



Indonesia: People use every space available to ride a local train at Manggarai Station on the Jabodetabek Railway. [Photo by Shinichi Kuno]



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### Director General's Message

# Economic Infrastructure Development

## Support for Establishing a Base for Nation-Building and Achieving Inclusive Development

The Economic Infrastructure Department is involved in laying a nation's economic foundation: urban and regional development planning and public infrastructure building. In addition, the department's activities widely cover gender equality, poverty reduction and peace building, which are central issues of the MDGs. This department thus deals with fundamental themes concerning development activities, and it extends effective assistance, by working closely with every other department at JICA.

The Economic Infrastructure Department extends assistance in the fields of urban and regional development, transportation, and information and communications. We aim to contribute to sustained economic growth of the developing countries, which is one of JICA's objectives set by its medium-term plan.

Let me mention about some of our activities in fiscal 2012. We formulated a development master plan for Greater Yangon in Myanmar, where rapid democratization of the country is also leading to its rapid urbanization. The master plan will guide the city toward a sustainable development in future. In Afghanistan, we assisted in the development of the Kabul metropolitan area, where urban functions cannot keep up with rapid population growth, both in human resources development and in infrastructure improvement. In Africa, we assisted with developing economic corridors that connect the land-locked countries to the coastal ones.

It is our priority to provide an effective support through partnerships with the private sector. In order to create a favorable business environment, to begin with, we assist for policy making and institution building with regard to infrastructures such as highways, bridges, railways, airports, harbors, ICT, etc. Then we cooperate in training people who operate and maintain these facilities. Plans to improve these facilities are also formulated

with a view to financing by Japan's ODA. This approach that encourages investments from the private sector is actively taken in the ASEAN region, Central and South America, Africa, etc.

Gender equality and poverty reduction are fundamental issues for all JICA programs. Our activities cover: establishing policies and institutions for gender mainstreaming; empowerment of women; financial inclusion for impoverished people, etc. The department also collects and analyzes information about gender and poverty in various countries, so that we can provide useful suggestions for each JICA project.

In order to reduce poverty and social disparities, which are often underlying causes of conflicts, our peacebuilding operations adopt a multi-sector approach: vocational training and agricultural development to create jobs, upgrading infrastructures, reinforcing state governance functions, etc.

In fiscal 2013, responding to the signing of the Framework Agreement concerning the Mindanao peace process in October 2012, we are starting full-scale assistance for the consolidation of peace and recovery of the conflict affected region in the Philippines. In Myanmar, where democracy is taking hold, we are extending more comprehensive cooperation. Furthermore, we plan to work hard on public-private partnerships and to prepare for the post-MDGs.