



India: Delhi's Kashmere Gate metro station, constructed by ODA Loan, always bustles with passengers. (Photo by Shinichi Kuno)

Director General's Message

The Awakening of South Asia and Its Huge Potential



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There are approximately 1.3 billion people in the world who live on less than US\$1.25 a day, among whom an outsized portion, 500 million, live in South Asia. To reduce this impoverished population, it is important to promote economic growth and accelerate poverty reduction. For Japan, South Asia is farther away, both geographically and psychologically, than Southeast Asia, but the large pool of a youthful population and the abundant labor force is the region's attraction. JICA is engaged in various efforts to maximize such potential, including support for vitalization of private-sector economic activities in South Asia.

In South Asia, to accelerate economic growth and poverty reduction, JICA's initiatives are focused on strengthening governance, improving people's access to social services such as education and health care, and developing a wide variety of infrastructure.

To meet the important challenge of job creation for the large young population, JICA sees the necessity of vitalizing economic activities that would attract foreign investment, including from Japan.

In India, for example, construction of a dedicated freight corridor has started through ODA Loan; it will become the logistical backbone to materialize the Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor concept. A study is being conducted in the Chennai-Bengaluru area in South India, an area with surging economic growth, to develop another industrial corridor project.

In Sri Lanka, assistance is being strengthened toward comprehensive transportation development in the capital city's metropolitan areas and toward the electric power sector.

Compared to the Southeast Asian region, the South Asian region has fewer intraregional economic

transactions. JICA started a study on possibilities in cross-border cooperation in 2013, including seeking insights into supply chain formation. JICA believes that vitalization of private-sector economic activities, through such initiatives as development of cross-border industrial corridors between India and Bangladesh in particular, will benefit the economies of the countries, their neighboring countries, and also Japan.

At the same time, JICA will continue its support in such areas as education and health, with special consideration for poor people. Many cooperation projects in such areas benefit women. Formulation and implementation of projects with a focus on gender issues will be further enhanced in fiscal 2014.

Lastly, in Afghanistan, where 12 years have passed since primary restoration of support started in 2002, moderate but steady income increases are being seen despite unstable environments. JICA will continue to be involved in the reconstruction of Afghanistan through a variety of efforts, with the utmost care and elaborated security measures.