JICA Awarded by the UN for Its Longtime Contribution as a Pioneer and Promoter of South-South Cooperation

The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) has been selected for the first time as the winner of the South-South Cooperation Award for its nearly forty-year efforts of promoting the implementation of South-South Cooperation and sharing its best practices and lessons with others at the 2012 South-South Cooperation Expo held in Vienna during November 19th to 23rd.

It is the second time JICA has received the Solution Award, after receiving the first one in 2010. This award was for the Triangular Cooperation based on the innovative experience of hospital management in Sri Lanka, and it has been implemented since 2007. The innovation is employment of Total Quality Management (TQM) method in hospital management. It made achievements in reducing neonatal infections in spite of limited human, physical and financial resources. This system of TQM was originally developed in the Japanese manufacturing industry, comprising of 5S’s organizational method (seiri (sort), seiton (set), seiso (shine), seiketsu (standardize) and shitsuke (sustain)) and kaizen (continuous quality improvement). JICA has helped systematize Sri Lankan successful experience into the 5S-KAIZEN-TQM approach as a methodological model to facilitate easier learning and adoption.

JICA, in collaboration with Sri Lanka, has worked in improving the quality of medical services in 15 countries in Africa, through this approach. JICA promotes South-South Cooperation and implements Triangular Cooperation, to create many benefits beyond transferring useful knowledge to developing countries. Not only can Triangular Cooperation solve issues in final beneficiary countries it can also help developing countries (including emerging countries) accumulate their own implementation experiences for development cooperation and build their capacity as development partner. Activities with new emerging partners have deepened mutual understanding between developing countries and Japan.

South-South Cooperation takes a form in which a developing country in the southern hemisphere supports other developing countries. In recent years, there has been an increase in interest and expectations for South-South Cooperation to supplement assistance from traditional donors, both in terms of quantity and quality.

Japan, through JICA, started promoting South-South Cooperation in Asia, Latin America and Africa in 1974, four years before BAPA ("Buenos Aires Plan of Action)
and earlier than other aid agencies. Japan values potential of South-South Cooperation that could help a country solve development challenges in an efficient and effective way, because it enables the country to take advantage of the knowledge and experiences of other countries with similar geological, linguistic, geographical, cultural, and development conditions.

If more countries engage in effective development cooperation, the quality and quantity of global development assistance will increase in the future. This factor is another reason why JICA will continue to be a strong supporter of South-South Cooperation.

*Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)* is the executing agency of Japan’s Bilateral Official Development Assistance (ODA). JICA, the world’s biggest bilateral aid agency, works in over 150 countries and regions. In accordance with its vision of “inclusive and Dynamic Development,” JICA supports the resolution of 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.