JICA Donates Motor Cycles to Promote Industrial Villages

The Chief Representative, JICA Kenya Office, Mr. Yoshiyuki Takahashi, in March this year, presented 11 motor cycles to the One-Village-One-Product (OVOP) project.

The project is among those which were proposed in the National Industrial Master Plan of Kenya’s Ministry of Industrialization with technical assistance from the Government of Japan through JICA. It is one of the strategies the ministry shall use to promote industrial development in the rural areas.

OVOP works on the premise that every region or village has a unique and valuable local resource which can be developed into an outstanding product through value addition, then showcased to the rest of the country and to the wider world.

It is a strategic movement designed specifically for regional development. It requires people to take up a product or industry distinctive to their region and cultivate it into a nationally, or even globally accepted item. The movement was initiated in 1979 in Oita Prefecture, one of the Provinces of Japan by Dr. Morihiko Hiramatsu.

The Ministry is currently implementing OVOP on a pilot basis in eleven districts - Nyeri North, Laikipia West, Yatta, Kisii, Nandi East, Bomet, Vihiga, West Pokot, Garissa, Isiolo, and Kwale.

The Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Industrialization, Prof. John Krop Lonyangapuo, said the motor cycles shall be used in the pilot districts to accelerate implementation of the project.

KenGen Gets Geothermal Loan

The Government of Japan and Kenya Electricity Generating Company Limited (KenGen) recently signed a loan agreement amounting to approximately Kshs.24,548 billion for the development of the Olkaria Geothermal Power station.

The agreement was signed by JICA Chief Representative, Mr. Yoshiyuki Takahashi, for the Government of Japan, and KenGen Managing Director, Mr. Edward Njoroge, for KenGen.

The Olkaria project for extending Unit 4 and 5 of Olkaria I was identified as one of Kenya’s priority areas for development in order to meet the growing demand for electricity. The project is expected to increase electric power supply by an extra 140 MW of power into the National Grid. This will create a conducive investment climate which is vital for economic growth. Also being a renewable and clean energy project, it is environmentally-friendly.

The project is co-financed by the Government of Japan, the World Bank together with German Development Bank (KfW) and European Investment Bank (EIB). The Government of Japan was the first development partner to sign the Loan Agreement.

MCH Handbook to be Launched in Kenya

It is expected that the Maternal, Newborn & Child Health Handbook when utilized in well-established health systems shall promote mother and child health.

Global health community pays special attention to Maternal, Newborn & Child Health (MCH) because of delays in the progress towards achieving Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa and South East Asia.

Maternal and Child Health (MCH) handbook is one of the tools for promoting MCH and was adopted by the Japanese health system in the 1940s. The handbook is designed to provide records of conditions of mothers during pregnancy, delivery and growth of the child, as well as higher immunization so that the health workers can refer to it in cases of referrals, follow-ups and emergencies. It is expected that the MCH Handbook, when utilized in well-established health systems, shall promote ‘continuum of care’ and eventually improvement of MCH. Indeed, the successful use of the MCH Handbooks in developing countries with low incomes has led to the realization that they can be valuable to Sub-Saharan countries.

It is in this context that a seminar was held from March 1-2, 2010, in Nairobi to explore how the introduction of the Handbook could be effected in the countries of Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda. A joint team from these five countries is localizing the book which contains pages for interaction between the health provider and the expectant woman.

JICA Alumni Association Organizes Medical Camp

JICA Ex-participants Alumni Association of Kenya (JEPAK) in March, 2010, organized a medical camp in Nakuru during which hundreds of people were treated.

JEPAK is a network of Kenyan professionals who have benefited from Training in Japan through JICA. The association utilizes the rich and varied academic and professional skills of its members to contribute towards Kenya’s social and economic development.

It has been organizing annual medical camps, the first one in 2008 (general medical camp), and the second in 2009 (dental camp). This year’s medical camp was held on March 2, 2010, under the theme Extending Basic Dental Health Care Access to the Rural Community.

The organizers went door-to-door informing the community about the planned event and registered 1,500 beneficiaries. They also used posters and outdoor campaigns to publicize the event. On the day of the camp, 850 community members were observed and treated for various ailments and given advice on how to improve their health. Serious cases were referred for more specialized care. Voluntary Counseling and Testing (VCT) services were also provided.

Participation by the JEPAK members was purely on voluntary basis and doctors and other medical personnel provided their services free of charge. JICA provided a subsidy for drugs and logistical arrangements. Others who were involved in the event were the Ministry of Health, Kenyatta National Hospital, Kenya Medical Research Institute (KEMRI) and the Kenya Medical Training College (KLMTC). Four members of the alumni association of JICA, Rwanda Office, attended as observers. They were able to see the activities of JEPAK which they could replicate in their country.

A Japanese Olympics runner donated 200 pairs of shoes to be distributed to the needy members of the community.