The JICA USA Newsletter is a bi-monthly publication which provides information on JICA’s activities in Washington, DC and around the world. If you are interested in receiving this electronic newsletter, please contact jicaus-newsletter@jica.go.jp to be added to our mailing list.

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JICA provides emergency supplies and dispatches medical and relief teams in response to the Nepal earthquakes

JICA was quick to act in the aftermath of the two devastating earthquakes that shook Nepal on April 25th and May 12th, 2015. The quakes, which were respectively of 7.8 and 7.3 magnitude, have killed over 8,500 people, left thousands more injured and half a million homeless. Thirty five out of 75 districts were affected by the earthquakes.

On April 28th, a search and rescue team comprised of 46 members arrived in Nepal from Japan and worked to support local military and police at the Krishna Mandir temple as well as in Sector K, an area in the ancient city of Bhaktapur. At the request of the Nepalese army, structural assessment experts of the rescue team conducted a seismic assessment of buildings of the former royal palace.

The following day, the dispatched medical team arrived and consulted about local medical needs and areas that required the most immediate attention. Given that the team was comprised of doctors and nurses able to meet complex medical needs, they were instrumental in supporting operations and dialysis in a hospital in Kathmandu, as well as in the village of Barhabise.
A second team of 34 medical staff of differing expertise and skills arrived on May 8th to relieve the first group. They worked closely with local doctors to ensure that past the Japanese presence, there is medical staff able to support the patients to full recovery through regular follow-ups.

JICA also committed US$210,000-worth of emergency supplies, consisting of 350 tents and 2,500 blankets. These arrived in Kathmandu on May 4th.

As the emergency relief activities draw to an end, JICA will continue carrying out seamless and effective support for the recovery and reconstruction of Nepal.

Related Links

- Report on the Activities of a Disaster Relief Team Sent to Nepal Following Earthquake
- Second Report on the Activities of a Japan Disaster Relief Team Sent to Nepal Following Earthquake

JICA President Tanaka attends UN meetings and gives keynote address at the Asia Society during trip to New York

JICA President Akihiko Tanaka visited New York from April 27th to May 1st. During his stay, he attended meetings of the 2015 Human Development Report Advisory Panel organized by the United Nations Advisory Board on Human Security (ABHS) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). He also gave a keynote address at the Asia Society, a nonprofit organization established in 1956 with the goal of mutual understanding between the people of Asia and the United States.

At an ABHS meeting held at the U.N. Headquarters, there was a report on the activities of the U.N. Human Security Unit and a debate on its future action program. Tanaka spoke about the achievements of the public forum titled "Disaster Risk Reduction and Human Security" at the Third U.N. World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction held in Sendai this March. He also participated in the discussion about its concrete action program.

On April 29th, Tanaka gave a keynote address at the Asia Society themed "Japan and the World: A New Global Strategy." Tanaka started by noting that 2015 is a very significant year for the world
Tanaka gives a keynote address at the Asia Society

and Japan as it marks 70 years since the end of World War II. He talked about the history of the United States' contributions to Japan's development after the war and Japan's subsequent contributions to Asia and the international community. Next, regarding the direction of Japan's global strategy based on the 70 years since the war, he highlighted the importance of 1) making a nonmilitary contribution to the international community, 2) the Japan-U.S. alliance, 3) supporting the strengthening of the market economy, and 4) contributing to expanding economic dynamism from the Pacific Ocean to the Indo-Pacific. Finally, Tanaka concluded by affirming that as the executing agency of Japan's official development assistance, JICA will implement cooperation with the goal of achieving “quality growth” based on “human security,” which is the guiding principle of Japan’s development cooperation.

Representatives from various countries’ governments and U.N. agencies, as well as members of the media, totaling some 90 participants, attended the event at the Asia Society. A lively discussion followed, covering Japan's emergency assistance, restoration and reconstruction activities in response to disasters, the establishment of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and a wide variety of other topics.

At the meeting of the 2015 Human Development Report Advisory Panel held at the UNDP on April 30th, Tanaka and other panel members discussed how to organize concepts for the report, themed "Rethinking Work for Human Development," as well as what direction it should take.

Related Links

- [JICA President Tanaka visits the United States](#)
- [Video of President Tanaka’s address at the Asia Society](#) (external link)
- [President Tanaka interview with Asia Blog (Asia Society)](#) (external link)

JICA USA holds briefing session on Cuba for D.C.-based Japanese expat community

For more than 50 years, JICA has maintained an active presence in Cuba, providing assistance to the Cuban people based on mutual friendship and cooperation ties that date back over 400 years.
As one of Cuba’s main development partners, Japan, through JICA, has been providing agricultural development assistance to Cuba aimed at helping this Caribbean nation increase its food productivity in general, and its self-sufficiency in rice production, in particular. JICA has also been supporting Cuba’s socio-economic development through the provision of environmental conservation and health care-related cooperation. To this end, in recent years, JICA has supported projects designed to help Cuba improve its groundwater and seawater intrusion management capacity. JICA has also increased the technical skills of Cuban technicians responsible for the maintenance of medical equipment.

JICA’s long history of engagement with Cuba puts the Agency in a privileged position to serve as a source of understanding on Cuba and its people, as well as an ideal partner for Japanese companies wanting to explore business opportunities in the largest island of the Greater Antilles. For JICA, the opportunity to act as a bridge between the people of Cuba and Japan couldn’t have arrived at a more propitious time.

After all, Japan has positively responded to the recent wave of enhanced engagement between members of the international community and Cuba. In this context, on the heels of the historical visit paid by Japanese Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida to Cuba from April 30 to May 3, 2015, in which he announced (external link), inter alia, the “initiation of full-fledged grant aid” from Japan to Cuba and the “strengthening of economic relations” between both countries, JICA USA on May 14, 2015 hosted a briefing session on Cuba for representatives of the Washington, D.C.-based Japanese expat community.

Led by Mr. Akio Saito, Deputy Director General, Latin America and the Caribbean Department, JICA, this public session was envisioned as a unique chance to brief Japanese expats on the latest business, diplomatic and cooperation developments associated with Japan-Cuba relations. More than 40 people, including representatives from Japanese companies with offices in Washington, D.C., Japanese journalists accredited in the U.S., and trade union representatives from Japan, attended this briefing session.

Following Mr. Saito’s informative overview of the historical, economic and diplomatic relations between Japan and Cuba, participants asked further questions and learned more about JICA’s keen intention to augment its assistance to Cuba, all in line with the announcements made by Foreign Minister Kishida on behalf of the government of Japan. Audience members welcomed this news.

1 Up to 2013, cumulative assistance from Japan to Cuba reached some 53.69 billion Japanese yen (annual assistance currently averages 3 to 4 billion yen).
and eagerly requested additional information related to specific industries and/or potential business opportunities with Cuba from which Japanese companies could benefit in the future.

With the goal of promoting even stronger friendship and cooperation ties between the peoples of Japan, Latin America and beyond, JICA USA intends to convene similar sessions in the future on subjects tailored to the specific information needs of members of the Japanese business community in Washington, D.C., as well as our American friends and partners.

Related links:

- JICA President Holds Talks with Vice-President of the Cuban Council of Ministers
- JICA’s activities in Cuba

### JICA supports Ebola preparedness in Burkina Faso and Sudan

Neither Burkina Faso nor Sudan has reported cases of Ebola, but JICA is working with local communities and medical authorities to reduce risks of the virus spreading in these countries.

The West African country of Burkina Faso is close to the three countries that have been victims of the virus. As such, authorities had already taken proactive measures, such as banning the sale of bushmeat and implementing border controls. Even so, the threat of infection in neighboring Mali, a lack of awareness about the disease and potential dangers presented by migrant workers from countries whose economies were ravaged by the virus puts Burkina Faso at risk.

JICA has leveraged its School Management Committee Support Project, which promotes transparent elementary school management and better quality education, as an avenue through which to raise awareness of Ebola. With most of the committee members being volunteer residents who have gained the trust of local communities, they are ideally positioned to share vital information related to the speed of infection, symptoms, high death rates, and how to dispose of bodies. Four core instructors received an initial training and went on to train 496 school inspectors as community level instructors in four administrative regions that border countries with Ebola outbreaks. The community level instructors then trained 14,875 educational committee members, including the principals of 3,764 elementary schools, as community awareness raisers. Educational materials were prepared in both Dioula and French.
In Sudan, JICA, with technical expertise from Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), supported trainings organized by the Preparedness and Response to Epidemic Disease Directorate in the Federal Ministry of Health in Sudan. A first workshop was conducted at the Khartoum International Airport for 31 medical and public health professionals, and a second was offered at the Khartoum Teaching Hospital for 19 medical team members working at isolation centers located in the hospital.

The two-day intensive course covered information on Ebola detection and control, including lectures on epidemic updates, clinical features of Ebola, case definition and management, contact tracing, surveillance. There were hands-on components as well, including group exercises on dressing and undressing of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), disinfection of a PPE and ambulance, waste disposal and dead body management. Participants also did a simulation in which they had to safely transport a suspected Ebola patient from a plane to an isolation center.

Community engagement was also an important part of the preparedness efforts in Sudan. JICA worked with UNICEF and the Health Promotion Directorate of the Federal Ministry of Health to organize a workshop for over 50 health promoters from all 18 states.

JICA is also still supporting those countries that have been battling the virus and has dispatched an additional expert to Sierra Leone through the World Health Organization.

Related Links

- JICA Project Helps Dispel Ignorance About Ebola in Burkina Faso
- Dispatch of Expert in Response to Ebola Outbreak in West Africa
- JICA Provides Support for Ebola Preparedness in Sudan

Training participants in Sudan learn how to properly sort and handle travelers on an airplane.