

Overview of Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)

Background

Japan joined the Colombo Plan in 1954 and started providing technical cooperation to developing countries. During the reconstruction period following the devastation of World War II, Japan returned to the international community by joining the United Nations in 1956. The entry to the Colombo Plan was an epoch-making event that established Japan's status as a technical aid-providing country in the international community. Initial technical cooperation started with acceptance of technical training participants from, as well as dispatch of experts to, other Asian countries through commissions made to the Japan Asian Association. As Japan's economy and society developed, expectations for expanded cooperation from Japan rose. Accordingly, as cooperation activities were extended to the Middle East, Africa, and Latin America, the scale of cooperation increased annually.

Starting around 1955, a system was adopted to combine various forms of cooperation, such as acceptance of technical training participants, dispatch of experts, and provision of equipment all of which were previously implemented individually, for more effective technology transfer. More planned technical cooperation programs were implemented after upgrading facilities, such as research institutes and educational institutions, which are sites for technology transfer, and equipment with financial assistance.

In the midst of this expansion of cooperation programs, the Overseas Technical Cooperation Agency (OTCA) was established in 1962 to comprehensively and effectively implement various activities that were previously implemented by different organizations individually. The establishment was a foundation for implementing Japan's technical cooperation programs in a unified form. On the other hand, overseas emigration programs restarted when the San Francisco Peace Treaty came into effect in 1952. Due to a subsequent decrease in the number of Japanese people emigrating, the focus of the programs gradually shifted from dispatching new emigrants to assisting those emigrants already living overseas. In 1963, with the establishment of the Japan Emigration Service, a system was established to consistently dispatch new emigrants and assist emigrants already living overseas.

Japan's high economic growth during the 1960s and 1970s led to an increase in the quantity of Japan's aid, which accompanied various discussions on how Japanese assistance should be provided. Under these circumstances, the idea of establishing an organization to implement Japan's international cooperation programs in a unified form was born. In 1974, a decision was made to establish the Japan International Cooperation Agency by taking on the responsibilities earlier held by the Overseas Technical Cooperation Agency, the Japan Emigration Service, and the

Overseas Agricultural Development Association, as well as part of the responsibilities held by the Japan Overseas Development Corporation.

The law concerning the establishment of the new agency came into effect as Law No. 62 in May 1974, and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) was officially established on August 1, 1974.

Though JICA was established as a special public institution, a policy of reforming special public institutions was announced in subsequent deliberations on administrative reforms, followed by a decision to transform JICA into an independent administrative institution in accordance with Japan's administrative reform plan in December 2001. Subsequent to the promulgation of Law No. 136 in December 2002, JICA became an independent administrative institution on October 1 of the following year, and was reorganized into an implementing body for international cooperation, which requires greater results-orientation and accountability.

Expansion and Diversification of Programs

In the beginning, JICA's programs included technical cooperation, dispatch of Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCV), development investment and financing, emigration service, and training and securing aid personnel. Later, as the Japanese economy developed further and technology advanced, JICA was expected to expand and diversify its programs. As a result, various cooperation programs were added, including expediting Grant Aid Projects (fiscal 1978), the Youth Invitation Program (fiscal 1984), Disaster Relief (fiscal 1987), and Aid Efficiency Promotion (fiscal 1988).

Technical cooperation that has been implemented since the establishment of JICA has also been diversified. Various kinds of activities have been launched, including third-country training (fiscal 1974); research cooperation (fiscal 1977); joint technical cooperation with international organizations (fiscal 1981); acceptance of technical training participants as part of the Look East Policy of Malaysia (fiscal 1982); cooperation with the ASEAN Human Resources Development Center (fiscal 1982); dispatch of skilled workers from the private sector (fiscal 1987); local in-country training (fiscal 1993); dispatch of third country experts (fiscal 1994); dispatch of private sector advisors (fiscal 1996); acceptance of technical training participants in the welfare sector under the Japan-Latin America Friendship Program (fiscal 1996); capital aid cooperation experts (fiscal 1997); long-term training participants (fiscal 1999); technical advisors for the implementation of grant aid projects (fiscal 1999); and the JICA Partnership Program (fiscal 2002). When JICA became an independent administrative institution in October 2003, a review of

programs in their entirety resulted in the abolishment of development investment and financing, emigration services, settlement programs, and emigration loan programs.

Along with the diversification of programs, the ¥27.2 billion operating budget at the time of establishment increased to ¥160.9 billion in fiscal 2007. Overseas offices increased from 40 at the time of establishment to 95 (described later in detail) in fiscal 2006.

In terms of the number of people involved, the number of training participants accepted increased from 2,169 in fiscal 1974 to 21,280 in fiscal 2007; the number of dispatched experts increased from 513 in fiscal 1974 to 4,940 in fiscal 2007; and the number of JOCVs dispatched increased from 208 in fiscal 1974 to 1,482 in fiscal 2007. As a result of the expansion of programs, 371,660 training participants have been accepted, and 88,180 experts and 31,766 JOCVs dispatched in total to date.

Upgrading and Expanding the Organization

At the time of its establishment in 1974, JICA consisted of 17 departments, one office, and one secretariat at the headquarters; 12 branches and eight affiliate agencies in Japan; one overseas representative office; 14 overseas offices; nine overseas branches; and 16 JICA/JOVC offices. In fiscal 2006, it consisted of 18 departments, three offices, and two secretariats at the headquarters; 12 international centers, three branches, two JOCV training centers, and the Institute for International Cooperation in Japan; 56 overseas offices; 32 JICA/JOVC offices; and 7 JOVC offices.

The headquarters office was previously located in the Shinjuku Mitsui Building (except for a short period at the time of establishment) in Nishi Shinjuku, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo, and the JOCV Secretariat was in Hiroo, Shibuya-ku, Tokyo. In April 1996, the headquarters and JOCV Secretariat moved to the Shinjuku Maynds Tower in Yoyogi, Shibuya-ku, Tokyo, where they are currently located.

There have been several major changes in the structure of the headquarters. At the time of the establishment, there were four emigration-related sections. These were integrated into one department in 1994. On the other hand, new departments, including the Grant Aid Project Management Department (currently the Grant Aid Management Department) and the Secretariat of the Japan Disaster Relief Team, were set up in order to implement new programs. In fiscal 1999, major structural reform was carried out in order to strengthen country- and region-specific approaches, etc. New departments, including Regional Department I (Southeast Asia and Indo-China), Regional Department II (East, Southwest, Central Asia; the Caucasus and Oceania), Regional Department III (Latin America and the Caribbean), and Regional Department IV (Africa, Middle East and Europe),

were set up.

In addition, in April 2004, eight departments in charge of program implementation, which had been categorized by scheme and sector, were reorganized into five departments in terms of development issues such as global environment and human development, which overlap fields horizontally. At the same time, in order to correspond to program implementation in the Middle East and Africa, four regional departments were reorganized into five departments. As part of the preparations for the merger with the departments in charge of overseas economic cooperation at the Japan Bank for International Cooperation on October 1, 2008, the organization was reorganized into a structure close to that which will be in place after the merger. As a result, the headquarters consists of 24 departments (of which four are preparatory offices), five offices (of which two are preparatory offices), two secretariats, and one research institute preparatory office as of the beginning of fiscal 2008.

As for domestic offices, the Institute for International Cooperation for developing human resources opened in 1983, the emigration training center was closed in 1989, international centers opened by integrating offices in service of the same area (for example, the Tsukuba International Center was set up by integrating the Tsukuba International Center and the Tsukuba International Agricultural Training Center in 1996), measures were taken to correspond to structural rationalization (for example, the Kansai Branch Office was closed and the Nihonmatsu Training Center opened in 1996), and domestic offices in the Metropolitan area were reorganized (the Hachioji International Center was closed in 2006 and a base for citizens' participation cooperation promotion was placed at the Hiroo Center [JICA Global Plaza] in 2006). The Institute for International Cooperation was reorganized into the Preparatory Office of the Institute for Development Research as an organization with headquarters. As a result, as of the beginning of fiscal 2008, domestic offices consist of 12 international centers, three branches, and two training centers.

Overseas offices, which numbered 40 at the time of establishment, were subsequently set up in countries such as Zimbabwe, Mongolia, the Republic of South Africa, Palestine, and Uzbekistan as programs expanded. In fiscal 2003, the Afghanistan Office opened. When dispatching JOCVs to countries without a JICA office, a volunteer coordinator is employed. On the other hand, the Latin America Representative Office (located in Brazil) was closed in 1981, as well as offices in Los Angeles, Sudan, Canada, and Brunei Darussalam. As a result, as of the beginning of fiscal 2008, there are 55 overseas offices, 39 JICA/JOVC offices, and one JOVC office.