The Solomon Islands remains a high mortality rate for malaria. The rate is higher than other diseases and the second largest is cancer. Japan is working on this problem extensively. In 1988 Japan constructed the Solomon Islands Medical Training and Research Institute (SIMTRI) to conduct training courses, meetings, workshops as well as investigative researches. For Five (5) years after 1991, Primary Health Care Promotion Project was also implemented to improve the techniques and knowledge of the malaria control personnel.

Now the “Malaria Control Strengthening Project” runs for three (3) years till 2009. This project brings about improvement of public health management and clinical management on Malaria Control, effective use of Solomon Islands Malaria Information System, and better capacity and skill of health staff. The project office is being set up in the part of SIMTRI. The team is putting the project into action with Ministry of Health and Medical Services (MHMS), Vector Borne Disease Control Program (VBDCP), Guadalcanal Provincial Health Office (GPHO), Honiara City Council (HCC), National Referral Hospital (NRH), and Solomon Islands College of Higher Education (SICHE).

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**About Project**

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**From Project Manager**

Mr. Albino Bobogare, Deputy Project Director

In 1988 JICA completed the construction of the Solomon Islands Malaria Training and Research Institute (SIMTRI) and in September 1991 a “Primary Health Care Promotion Project” for malaria was launched. This cooperation was designed to improve the techniques and knowledge of malaria control personnel and to enhance community participation for malaria control in Solomon Islands.

With this background, Ministry of health (MOH) requested further cooperation from Japan through JICA in 2004. On 26th January 2007 at SIMTRI, both parties (Ministry of Health and JICA) signed the Minutes of Meeting, and “the Project for Strengthening of Malaria Control” was launched for Guadalcanal and Honiara.

The Project aims for cooperation between two major sectors of the MOH, the clinical sector (the Health Care Office) and the public health sector (the Health Improvement Office) in order to develop a surveillance system as well as a manual for malaria diagnosis and treatment of malaria reflecting the expertise of both sectors. The Project also aims to improve the capacity of registered nurses, nurse aids, and malaria microscopists in the rural facilities to gain appropriate capacity for malaria patient care.

The successful launching of this project is envisaged to improve quality of services for malaria diagnosis and treatment, and especially to reduce or eliminate
the incidence of severe malaria cases in Solomon Islands.

From JICA Solomon Islands Office
Yoshihiko Nishimura, Project Formulation Advisor
JICA Solomon Islands Office

In the history of JICA’s corporation in combating with Malaria in Solomon Islands, we are now certainly facing a dramatic turning point. When Japanese government assisted Solomon Islands government to establish SIMTRI in 1988, our categorical imperative was “Eradication” of Malaria, which should still ideologically be supreme goal of human being.

Now, let us have a look at the goal indicated by our brand new “Malaria Control Strengthening Project”. It says, the projects goal is to strengthen the medical staff’s skill and knowledge to “Control” the disease. Is it a down-grading of our ambition? No, it is neither down-grading nor easy compromise. We, both Solomon Islanders and Japanese, have learned a lot in these 2 decades that we need more realistic approach when we deal with this particular disease.

Capacity building in nowadays is a keyword for any fields of development. Health and medical sector cannot be an exception. I believe that a systematic combination of Education – Training – Advocacy only can realize the self-reliant and long sustaining function of Malaria control.

This philosophy and strategic approach is to be realized that, it will be brought by our selected expert team lead by Professor Kawabata who has a long experience to cope with Malaria in Solomon Islands. This is not only my expectation but a conviction that with the project team’s support Solomon Islands’ government and people will finally obtain a full capacity to “control” Malaria. It is my great pleasure to be a witness of this dramatic change, which will take place in coming three years.

From Chief Advisor
Professor Masato Kawabata, Kobe University

On behalf of the Japanese expert team, it is a great honor for me to extend my most sincere and heartfelt congratulation on the happy occasion of the opening of the project for malaria control strengthening in the Solomon Islands.

As you all know, malaria is historically a major public health issue in the Solomon Islands, causing the deterioration of economic and social development at the country level. With the background of unacceptable level of disease burden due to malaria, the Ministry of Health and Medical Services (MHMS) in the Solomon Islands requested cooperation of Japan in 2004. In response to this request, preliminary assessment and investigation were conducted in August and September 2005, and I had the opportunity to join this assessment and investigation team.

Initially, the project intends to provide overall access to malaria services in the pilot areas. Early and appropriate malaria management strategies at the primary health facilities are expected to effectively eliminate malaria cases in the area and reduce the number of malaria carriers at the same time. Therefore, the purpose of the project was stated as “effective management of malaria cases, is established at primary level facilities in Guadalcanal Province and Honiara”.

I believe that this project will further enhance mutual goodwill and friendship between Solomon Islands and
Japan in the spirit of cooperation.

**The Project has launched**

**The first Joint Coordination Committee (JCC) has held.**

*Professor Masato Kawabata, Kobe University*

The first JCC was held on 25 January 2007, 10:00-12:00 at a meeting room in SIMTRI. Participants were following:

Solomon Islands: Mr. Malefoasii (JCC chairman), Mr. Ogaoga (Representative of Project), Mr. Albee (Representative of Project), Counter part (GP, HCC, NRH, SICHE)

Japan: Professor Kawabata (Chief Advisor), Dr. Matsuguchi (Deputy Chief Advisor), Ms. Takamiya (Maintenance for Medical Equipment/ Inventory Control), Ms. Tsuda (JICA HQ), Mr. Miura (JICA Solomon Islands Office)

Some other members: Counter Part organization and WHO to observe this committee.

At the beginning, Mr. Aisom prayed for committee, followed by compliments from Mr. Bobogare and Mr. Miura.

Three-year project plan was explained, and based on this presented plan, discussion to decide for detail was held. Mr. Tsuda explained the scheme of JICA project, Mr. Kawabata gave an account of the background, basic idea and plan, and Mr. Albino introduced the detail of each year’s activity. Also, lots of questions and suggestions for the Project was given to the session.

The two parties, however, could not sign the Minutes of Meeting, which was the main purpose on this committee to be singed, on this date because of R/D issue. Other meeting was held on 26th in order to solve this issue. Continuously discussion from 25th was held, and finally the Minutes of Meeting was concluded by two parties.

**Activities Jan-Mar 2007**

**Regular Meetings with Counterparts**

*Dr. Motoyuki Matsuguchi, Deputy Chief Advisor*

Before finalizing the Inception Report at the JCC (Joint Coordinating Committee), meetings were held to discuss the detailed activities of the Malaria Control Strengthening Project between the staff of VBDCP (Alby and Boaz), HCC (Karen Sanga), GPHO (Tobani and Chris Becha) and the Japanese Project team members (Akiko and Dr. Kawabata in the photo). Sometimes the Project team members will visit the offices of SICHE, NRH, MHMS or GP in Honiara. Also other international agencies like WHO, AusAID, Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria when consulted.
One of the meetings with C/Ps to discuss the Inception Report. Library of SIMTRI, January 2007.

Facility Base Survey

Ms. Akiko Takamiya, Maintenance for Medical Equipment/ Inventory Control

The Facility Base Survey has been conducted from 29 Jan at all primary health facilities in Guadalcanal province and Honiara city area. The survey aims to investigate the facility conditions for selecting the project pilot areas and supplies and equipment to be purchased by the project. The survey staff interviewed health staff of the facilities about their accessibility, health services, operation and management, facility condition and equipment. Three survey groups were organized for this survey. The survey arrangement was done by GP and HCC. All staff has done great job although they encountered many difficulties by bad weather and topographic hurdles.

Analysis of Supplies and Equipment to be purchased

Ms. Akiko Takamiya, Maintenance for Medical Equipment/ Inventory Control

The list of supplies and equipment to be purchased by the project will be prepared in accordance with the facility base survey result. The information of the health facilities collected by the survey groups will be compiled and analyzed for considering what items are necessary for the health facilities within the project activities. The project will review the list and decide the items to be purchased. All items should be suitable and useful for each health facility.

Selection of the Pilot Areas

Mr. Albino Bobogare, Deputy Project Director

A facility base survey (FBS) for malaria diagnosis and treatment will be carried out within Guadalcanal Province and Honiara City Council in order to select the pilot areas. The project will select the target AHCs, RHCs and NAPs for the project in the pilot areas based on the FBS. All eight (8) AHCs in Guadalcanal Province will be selected for the pilot, and some RHCs and NAPs which are satellite health facilities of these AHCs will be also included.

Creation of the Curriculum and Educational Materials for the Stock Management of Medical Materials and the Utilization and Maintenance of the Malaria Diagnostic Equipment

Ms. Yukari KOGA, IEC Material Development

The Project has a plan to hold training of the stock management and equipment management this year. Referring used materials or tools for the training of the stock management of drugs, examination reagents and other medical commodities in the past courses, and for the training of the utilization and maintenance of the equipment in the past courses, the training curriculum and teaching materials will be renewed and prepared for the training session for health workers in AHCs, RHCs and NAPs.

Taskforce for the revision of malaria treatment guidelines

Dr. Motoyuki Matsuguchi, Deputy Chief Advisor
In the Solomon Islands DTC (National Drug and Therapeutics Committee), there are some subcommittees for particular drug categories. The committee for anti-malaria drugs is composed of Ms. Tash Martin (pharmacist), Dr. Jeffrey Hii (WHO), Dr. Lyndes Wini, Dr. James Auto (pediatrics), Dr. Levi Hou (obstetrics) and Dr. Tenneth Dalipanda (internal medicine). The malaria treatment guidelines were revised in October 19 last year with ACT (arthemisinin-based combination therapy) as the second line treatment. It has just obtained the approval of the Ministry of Health and Medical Services executives on February 9, 2007. The malaria working group will be the core of the taskforce for creating, on the basis of the new guidelines, materials used in practice and for training health staff (MDs, RNs, NAs and microscopists).