

Safety Management Operations Conducted Overseas

Developing countries are commonly confronted by poverty issues, which in turn can give rise to the increased incidence of crime. Some countries face political instability, the possibility of a coup d'état and the burden of long-running civil wars.

Even after the conclusion of civil wars, there are instances that require peacebuilding activities in countries beset with political instability and numerous public security issues. Moreover, there are also regions around the world where there are threat factors on terrorism. Additionally, there are nations in which transportation customs differ from those in Japan, with many of these countries characterized by a high risk of traffic accidents due to inexperienced local drivers and underdeveloped transportation infrastructures.

In this regard, JICA undertakes those security measures and risk management initiatives outlined below in an effort to support personnel engaged in international cooperation to act and work in safety.

■ Training and Seminars on Security

JICA conducts pre-departure security measures training for affiliated personnel, including experts, volunteers and their families. Training focuses on such topics as region-specific crime, the selection of housing, dealing with local residents, the protection of valuables as well as hold-ups or car-jacking. In general terms, information is provided from the standpoint of crime prevention and emergency response.

An orientation is organized for newly posted arrivals through JICA's overseas offices. Topics covered include information on current public security conditions and crime prevention measures. Led by JICA's overseas offices, affiliated personnel convene a Security Meeting at least once a year for the purpose of sharing pertinent experiences and providing local security information. Through these meetings, individuals living and working in the same environment reveal and share their practical expertise on security measures accumulated through day-to-day experiences.

■ Stationing of Security Management Advisors

To strengthen local safety measures, JICA assigns personnel with expertise in public security as "security management advisors." These advisors undertake the collection and dissemination of public security information, and are charged with the responsibility of responding to, and taking security measures against such

wide-ranging incidents as residential crime and traffic accidents. Security management advisors draw upon their extensive knowledge of both local crime patterns and Japanese behavior patterns to provide the appropriate guidance on safety.

In countries without overseas offices, JICA may assign personnel to collect local information.

■ Establishment of Emergency Contact Networks

In each country of operation, JICA builds communication systems that encompass all relevant personnel in the event of an emergency. Means of communication naturally include the telephone, mobile phones, satellite phones and radio equipment. Recognizing the essential nature of information transfer and confirmation in emergency situations, JICA positions the emergency contact networks as a vital pillar of its safety measures.

■ Dispatch of Security Confirmation Missions to Prepare Appropriate Safety Measures

With regard to countries presenting particular issues in terms of safety, JICA dispatches security confirmation missions to assess local conditions, and to then examine specific safety measures. For example, in order to respond to aid needs, JICA analyses the state-by-state public security condition of a particular country and then makes appropriate decisions on the range of activity by JICA personnel.

In countries with a high occurrence of crime, JICA dispatches a security advisory mission to provide direct safety guidance to locally stationed personnel, covering such topics as the prevention of residential crime and actions to be taken when dealing with armed crime.

Regarding traffic safety measures, JICA prepares various types of instruction manuals and distributes these to persons affiliated with JICA. At the same time, JICA regularly publicizes information regarding the occurrence of traffic accidents in various countries and works to foster an awareness of safety. In response to local requests, JICA dispatches investigation teams to provide instruction on traffic safety.

■ Bearing the Expense of Crime-Prevention

JICA bears such expenses as alarm systems, the hiring of guards and the installation of crime prevention equipment for the residences of its experts and volunteers. As one example, JICA may arrange for the construction of raised

fences, the installation of steel gratings and the reinforcement of doors and window frames as and when considered necessary.

■ 24-Hour Crisis Management

JICA's Headquarters remains on a 365-day, 24-hour standby status to respond to overseas emergency situations.

■ Anti-Terrorism Measures

The steady increase in the number of countries and regions prone to terrorism is a cause for concern. One particular feature of terrorism in recent years has been the increase in the number of large-scale terror incidents perpetrated by international terrorist organizations. Until now, acts of terror have targeted U.S. and European interests in the Middle East, South Asia and Africa. However, there is no denying that Japan could also become a target of terrorism in the future. JICA strives to raise an awareness of terrorism among JICA personnel working in high-risk regions to help them avoid risk. These efforts include providing specific precautions on such occasions as pre-dispatch training and post-arrival orientation on how to avoid becoming involved in a terrorist incident to raise the awareness of these personnel and avert risk.

■ Security Measures in Reconstruction Assistance Activities

JICA conducts programs in post-conflict countries or countries with ongoing conflicts such as Afghanistan, Iraq, eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sierra Leone, South Sudan and Pakistan. Drawing on the activities of United Nations organizations and other agencies active in the relevant region, JICA routinely monitors volatile political and public security situations, carefully surveys regions of activity and deploys necessary safety equipment such as radios and armored cars in the ongoing conduct of its projects. As JICA increases its participation in the peacebuilding area and in reconstruction assistance projects, a focus on such safety measures and a high state of readiness become ever more vital.

Given the nature of unpredictable events such as kidnappings, coup d'état, riots and terrorism, practical know-how in dealing with potential dangers is of the utmost importance. To that end, JICA has instituted Security Risk Management Training both in Japan and overseas in conjunction with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) eCentre from 2003.