



Read Inside

- Study Tour to Egypt
- WRIC Joint Coordination Committee Assembles
- JICA's Resident Representative at INA
- Early Childhood Group Visited Jordan.

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Urban Planning for Greater Damascus

JICA Study Team on Urban Planning for Sustainable Development of Damascus Metropolitan Area arrived to Syria on Sep. 20. Next day; Study Team met Syrian Counterparts Committee, whereas; the team leader Mr. Tsuyoshi Hashimoto presented the general information about the study.

Three entities are the main counterparts' agencies in this study: Ministry of Local Administration & Environment MLAE, Damascus Governorate, and Rural Damascus Governorate; moreover, coordination and cooperation will take place with other concerned Ministries, like: Ministry of Transport, Ministry of Agriculture & Agrarian Reform, Ministry of Electricity, Ministry of Housing & Construction. Project Office will be located in Damascus Governorate Head Office.

Later, the team paid a courtesy call to State Planning Commission

SPC, where they met Dr Talal Bakfalouni- Deputy Head of SPC and Ms. Thuraya Idlebi – Director of International Cooperation Department. Next, Steering Committee Meeting was held at Ministry of Local Administration & Environment; with participation of Deputy Minister of Local Administration & Environment-Dr. Nabil Ashraf, Damascus Governor-Dr. Bishr al Saban, Rural Damascus Governor– Dr Mohammad Said



Akeel, JICA Resident Representative- Mr. Kazuhide Nagasawa and concerned staff from the Ministry, both Governorates and JICA side.

The study includes different stages. First stage that has already started in September 2006, and last stage is scheduled in March 2008.

The study aims at proposing Long Term Development Scenario, preparing Urban Development Master Plan for Damascus Metropolitan Area and Syrian Counterparts Capacity Building.





Study Tour in Egypt

One and half year passed since JICA has started its cooperation with the Ministry of Local Administration and Environment in the field of Building the Capacities of Directorates of Environment in Syria.

According to the agreement signed between JICA and the Ministry, JICA provided the necessary equipment for the project of Environment Monitoring and JICA's experts toured the Syrian DFEA where they trained the staff of the laboratories to be acquainted with the provided equipment.

To secure better utilization of the equipment and in order to get more information related to environment monitoring and inspection process JICA's experts arranged a study tour in Egypt for some of the DFEA Staff to be aware of the Egyptian experience in the field as JICA has started similar project in Egypt 8 years ago.



At JICA Egypt Office

Eleven members from GCEA, and DFEA of Aleppo, Deir Ezzor, Homs, Hama, Idleb, Quneitra, Suweida and Damascus participated in the study tour in the period from Sep.09 to 14,2006 accompanied by two JICA Syria Office staff of the environment sector and the Head of JICA experts' team.

The tour started in Cairo where the participants visited the Egyptian Environment Affairs Agency

(EEAA) and Cairo Central Center (CCC) and where they exchanged views with the head of the center who presented the activities of the Central Laboratory and the available equipment.

After that the participants had the chance to visit two Regional Branch Offices (RBO) of EEAA in Suez and Mansoura where they have practiced the environment inspection together with their Egyptian counterparts. They visited Suez Waste Water Treatment Plant to get a closer idea about water quality monitoring, and Suez Cement plant to explore air quality monitoring and inspection.



AT Suez RBO



Water Quality monitoring

In their visit to Mansoura, they paid a visit to the Electric Power Plant of "Talkha" to learn their experience in monitoring and inspection and to discuss problems related to the environmental monitoring.



At the end of the tour, the participants met JICA's expert who is working for the project in Cairo and who introduced the Project of Regional Environmental Management Improvement in order to exchange views and experiences with the Syrian project and to share lessons gained during the project's implementation period.

Finally the participants expressed their appreciation to JICA for offering them the chance to be acquainted with different experiences and activities that will help them in performing better monitoring.



One of the project's equipment

JICA's Resident Representative at INA

JICA Syria Resident Representative was invited to "Institut National d 'Administration" (INA) to present about JICA, and its activities in Syria.

Thus, on September 19th, 2006 Dr. Sam Dalah; dean of INA, received Mr. Nagasawa at INA, firstly, it has been discussed about the importance of acknowledging INA students; who will become tomorrows leaders, about the role of Technical Cooperation agencies, of which JICA, is one of the well reputed among, due to its long history, and big heritage of cooperation with the Syrian govern-

ment since 1970. INA Students, on the other side, had their chance to discuss about JICA projects' activities, its inputs, and outputs.



Mr. Nagasawa with INA Dean and staff surrounded by INA students



*Mr. Sam presenting to Mr. Nagasawa
INA's shield*

At the end of the presentation, Mr. Nagasawa received the shield of INA, and it has been agreed that such presentation would be better to become a tradition, and moreover, JICA's experts will hold presentations to disseminate their experience in their domain to tomorrows leaders.

It is worth mentioning that JICA Syria Office is receiving INA students as interns since 2005, and is willing to do the same in 2007.



WRIC Joint Coordination Committee Assembles

On August 31st WRIC project Joint Coordination Committee (JCC) was held. Headed by Mr. Nagasawa; Resident Representative of JICA in Syria, and Mr. Hussein MAKHLOUF; Director General of General Commission for Water Resources (GCWR), JCC discussed the progress and future plan of WRIC project which has started in June 2002. Since that date, many activities took place in Barada and Aawaj, and Coastal Basins, some 6 million United States Dollars was inputted by the JICA as Technical Cooperation making this project the biggest one in Syria in the meantime, and quite big compared to other JICA projects around the world. This is aside from the installation of Met-

rological and Hydrological Equipment implemented in 2003 using the Grant Aid by the Government of Japan, the value of which was 6 million dollars.



Mr. Hussein (on the right) and Mr. Nagasawa heading the committee

Project Experts and counterparts presented the activities conducted since the last JCC held last April.

In addition, the annual report 2006 was presented containing

ground water balance of Barada and Aawaj Basin, and decline of ground water table in the last 23 years (1980 – 2003) using Synthetic Storage Model (SSM). The results of which seemed quite alarming, these results are now in the hands of decision makers.

Members of JCC, on the other hand commented the presentation, and provided valuable feedback which was incorporated into the minutes of JCC, and thus, each one can say that this project is his baby.

This project will be concluded in June 2007, its achievements, and further success, wouldn't be possible without the collaboration of all sides.

Early Childhood Group Visited Jordan

Five JOCV Volunteers who work with the Women Federation's Kindergartens accompanied by Eight Syrian Counterparts and JICA Syria Office Program Officer, visited Jordan in the period from Sep 17 to 19 2006.

JICA Jordan Office arranged the schedule of the visit which contained the observation of one model Kindergarten in Amman where the participants were able to get some practical experiences and attended lectures and did practical training observed by the head of the kindergarten Ms. Bareaa Shnana on how to arrange the daily, weekly

and monthly plan, the most appropriate means for implementing these plans and how to prepare the suitable teaching halls utilizing the available tools and materials.



Participants in a visit to one of Amman Kindergartens

Another visit was to one of the Ministry of Education's KG in one Secondary school, where

there the head teacher explained about the educational methods and the way to maintain disciplinary and cleanliness.

At the end of the 3 day visit, all the participants appreciated the efforts of the organizers of this fruitful visit that will affect positively their activities in the schools.



Practical training at the kindergarten