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.

In this issue:

- World Tsunami Awareness Day: JICA hosts a three-day disaster risk seminar
- JICA emphasizes the importance of private sector partnerships at the Japan-LAC Business Forum
- JICA Vice President speaks at CSIS’s Quality Infrastructure Event
- JDR Medical Team receives certification from the World Health Organization
- The Second High-level Meeting on Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC) highlights Triangular Cooperation

World Tsunami Awareness Day: JICA hosts a three-day disaster risk seminar

Coinciding with the debut of World Tsunami Awareness Day, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)’s Indonesia Office and the Indonesian province of Aceh, hosted a three-day tsunami risk reduction seminar from November 3-5. World Tsunami Awareness Day, celebrated on November 5, was established last December through a designation from the UN General Assembly. The newly designated day calls on all countries and international bodies to raise awareness for tsunami risks and share innovative approaches to risk reduction.

While tsunamis are rare, they are extremely deadly. In the past 100 years, 58 tsunamis claimed the lives of more than 260,000 civilians – accounting for over 4,600 lives lost per tsunami. This means that when a tsunami strikes, more lives are taken in that instance than in any other singular natural disaster event.

This year, as tribute to the first-ever World Tsunami Awareness Day, JICA staff in Indonesia hosted a seminar that highlighted the dangers caused by tsunamis around the
world. They shared their insight with local communities on how to heighten their preparedness to reduce costs and damage associated with the disasters. Specifically, the seminar focused on first building awareness and understanding about the deadliness of tsunamis, and then discussed methods to provide more robust preparedness measures like constructing disaster resilient infrastructure by employing Japan’s “Build Back Better” mentality.

The seminar builds upon the Government of Japan and JICA’s longstanding history of helping communities in Indonesia recover and rebuild after natural disasters. In 2004, when a 9.1 magnitude earthquake hit the west coast of Sumatra and resulted in a series of devastating tsunamis along the Indonesian coasts of the Indian Ocean, the Government of Japan, through JICA, immediately stepped in to deliver emergency relief supplies to the badly afflicted communities. As a part of JICA’s response, large sums of emergency relief goods were dispatched to the capital of the Aceh province in Indonesia, Banda Aceh, where approximately 70,000 lives had been lost. JICA provided further assistance by partnering with the Indonesian Government to establish a recovery plan and helped to rebuild its infrastructure to prevent a repeat of similar damage.

It is the hope of JICA that its partnership with the Government of Indonesia and its communities will make Indonesia more prepared for decades to come. Over the years, JICA has had great success in helping nations better prepare for the disasters of the future. Over 50 years ago, the nation of Chile was struck by the infamous Valdivia earthquake and tsunami, which took approximately 5,000 lives. In response to this tragedy, JICA partnered with Chile’s National Emergency Office of the Ministry of the Interior and Public Security, better known as ONEMI, to employ tsunami mitigation and preparedness techniques, like developing an early-warning system for tsunami detection. ONEMI proceeded to utilize the techniques learned from its partnership with JICA, and recently was awarded the inaugural Hamaguchi Award for the organization’s clear contribution to the field of coastal disaster risk reduction technology.
JICA President Shinichi Kitaoka provides opening remarks at the Japan-LAC Business Forum

On November 1, the President of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), Dr. Shinichi Kitaoka, provided an opening address for the two-day Japan-Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) Business Forum. The Forum, which was hosted in Tokyo by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) from November 1-2, served as an opportunity to expand and fortify commercial ties between Japan and LAC countries. The event served as fertile ground to discuss beneficial investments for emerging markets, trade opportunities, and future innovation and entrepreneurship collaborations amongst high ranking government officials and private sector leaders from both Japan and the LAC region.

In his opening remarks, President Kitaoka emphasized two key points regarding the future of sustainable development projects in the LAC region. First, he underscored the importance of procuring private sector investments for future economic and business developments in the region. While Japan has served as one of the most valuable sources of foreign direct investment to LAC countries, the role of Official Development Assistance (ODA) and public sector financing has become an ever-dwindling proportion in an ever-growing financial pie. In response to these circumstances, President Kitaoka called upon Japanese companies, and their representatives sitting in the room, to take a higher level of interest in LAC development projects to ensure stronger private sector financial flows that will escalate commercial development in the region.

Second, the President also highlighted the increased importance of developing and transferring advanced technology solutions to help LAC growth. In his speech, President Kitaoka stressed that JICA would work at the forefront of these collaborations by sharing Japanese technical expertise and advanced technologies in partnership with key communities, like the Japanese diaspora, to improve economic infrastructure outcomes. Additionally, he outlined how Japan’s technical expertise and technologies can further help
JICA USA Newsletter – November/December 2016

contribute to respond to universal goals like stemming climate change and reducing disaster risks.

In addition to President Kitaoka’s remarks, JICA’s Senior Vice President, Mr. Hidetoshi Irigaki, participated as a panelist for one of the four panels of the Forum. During the “Plenary Session I: Quality Infrastructure Investment” event, Mr. Irigaki underscored the value of measuring each project’s “inclusiveness, sustainability, and resiliency” to ensure quality infrastructure development across LAC projects. To speak to the investors’ roles in pursuing quality infrastructure investments, Mr. Irigaki highlighted some of JICA’s efforts in this field. In particular, he spoke at length about JICA’s Co-financing for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (CORE) program to support energy investments to mitigate climate change impacts in the LAC region. He also spoke about JICA’s financial and technical cooperation efforts to expand the use of public-private investments for development projects.

As of April 2016, the IDB and JICA expanded their co-financing arrangement and added a line to emphasize investing in quality infrastructure as part of its CORE objectives and framework. In the continuing months, JICA looks forward to working closely with its development partners, including private businesses, to pursue sustainable quality infrastructure in LAC countries.

**JICA Vice President speaks at CSIS’s Quality Infrastructure Event**

On December 15, at an event hosted by the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) in Washington, D.C., JICA Vice President for ODA Loans and Private Sector Partnership, Mr. Junichi Yamada, outlined JICA’s efforts to promote quality infrastructure investments in developing countries.

JICA is the primary government agency responsible for Japan’s Official Development Assistance (ODA) with an annual budget of about $25 billion, of which a major proportion is allocated to quality infrastructure projects in developing countries. As part of its project practice,
JICA also transfers its infrastructure operations and maintenance technologies to the partner countries.

As part of his presentation, Mr. Yamada spoke about the importance of building quality infrastructure to help achieve JICA’s vision of providing inclusive, dynamic development in countries across the world. He noted that investing in quality infrastructure projects results in many positive outcomes like spurring job creation by hiring people from local communities, improving the investment climate, and transferring advanced technologies to assist with further economic growth. Mr. Yamada also detailed some of the ways that quality infrastructure projects can help better achieve global environment and climate goals, in addition to reducing life-cycle costs associated with infrastructure projects.

In the ASEAN countries, for example, JICA has supported quality infrastructure investments like the construction of ports, roads, and bridges along the ASEAN East-West Corridor and its South Corridor. Furthermore, Mr. Yamada noted that JICA also helped improve the distribution of goods in ASEAN countries by supporting the establishment of a single window system for customs procedures. The newly integrated system allows multiple ASEAN countries to assimilate their customs procedures and regulations to ensure standardized customs measures.

To conclude his remarks, Mr. Yamada emphasized the importance of capacity-building for service delivery, stating that capacity building is important for the planning, procurement, and implementation stages of infrastructure projects.

JICA recognizes that investing in quality infrastructure projects is essential to realizing developing countries’ visions of international development. Therefore, JICA will continue to promote investing in projects that have low life-cycle costs and encompass other quality infrastructure metrics.

**JDR Medical Team receives a certification from the World Health Organization**

Only one year after JICA’s Japan Disaster Relief (JDR) Infectious Diseases Response Team was established, a team of Japanese medical experts joined a short list of international health professionals to pass a certification to serve as a World Health Organization (WHO) expert in infectious diseases. The team was presented with the recognition for their contribution to global health and their dedication to improving public health in affected areas. This achievement underscores JICA’s commitment to supporting international efforts in the fight against infectious diseases.
JICA USA Newsletter – November/December 2016

Organization (WHO) Emergency Medical Team.

The certificate, which was awarded by the WHO Director-General Margaret Chan on October 11, verifies that the JDR Medical Team has met the WHO’s high quality standards to be dispatched across the world during emergency situations. To date, six teams, two from Russia and one each from Japan, China, Australia, and Israel have been certified. Given that medical teams with varying skill-sets and capabilities are flown in to help with emergency responses when a disaster strikes or an outbreak flares, this classification helps provide standardized metrics to help monitor and ensure the highest quality medical services are provided to patients. By individually certifying medical teams, the WHO has banded together some of the best and brightest medical professionals to be ready at a moment’s notice to provide critical care and respond to emergencies.

Additionally, as a verified WHO Emergency Medical Team, the Japanese medical professionals have been added to the WHO’s global registry. This registry can be used by governments and international organizations to learn about the scope and specialties of each of the country teams. By using the global registry, governments and organizations alike can gather information to better assign appropriate tasks to each of the teams to deliver more effective emergency medical services.

As of October, the JDR Medical Team has been formally classified as EMT Type I and Type 2 capable of providing an emergency field hospital for disaster response and to provide specialist cells for kidney dialysis and surgery. The certification followed an eight-month application and peer review period,
where a team of evaluators from the WHO came to Tokyo to personally review the qualifications of the JDR Medical Team.

As a WHO-classified Emergency Medical Team, these Japanese doctors have proven their commitment to the international guiding principles for patient care, as well as a high-level adherence and capability to implement robust international standards.

The Second High-level Meeting on Global Partnership for Effective Economic Development Cooperation (GPEDC) highlights Triangular Cooperation

Between November 28 to December 1, representatives from governments, international organizations, the private sector, civil society groups, local governments, and trade unions gathered at the Kenyatta International Convention Center in Nairobi, Kenya in the context of the second high-level meeting on Global Partnership for Effective Economic Development Cooperation (GPEDC).

The four-day meeting comprised of forums, workshops, director-level meetings, panels, and an impressive array of side-events focused on advancing the effectiveness of development efforts to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Of the various activities, JICA co-organized a side event on December 1 called “Scaling up Triangular Cooperation for implementation of the SDGs” with the help of the Government of Mexico, Global Affairs Canada, the International Network for Bamboo and Rattan (INBAR), and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

As one of the speakers of the discussion panel, JICA’s Director for the Global Issues and Development Partnership Office, Mr. Shohei Hara, highlighted the importance of expanding the use of South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation methods, particularly in regard to civil society organizations and private sector groups.
While South-South cooperation focuses on exchanging resources between developing countries, triangular cooperation allows more developed countries to provide support for the partnerships between less developed countries. Although the concept of triangular cooperation has gained some traction in recent years, the scale of triangular development cooperation is still rather limited compared to traditional North-South cooperation or South-South cooperation.

As such, Mr. Hara offered his insight on how development partners can work together to enhance the effectiveness of triangular initiatives and capitalize on this mode to accelerate toward achieving the SDGs. At the event, Mr. Hara shed light on how long-term commitments for capacity development and the establishment of Centres for Excellence – partnerships that foster information and resource sharing between countries – can play a key role in this effort. Specifically, he emphasized that triangular initiatives can be especially useful in fragile contexts, where neighboring states often have better insight on how to best assist with reconstruction efforts.

To exemplify the successes of triangular initiatives, Mr. Hara pulled from samples of JICA’s numerous programs, including its Better Hospital Service Program that improves health service quality through Centres of Excellence in Sri Lanka and Tanzania. This health program has established a process for African beneficiary countries to learn good practices from more developed countries to change their approach for effective management and better hospital care.

As JICA continues to promote and pursue more triangular cooperation projects, it looks forward to working closely its international partners to scale up these efforts.