JICA’s Fiscal and Public Service Reform Development Policy Loan contributes to Jordan’s reform efforts
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As the region goes through many political and economic challenges, recognizing and appreciating the stability of Jordan is translated by the international community by supporting Jordan; that is increasingly playing greater role in maintaining not only its stability but also stability at the regional level.

Since the establishment of diplomatic relations between Jordan and Japan in 1954, the Government of Japan through JICA has provided over US$ 3 billion in development assistance to Jordan in the three schemes; ODA loans, grants and technical assistance, to various sectors such as water, energy, environment, tourism, transportation, vocational training, health, etc.

Despite its limited resources, and the pressing economic forces, Jordan has opened its boarder since the spark of the Syrian crisis in 2011 to hundreds of thousands of Syrian refugees, whom mostly live in the different Jordanian cities and towns among Jordanian host communities.

In addition to the economic, social and security challenges arisen as consequences of the influx of the Syrian refugees, Jordan has scarcity in water and energy resources and thus depends on importing fossil oil and gas for power generation and transportation. Jordan has also seen declining foreign investments, trade movement and tourists’ numbers and revenues because of the Arab Spring and the political turmoil in the region.

In recognition to these challenges and in response to the loan request submitted to JICA late last year, the Government of Japan through JICA has decided to extend its “Fiscal and Public Service Reform Development Policy Loan”, to Jordan. The loan amount is JPY 24 billion (approx. US$ 200 million), and will have 25 years repayment period in which the first 7 years grace period, and 1.7% interest rate. To be responsive to the main factors that aggravated the budget deficit, JICA’s loan in its policy matrix focuses on reforms at three levels; fiscal management, water sector reforms and energy sector reforms. JICA’s policy matrix was designed to be in line with the ongoing IMF SBA programme with the government of Jordan, and with the priorities and executive plans of the government of Jordan.
On behalf of the Government of Jordan, Dr. Emad Fakhoury – Minister of Planning and International Cooperation, signed on the 27th May 2015 the Exchange of Notes and the Loan Agreement, while Japanese Ambassador to Jordan Mr. Shuichi Sakurai signed the Exchange of Notes, and Mr. Shokichi Sakata – Chief Representative of JICA Jordan Office, signed the Loan Agreement.

As this loan contributes to the efforts aiming to alleviate the unfavorable impact of different factors on the Jordanian economy, JICA wishes to see the Jordanian economy prospering in the near future.
It is spring and it is the season for the volunteers’ programs big events. Let’s start with the music volunteers under UNRWA who has successfully conducted two big events:

Music Stars Amman and Music Stars Irbid. These two events showed the deep understanding of music through the students’ performance. Music volunteers are closely working with the local music teachers of UNRWA schools to develop the educational skills and materials for better results.

As for Physical Education; Volunteers conducted Samurai Cup for boys and Smile Cup for girls, these two events were in cooperation with UNRWA schools where volunteers are currently working. The students learn to respect the rules of the games. Local teachers focus on teaching the methods to develop the students’ attitudes toward each other.

Another type of sports event was conducted through the volunteers working under Ministry of Education as Kindergarten teachers. Ajloun and Mafraq Sports events. Parents were attending these cheerful events and could basically understand the importance of “learning through playing” which is a goal that KG volunteers are working on along with the Kindergarten teachers under Ministry of Education.

An Art Exhibition for the students of UNRWA was held in Al Thaqafa Street in Shmeasani Amman. The art work showed collaboration between students and teachers from different schools. The Art work of the students was also exhibited in UNRWA Jordan Office, JICA Office and area field office.