example, nationwide provision of basic health services, improved school enrollment rate for children, community development in approximately 15,000 villages (as of December 2006) through establishment of community infrastructure and support for livelihood improvement, social reintegration of approximately 55,000 ex-combatants (as of June 2006), and rehabilitation of major trunk roads.

At the London Conference on Afghanistan held in January 2006, donor countries and international organizations pledged an additional US$10.5 billion support for the Afghan government, who announced the Interim-Afghanistan National Development Strategy (I-ANDS) that specifies the direction of development over the next five years. Efforts for better outcomes through mid- and long-term development and aid coordination have started and JICA is thereby actively involved in the process.

However, the security condition in Afghanistan remains unstable, especially in the southern area, affecting reconstruction efforts and the livelihood of residents. In rural areas where 75% of the total population resides, improvement in livelihood through sustainable agricultural development has stalled and poppy farming is expanding mainly in some southern areas. Expansion of regional disparities is leading to a worsening urban environment caused by the influx of people to urban areas.

For the last five years, starting with emergency assistance such as rehabilitation of roads and restoration of schools and medical facilities in Kabul, Kandahar, and Mazar-e-sharif, JICA has provided various assistance aimed at mid- and long-term development; for example, development of medical human resources in tuberculosis control and reproductive health, training for primary school teachers, capacity rebuilding of agricultural experi-

For the future, JICA will increase cooperation effects by strategically combining different projects in the priority areas, such as comprehensive agricultural and rural development and improvement of basic health services. In Jalalabad, a major urban city located east of Kabul, a new project focusing on support for development of rice farming is scheduled to start. As for infrastructure development, a project that aims to build a system in which the Afghan-related organizations can maintain and manage the major trunk roads rehabilitated with support of the international community while utilizing the private sector. In order to respond to Kabul’s urban issues, JICA is examining ways to improve the power supply system in the city as well as embody cooperation plans for urban development.

Iraq: Peacebuilding

Four years have passed since the fall of the Hussein regime in 2003, and the political process for democratization is progressing as evidenced by the implementation of a national election in December 2005 and the inauguration of an official government in May 2006.

Similar to Afghanistan, a new cooperation framework between Iraq and the international community called Iraq Compact is also being formulated.

At the International Donors’ Conference on the Reconstruction of Iraq held in October 2003, the Japanese government announced grant aid cooperation worth US$1.5 billion and yen loans worth US$3.5 billion as support for Iraq. JICA, which plays a role in technical cooperation and grant aid cooperation, is promoting institutional capacity implementation of Iraq-related organizations and development of human resources with an emphasis on synergy effects through combining grant aid cooperation and yen loans in the priority areas of democratization, water, health, electricity, and agriculture.

Specifically, a development study in preparation for yen loans regarding water supply in Baghdad and Basra was conducted and training courses in leakage control, water distribution network control, and enhancement of management were conducted in Jordan targeting the staff of the Baghdad waterworks department.

Training targeting pediatricians and pediatric nurses was also conducted in Egypt. The training participants are in turn conducting training for their colleagues and other medical personnel in neighboring areas after returning home.

National reconciliation is a major issue for national stability in Iraq. Accordingly, in March 2007, a group of congress members and related parties led by the minister for National
Reconciliation were invited to Japan to attend an Iraqi National Reconciliation Seminar. At this seminar, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa, the independence movement in Aceh, Indonesia, and Timor-Leste, and Japan’s post-war reconstruction experience were discussed as case studies, and a visit to Hiroshima was conducted.

**Water Resources Management and Environmental Protection**

The Middle East, where most of the land is arid, has the scantiest water resources per capita in the world. In addition, population growth and industrialization exacerbates lack of water resources. Recent economic development, industrialization, and rapid urbanization have exacerbated environmental problems such as water pollution, solid waste, and air pollution.

JICA provides cooperation to improve technical levels in respective sectors, including water resources management, urban and rural water supply in the water resources sector as well as sewage management, waste control, and environmental management in the environment sector.

**Regionwide Cooperation**

In order to address issues common to the region, regionwide projects targeting a group of countries are formulated and implemented and workshops and region-specific training are held.

In the sectors of vocational training, environment, and water resources, regional experts and regionwide coordinators are in place at JICA Jordan Office. JICA also held workshops in the vocational training sector in September 2005 and in the water sector and support for persons with disabilities in December 2006 to provide opportunities for information sharing for the formulation of regional cooperation projects. Region-specific training was additionally planned in the sectors of vocational training, water resources, support for persons with disabilities, disaster prevention, and reproductive health; and projects were formulated in the sectors of preschool education, environmental monitoring, and avian influenza.

**South-South Cooperation**

Countries in the Middle East are not only deeply connected politically and culturally but they also share many development issues within the region. Regionwide cooperation in which countries in the region capitalize on their strengths is effective for solving these issues, leading to stability for the whole region. Collaboration with Arab countries is critical for the Middle East peace process and support for Iraq as well. JICA conducts many training courses for Iraq and Palestine in Egypt, Jordan, Syria, and Tunisia (third-country training), promoting South-South cooperation as the embodiment of peacebuilding and regionwide cooperation.

As for South-South cooperation for Africa, based on the partnership agreements with Egypt, Tunisia, and Morocco, and along with the TICAD process, cooperation centered on third-country training is implemented. Outcomes of Japan’s past cooperation and characteristics of the host country are utilized in line with the needs of countries in conducting third-country training.

---

**Front Line**

**Jordan**

**Capacity Development Project for Non-Revenue Water Reduction**

For Effective Use of Valuable Water Resources

Non-revenue water means water that is lost during water distribution because it is stolen or leaked and thus does not become a source of revenue for the waterworks department. In Jordan, in addition to chronic water shortages, poverty, and water issues such as disorderly use of water by residents, the high rate of non-revenue water is a serious problem. Non-revenue water accounts for approximately half of all water distribution in this country. In this project, as well as training on necessary skills for leakage control (underground leakage survey, pipe repair, water meter improvement, distribution system improvement, etc.) through field practices, a program for awareness development has been formulated and implemented jointly with the waterworks department.

**Educational activities for children**

As measures for preventing water theft, a leaflet is widely distributed to residents and workshops for teachers and students, and community hearings are also held. At the community hearings, seminars are given by religious leaders and opinions of the waterworks department and residents are exchanged to respond to the complaints and requests of the community. Also, in order to develop “water messengers” who communicate the importance of water, activities are carried out to help children understand and consider the scarcity of water resources in Jordan and the problems of water usage.

“Help Us Help You.”

The project has devised a slogan, “Help Us Help You;” meaning, “Please help the waterworks department who provides water. That in turn will help you.”

The underground leakage surveys are usually conducted at night when there is not much human or vehicular traffic. The survey sometimes continues till midnight with no additional allowances paid for technicians. Naturally, nobody is fond of this field work. However, the staff of the Jordan waterworks department is impressed with the Japanese experts who doggedly work in the field and has gradually started understanding the importance of steady effort. The staff of the waterworks department continues to work till midnight in rain and strong wind. Believing that such dedication will lead to a change in community awareness on water, JICA will continue to provide training.

(JICA Jordan Office)

A water awareness survey is conducted in school.