Meeting Rural-Damascus Governor

On January 15, JICA Syria Office Resident Representative, accompanied by staff of JICA Syria Office, and Mr. Hashimoto; the team leader of Urban Development Study team, met Rural Damascus Governor to discuss issues of technical cooperation within Rural Damascus Governorate in general, and the accomplishments and ongoing activities of the project.

Apart from Sewage Master Plan Development Study, And Capacity Building of Environmental Monitoring, WRIC, and Development of Efficient Irrigation Techniques and Extension (DEITEX) Technical Cooperation Projects which include both Damascus and Rural Damascus governorate, as well as CBR Project which is mainly implemented in Rural Damascus, the Sustainable Urban Development Study is the most intensive project initiated by JICA within the region recently. Aiming at developing a sustainable planning vision using indicative planning in line with building the national capacities to sustain the planning procedure on the same level after the termination of the main project.

Local Seminar in “Investment Project Preparation and Appraisal Seminar “

In cooperation between State Planning Commission and JICA and within the framework of the program (Investment Project Preparation and Appraisal Seminar for Syrian officials), a local Seminar based on the contents of last seminar in Japan and by the ex-participants, was held in the State Planning Commission during the period 21-28 December 2006 as a preparation Seminar for the Advanced training course which will be held in Japan on 25 February 2007.

24 participants from 4 ministries attended the local seminar.

A Japanese Technical Assistance Team was dispatched to support the Syrian lecturers.

The purpose of this program is to provide the Syrian officials the opportunity to acquire enough skills and knowledge regarding the implementation of Feasibility study and appraisal of feasibility study report relating to the national public development projects.

The duration of this program is 5 years till 2009.

From left: two deputy head of SPC; Dr. Al Ashkar and Dr. Bakfaloni, Mr. Nagasawa; JICA Resident Representative, and Mr. Yamashita; JICA Expert at Mo Economy.
Fourth Training Course within DEITEX Concludes  

The training course on organizing field days was concluded. This training course is the fourth and the last course within the training activities of DEITEX projects that is dedicated for water extensionists.

Previously three training courses already concluded in the fields of: field survey, basic information on modern irrigation, and design of extension materials. This course concludes these all, and summarizes the information for the extensionists on how to illustrate the good and bad practices for the farmer, by utilizing the demonstration farms installed within the course of this project, and thus convince the farmer to adopt modern irrigation, and to change his irrigation practices if he has already installed modern irrigation system to more water saving practices.

During this course, trainees learned how to approach to the farmer in a way that he can understand, and absorb the sophisticated technical information by observation the existing model, and doing some simple calculation by himself.

The acceptance of farmers who participated to this training with their extensionists was OK, and extensionists on the other hand learned some lessons on how to organize an effective and attractive field days in the future.

DEITEX activities will continue this year, where more courses will be held aiming at developing the capacity of the water extensionists, who will form the baseline for future development acting as trainers for their colleagues.

Water Modeling Workshop

WRIC Groundwater Modelling Seminar 2006 was held on December 18th 2006, to enhance the exchange experience and knowledge, as well as the further cooperation and coordination among related organizations in the field of hydrological analysis in Syria.

This time, WRIC staff presented their modelling activities by using SSM, which include the water balance in Barada-Awaji basin and coastal basin. In their presentation, the current situation as well as the future prediction of water balance was presented, which is very useful for the future decision making in Syrian government. The result of WRIC simulation showed an approximate water deficit of 200MCM/year in Barada-Awaj basin, and approx. 3,000 (million m3/year) water excess.
found in the Coastal basin.

In addition, representatives of the relevant organisations in Syria such as the Directorate of Integrated Management of Water Resources, Water Quality Monitoring Directorate of MOI, Water Resources Directorate in Homs which has technical cooperation with the Dutch government, ACSAD, Ministry of Agriculture made presentations.

Following the presentations, very active discussion took place, which was very useful to share and exchange the information among water-related organisations in Syria.

WRIC is expected to act as the information source for the decision makers in terms of water resource information, and thus, JICA’s technical cooperation project aim at building the capacities of this centre to be able to accumulate, analyse, and issue this information in a simple, understandable form for the decision makers.

Project for Strengthening Reproductive Health in Syria

The Project for Strengthening Reproductive Health (RH) in Syria is considered the first technical cooperation in the Health Sector in Syria. It has started on June 2006 and will last until March 2009.

The project aims at increasing the utilization of Maternal and Child Health (MCH) and (RH) at Rural Public Health Facilities.

Regarding the health activities, the project focuses on improving the quality of services at the health centers, building refreshment works, trainings and provision of Equipment.

Meanwhile regarding the non-health activities the project is seeking existing various community activities to collaborate and develop such as literacy class, agricultural extension program and micro finance program.

The project site is Manbej District in Aleppo. The direct beneficiaries of the project are health staff in charge of 17 health centers and people in reproductive age in the three pilot areas (Manbej, Al Khafse and Maskaneh). While the indirect beneficiaries are the population of reproduction age in the whole Manbej District.

The uniqueness of the project is to integrate health activities and non-health activities in order to accelerate people’s RH behavior.

The Project includes Japanese consultants who are indirect contact with both the national and the community level for granting smooth implementation of the project’s activities. They have established a web site which provides updated information about the progress of the project. (URL: http://project.jica.go.jp/syria/4425009E0/en_index.html).

Junior JOCV Volunteers are expected to join the project in the future in the fields of public health and rural development.

Manbej Health Centre

Barada Spring (June 2005)
With great eagerness & enthusiasm to disseminate the knowledge & skills that have been acquired to the other Women Federation instructors, the 5 Women Federation staff who attended a training course in Japan in the field of early childhood care, held 3 workshops in Lattakia, Homs & Hama last week.

The aim of these workshops was to upgrade the performance of the Women Federation instructors by introducing them to modern educational methods & techniques that create better communication with the children who will be gradually encouraged to become more creative & self-confident.

The workshops included a presentation about the situation of the nurseries & kindergartens in Japan. Moreover, training the instructors how to make toys, theater puppies, and recycled teaching materials. in addition to children songs & stories, and many other skills that bring the pleasure and entertainment to the children by enhancing the principal of learning through playing as the most effective way to stimulate the children’s interest & curiosity.

Teachers were very glad as they were working in groups to apply what they have come upon during the practical sessions. It’s worth mentioning that the trainers will carry on holding more workshops in the other Syrian cities in order to spread & convey their experience & knowledge to all the Women Federation instructors in order to reach the overall goal which is a better childhood for Syrian children.