



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

JAPANESE VOLUNTEERS CELEBRATE 40TH ANNIVERSARY IN GHANA

16th August, 2017. Accra. The Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers, JOCV, the international volunteering arm of the Japan International Cooperation Agency, JICA is celebrating its 40th anniversary in Ghana.

The Exchange of Notes which paved the way for the establishment of the Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCV) in Ghana was signed on 17th February, 1977 between the Governments of Ghana and Japan. Since 17th August 1977, hundreds of Japanese volunteers have been dispatched to Ghana. Currently, there are 83 Japanese volunteers in Ghana. JOCVs are usually deployed to sectors including, health, education, agriculture, community development, sports, vocational training, agriculture, social welfare, engineering, etc.

From the inception of the programme to date, 1,252 volunteers and 31 senior volunteers have completed their assignments in Ghana. Majority of them were Science and Mathematics teachers and they were assigned mainly to rural schools where it was difficult to recruit qualified Ghanaian teachers.

The main objective of the programme is to promote technology and knowledge transfer as Japanese volunteers transfer their skills to people or students they work with. They work hand-in-hand with Ghanaians to bridge the developmental needs of the country, especially in the hinterlands.

According to the JOCV Coordinator, Mr. Shinji Taguchi: "The programme also brings the people of Ghana and Japan together at the grass-root level, thereby promoting intercultural exchanges. Volunteers learn the language and culture of the people they work with and when they return to Japan, they continue to portray the Ghanaian culture and they are therefore qualified to be called cultural ambassadors of Ghana in Japan."

He continued: "We have junior volunteers who are between 20 to 39 years. These are young people who completed university and work for few years before deciding to become volunteers. We also have senior volunteers who are between 40 to 69 years of age. These are very experienced people who actually worked hard to build the economy of Japan."

Currently, there are 82 volunteers including senior volunteers working in Ghana and they are serving in all regions of the country. This is the highest number of Japanese volunteers assigned to a country in any region where JOCV operates across the world.

The Chief Representative of JICA Ghana, Mr. Hoshi Hirofumi reiterated: "Since the first seven JOCVs landed on the soil of Ghana in 1977, the program has continued to expand and respond to calls from partner countries all over the world. To date, over 50,000 volunteers, both young and senior ones, have been dispatched to 96 countries and regions in total. I wish to reaffirm our continuous commitment to working closely with government agencies and stakeholders to further promote a friendly relationship between Ghana and Japan as we help tackle some of the developmental challenges facing Ghana."

Other activities to mark the 40th anniversary include:

- ICT workshop for students and teachers of Bagabaga College of Education and Tamale College of Education in the Northern Region.
- ICT quiz for NVTI students at the Kings Technical Vocational School in the Central Region.
- Science and Mathematics workshop for students in Navrongo.
- Courtesy call to the President of Ghana on the 25th of August, 2017.
- Official opening ceremony to be held on 22nd of August 2017 at the Osu Presby Hall.
- Baseball match between Ghana and Japan on the 26th of August, 2017.
- JICA Volunteers in Ghana will have their annual meeting on the 23rd and 24th of August.

End.