



Surveying a rocky stretch where oil has been washed ashore

Disaster Relief

Quick response to the needs of affected countries

Outline of Disaster Relief Activities

When major disasters occur in other countries, JICA carries out emergency relief activities in response to requests received from the governments of affected countries or international organizations with the decision of the Japanese Government. Search and rescue teams, medical teams, expert teams, or Self-Defense Force units are dispatched in the name of Japan Disaster Relief (JDR) teams and in addition emergency relief goods are provided.

Search and Rescue Team

The main tasks of the search and rescue team are to search for missing people, rescue victims, provide first aid, and move victims to safe areas. The team is made up mainly of rescue personnel of the National Police Agency, the Fire and Disaster Management Agency, and the Japan Coast Guard. They leave Japan within 24 hours of a decision of dispatch in order to conduct search and rescue activities in an affected country.

Medical Team

The tasks of the medical team are to provide medical treatment for victims with injuries or illnesses, and when necessary they work to prevent infection and the spread of diseases. The medical team consists of doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and co-medical registered with the Secretariat of the Japan Disaster Relief Team of JICA. As of late March 2008, 776 members (217 doctors, 350 nurses, 40 pharmacists, and 169 co-medical) were registered under this scheme.

Expert Team

The expert team provides guidance and advice on emergency response measures and recovery. The team consists of specialists and researchers recommended by related government ministries and agencies according to the type of disaster.

Self-Defense Force Units

When a large-scale disaster, or a disaster with special circumstances, occurs and the dispatch is deemed especially necessary, Self-Defense Force units can be dispatched. Self-Defense Force units carry out medical activities (including disease prevention activities), emergency response measures, recovery, transport activities using ships, aircraft, and helicopters, and water supply activities.

Provision of Emergency Relief Goods

Relief supplies such as blankets, tents, water purifiers, and generators are provided to the affected areas to assist with relief activities for victims and the recovery process in the affected areas. To ensure that relief supplies are transported promptly to an affected country, warehouses have been set up in four locations worldwide: Singapore, Frankfurt in Germany, Johannesburg in the Republic of South Africa, and Miami, in the United States of America. Medicine is difficult to store due to expiration dates and temperature control and requires a language display catered to the disaster area. Therefore, it is provided after being procured from the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) or the International Dispensary Association (IDA).

Oil Spill Accident in the Republic of Korea

Utilizing Japan's experience overseas

On December 7, 2007, a crane barge collided with an anchored oil tanker on the west coast of the Republic of Korea (ROK) and a massive quantity of oil was spilled, creating an unprecedented accident in the ROK.

In response to a request from the ROK Government, Japan dispatched an expert team and provided emergency relief goods (oil adsorbents) to the accident area.

Japan and the ROK are very similar in respect to geographical features, and there was a tremendous amount of similarities between this accident and Japan's experience a decade ago, when the Nakhodka created a heavy oil spill in January 1997.

The expert team dispatched to this accident was mainly composed of the same members that had worked on the front line in the Nakhodka accident. Therefore, the team shared the method of response taken and lessons learned during the Nakhodka accident with the ROK Government, local governments, and fishermen. In addition, the team provided training on how to use oil adsorbents. In this way, they were able to successfully make use of Japan's knowledge and experience.