

Emergency Disaster Relief

Taking Back as Many Smiles as Possible

The JICA Emergency Disaster Support System

JICA dispatches Japan Disaster Relief (JDR) teams and provides emergency relief supplies when major disasters occur overseas, in response to requests received from the governments of affected countries or international agencies.

JDR is composed of five teams: the rescue team, medical team, infectious diseases response team, expert team, and the Self-Defense Force unit. The decision to dispatch a JDR team is made by the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Operations of the Secretariat of Japan Disaster Relief Team

1. Dispatch of JDR Teams

The Secretariat of JDR at JICA is in charge of the administrative work of disaster relief operation for overseas afflicted areas. When the Japanese government decides to dispatch a JDR team, the Secretariat of JDR organizes the team members. In addition to arranging flights for the team and organizing cargo, the Secretariat sends JICA personnel as team members for logistics and coordination and provides various other types of support so that team members are ensured of smooth operations in the field.

Among the JDR teams, the rescue team, the medical team, and the infectious diseases response team are typical ones.

A JDR rescue team searches for and rescues people affected by large-scale disasters abroad. The JDR rescue team is classified in the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group's (INSARAG) external classification as "heavy," or the highest rank. In September 2017, a rescue team was dispatched to Mexico in

the wake of an earthquake and worked through the night to engage in search and rescue operations there.

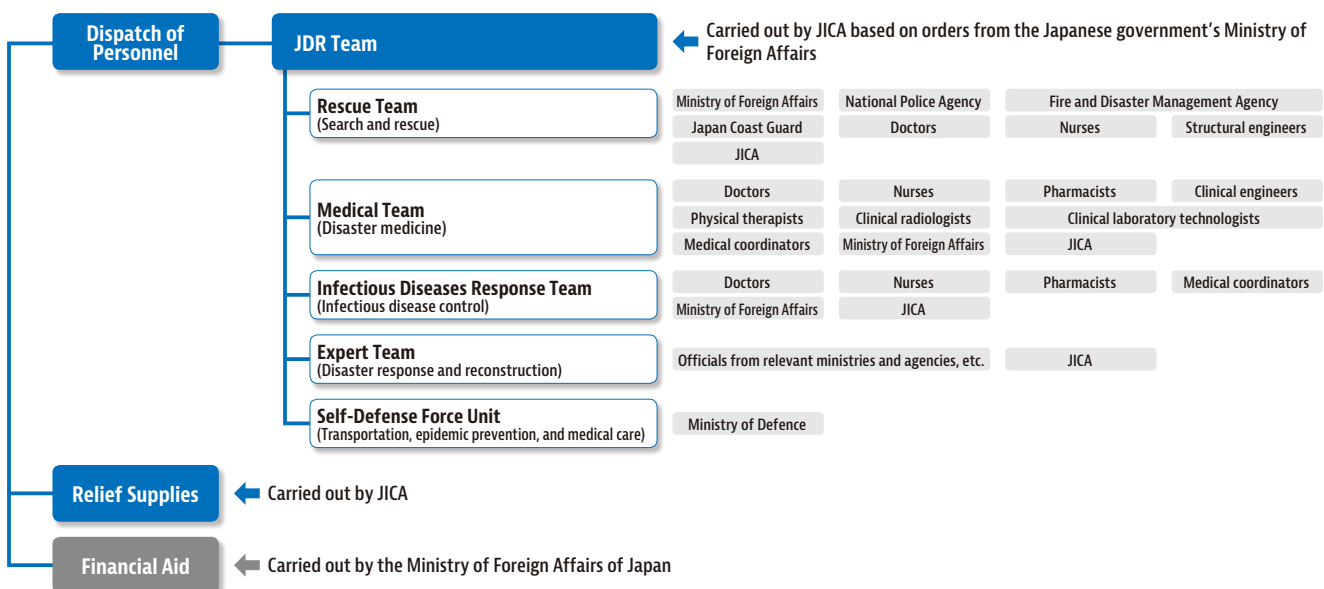
A JDR medical team provides medical assistance to disaster-affected people. In October 2016, the team was certified by the World Health Organization (WHO) as an Emergency Medical Team (EMT). In February 2017, the disaster medical information standardization method called Minimum Data Set (MDS), which was developed by the EMT MDS Working Group led by JDR-JICA, was adopted by WHO as an international standard. The MDS was first put to practical use in international relief operations for the cyclone disaster that hit Mozambique in March 2019, with the support of a JDR expert team [→ see the case study on page 59].

In response to global epidemics of infectious diseases, JICA established an Infectious Diseases Response Team in October 2015, recruiting team members and providing training sessions. JICA sent such a team to the Democratic Republic of the Congo to tackle the outbreak of yellow fever in July 2016 and Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) outbreaks in June 2018 and August 2019. In December 2019, it dispatched an Infectious Diseases Response Team to Samoa in response to the measles epidemic there, supporting the care of seriously ill patients, infants in particular.

2. Provision of Emergency Relief Supplies

In order to provide affected areas with emergency relief supplies in a quick and secure manner, the Secretariat of JDR procures and stores them beforehand, and keeps a stockpile of such supplies in its warehouses at six locations around the world. In fiscal 2019, JICA provided such supplies on 10 occasions of various natural disasters, including a volcanic eruption in the Philippines; an earthquake in Albania; flooding in Iran

Japan's Emergency Disaster Relief System



Emergency Disaster Relief in Fiscal 2019: 15 cases

No	Date of relief	Country/region	Type of disaster	Type of relief	Number of those dispatched/ supplies provided
1	April 2019	Mozambique	Cyclone	Medical team	24 people (second batch)
2	April 2019	Iran	Flooding	Provision of supplies	Tents, plastic sheets, sleeping pads
3	July 2019	Democratic Republic of the Congo	Ebola virus disease	Provision of supplies	Personal protective equipment (PPE)
4	August 2019	Democratic Republic of the Congo	Ebola virus disease	Infectious diseases response team	20 people (first batch: 7 people, second batch:13 people)
5	September 2019	Bolivia	Forest fire	Provision of supplies	Personal protective equipment for firefighting
6	September 2019	Bahamas	Hurricane	Provision of supplies	Tents, blankets, plastic sheets, portable jerry cans, water tanks
7	September 2019	Brazil	Forest fire	Provision of supplies	Tents, sleeping pads
8	November 2019	Djibouti	Flooding	Self-Defense Force unit	116 people
9	November 2019	Djibouti	Flooding	Provision of supplies	Tents, blankets, sleeping pads, portable jerry cans
10	November 2019	Albania	Earthquake	Provision of supplies	Tents, sleeping pads
11	December 2019	Samoa	Measles	Infectious diseases response team	15 people (first batch: 4 people, second batch: 11 people)
12	January 2020	Australia	Bushfire	Self-Defense Force unit	91 people (one C-130H transport aircraft)
13	January 2020	Australia	Bushfire	Provision of supplies	Masks
14	January 2020	Philippines	Volcanic eruption	Provision of supplies	Masks, drinking water, generators, cord reels, portable jerry cans
15	January 2020	China	COVID-19	Provision of supplies	Personal protective equipment (PPE)

and Djibouti; infectious disease outbreaks in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and China; a hurricane in Bahamas; and forest fires in Bolivia, Brazil, and Australia.

3. Preparation for Emergency Response at Ordinary Times

In order to enable JDR teams to deliver prompt and appropriate assistance in times of large-scale disasters, it is essential to maintain readiness in normal times. To this end, JICA provides various kinds of training throughout the year to build the capacity of candidate JDR team members.

With regard to donor coordination, the Secretariat of JDR has been working to strengthen relationships with other international organizations concerned, including the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

(UNOCHA) and WHO. Through the Project for Strengthening the ASEAN Regional Capacity on Disaster Health Management (ARCH Project) led by the JICA Infrastructure Management Department, JICA also contributes to development and capacity building of the disaster medicine cooperation system in the ASEAN region.

Recent years have seen more and larger natural disasters in the world. Accordingly, international disaster relief operations by Japan, a disaster-prone country with vast experience in disaster management, is increasing in importance. The Secretariat of JDR is strengthening cooperation with different departments and sections to provide seamless assistance for rehabilitation and reconstruction after emergency response.

Mozambique: Deploying Comprehensive Emergency Assistance in the Wake of a Massive Cyclone



A great contribution to the health crisis response



Medical care by the JDR medical team

Between March and April of 2019, JICA dispatched a JDR medical team and JDR expert team to Mozambique, which was devastated by the southern hemisphere’s worst-ever cyclone. In addition to providing emergency relief supplies to the country, JICA also assigned its staff members to the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC), which was responsible for the overall coordination of relief operations.

The medical team set up a field clinic in a remote area where medical assistance was unavailable because the land route to the area was disrupted, looking after 794 patients in total. Many of the patients developed diarrhea or acute respiratory diseases. There were also signs of a cholera outbreak. These developments pointed to the special need for a timely infectious disease response.

The JDR expert team supported the management of the Emergency Medical Team Coordination Cell (EMTCC). For the first time, the teams put into operation the Minimum Data Set (MDS), a disaster medical information standardization method developed at the initiative of Japan. The analysis of the overall developments in medical care using MDS greatly contributed to the health crisis management and response.

JICA as a whole provided multilayered assistance, supporting (1) UNDAC and EMTCC, which were responsible for overall operational coordination in the affected areas; and (2) medical care activities on the ground. JICA will take advantage of this experience and the lessons learned in the process in its response to major disasters in the future.