

A Message from the President

Fiscal 2008 was a turning point for Japan's official development assistance (ODA) as well as for the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).

Japan hosted two major international conferences in 2008. The fourth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD IV) was held in May, with the core theme: "Towards a Vibrant Africa: A Continent of Hope and Opportunity." It focused on such issues as boosting economic growth in Africa, ensuring human security, climate change and environmental challenges. Building on the outcome of the TICAD IV, the G8 Hokkaido Toyako Summit in July discussed tangible measures to realize the goal of a "Vibrant Africa."

In October New JICA was launched to synthesize the implementation of Japan's ODA policies. Its new comprehensive mandate includes Technical Assistance, a carryover from its previous existing activities; concessionary loans (ODA loan), which were formerly managed by the overseas economic cooperation section of the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC); and a portion of the Grant Aid formerly provided by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Another new development was the establishment of the JICA Research Institute (JICA-RI). JICA-RI applies a multi-disciplinary approach, ranging from economics to political science, history and cultural studies, toward a broad array of issues facing developing countries. Also JICA-RI draws on the experience and expertise of JICA's field activities in its research. Partnerships with international agencies and academic institutions will be strengthened.

Since the beginning of 2009, reconstruction of Afghanistan and assistance to neighboring Pakistan has attracted considerable global interest. With some 40–70 staff including technical experts in the field, JICA is actively working to support reconstruction efforts by the people of Afghanistan in such areas as urban infrastructure development and agriculture.

In March 2009, JICA opened an office in Iraq. While we must pay the greatest attention possible to security and safety issues, it is vital that we have our people on the ground as quickly as practicable to provide reconstruction assistance to the most vulnerable people.

In an increasingly interdependent world, peace and prosperity can only be assured by concerted efforts throughout the world. JICA's vision of "Inclusive and Dynamic Development" underlines that all people should enjoy the fruits of collaborative endeavors.

I trust that this Annual Report will increase your understanding of JICA and its activities and look forward to your support and encouragement under its new and enhanced organizational structure.



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Sadako Ogata

President

Japan International Cooperation Agency
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