



Laos: the Second Mekong Bridge, built with support from Japan, connects Thailand and Laos. Expansion of its role is expected as a part of the East-West Economic Corridor. (Photo by Shinichi Kuno)

Director General's Message

For Enhancement of Growth and Contribution to Regional Common Challenges



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The year 2013 was the 40th anniversary of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation, and to commemorate this milestone, the ASEAN-Japan Commemorative Summit was held in Tokyo. At the Summit, the Japanese government announced a total of 2 trillion yen ODA provision over the next 5 years, including for infrastructure development to strengthen connectivity and to alleviate domestic disparity in ASEAN countries, which will lead to the further deepening of the relationships between Japan and these countries. With the increasing importance of the Pacific region, JICA will also continue its cooperation for the enhancement of growth. JICA extends continuous effort to contribute to the challenges in Southeast Asia and the Pacific region overall.

Looking back on 2013, several important events have taken place. First, the ASEAN-Japan Commemorative Summit Meeting was held to celebrate the 40th anniversary of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation, and where various types of cooperation by the Japanese government toward ASEAN countries were announced. In addition to taking the opportunity of the meeting to hold an event to discuss the future of ASEAN, JICA also made preparations for ODA projects committed at the meeting with a focus on infrastructure-related sectors.

Secondly, for the catastrophic damage caused by Typhoon Haiyan, which hit the Philippines in November 2013, JICA has provided seamless assistance with all its available resources, from emergency support right after the storm to technical and financial assistance toward early recovery and reconstruction; the assistance still continues today.

Also in the Philippines, the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro was signed in March 2014. It was an important outcome in which JICA's long involvement in the peacebuilding process in Mindanao bore fruit.

Further, in Southeast Asia and the Pacific region, which have close relationships with Japan and where cooperation is active among partners that include private enterprises, universities, and NPOs, JICA is also engaged in cooperation

with these various partners through initiatives such as the Science and Technology Research Partnership for Sustainable Development (SATREPS) and ODA utilizing Japanese small and medium enterprises' technologies. The announcement in July of the successful production of an antibody against the dengue virus through collaborative research by universities in Japan and Thailand through SATREPS is a result that is symbolic of such engagement.

The Southeast Asian region is important for the Japanese government's infrastructure export strategy. For instance, we expect to see growth in infrastructure exports and investments by promoting the Jakarta Metropolitan Priority Area for Investment and Industry (MPA) Project in Indonesia through public-private collaboration of both countries.

In addition to these projects, in fiscal 2014 JICA would like to work on providing effective support by quickly responding to our government's various policies, such as disaster risk reduction, maritime safety, the rule of law, global health, and support for women's empowerment.

The year 2014 is the 60th anniversary of Japanese ODA. The establishment of the ASEAN Community and the Pacific Islands Leaders Meeting are lined up for 2015. Based on this long history of Japanese ODA, JICA hopes to make this a year of another leap forward.