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### Hot Issue

## JICA-IMF Joint Conference Focuses on Ways for Sustainable Development in Low-Income Asia

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About 100 policymakers, researchers and aid officials gathered



### Review

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### Review

## Dialogues with the World Bank to Prepare Collaborative Research on SABER Program

JICA-RI's team led by research fellow [Takako Yuki](#) has been working to launch a collaborative research project related to the World Bank's new program SABER with the Bank and JICA Headquarters. To carry forward discussions over this collaboration, Yuki visited Washington, D.C. from October 9 to 16 and met World Bank specialists.

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### Special

## A Policy Brief on Sustainable Water Use in Africa Released

In September, JICA-RI released a policy brief titled “[Social Science Approach to Sustainable Water Use and Management in Africa](#).” The paper is based on the outcomes of two research projects and written by Atsushi Hanatani and [Mine Sato](#).

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# JICA-IMF Joint Conference Focuses on Ways for Sustainable Development in Low-Income Asia

In the past three decades, the world has witnessed rapid growth in Asia. While countries like China and India push forward for economic expansion despite the global recession, the same region is home to others still at an early or middle stage of their development.

To discuss the issues those low-income countries (LICs) face and find ways for them to achieve sustainable development, JICA and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) convened an international conference “Sustainable Development in Low-Income Asia: Infrastructure Investment and Financial Sector Development” on October 12. About 100 participants including senior policymakers from various Asian countries, researchers and officials from aid community attended the event held at JICA-RI throughout the day.

The conference began with welcome remarks by JICA President Sadako Ogata, who emphasized that infrastructure investment and financial sector development can greatly help improve people's living in LICs and it is one of the major cores of JICA's operations.

Subsequent discussions focused on three main themes: 1) macroeconomic lessons from emerging market economies on infrastructure investment and its financing, 2) policy challenges for infrastructure development in Asian LICs based on lessons from the region, and 3) policy challenges facing the LIC financial sector. Presenters and diverse selections of commentators addressed each agenda, and among them were the IMF Asia Pacific Department Director Anoop Singh, the Asian Development Bank Managing Director General Rajit Nag, and high-level ministry officials.

JICA-RI Senior Fellow [Yasuo Fujita](#) made a presentation on the second theme based on his research, introducing JICA's recent studies for policy discussions. Due to their limited fiscal space and governmental capacities despite the large investment needs, the prioritization of infrastructure investment in Asian LICs is indispensable to effectively narrow the infrastructure deficit, he explained. He argued

that spatially connective infrastructure (like logistics and telecommunication) should be considered one of the top priorities, and also, an attention should be paid to climate change needs in infrastructure development. Moreover, he mentioned that to scale up private sector's investment in infrastructure (increasing since 2005), LIC governments should clarify how that sector can contribute, continue to enhance investment climate and other conditions, and prepare well-designed projects with the public and private sectors' roles clearly defined.

The final policy roundtable centered on inclusive growth in all Asia and also the need to develop “soft” infrastructure like education and health. Immediately after, the conference ended with JICA Vice President Kiyoshi Kodera's closing remarks.

On the conference, Fujita says it was rare that it focused on “Asian LICs” as usually those like China and Indonesia are the subjects when developing countries in Asia are discussed. Also he adds, “This was the first joint seminar by the IMF and JICA. So I hope it will help promote the ties between the two in the development of Asian LICs as well as that in other regions.”

Future development aid dialogues such as the Fourth High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Korea are expected to reflect the outcome of this conference.

\* More on the conference, read the coverage in [JICA Headquarters' website](#).



Yasuo Fujita in discussion session (right)



# US-Japan Joint Symposium on “Natural Resource Management for Peacebuilding and Statebuilding”

A US-Japan joint symposium on natural resource management for peacebuilding and statebuilding was held at JICA-RI in Tokyo on October 25. The symposium was co-hosted by the following five institutions: JICA-RI, the Environmental Law Institute (ELI) in the United States, the Global Infrastructure Fund Research Foundation Japan (GIF), the Graduate School of Frontier Sciences at the University of Tokyo, and the Research Center for Sustainable Peace of the Graduate School of Arts and Science at the University of Tokyo, and supported by the Japan Foundation Center for Global Partnership.

JICA-RI researchers presented findings from a newly launched research project, “Land and Property Problems in Post-conflict Statebuilding and Economic Development” while researchers from Japan, the US, Canada, and the Philippines shared results from a collaborative study “Harnessing Natural Resources for Peacebuilding: Lessons from U.S. and Japanese Assistance” by the ELI, GIF and the University of Tokyo. The speakers exchanged views with some 80 participants ranging from practitioners to researchers.

JICA-RI Senior Research Fellow [Shinichi Takeuchi](#), the research leader of the above mentioned project, introduced the main concept of the study first. He explained that land and property problems often reflect political power structures, indicating the need for analysis and sensitivity over political aspects. “Inclusive policies that don’t marginalize specific groups are essential in both political and economic fields,” he said.

Takeuchi also discussed the findings from a comparative analysis of Rwanda and Burundi so far. The two countries share many characteristics

from ethnic composition (Tutsi and Hutu), refugee issue caused by conflicts, and to land problems due to high population density and military clash. But, they have taken contrasting paths since the end of each conflict. While the minority Tutsi-led rebel won the war in Rwanda, an ethnic power-sharing approach was implemented in Burundi.

To settle land and property problems, Rwanda adopted a “land sharing policy” which grants half of the land owned by the Hutu original inhabitants to returning Tutsi refugees. Behind this “top-down” approach lies the political stability of the Rwandan government. By contrast,

settlements of land disputes in Burundi were basically left to local community leaders. In a way, the power-sharing system is prevailing even at individual-level settlement of land tenure making this “bottom-up” approach possible in the country.

“Rwanda has been successful in controlling people’s dissatisfactions, at least for now,” Takeuchi pointed out.

“Yet, in Burundi, there is a heap of land problems left unresolved largely because reaching a settlement is difficult and takes time. Political power style affects land disputes and also the methods for their settlements.”

JICA-RI research associate [Ryutaro Murotani](#) joined Session 2: “Land and Property Problems in Post-conflict Statebuilding and Economic Development” as a commentator. In his comment, he said that land and property problems are rather complex because of their intertwining relations with conflicts, and systems transplanted from outside could bring unexpected consequences. “Although donors often try to introduce modern ‘land laws’ to post-conflict countries, modern laws aren’t necessarily the best solution for those situations. We should not look for ‘the best practice’ but for ‘the best fit,’” he stressed.



Takeuchi presenting cases of Rwanda and Burundi (left)

# Dialogues with the World Bank to Prepare Collaborative Research on SABER Program



Children in Niger -- Niger has been working on an education reform with donors' support since 2003 (Photo by Akio Iizuka/JICA)

JICA-RI's team led by research fellow [Takako Yuki](#) has been working to start a collaborative research project with the World Bank and JICA Headquarters. Titled "System Assessment and Benchmarking for Results (SABER), Learning Achievements and Equity," the project focuses on the Bank's new program [SABER](#), which aims to offer data and information to investigate the relationships between educational policies and delivery of learning outcomes worldwide.

To carry forward discussions over this collaboration, Yuki, along with Kazuro Shibuya of JICA's Human Development Department, visited Washington, D.C. in the United States. During the stay from October 9 to 16, they met a selection of World Bank specialists as well as JICA Washington Office staff.

JICA team is currently preparing a proposal on the project to apply and improve SABER diagnostic tools in order to examine a variety of school-based management systems -- a management style which allows more autonomy to schools rather than local governments -- and types of policies which align with those systems.

At the meeting, they discussed research approaches and target countries, and exchanged opinions with the Bank's representatives. Particularly, they confirmed they would coordinate over the "school-autonomy and

accountability" policy domain of the SABER. Moreover, JICA team plans to conduct studies to address questions which the current SABER domains do not cover. The Bank welcomed this, being eager to understand the gap between policies and the ground.

Among the candidate target countries, four West African countries (Burkina Faso, Senegal, Mali and Niger) are top-listed as both institutions have accumulated data in this region and can complement each other.

Researchers from all the involved organizations plan to visit Burkina Faso and Senegal for a preparation of a pilot survey in December.

## Special

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It is well-known that there is a close linkage between water shortage and poverty. To achieve sustainable water use and management by local residents in Africa, it is essential to comprehend the nature of water resources including their existing volume as well as the livelihood strategy and social relations of the people, the report stresses.