

# Development Assistance as a “Means for Co-Existence”

## Confronting a Changing World

Japan achieved remarkable growth during the course of the nation’s postwar reconstruction. To ensure that Japan can now meet the expectations of the international community as one of the world’s developed countries, JICA, the organization for implementing Japan’s official development assistance (ODA), has provided support to promote the economic and social advancement of developing countries.

The world is now facing unprecedented major changes, as it confronts the problem of large “disparities in development” as well as new “cross-border issues.” As these changes unfold, JICA is being asked to undertake new initiatives for surmounting these new global issues by drawing on its extensive experience in development assistance cultivated to the present.

### The Significance of Development Assistance Has Been Transformed by Globalization

In the same manner that Oriental paper manufacturing and printing technologies as well as pyro-techniques were transmitted to the West about 1,000 years ago, the world has developed amid repeated cultural and technology interchanges. Spurred by the conclusion of the East-West Cold War and the breathtaking advances in information technologies (IT), contemporary society is entering an era in which the movement of people, goods, money and information move with unprecedented speed on a scale never witnessed before. The effects of various global problems, including those occurring outside Japan, instantly spread across national boundaries and jeopardize the security and prosperity of Japan and the world as a whole. Examples of such problems include the financial and economic crises in 2008, as well as poverty, infectious diseases, terrorism and conflicts, natural disasters, climate change and food and energy shortages.

The dramatic advance of globalization since the 1980s sparked by the so-called “IT revolution” has reshaped the world. Unlike in the past, when the world was made up of nations that existed as solitary entities, today’s world is characterized by “mutual dependence and supplementation that transcends the framework

of national borders.” Japan has strong relationships of mutual dependence with other countries covering a multitude of economic activities, beginning with the import of resources. For this reason, the international community will never allow Japan to focus solely on its domestic problems while ignoring circumstances in the rest of the world or to implement “one-country pacifism,” whereby Japan pursues only its own national interests.

Today, no country in the world can completely sever its ties with other nations, and it is essential to recognize that “the pursuit of the common interests (international interests) of the international community is also interwoven with Japan’s own interests.” As stated in the Preamble of Japan’s constitution, Japan must achieve peace and stability with the world to build good relations with the international community and establish an “honorable position” that will allow it to survive in the future and prosper together with the international community. Development assistance is no longer seen as a charitable activity undertaken by the wealthy to help the poor. Rather, development assistance must be recognized as being a “vital tool for pursuing international interests and ensuring Japan’s survival.”

### The Changing Environment Surrounding Development Assistance

Since 2000, the environment surrounding development assistance both in Japan and overseas has evolved markedly. One particularly notable change has been the unprecedented scope of economic growth in numerous regions in tandem with the rapid advance of globalization. Although the world has yet to fully rebound from the financial and economic crises, so-called “emerging countries” have achieved dramatic economic growth over the past several years. The aggregate size of the economies of the G20 nations, excluding the G8 nations, has grown from US\$7.3 trillion in 1999 to US\$18.7 trillion in 2009, representing a 2.6-fold expansion over this 10-year period.

As one tangible result of this economic growth, the number of people in Eastern Asia and the Pacific subsisting on less than US\$1.25 per day has decreased by half, declining from 640 million persons in 1990 to 320 million in 2005. With Asia’s middle-income segment forecast to reach 2.0 billion people 10 years from now, in 2020, there are expectations that Asia will overcome the financial and economic crises and achieve further growth both as the world’s factory and as a consumer market.

Development assistance carried out over long years by Japan together with all types of partners, including those in the private sector, has contributed significantly to this growth in emerging