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The Role of Development Framework for Post-2015 Discussed

In preparation for 2015, the target year of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), discussions are globally progressing over the post-2015 development framework. JICA-RI has conducted research and organized seminars towards post-2015. As part of its efforts, the Institute hosted two open seminars on this theme, inviting two specialists from UNU-WIDER and DFID.

Roles of Foreign Aid in a Post-2015 Perspective Discussed

On March 25, JICA-RI held a public seminar “Aid, growth, poverty and the changing global market” at the JICA Ichigaya Building, inviting Professor Finn Tarp, Director of the United Nations University World Institute for Development Economics Research (UNU-WIDER). Professor Tarp and about 50 participants discussed the roles of aid towards post 2015, in light of the efforts of UNU-WIDER. The challenges and new opportunities for development aid in the context of the ever-changing global economy were discussed.

Professor Tarp first introduced the findings of UNU-WIDER’s three-year research program on foreign aid ([Research and Communication on Foreign Aid: ReCom](#)). Professor Tarp recognized the fact that economic growth facilitated by aid has led many countries to



Prof. Tarp

“graduate” out of low-income aid recipient status to middle-income economies along with the betterment of poverty reduction and human development. However, in specific areas of Africa, sub-

Saharan Africa in particular, the GDP per-capita growth rate remains low and the labor force moves from high productive manufacturing sector to low productive activities. Under these circumstances, Professor Tarp raised the core issues on the post-2015 development agenda: a continuous support of aid for resource-poor fragile states in Africa, particularly aid for promotion of employment; aid for newly impoverished people in middle-income nations; and global issues such as aid for gender equality, environment and climate change.



Environment and Climate Change is a Key Agenda for the Post-2015

On March 26, JICA-RI hosted an open seminar on “environment and development cooperation,” inviting Mr. John Carstensen, Head of Profession for Climate and Environment at Department for International Development (DFID), UK, and Chair of the Network on Environment and Development Co-operation (ENVIRONET) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC). The event was organized with the support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, the British Embassy Tokyo, and OECD Tokyo Centre.

Mr. Carstensen gave a presentation on the efforts of DFID and OECD-DAC ENVIRONET under the theme of “Environment, Climate Change and Development.” He first raised a topic of “climate and environment,” one of the six priority development issues that DFID has identified, introducing the four main areas of focus: 1) helping the poorest people adapt to

Furthermore, Mr. Carstensen referred to Future Fit DFID, which is a strategy for the UK to remain a world leader in development: the strategy aims to 1) understand and act on the links between poverty, climate change and sustainable economic development; 2) help countries build resilience, particularly in relation to food, water, energy and cities; and 3) seek out opportunities to innovate, building new partnerships with the private sector, and capitalizing on UK excellence in delivering cutting edge research.

On the post-2015 framework with a focus of poverty alleviation and sustainable economic development, Mr. Carstensen pointed out the importance of good governance, peace and stability, anti-corruption, and the role of women and girls. He emphasized that these are key factors in the natural resource management that is essential for poverty reduction. He stated: “Global prosperity and eradicating extreme poverty are impossible without addressing climate change, and climate should therefore be integrated throughout the post-2015 framework and all goals should be climate-smart.”



Mr. Carstensen (left), JICA-RI Senior Research Fellow Tomonori Sudo (right)

the effects of climate change on their lives and livelihoods; 2) helping poor countries develop in ways that avoid or reduce harmful greenhouse gas emissions and enabling millions of people to benefit from clean energy; 3) protecting the world's forests and the livelihoods of the people who depend on them; and 4) encouraging global action on climate change.

Furthermore, as the roles of OECD-DAC ENVIRONET where Mr. Carstensen chairs, he proposed to promote the effective implementation, measurement, monitoring and evaluation of the environmental dimensions of a post-2015 framework. He also pointed out key donors' coordination roles such as improved understanding of the role of green growth in ensuring poverty alleviation and equitable economic development, including mobilization and private funds. He further advanced improved quality of effective development policy and co-operation practices related to climate-resilient urban development, green growth, strategic environmental assessment, climate adaptation and biodiversity, by effectively sharing knowledge and best practice among donors and other partners.

Discussing Nexus between JOCV and Anthropology at JICA-RI Seminar

JICA-RI currently conducts a research project entitled “the Interdisciplinary Study of Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCV),” which examines various topics related to the JOCV program from different academic perspectives. As part of the research project, JICA-RI holds JOCV seminars to disseminate its research results and to build a network. On March 20, JICA-RI hosted an open seminar titled “Perspectives to Observe Local Communities: JOCV and Anthropology,” the second event that followed the first one held in September 2013.

At the beginning of the seminar, JICA-RI Research Fellow Mine Sato introduced that the basic approach of anthropology is to attempt to understand local people and their society “as they are” through participant observations and interviews during long-term field surveys. She pointed out that this approach is compatible with the basic stance of JOCV which is symbolized by a motto “Together with local people,” indicating a possibility of collaboration between anthropological research and JOCVs’ activities.

Professor Junkichi Watari of Komazawa Women’s University, the first guest speaker, gave a presentation titled “Delivering the Wisdom of Fieldwork.” Professor Watari, technical advisor to JOCVs, has been engaging in pre-dispatch training courses for many years. One of the competencies required for JOCVs described in the training handbook is “to have the cultural grounding to observe and understand human behaviors in different ethnic communities.” Referring to the understanding of culture as the precondition of JOCVs’ activities, he explained the significance of anthropological perspectives—pondering what culture is—in JOCVs’ activities. What he emphasized was the importance of the following anthropological visions: observing how local people perceive their societies rather than just observing local people; and recognizing the differences and commonalities between the way of looking at things by local people and that of us.

Professor Watari stressed that with these above-mentioned visions, volunteers can achieve the three objectives of the JOCV program: (1) engaging in dialogue and interacting with individual people in specific local communities, and offering feasible solutions to various problems from local peoples’ views through trial and error; (2) mutual understanding; and (3) passing on what they have learned to Japanese society.

Subsequently Professor Hisao Sekine of the University of Tsukuba gave a presentation titled “The Pacific Island Nations and JOCVs: from a Regional Vision.” Based on his experience as a JOCV and his later research outcomes, he attempts to analyze changes in the sentiment of JOCVs through looking into the regional characteristics, drawing on the interviews with JOCVs in the Solomon Islands.

Professor Sekine discussed: in the Pacific island region, due to the rich natural resources and reciprocal relationships in traditional societies, they tend to think they have enough to survive and not to accept anything strange; those volunteers assigned to the regions question themselves why they are here; however, relativizing the situation from an anthropological perspective enables them to understand that pushing for industrial development is not the only way; and volunteers also begin to see local people’s positive side—generous, kind, and laid-back. Professor Sekine pointed out that JOCVs’ perspectives change over time, so that they don’t cling to results. He concluded by arguing that the greatest achievement of the JOCV program in the region could be local people’s fond memories of volunteers along with volunteers’ personal growth.

The impacts of infrastructure development on human development and influence of disability on poverty

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“Access to Infrastructure and Human Development: A Cross-country Evidence”

Author: Jeet Bahadur Sapkota (WP No.70)

Although there is a firm consensus that infrastructure plays a vital role in achieving Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), limited empirical literature is available on the impacts of infrastructure on human development.

This study, using the panel data of 1995 to 2010 covering 91 developing countries, measures the impacts of several infrastructure variables—access to electricity, safe drinking water sources, and road density—on the human development index (HDI) and its three component indexes (health, education and income). The paper argues that eradication of all forms of infrastructure poverty (defined as “lack of access to infrastructure services”) is a must condition to eliminate human poverty sustainably. Thus inclusive post-2015 new-development strategies should address the importance of eliminating the infrastructure poverty.

“Analysis of Poverty between People with and without Disabilities in Nepal”

Authors: Kamal Lamichhane, Damaru Ballabha Paudel, and Diana Kartika (WP No.77)

The ongoing MDGs, which set eight goals, do not specify the issues of disabilities. Despite the fact that “inclusive development” has been trumpeted, persons with disabilities are excluded in the mainstream of development. More than two-thirds of the total population of people with disabilities lives in low and middle income countries, but research on disability and poverty is scarce in these countries.

This study intends to fill this void by examining the factors of the poverty of people with and without disabilities in Nepal, using the nationally representative dataset, Nepal Living Standard Survey (NLSS-2010/2011). The study finds that people with disabilities, compared with their counterparts without disabilities, are more vulnerable to fall into the poverty trap, based on figures of poverty headcount, incidence and severity. Addressing the issue of disabilities in post-2015 development agenda is essential to make development inclusive and sustainable.

