‘Our data management system is poor. It is difficult to obtain accurate health information at the grassroots level, especially when it is more than five years old. This is exactly the opposite situation in Japan. Data management in the health sector is excellent. They have files that date back 30 years or more. I have learnt how to replicate the Japanese model of data management system at our local and grassroots levels. Unfortunately, there is little support for the provision of needed infrastructure and equipment. I believe we can achieve same feats like the Japanese, so my team and I are trying our best to improve our data management system at the local level.’ Mr. Sumaila Mohammed Zakaria, Head of Public Health Unit at the Regional Hospital, stated. He attended the Health Administration for Regional Health Officers for Africa training in Japan in 2009.

‘Many pregnant women still use the local herb called ‘Mansugu’ to facilitate child delivery process. But, this herb is believed to contain dangerous oxytocins which could cause ruptured uterus and lead to the death of the baby and sometimes, the mother,’ Christina Zumabare Dery, a Senior Midwifery Officer at the Regional Hospital espoused. She also attended the Maternal Health Assistant training in Japan in 2010. ‘We have embarked on a health education campaign against the use of the herb and we are making gradual progress, because more pregnant women are coming to the hospital to have their deliveries instead of using ‘Mansugu’ and staying at home,’ she submitted.

Infant and Maternal mortality has reduced significantly in the region. By 2015, we hope to achieve reduction in child mortality under five by two-thirds and maternal mortality by three-quarters. We are also working to reduce the incidence of HIV, TB, malaria and other communicable diseases and prevent mother-to-child transmission of HIV/AIDS. These are all in line with the Millennium Development Goals on Maternal Mortality. The training we had in Japan has helped us to remain focused and we believe we can achieve our targets. We are also transferring our knowledge unto other health workers and demanding more discipline, honesty, punctuality, information-sharing, teamwork and positive attitude,’ Nusrata Issah, Principal Nursing Officer at the Regional Hospital in Wa, said. She has almost 40 years experience in the Health Service and she partook in the Maternal Health Assistant training in Japan in 2009.

‘Japan has helped us a great deal. Apart from training our health workers, the Government of Japan has donated health equipment to our regional hospital. They include: delivery beds, sterilizers, suction machine, filter heart monitor, resuscitation machine and others. We all loved the hospitality of the Japanese people, it was surprising to experience such care, openness and love from people of a developed country. We enjoyed our stay in Japan.’ She concluded.
In 2009, the Teacher Education Division (TED) of the Ghana Education Service (GES) and JICA launched “the Project for Strengthening the Capacity of In-Service Training (INSET) Management.” INSET is the training of serving teachers. The idea is that a group of teachers come together to learn how to teach better. The INSET can take place at a school (School Based INSET (SBI)) or within a cluster where teachers from 2 to 5 schools gather (Cluster Based INSET (CBI)). The INSET project ultimately aims at improving the teaching skills of primary school teachers.

The Government of Ghana (GoG) has set primary education as an important area for its national development policy and admission and enrolment rates have increased dramatically during the past decade. However, the quality of education, in particular the quality of teachers, needs to be enhanced to improve students’ academic capabilities. In response, JICA, for more than a decade, has implemented technical cooperation projects for developing an INSET model for primary school teachers in the core subjects of Mathematics and Science.

Today, the GoG has set a goal of expanding INSET nationally. Under the current phase (2009 to 2013), JICA is focusing on the capacity development of the GoG’s operational management for the INSET expansion. Within the last two years, the TED has conducted a series of trainings for the INSET trainers at the regional/district levels in over 100 districts. However, due to decentralisation initiatives, the project now faces some challenges in dealing with 170 district education offices’ budget priorities and management. The project is currently trying to align the INSET models and operational systems with the current decentralised system.

Fortunately, many teachers are satisfied with the quality of trainings, and the positive impact of increased collegiality and school atmosphere is evident. One participant of a SBI said: ‘I learnt teamwork with colleagues and got good opportunities to deliberate about my concerns in teaching, with other colleagues.’ In the past, there were limited circumstances where teachers discussed their lessons with each other in order to improve their lesson delivery. However, the SBI/CBI has brought such an opportunity to Ghana, teachers now come together to discuss their lessons with their colleagues. It is a tremendous change for teachers and schools in many districts.

Teachers are becoming aware of the importance and usefulness of the INSET. Some schools have started undertaking INSET at Junior High Schools, others too have plans to expand the SBI/CBI to other subject-tachers. JICA will continue to support the improvement of the quality of education in Ghana through INSET.
Accra Plain Irrigation Project Preparatory Study

Agriculture, one of the priority sectors in JICA Ghana, is a big consumer of water. Water management is an essential activity to fulfilling the demand of water in Agriculture, and JICA has started its preparatory study on the Accra Plain Irrigation project.

Accra plain is a broad area of total 200,000 ha from the Kpong Dam in Eastern Region to the Gulf of Guinea along the Volta River, which has a great location to start the irrigation project with rich water resources from Volta River and easy access to Accra and Tema.

Through the irrigation project finding mission in 2011, JICA realized the possibility of a more cost-effective gravitational irrigation in the area, against the previously proposed pumping irrigation. Based on the Mission’s findings, JICA decided to conduct the Pre-Feasibility Study (Pre F/S), focusing on 15,000 ha as a priority area. The project which costs US$85 million, entailed irrigation development, infrastructure design and planning, farmers’ organization and enterprises, irrigation system management, agricultural economy and development plan, social and environmental impact.

The project is trying to apply public-private partnership (PPP) approach. In other words, the project expects to attract public-private firms in its irrigation development and operational management. This approach is relatively new in irrigation sector in Africa. The study is required, not only from the engineering point of view, but also from the perspective of social development including small farmers and its organization.

Although, the study period was short (January to May), the study-team worked extensively and proposed some technically, economically and financially viable development options and their findings were well appreciated both by GoG and the World Bank(WB), which is supposed to finance PPP scheme.

Additionally, there are other components to be studied, therefore, further full-fledged Feasibility Study is needed to be conducted to the implementation of the Project. JICA is continuously discussing the necessity of further collaboration with WB and GoG to facilitate the implementation of F/S.

Capacity Development for Maintaining Power Supply Facilities in the Republic of Sierra Leone

The institution responsible for electricity generation, transmission and distribution in Sierra Leone is the National Power Authority, known as NPA. It is government-owned and is in charge of the country’s electricity supply.

The country uses both hydro and thermal power generation system. Hydroelectric power contributes majorly to the electrical power generation especially during the raining season with an output of 50MW and 18MW during the dry season.

The country is confronted with a major challenge of providing access to electricity for approximately thirty percent of the remaining population in Freetown. Hence, investments from development partners are essential in expanding the country’s power sector.
In 2000, JICA successfully constructed a 10 MW power plant in Free Town. It is followed by technical assistance on enhancing capacity to operate and maintain diesel generator facilities and distribution network of the NPA engineers and technicians. This will invariably contribute to sustainable economic and industrial development and stable livelihoods.

The first meeting of the Joint Coordination Committee (JCC) for “the Project on Capacity Development for maintaining Power Supply Facilities in the Republic of Sierra Leone” took place at the Electricity House in Freetown on 11th April, 2011, under the chairmanship of the Minister of Energy and Water Resources, Prof. Ogunade Davidson. The project is estimated to cost US$4.2 million and it will last for three years (March 2011 to March 2014).

In his brief statement, Prof. Davidson commended the Japanese government for the timely intervention in the Sierra Leonean power sector and spoke about the significance of the project that it will contribute immensely to the upgrading of the power supply quality and improvement of the financial situation of NPA.

At the meeting, outlines of the project implementation policy and method for the first year were presented by Mr. Koji Fujii, Chief Advisor, JICA Expert Team, project implementation method on power generation presented by Dr. Noboru Matsumura and Mr. Tadashi Nio presented the Project implementation method on Transmission and Distribution.

According to Mr. Fujii, the overall goal of the project is to ensure that quality of power supply from NPA is upgraded and that the NPA recovers its power supply cost through an improved financial management system. Mr. Nio explained that the implementation method for the capacity development of NPA staff will include on-job-training, short-term intensive technical Guidance and overseas trainings in Japan and Ghana.

The meeting brought together, representatives from the National Commission for Privatization (NCP), engineers and technicians from the NPA, representatives from JICA Ghana Office, experts team from Yachiyo Engineering Co., Ltd and JICA Sierra Leone Field Office.

ANNOUNCEMENT

St Theresa Centre for the Handicapped is a school in the Volta Region where both boys and girls can acquire their skills for their future. They are selling clothes baskets, purses, leather pouches, coin cases, pen cases, book covers, etc... Please, come and see their products at the JICA craft shop.

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