



Myanmar: rural area around the site of the project Development of Participatory Multiplication and Distribution System for Quality Rice Seeds. (Photo by Shinichi Kuno)

## Director General's Message

## Projects Conducted in Africa Receives High Acclaim at TICAD V

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**Agricultural and rural development is a field on which Japan has placed emphasis since international cooperation started 60 years ago. Historically JICA improved irrigation facilities and provided guidance on rice-growing techniques, primarily in Southeast Asian countries. Today, the scope of activity has been expanded from Asia to Africa, and JICA's past experience has created new projects for rural vitalization. In 2013, JICA focused on working cooperatively on the basis of support policies that were adopted at the Fifth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD V).**

JICA's activities in Africa mainly comprise two pillars. The first is to improve the agricultural productivity of Sub-Saharan African countries through a leading initiative, the Coalition for African Rice Development (CARD), which involves international organizations. JICA aims to double rice production in the region in a decade, by 2018. This project has been proceeding smoothly; it has achieved 20.7 million tons as of 2012, which marks an increase of 48%.

The other pillar is the Smallholder Horticulture Empowerment and Promotion (SHEP), with the goal of empowering women farmers. This project is designed to encourage scheduled production of vegetables with attention to market trends and finally achieve an increase in earnings. In Kenya, this project has achieved a successful outcome; the sales amounts have doubled since the project was initiated in 2010. This effort was highly acclaimed by TICAD V, and JICA received requests to expand SHEP into other African countries. In response to these requests, JICA is proceeding with preparations to do so, such as inviting technical training participants

to Japan.

Looking at Asia, where JICA has provided support for many years, Indonesia, Thailand, and Malaysia have successfully achieved steady economic development. Demands in agriculture have also shifted from the stage of easing hunger to the stage of acquiring safe and reliable high-quality food. Taking advantage of the know-how of private Japanese companies, JICA will assist with establishing a value chain that enables delivery of safe and reliable high-quality agricultural products from producers to consumers.

It is estimated that the Earth's population will be over 9 billion people in 2050, and we will need to secure twice as much food as today. This will increasingly become a global issue from the perspective of food security. In that sense, JICA believes the importance of focusing on fisheries, such as by redefining "aquaculture" as a source of protein that can deal with future population growth. With an eye on global-scale population growth, the Rural Development Department will consider cooperation for future agricultural and rural development.