

Press tour on Japan's cooperation with Jordan

By: Eng. Hani Kurdi – JICA Jordan office

During the period from March 7 to 9, 2011, JICA Jordan Office organized a Press Tour inviting the representatives / reporters of the daily Newspapers, Petra News Agency, Jordan TV, Hayat FM Radio Station and the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation. The Press Tour Schedule was prepared to give to the participants the opportunity to observe various fields of cooperation programs by conducting site visits to projects and schemes of cooperation provided to Jordan from the government of Japan.



Mr. Tanaka brief the participants

Mr. Tanaka the Chief Representative of JICA, briefed the participants on JICA's activities and its role in implementing the cooperation programs in Jordan, he stressed in the importance of publicizing Japan's role and contributions in the socio-economic development of Jordan.

During the 3-days tour, the participants visited several projects and experts and volunteers working sites; namely: UNRWA School in Ashrafieh, Hitteen Refugees Camp, Jerash VTC, Capacity Development Project for NRW Reduction Project, Historic Old Salt Museum & Trail, Dead Sea Panorama Complex, Integrated Health and Empowerment of Women Project and Karak Center for Rehabilitation and Welfare.

At the end of the press tour, the participants expressed their deep appreciation for the contributions of the Japanese government in the socio-economic development of Jordan, and valued the JICA's schemes of cooperation which deeply support the basic human needs of the Jordanians. Many articles were published in the newspapers and TV and radio reports were broadcasted.

Sharhabil Bin Hassneh Ecological park (SHE) opening

By: Abdel Rahman Sultan - FOEME

Since the early 2000s Friends of the Earth Middle East (FoEME) has been working towards the restoration of the Jordan Valley's flora and fauna in the wake of years of tremendous resource exploitation, overgrazing, and erosion. On Tuesday April 12, 2011 FoEME accomplished a major goal in this process with the grand opening of the Sharhabil Bin Hassneh EcoPark (SHE) under the patronage of his Royal Highness Prince Hassan Bin Talal represented by Dr. Adnan Badran as the keynote speaker. In addition, there were over 190 attendees, both local and foreign, including the European Ambassador to Jordan, Ministry Officials, Parliamentarians, Senators, Funders and Media.

SHE was established in 2004 in the Northern Jordan Valley community of Pella, where it has three main objectives; first to increase public awareness about the environment, second to create an open-space for recreation and third to protect nature. The Sharhabil bin Hassneh Eco Park and the Ziglab Initiative have been created as pilot projects whose goal is to establish a model for preserving ecologically important habitats within the Jordan Valley. FoEME collaborates with the Jordan Valley Authority (JVA) and Ministry of Agriculture-Forestry Department, where they allocated lands for protection and rehabilitation.

Rehabilitation brought nature back to the area; over 250 different flowering plants were recorded, 53 bird spp. including 18 globally endangered spp., five large mammals including 4 globally endangered spp., etc.

FoEME was able to develop SHE with donors support. FoEME was able to get funding and technical expertise from JICA and JOCV program and also from the USAID, Australian Embassy, SIDA and other donors. Moreover, FoEME was able to get in-kind donations from the local community in terms of goods and volunteers to support the sustainability of the Eco Park. FoEME sees that future expansion of SHE is essential to establish sustainable development practices at the Ziglab Basin. Expansion include forestry areas that can be incorporated into the protection scheme and applying action such as solar project to generate electricity, cooperate with the local societies, and promote River Jordan Rehabilitation objectives in general.

Now that SHE is officially open, its mission of promoting environmental conservation and promoting national and international cooperation can be further realized.

“Sharhabil Bin Hassneh Eco-Park should not just represent a relationship with Friends of the Earth Middle East and the local community, but should also act as a meeting place for young people, activists and tourists from Jordan and from all over the world. That way this Park will not just be a testament to the importance of the natural and human environment, but a significant symbol of cultural coexistence and respect for each other that we as Arabs and particularly as Jordanians believe in. From Prince Hassan bin Talal keynote address at the opening of SHE Park



Sharhabil bin Hassneh ECO Park and some kinds of flowers

Friends of the Earth Middle East (FoEME) are a unique organization that brings together environmentalists. Our primary objective is the promotion of cooperative efforts to protect our shared environmental heritage. In so doing, we seek to advance both sustainable regional development and the creation of necessary conditions for lasting peace in our region. FoEME is a member of Friends of the Earth International, the largest grassroots environmental organization in the world.

Dissemination Workshop on Environmental Education

By: Eng. Hani Kurdi –JICA Jordan office

On March 27, 2011, JICA in cooperation with the Ministry of Education held a workshop on environmental education to disseminate the activities of the Ministry’s directorates in Eastern Badia, Ain El- Basha and Tafieleh to other directorates all over the Kingdom. JICA volunteers and their Jordanian counterparts who are working in those directorates present their activities and projects to more than 100 participants in this event.

The Volunteer’s presentation includes activities on recycling of cans and papers, water conservation programs and soap making. The workshop was attended by Dr. Hani Al- Jarrah, Director of Cultural and Arts Activities at the Ministry representing the Minister, Mr. Toshiaki Tanaka, Chief Representative of JICA Jordan Office and H.E. Mr. Tetsuo Shioguchi, Ambassador of Japan to Jordan who addressed the participants and stated that “the global environmental problems such as climate change and the loss of biological diversity triggered by human activities and globalization, have been considered as a threat to the earth and mankind”.



Participants at workshop

It’s worth mentioning that, JICA has dispatched 622 volunteers since 1986 who have worked closely with Jordanian people in several fields. JICA have 5 volunteers in the field of Environmental Education who are currently working in the kingdom, 4 of them at the Ministry of Education and 1 at Petra Development and Tourism Region Authority.

When a disaster turns to be an opportunity for reconstruction and employment creation!

Rabah Al-Shanti – JICA Jordan office

The 11th March 2011 was not a sad day for the Japanese people only but for Jordanians and the whole world as well; where they expressed their sadness for the tragic earthquake that has hit the north eastern coast of Japan causing destruction in many prefectures and then was followed by a devastating tsunami that is believed to have greater destruction on Japan than the 9.0 Richter earthquake itself.

So far this disaster is estimated to cost Japan US \$ 300 billion in losses as well as the 30,000 people who died or disappeared because of the disaster and cannot be found till now. Tens of thousands were also evacuated from their residential locations fearing contamination from the leaked radiations.

On the 20th April 2011, several Jordanians including some of JICA Jordan Office national and Japanese staff gathered in front of the Japanese Embassy in Amman to express their solidarity and sympathy with the victims and those who were displaced or lost loved ones as a result of the 11th March devastating earthquake and tsunami which is considered Japan's greatest disaster since the World War II.

The mourners held candles and white flowers to express their grief over the loss of at least 15,000 people. His Majesty King Abdullah II also extended his condolences to Japan over this disaster, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs visited the embassy in Amman to convey the Monarch's condolences to the Emperor and the Japanese People for the losses. In separate letters, HRH Prince Al-Hasan Bin Talal and HRH Princess Basma Bint Talal sent their condolences to JICA on the losses resulting from this disaster.

However, the recent news on the Japanese government on the 20th April 2011 approving a US \$ 49 billion draft extra budget to finance reconstruction efforts in destroyed areas by the March 11 earthquake and tsunami, is a manifestation for the Japanese spirit and their determination to overcome difficult times by well-planning and immediate action for reconstruction.

The budget for the current fiscal year, the first of several emergency financing schemes, is expected to come into effect starting from the 2nd May 2011 after the Diet approves it. The budget will provide more than 100,000 temporary housing facilities for displaced victims after the March 11 crisis, as well as allocations for repairing damaged infrastructures and clearing up rubble.



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