Nine Japanese volunteers arrived in Sri Lanka recently, with the aim of providing their expertise to improve and add value to activities carried out by various public institutions in the country. These volunteers are in Sri Lanka as a part of JICA’s ongoing Volunteer Dispatch Programme. The volunteers were introduced to their host organizations at an assigning ceremony held at the Department of External Resources, on 24th October 2012.

The nine volunteers possess a variety of skills covering several technical fields including environmental education, computer technology, physiotherapy, water quality analysis, youth activities, hairdressing/beauty-culture, Japanese language education, and football.

The volunteer who will work in the field of environmental education will be assigned to the Dehiwala-Mt. Lavinia Municipal Council in order to support its Solid Waste Management Programme. The volunteers who will work in the field of computer technology will be assigned to the Ministry of Education, and Vocational Training Authority (VTA) training center in Horana. The volunteers in the field of physiotherapy and youth activities will be assigned to the Rajanganaya Divisional Secretariat to work in support of activities relating to the National Community Based Rehabilitation Programme implemented by the Ministry of Social Services, and the volunteer in the field of water quality analysis will be assigned to the National Water Supply & Drainage Board, in order to enhance the analytical capabilities of its laboratory. A volunteer in the field of hairdressing/beauty-culture will be assigned to the VTA Kantale Center in order to enhance the skills of those following training programmes in this field that is increasingly providing job opportunities for young women. The volunteer in the field of Japanese language education will work for the National Institute of Education in order to support its Teacher Training Programme scheduled to commence this November, while the other volunteer will work in Ampara as a football coach in support of training programmes conducted by Football Federation of Sri Lanka.

The strengths of JICA’s volunteers are their practical approach to problem solving, and their grasp of local languages, which enables them to interactively communicate with the local people. These volunteers use extremely creative means of communication, which is essential for effective teaching and training. They are able to positively influence those whom they work with due to their attitudes, strong sense of discipline and high emphasis on team work. These volunteers not only transfer technical skills, but also share knowledge on cultural aspects, and most importantly, build strong and long lasting friendships with local people that outlast their stay in Sri Lanka.

The contribution by JICA’s volunteers towards development activities at grass-root level is greatly valued by those organizations that have benefited from their services. There are altogether 40 volunteers who are currently working in various parts of the country. Since the inception of JICA’s Volunteer Dispatch Programme to Sri Lanka in 1981, a total of 878 volunteers have worked in the country.

development issues in developing countries. In Sri Lanka, Japan has been providing financial and technical assistance since 1954, and is the largest donor to the country. On behalf of the people and the Government of Japan, JICA contributes towards the improvement of the lives of people in Sri Lanka.