

Africa



Accelerating Self-Reliance Support Projects to Bring Change and Growth to Africa

The year 2008 witnessed the Fourth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD IV) and the G8 Hokkaido Toyako Summit, which were held in May and July, respectively. These events placed African development issues in the limelight. Accordingly, the year saw a number of global discussions take place regarding a lot of measures aimed at eradicating poverty and assisting economic growth in the region. Africa is still beset with a large number of issues that need to be solved. Negatively affected by the ongoing global financial crisis, the economic conditions surrounding Africa are very severe. However, the region is undoubtedly making surefooted steps toward a bright future, as evidenced by the steady increase in African ownership. JICA will join forces with the international community to support the realization of a self-reliant Africa.

Pillars of Aid Following Up and Promoting the TICAD IV Yokohama Action Plan

From May 28 to May 30, 2008, the TICAD IV conference was held in Yokohama, Kanagawa Prefecture. (For details, see “Feature: African Development” on page 18 of this report.) The Yokohama Action Plan, which was adopted at TICAD IV, prioritizes the finding of solutions to the following three issues through the expansion of the partnership between the international community and Africa.

1. Accelerate Growth in Africa

- Establishment of cross-border infrastructure, such as transportation and energy; expansion of the One Stop Border Post (OSBP) Project (for details of the OSBP Project, see “Example: The Project on Capacity Building for the Customs Administrations of the East African Region” on page 90 of this report.)
- Support for improving agricultural productivity with a focus on rice production, and increasing the supply of food through the Coalition for African Rice Development (CARD)

2. Establishing the Concept of Human Security

- Assistance to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (construction of primary schools, measures against infectious diseases, supply of safe water, etc.)
- Assistance for development and reconstruction projects that contribute to regional stability, sustainable peace and good governance

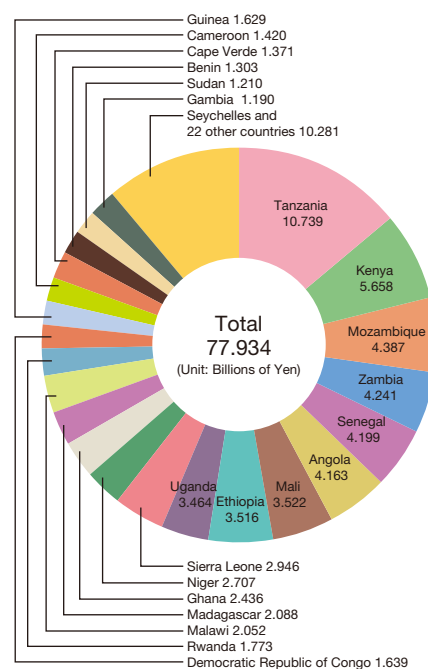
3. Dealing with Issues Associated with the Environment and Climate Changes

- Formation and implementation of projects in line with the Cool Earth Partnership
- While still facing such issues as poverty, low agricultural productivity and inadequate infrastructure, the African economy has achieved steady expansion in recent years, enjoying increased investment from other regions of the world following the conclusion of various regional conflicts, as well as surging prices for its resources, including oil and minerals. As a result, some countries on the African continent have achieved annual economic growth rates of more than 5%. However, Africa is gradually being impacted politically, economically and socially by the recent global financial and economic crisis, which could not be foreseen at the time of TICAD IV.

Under these circumstances, JICA established a TICAD IV Follow-up Office under its Africa Department in October 2008. This Office is in charge of checking the effectiveness of the assistance provided through TICAD IV and the commitment of donor nations as well as of formulating and coordinating JICA’s overall plans to follow up on TICAD IV initiatives. Through the launch of the new Office, JICA is now positioned to more accurately pinpoint and analyze the new assistance needs of each African nation in conjunction with its overseas offices. Leveraging such an effective

Scale of JICA Programs by Country (Fiscal 2008)

Breakdown of Fiscal 2008 JICA program expenses by country in Africa based on the total of Technical Cooperation expenses, Japanese ODA loans (amounts disbursed) and Grant Aid (the portion in connection with grant agreements signed, including the budgets used in activities expedited and monitored by JICA).



* Excluding amounts for cooperation provided to groups of countries and offered through international organizations.

framework, JICA will take steady steps toward the accomplishment of the Yokohama Action Plan.

Priority Issues and Efforts

Toward Fulfilling an International Commitment of Doubling African ODA by 2012

The Japanese government announced an international commitment of dou-

bling its Official Development Assistance (ODA) to Africa by 2012, TICAD IV’s final year. In accordance with the commitment, and with due consideration given to all the Yokohama Action

Plan objectives adopted at TICAD IV, JICA is carrying out a comprehensive examination of overall assistance needs to implement focused allocation of assistance resources, thereby producing

tangible results by 2012.

Specific initiatives designed to assist with the acceleration of Africa's growth include: 1) the establishment of such basic infrastructure as transportation, telecommunication and energy systems; 2) the construction of trade and investment frameworks to drive growth; 3) the boosting of agriculture, a sector on which approximately 70% of

the entire African population depend; and 4) the development of human resources, particularly in the areas of science, mathematics and technical education, required for achieving and sustaining growth.

Also, empowering the people of Africa is indispensable in helping to keep the peace, sustaining growth and reducing poverty across the continent.

In line with this view, it becomes important to provide support based on the concept of human security, which emphasizes that the positive influences from assistance should be directly felt by individuals. Meanwhile, climate change is inevitably generating certain risks in terms of Africa's development. How to counter these risks is becoming another issue of significant importance.

Country Overviews and Priority Issues

■ Kenya

Supporting Economic Infrastructure and Agricultural Development

Fulfilling an important role as an East African hub, Kenya has been maintaining high economic growth since 2000. Nevertheless, the country's economic infrastructure, including electricity-related systems, roads, ports and harbors, has not been fully developed. In addition, the country's agricultural industry, which involves about 60% of the entire population, is highly susceptible to drought and other climatic conditions. Situations such as these will definitely need to be addressed if the food supply is to be stabilized and farmers' incomes increased. With the aim of promoting Kenya's economic

growth through infrastructure development, JICA is undertaking a program on power generation and transmission improvement. Also, in order to improve the quality of life of people living in Kenya's arid regions, JICA is implementing a Community Agricultural Development Project in Semi Arid Lands (CADSAL) while promoting a smallholder empowerment program for income generation to support horticulture and rice production. Through these and other activities, JICA is assisting with Kenya's agricultural development.

■ Tanzania

Focusing on Agricultural Development to Reduce Poverty

In Tanzania, the agricultural industry

accounts for approximately 45% of GDP and approximately 40% of the country's total exports. Also, about two-thirds of the domestic labor population is engaged in agriculture. Tanzania has positioned the development of its agricultural sector as an important initiative to accelerate poverty reduction and economic expansion. Accordingly, the Tanzanian government and donor countries have been jointly implementing a United Republic of Tanzania Agricultural Sector Development Programme since 2006. Currently, Japan and other donor countries are collaborating with the relevant government authorities in Tanzania to promote the development of the agricultural sector. These government authorities are 1) the

Example

Uganda

Northern Uganda Rehabilitation Programme

JICA Bridging Humanitarian Relief and Development Assistance, Helping the Region Recover from the Chaos of Civil Wars

Due to the country's prolonged civil wars, the establishment of social service frameworks and the development of infrastructure have been significantly delayed, particularly in Northern Uganda. At present, following the deportation of antigovernment forces, public security in the north is gradually improving. Consequently, the region's inhabitants are now endeavoring to return to normal lives. In line with the strengthening of their endeavors, the format of the assistance provided in Uganda is changing from humanitarian relief to development activities. Nevertheless, such assistance offered by various development assistance organizations is insufficient and has yet to satisfy the country's varied needs.

JICA has conducted studies in an effort to decide the direction of future assistance in Northern Uganda. These studies revealed that the internally displaced—believed to total approximately two million people—are rushing back to their home villages and that the living conditions in these villages are extremely poor. Particularly noteworthy is the dreadful state of road infrastructure, which not only interferes with ordinary social and economic activities in and around the region, but also hampers these people in their efforts to return home and settle down. Even after returning to their home villages, these people are unable to find acceptable jobs and housing. These conditions indicate that such bases of their daily lives as basic infrastructure, public utilities, social service systems and markets have yet to be established. In response to such conditions and in order to allow these people to

return to and settle down in their home villages with a sense of security, JICA is providing reconstruction assistance aimed at reinvigorating their communities and restoring the administrative functions of local government. Furthermore, JICA will support the development of equitable communities, in which an increasing number of North Ugandans will be able to enjoy the dividends of peace after the civil wars.



A truck overturned by extremely poor road conditions

Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Cooperatives; 2) the Ministry of Livestock Development and Fisheries; 3) the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Marketing; 4) the Ministry of Water and Irrigation; and 5) the Prime Minister's Office, Regional Administration and Local Government. In line with this program, JICA will continue to provide Tanzania with support focusing on: policy formulation and administration; water and irrigation development; human resources development; and rice production technique enhancement and dissemination.

■ Uganda Toward Advances in Economic Growth

In the past, a series of civil wars disrupted Uganda's economy. After these wars ended, the country energetically promoted structural adjustment policies to reduce the number of military personnel and government employees and to liberalize the overall agricultural product market. Through the implementation of these and other policies, Uganda recorded an average annual economic growth rate of approximately 6% in the 1990s. The country has maintained the same level of growth rate ever since, and the trends in its macro economy are showing ever greater stability. In recent years, the government of Uganda has been promoting additional economic growth through the improvement of the country's economic management capabilities, productivity and competitiveness as well as the people's income, in accordance with its belief that further economic growth is indispensable for

reducing poverty. The government is prioritizing the modernization of agriculture and the establishment of basic infrastructures. JICA is supporting Uganda through such Technical Cooperation projects as the Rice Promotion Project and the Project for Enhancing Electricity Supply.

■ Sudan Assisting with the Achievement of Sustainable Peace after Prolonged Internal Conflicts

Sudan is the largest country on the African continent, and a variety of ethnic groups inhabit the country, including Arabs in the north and Africans in the south. With many intricately interwoven problems—religious and ethnic differences, regional disparities, conflicts about oil resources and struggles for political power—Sudan had constantly experienced a number of internal wars even before the Second Sudanese Civil War, which came to a close with the signing of a peace agreement in 2005. However, a series of internal conflicts have completely suspended the provision of education, healthcare and other social services over a long period of time. Therefore, there are many regions where living standards are among the lowest in the world, and many Sudanese are still having difficulties in leading self-reliant lives. Hostilities are continuing in Darfur in particular, and the number of refugees and internally displaced people is persistently on the rise. In accordance with Japan's ODA Charter, which embraces the basic principle of peacebuilding, and from the perspective of human security, JICA is actively providing assistance to help

achieve sustainable peace in Sudan. Specifically, JICA prioritizes support in such areas as helping war-ravaged people and refugees, reestablishing social frameworks and providing aid for basic human needs (BHN).

■ Ethiopia Agricultural Productivity Enhancement and Other Development Assistance

Boasting Africa's second largest population, which totals approximately 80 million, Ethiopia has formed an economy highly dependent on primary products. In fact, the agricultural industry in Ethiopia commands approximately 85% of all the employed, 40% of GNI and more than 90% of total exports. Thanks to improved agricultural productivity attributable to the relatively favorable climatic conditions of recent years and the increased use of fertilizers, Ethiopia has realized an annual economic growth rate of 10% or higher over the past four years. However, the country, which is still regarded as a symbol of poverty and hunger, is suffering from various problems from the human security perspective. Accordingly, the Ethiopian government is prioritizing the solving of food security issues and reducing poverty. In response, JICA is supporting the country in a number of areas, such as agricultural and rural development, which includes improving agricultural productivity, safe water accessibility, socioeconomic infrastructure development and education. In addition to these forms of ongoing support, JICA has begun assisting with the development of industries other than agriculture.

Example

Kenya Flood Disaster Management in the Nyando River Basin

Helping the Region Recover from the Damage Caused by Repeated Floods

The basin of the Nyando River, which runs through Western Kenya, is susceptible to constant flooding in the wet season. The flooding inflicts significant harm on the inhabitants and the economy of the area. The basin is recognized as an especially poor part of Kenya. In recent years, adversely affected by a decline in the price of sugar—the area's

flagship produce—and a decrease in rice production, the regional economy has continued to stagnate. Thus, the constant floods are forcing the people in the area to live in poverty.

In spite of this situation, Kenya does not have any governmental organizations specialized in flood management and, accordingly, has not been able to implement anti-flood measures. To help make a breakthrough, JICA is promoting a study on the integrated flood management for Nyando River Basin. Specific initiatives being taken as part of the study include: 1) the preparation of a master plan for integrated flood control in the Nyando River basin; 2) capacity building for personnel of executing organizations through

plan preparation processes; and 3) the promotion of anti-flood measures at the community level. Particularly for initiatives 2) and 3), JICA is providing support for structuring an organization called the Nyando River Forum, which comprises administrative and academic organizations, NGOs, private corporations and resident organizations. Kenya's Water Resources Management Agency highly values the effectiveness and importance of the Nyando River Forum. Building on this success, related parties are examining ways to enable the Water Resource Users' Association to continue to operate so that inhabitants in the Nyando River basin can autonomously instigate anti-flood measures.

■ Zambia

Delivering Support to People in Need

Despite being surrounded by no less than eight countries, Zambia has neither been involved in armed conflict with its neighbors nor even suffered a civil war since gaining its independence. Well supported by the production of copper—the country's mainstay export product—as well as by the tourism and construction industries, the country's economy has achieved steady growth. The benefits from such economic growth, however, have not been equally distributed among all the people of Zambia. This reality has manifested itself in the country's average life expectancy being less than 40 years and in more than 60% of the entire population living on less than one U.S. dollar a day. Moreover, HIV/AIDS prevalence among adults has reached 16.5%, and because of this and other reasons, the number of orphaned minors is believed to have exceeded 700,000. In response to such situations, JICA is advancing an HIV/AIDS/Tuberculosis (TB) Program and Self-Reliance Development Support for Rural Areas. Through these and other projects, JICA is extending assistance to those in need in Zambia.

■ Mozambique

Expanding the Scope of Assistance in Various Fields

In 1992, Mozambique welcomed the end of a civil war that had lasted over 17 years. In step with the progress and consolidation of peace, Mozambique achieved an annual economic growth rate of approximately 7% every year in the late 1990s. JICA opened its Mozambique Office in April 2003. The amount of cooperation that Japan has provided

to Mozambique has steadily grown since then. In 2008, JICA made progress with assistance projects with a particular focus on rural areas in such fields as education, healthcare services, agriculture, water resources, transportation infrastructure as well as information and telecommunication technologies. Looking ahead, JICA will continue to support Mozambique in achieving further economic growth and reducing poverty.

■ Madagascar

Supporting Increased Food Production and Traffic Infrastructure Development

The economy of Madagascar stagnated prior to the mid-1990s, due to political unrest and the introduction of socialist policies since the country gained its independence. In 1996, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank started extending structural adjustment facilities to the country. As a result of this financial support, Madagascar's macro economy stabilized to some extent. However, the internal conflicts that occurred during presidential elections exacerbated the social unrest, which consequently impacted the country economically. In 2002, Madagascar finally recorded negative economic growth of 12.7%. After this, the government of Madagascar formulated a Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) in 2003 and announced "Madagascar Naturally," a national development plan, in 2004. In 2006, the government consolidated all these long-term visions into its Madagascar Action Plan (MAP) to run from 2007 through 2012. With the aim of contributing to the realization of MAP goals, JICA is assisting the country in expanding food production and developing transportation and logistic infrastructure.

■ Angola

Helping Improve the Quality of Health and Medical Services through Human Resources Development

Following its independence from Portugal in 1975, Angola was plagued by civil war. The Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA)* and the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA)** signed a joint memorandum covering a cease-fire agreement, in effect ending the state of internal conflicts after 27 years. Thereafter, progress was gradually made with the disarmament and demobilization of anti-government forces, facilitating national reconciliation and reconstruction. Nevertheless, years of internal conflicts and negligence have caused the medical facilities and equipment to age and have reduced the country's medical workforce. Due to these conditions, Angola is currently in the position of being unable to provide sufficient health and medical care services. The Angolan government has formulated a Five-Year Healthcare Development Plan (2005–2009). Under this plan, the government emphasizes the development of human resources and facilities required for healthcare and medical services. In line with the government's efforts, JICA is contributing to the enhancement of health and medical services in Angola through the promotion of programs aimed at developing human resources in relevant fields.

* MPLA: Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola

** UNITA: União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola. The major anti-government force in Angola at that time.

Example

Kenya

The Sondu/Miriu Hydropower Plant Construction

Kenya is suffering from a serious shortage of electricity. As the Kenyan people continue to experience frequent blackouts and many plants are forced to close down, electricity shortages continue to hamper the country's economic growth. The plan to construct the Sondu/Miriu hydropower plant on the Sondu River—a major river in

Kenya—was first proposed through a master plan study for the Sondu River Multipurpose Project. After the proposal was made, JICA assisted with the construction by extending loans totaling ¥18.1 billion. After the project started, an NGO that was concerned about the impact of the project on the environment demanded that it be halted. However, the Kenyan government and Kenya Electricity Generating Company Limited jointly promoted the establishment of a Technical Committee, with the participation of resident representatives, NGOs, local administrative officials and experts. This committee worked to build

consensus among the parties concerned and in so doing acted as a prime mover in promoting the project. The new hydropower plant, which commenced long-awaited operations in 2008 and currently generates 5% of the country's total generation capacity, is attracting attention as a way of solving the electricity shortages.

More recently, JICA has been supporting the Sondu-Miriu Hydropower Project Sang'oro Power Plant. With the completion of this new power project, Kenya is expected to have additional generation capacity totaling 20MW.

■ Ghana

Supporting Industrial Development and Rural Area Revitalization

Ghana marked the 50th anniversary of its independence in 2007. Aiming to attain the status of a medium-developed country by 2015, politically and economically stable Ghana is steadily growing. In a country that has achieved such remarkable growth, Japan is providing Ghana with assistance from various angles, with the ultimate goal of reducing poverty through economic growth. One pillar of JICA's cooperation involves industrial development, the other rural area revitalization. Specifically, from the perspective of human security, JICA is working to complete groundwork that will consequently help to reduce poverty, alleviate regional disparity and achieve further economic growth. In tackling such groundwork, JICA is promoting the Capacity Development of Government Administration in the Upper West Region of Northern Ghana, a region showing particularly poor healthcare-related indicators. This project is aimed at enhancing basic healthcare services provided by resident health nurses and improving access to basic healthcare services for the poor.

■ Nigeria

Providing Development Assistance That Includes Primary Education Enhancement

Nigeria is a vast country with a population of approximately 140 million. However, about 70% of the entire population is living below the poverty line, which means that these people are leading their lives on only one U.S. dollar a day. In addition to such a high rate of people living in poverty, compared with other African nations, Nigeria shows higher gender disparity in terms of adult literacy rates, estimated incomes and representation in parliament. Also, despite being the largest oil-producing country in Africa and due mainly to years of military dictatorship, income from crude oil export is not being appropriately distributed to the nation's people. Accordingly, Nigeria has not been able to reduce poverty and develop infrastructure to the levels expected. The current administration, however, has recognized seven priority issues to be addressed and is tackling economic development. These issues are 1) emergency energy measures, 2) human security with regard to lives and possessions, 3) land reform, 4) human resources development, 5) compulsory education for children, 6) creation of wealth and reduction of poverty, and 7) development of transportation infra-

structure. In cooperation with the Nigerian government, JICA is assisting with economic development in the country through the implementation of primary education, the empowerment of women and other programs.

■ Senegal

Supporting Improvements in Health and Medical Services and Basic Education

Many countries in West Africa are facing such difficulties as budget and human resource shortages and weak organizational structures, hindering the ability to secure safe drinking water, providing basic education, enhancing sanitation, protecting the environment and improving the livelihoods of small-scale farmers and fishermen—all of which are JICA's priority areas of cooperation. Senegal is no exception. In 2000, the government of Senegal adopted a Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) with the aim of halving poverty by 2015. In 2002, the government finalized the PRSP, formulating PRSP II in 2007. In accordance with Senegalese government policies, JICA is extending development assistance to various areas, including the supply of safe, drinkable water, health and medical services, basic education and food security.

Example

Zambia

Project for Participatory Village Development in Isolated Areas (PaViDIA)

Isolated Small-Scale Farmers Making Self-Reliant Efforts toward Improving Their Livelihoods

Located in Southern Africa, Zambia is a landlocked country. More than 60% of the nation's population is living in poverty, and the rate is even higher in rural areas, with about 70% of the people living below the poverty line set by the government. Zambia's agricultural industry has a hierarchical, two-tiered structure. The lower level, which accounts for 90% of all farming households, consists of small-scale, subsistence farming households; the higher level comprises medium- and large-scale farming households that grow agricultural products for export. In order to reduce poverty in the country, it is essential to promote rural development that will be of benefit to the small-scale farming households, which are

operating under severe conditions in "isolated areas."

In the early 2000s, business conditions for small-scale farmers deteriorated significantly, due to such factors as a surge in prices of agricultural inputs, the abolition of government subsidies and the unavailability of privatized services in isolated areas. A Project for Participatory Village Development in Isolated Areas was launched to bring about improvements in such situations. Through small projects (micro projects) in which farmers themselves make self-reliant efforts, JICA is providing support by training agriculture extension workers who drive participatory development and by introducing sustainable agriculture technologies.

The principal feature of this project is that residents in isolated areas assume responsibility for promoting activities—from planning to execution—as well as for expanding the project in the future. For example, some farmers may identify and consequently commercialize local produce.



Farmers taking the lead in finding and using village resources

They can become aware of the resources they have and take advantage of this produce to change the current situation and to tirelessly tackle other issues. These activities may contribute to the improvement of village income and the reduction of poverty. There are high expectations that the approach taken in this project will be applied in other disadvantaged areas.

■ Democratic Republic of Congo Reconstruction Assistance Started under New Administration

In 2007, Democratic Republic of Congo saw its first democratic election since it declared independence, and a new administration was launched. The Japanese government has announced its intention to provide emergency and humanitarian aid through international organizations in eastern Congo, where antigovernment forces are still sparking conflicts. The Japanese government also announced that it would extend bilateral reconstruction and development aid in western Congo, which is centered on Kinshasa, the nation's capital. In response to these announcements, JICA is undertaking emergency projects aimed at peacebuilding and reconstruction in the country in a flexible and timely manner. More specifically, JICA has decided to apply a Fast Track System,* under which simplified procedures are used and related organizations tackle projects as one well-coordinated workforce. In addition, in August 2007, JICA established a JICA Democratic Republic of Congo Office (JICA DRC Office). This new office has begun full-scale operations to provide assistance in three priority areas: achieving sustainable peace, developing Congo's economy and enhancing availability of social services.

* A system introduced with the aim of facilitating swift planning and execution of emergency projects for peacebuilding and large-scale natural disaster relief through simplified procedures

Regional Expansion of the One Village One Product (OVOP) Movement in Africa

Originating in Oita Prefecture, Japan, the OVOP movement—recognized by many countries as an effective method for invigorating rural areas—has actually spread to Africa. In particular, Malawi launched a project to support an OVOP office in 2005 and has since worked to accelerate the establishment of the necessary structures and frameworks. Also, at the Fourth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD IV) held in May 2008, Japan announced its intention to extend comprehensive assistance to promote OVOP initiatives in Africa. To date, JICA has conducted workshops and studies in preparation for the launch of OVOP programs in individual African countries. From 2009 onward, JICA plans to start OVOP programs in a full-fledged manner in Kenya, Uganda, Mozambique, Ethiopia, Nigeria and Senegal. Also, since fiscal 2007, JICA has been inviting administrative officials from African nations to Oita Prefecture. These officials have participated in one-month training programs to learn about the OVOP movement.

Through the OVOP program, the people in a community utilize their region-specific resources themselves to develop an original product. Due to the nature of this program, often unique products are created and make their market debuts. Currently, Japanese consumers do not often find African products, but there is the possibility that unique markets handling African products will be formed in Japan.

Nevertheless, the OVOP program does not produce a tangible outcome in the short term. Rather, the success of an OVOP program hinges on long-term support as well as the community's voluntary activities. Furthermore, the background and situations differ from country to country in Africa. Therefore, JICA is using various approaches toward country-specific OVOP programs while working to expand the program in Africa in cooperation with other donor countries and NGOs.



A range of products on view in an OVOP store



A wood carving being made

Example

A Regional Project Seminar on the Protection of Tropical Forests in the Congo Basin

Toward Conservation of Congo's Tropical Rain Forest and Biodiversity

Central Africa's Congo River basin is second only to the Amazon in South America in terms of the size of its tropical rain forest. Rich in biodiversity, the basin accommodates a huge variety of flora and fauna as well as such endangered species as mountain gorillas and offers a wealth of food sources and the means to support the livelihoods of the more than 50 million people who live there. However, with the expansion of farmland brought about by population growth, as well as illegal logging and internal conflicts, some are pointing out the possibility that the Congo River basin's tropical rain forests could rapidly disappear. The extensive rain forests soak up vast amounts of carbon

dioxide, serve the planet as a kind of giant lung and act as a countermeasure against climate change. Protecting them and the basin's rich ecosystems are important in tackling global environmental issues.

In response to a request made at the Fourth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD IV) held in Yokohama, Japan, in 2008, in fiscal 2009 JICA started to provide representatives from countries in the Congo River basin with opportunities to attend an educational program on forest conservation conducted in Japan. At a seminar held prior to the educational program, African participants reported on the current status of environmental issues in Africa, and individual African nations expressed their hopes that Japan would extend cooperation. Aside from this educational program, another Japan-led project is attracting attention. Promoted in collaboration with the Japan Science and Technology Agency (JST) and Professor Juichi Yamagiwa from the Graduate School of Science, Kyoto University, this

project—conducted in Gabon, a country located in the Congo River basin—aims to conserve biodiversity in the basin's tropical rain forests through trials conducted on the coexistence of people with wildlife. Through this unique project, participants also aim to scientifically understand mountain gorillas and rain forests, while ecotourism is promoted in cooperation with residents of the basin.



Mountain gorillas are in danger of becoming extinct.