

# The Middle East



## Middle East Peacebuilding Is Key to Global Economic Development

Some 60% of global oil reserves and 40% of global natural gas reserves are located in the Middle East. For its part, Japan depends on imports from the Middle East for nearly 90% of its domestic oil consumption. Thus, stability in the region is a major determining factor of the natural resource and energy policy of Japan, as well as a critical factor for not only the economic development of the international community, but also for international peacebuilding.

### Pillars of Aid

Collaboration with the International Community in Supporting Peacebuilding based on the Six Pillars

The Middle East has long been known as the “crossroads of civilization,” having developed from ancient times as a strategic stop connecting the East and West. The Middle East is also known historically for its four different Arab-Israeli conflicts as well as ongoing struggles along both ethnic and religious lines. The end of conflict and peacebuilding in the Middle East as well as the stable procurement of natural resources from the region are issues of critical importance not only for Japan, but also for the entire world both politically and economically.

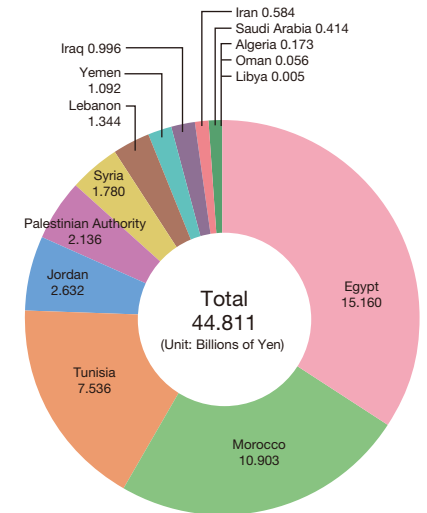
Taking this into consideration, Japan has strived to maintain a neutral stance toward the Middle East, having secured the trust of both parties. While collaborating with the international community, Japan has led a series of initiatives aimed at peacebuilding in the region under the following six pillars: 1) support for peacebuild-

ing in Iraq and the Palestinian Authority’s Territories; 2) support for the ongoing peace process in the Middle East via assistance provided to the Palestinian Authority and other surrounding Arab nations; 3) support for democratization in the region; 4) development of socioeconomic infrastructure and support for poverty countermeasures for low and middle income countries; 5) support for water resource management; and 6) support for human resources development tailored to the unique local needs of each country.

Although improvements were seen in security in Iraq in fiscal 2008, this same period also saw Israel’s attack on the Gaza Strip, as instability continued in the region. In light of this, Japan has embarked on a variety of assistance initiatives in the Middle East.

### Scale of JICA Projects by Country in the Middle East (Fiscal 2008)

Composition of JICA projects for each country based on total Technical Cooperation project expenses, ODA loans (total) and Grant Aid (concluded Grant Aid including activities expedited).



\* Excluding Technical Cooperation with multiple countries and international organizations.

## Priority Issues and Efforts

### Assistance Tailored to the Needs of Oil-Producing or Non-Oil-Producing Nations

As represented by the Palestinian issue, the Middle East is a region of constant conflict along the lines of ethnic tension, religious belief, and political power, as well as a region of great influence worldwide both politically and economically. The Middle East is also a region with two faces, high-income,

developed oil-producing nations and low-income non-oil-producing nations in varying stages of development, and a region where each country is home to a complex and diverse society made up of different ethnic groups and cultures. Accordingly, assistance programs must be precisely sculpted to meet unique local conditions.

As a result, JICA considers peacebuilding and reconstruction assistance

in Iraq and the Palestinian Authority’s Territories as keys to future stability in the Middle East, and as such has made these an issue of the utmost priority. Furthermore, water resource management, industrial development, technician training and environmental protection are all shared needs in the region. Accordingly, JICA is implementing programs, including volunteer programs, in line with local requirements.

# Country Overviews and Priority Issues

## ■ Iraq

### Aiming for the Integration of Differing Ethnic Groups and Religions

Since 1980, Iraq has suffered repeatedly from warfare and terrorism as evidenced by the Iran-Iraq War, Persian Gulf War and War in Iraq, which has led to the destruction of much of the country's socioeconomic infrastructure. While boasting the third largest crude oil reserves in the world, Iraq depends on the oil trade for a staggering 90% of its national income. As a result, oil price volatility has long-lasting effects on the country's finances.

Under these circumstances, JICA has used a comprehensive three-pronged approach to assistance in Iraq that provides Technical Cooperation,

loan aid and Grant Aid in the areas of 1) strengthening the oil, gas, agriculture, manufacturing and mining sectors for economic growth; 2) revitalizing the private sector through reconstruction of the power grid and development of a foundation for transport and communication; 3) improving the quality of life through construction of waterworks and sewer systems and increasing the quality of health care and education; and 4) strengthening governance practices to build a foundation for administration and expanding human resources.

As an example from fiscal 2008, Japan provided an ODA loan to the Water Supply Improvement Project in the Kurdistan region. The purpose of this project was the construction of new

facilities to replace deteriorating waterworks infrastructure in the Kurdistan region and the improvement of water supply conditions. As another example, and as a part of its training programs, JICA hosted the 3rd Seminar for Knowledge and Experience Sharing on Japan in March 2009, inviting Iraqi national diet members from different political parties and religious sects, such as Shia Islam, Sunni Islam and Kurdistan in the hopes of promoting greater stability and a collective approach to reconstruction in Iraq. The program agenda included lectures and seminars held in Tokyo, visits to Hiroshima and Kobe, as well as discussions on how Japan succeeded in its reconstruction after World War II and how it copes with natural disasters.

## Example

### Palestinian Authority Project for Improving Reproductive Health with Special Focus on Maternal and Child Health Project in Palestine

#### The Maternal and Child Health (MHC) Handbook – Connecting the Bonds of Life

Currently, the Palestinian Territories, under occupation by Israel, are confronted by an economic blockade, a three-meter tall "separation wall", expansion of Israeli settlements, road closures and checkpoints as well as daily curfews, which have greatly restricted economic activity and mobility, forcing local residents into a difficult lifestyle. In particular, the "separation wall," constructed unilaterally by Israel cuts deep into the area, with residents unable to move freely even within the Palestinian Territories. With little or no exception, movements are extremely restricted. Dotted by a number of security checkpoints set up within the area, there have even been cases where a pregnant woman has gone into labor while waiting in line to pass the checkpoints. The frequent closure of these checkpoints has also become a critical issue facing pregnant women as well as child rearing in the Palestinian Territories.

Jericho Hospital, which was built with Japanese assistance in the Jericho Governorate in the West Bank, receives some 80% of all childbirths in the Governorate. Checkpoint closures, however, often mean that it may take several hours or upwards of an entire day to reach Jericho, and with

the construction of the "separation wall," mothers and their children often cannot reach their clinic. Furthermore, even if they are able to travel to a different clinic, because of a lack of medical records, mothers and their children are unable to receive suitable medical care services.

To address this, JICA designated parts of the Jericho Governorate and Ramallah (and Al-Bireh) Governorate as a pilot region, starting the Improving Reproductive Health with Special Focus on Maternal and Child Health Project in Palestine from August 2005. As a part of this project, the distribution of the "Maternal and Child Health (MHC) Handbook," which keeps records of important medical information for expectant mothers and infants, greatly contributed to the improvement of maternal and child health care services in these areas. The MHC Handbook is quite simply a healthcare passport for mothers and their children. With the handbook, medical records are consolidated in one document, detailing exams received at different medical organizations within the area, which allows for improved diagnosis and treatment because health care workers are able to quickly grasp changes in health and exam histories. Additionally, maternal and child health care services provided throughout the Palestinian Territories have become more standardized, regardless of medical organization. Today, with only the handbook in hand, mothers and their children can go to any medical organization, including those affiliated with large NGO groups or the Ministry of Health to receive an exam or treatment. In January 2008, JICA reached an important milestone with the printing of 120,000 copies of the

nationwide version of the MHC handbook, or enough to cover the total number of births in the Palestinian Territories.

The success of the project led the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) to request the implementation of a similar service, and shortly thereafter JICA launched the MHC Handbook service in a UNRWA refugee camp in Jordan. Furthermore, JICA began Phase 2 of the project, which will last for four years starting in November 2008. While many challenges still remain, such as the wider use of the handbook, the continued development of health care workers, the expansion of health education, financial independence, collaborative links with private sector medical organizations and the implementation of the project in the isolated Gaza Strip, everyone involved believes with great conviction in the success of the project.



Waiting room at a refugee camp Maternal and Child Health Center

In fiscal 2008, with conditions in Iraq showing signs of improved stability in public security and local government, JICA decided to begin preparations for the establishment of an overseas office in Iraq, dispatching Japanese staff to Arbil in the Kurdistan region from March 2008. Going forward, JICA will make further efforts in the reconstruction of socioeconomic infrastructure, while maintaining close dialogue with the country.

**■ Palestinian Authority**  
**Economic Independence as a**  
**Shortcut to Peace**

The ministerial level meeting of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee Meeting on Assistance for Palestinians was held in New York City in September 2008. The meeting reaffirmed the ongoing peace efforts from the Annapolis Middle East peace conference held the previous year and re-acknowledged the need for assistance programs directed toward the Palestinian Authority. Starting in fiscal 2005, JICA, through Technical Cooperation projects in the fields of local autonomous authorities, maternal and

child health, and waste management, has assisted with raising the standard of services provided by the Palestinian Authority and improving living environments primarily in the Jericho area.

The Corridor for Peace and Prosperity concept is based on the idea that it is important to promote confidence-building between Israel and Arab countries for peace in the region, and that it is indispensable to promote sustainable economic development through inter-regional collaboration. As a result, JICA is providing Technical Cooperation for the purpose of improving agricultural technologies and is conducting surveys

**Example**

**Egypt**  
**Egypt-Japan University of Science and**  
**Technology (E-JUST)**

**Nurturing Practical-Minded Experts in**  
**Science and Technology:**  
**Egypt-Japan University of Science and**  
**Technology "E-JUST"**

University education in Egypt now faces two major challenges: a growing number of students and declining education quality. Even Cairo University, the country's most prestigious institution, faces challenges in ensuring its educational quality. For example, with over 260,000 students in the university, the faculty-to-student ratio in the engineering department is about 1:30. It has been gradually pointed out that the quality of education provided by Egyptian universities and the environment for education have worsened as the number of students grows.

Furthermore, it is not unusual for those who are in the disciplines of science and technology, having completed university in Egypt, to pursue postgraduate studies or opportunities in research organizations overseas. Students tend to remain abroad for employment, advanced education and

research resources, which leads to the ongoing decline in highly trained professionals with technical knowledge and expertise in the country.

To improve its current science and technology education, in 2004 the government of Egypt turned to Japan for assistance centering on the concept of meeting the international standard for research and education. Through a series of surveys and discussions, the government of Egypt has demonstrated tremendous enthusiasm in realizing the university concept through joint effort. After confirming the feasibility of this concept, JICA launched its project for establishing a university to be named Egypt-Japan University of Science and Technology (E-JUST) in October 2008. The concept of this university is to provide practical and international standard education through small-sized classes in undergraduate and post-graduate education and research by introducing the Japanese science and engineering education model, including research-oriented education. E-JUST is a national university and will begin an inaugural class of master's and doctorate students in February 2010.

To establish E-JUST, 12 universities in Japan have come together to form the Japanese Supporting University Consortium (JSUC), together with the Japanese business community and



Planned construction site of the new campus

relevant ministries, which provide comprehensive support including a grand design for the university as well as assistance in the organizational operation of education and research activities. E-JUST not only adopts the research-oriented education model, but also provides multidisciplinary, cross-sectoral study programs to foster practical and creative skills in students. An emphasis has been placed on postgraduate education, with the plan of receiving international students from Africa and the Middle East, as well as starting exchange programs with Japanese universities in the future.

**Counterpart's Voice**

**"We Spare No Efforts in Our Collaboration with Japan"**

Outlined below are the key E-JUST mission objectives for Egypt, other neighboring Arab countries and African countries:

- 1) To develop human resources with the goal of creating employment, as well as improving skills, knowledge and proficiency
- 2) With an emphasis placed on small and medium-sized businesses and the service sector, increase awareness of, and encourage participation in scientific research and creation of intellectual products
- 3) To strengthen Arab and African countries by enhancing Egypt-Japan education and culture exchange

E-JUST will strive to cooperate with our Japanese partners in reaching the goal for E-JUST to become the center of excellence (COE) in the region.



**Professor Ahmed Khairy**  
 Chairman of the Project Executive Committee  
 Acting President of E-JUST

for the construction of an Agro-Industrial Park and for comprehensive water management in the Jordan Valley. The objective of these assistance programs is to develop agriculture and related industries as key basic industries of the local economy in the Jordan Valley including Jericho. The programs are implemented under an approach that increases project effectiveness and creates organic collaboration with support in the fields of governance, agriculture and tourism.

Beginning in fiscal 2008, JICA has been implementing the project for (sustainable) tourism development in Jericho and through to the Jordan River Rift Valley (see page 118). This project was established based on the previously conducted Comprehensive Development Study on Jericho and the Jordan Valley. JICA is implementing the project alongside the local Ministry for Tourism and Historical Sites and local NGOs.

Additionally, in the Gaza Strip, JICA focuses on follow-up activities such as support for the activities of the JICA Alumni Association. This is because the situation with regard to security and political instability does not allow for the dispatching of Japanese experts there.

### Example

#### Tunisia Rades-La Goulette Bridge Construction Project

##### The Rades–La Goulette Bridge Pictured in Stamps

The Greater Tunis area surrounding Tunis, the capital of Tunisia, is home to 2.3 million people, or over one-fifth of Tunisia's entire population. While this region is the center of Tunisia's economic activity, it is divided into north and south by the canal in the Lake of Tunis. The only means of transportation that connect the north and south are the busy streets through the city of Tunis or the car ferry traveling between the ports of Rades and La Goulette. However, as the ferry has limited sailing times and vehicle capacity, most cars still choose the busy driving route through the city center of Tunis, creating traffic congestion and causing environmental damage.

Taking into consideration the future increase in economic activity and tourism demand growth in the area, as well as a foreseeable increase in traffic volume through the business center of the Grand Tunis area as a result of development projects around the Lake of Tunis, solutions for both the traffic and environmental issues are very much desired in the city. JICA began its research because of these conditions, and provided ODA loans to fund the Rades-La Goulette Bridge Construction Project, which was designed based on a research master plan with the goal of alleviating traffic congestion and improving the surrounding environment. This construction project

also represents the first large-scale infrastructure development project seen in Tunisia. Combining advanced Japanese technical skills, the bridge totaling 260m in length with two lanes in either direction was completed in fiscal 2008. The bridge not only connects La Goulette in the north and Rades in the south but also forms an important link in the beltway connecting the southeast and northwest parts of the capital.

As the ports of Rades and La Goulette are now connected by a bridge, Tunis can expect to see an acceleration in port development projects as well as further promotion of economic development on both the north and south shores of the lake. This project targets the alleviation of traffic

congestion in the city center by 30%, which in turn is expected to reduce air pollutants such as sulfur oxides (SO<sub>x</sub>) and nitrogen oxides (NO<sub>x</sub>) associated with vehicle emissions, thereby improving the urban environment.

The year 2006 marks the 50th anniversary of Japan-Tunisia diplomatic relations. To commemorate this milestone, the completion drawing of the Rades–La Goulette Bridge was printed on a commemorative stamp in Tunisia. This clearly demonstrates Tunisia's positive view of the foreign assistance provided by Japan.



The Rades-La Goulette Bridge

#### Local Voices “It’s Wonderful as Both My Commute Time and Stress Levels Have Been Greatly Reduced.”

- “I live 10km south of the Tunis city center, and every morning I had to take the ferry (El Battah) to get to work in northern Tunis (La Goulette), which is on the other side of the shore. It usually took a while for me to disembark the ferry, as it was always crowded with passengers and cars. After the Rades-La Goulette Bridge was built, my commute time and associated stress was greatly reduced, so I am very happy with the bridge.”
- “The Rades-La Goulette Bridge is very wide and beautiful. People who cross the lake usually stop their cars in the middle of the bridge to take in the scenic view of Tunis Lake from atop the bridge.”
- “After I started using the Rades-La Goulette Bridge, traveling to the suburban areas of Tunis became easy and convenient.”