



Feature *New* JICA

efforts are being made to review the current state of ODA against the background of economic difficulties. Improvements in strategies, flexibility, transparency, and efficiency, as well as the promotion of broad public participation in ODA projects, have become primary tasks. The “New ODA Charter” (page 28) that was issued in August 2003 includes policies associated with the implementation framework, including collaboration between the government and implementing agencies and strengthening field operations, in addition to new issues and areas such as public participation and peacebuilding.

Refugee camp in Afghanistan ©JICA/Yoshino Oishi

The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) became an independent administrative institution on October 1, 2003, after ending nearly thirty years as a special public institution of the government.

With the start of the “New JICA,” we have reviewed the current state of programs/organizations starting with the basics, and are promoting self-reform for the purpose of creating an organization that is trusted both within Japan and by the international community.

Conditions Surrounding Development Assistance

Domestic and international conditions of development assistance have changed dramatically in recent years.

In the midst of globalization, disparities in living conditions among the people of the world have widened and poverty has become an increasingly serious issue. Global development issues such as the environment and infectious diseases have not been sufficiently addressed. In addition, various

regional and international conflicts including Afghanistan and Iraq have made us realize the need for cooperation to consolidate peace and nation-building.

Under these circumstances, donor* countries and agencies are trying to promote cooperation under common development goals and strategies. In particular, the declaration of the United Nations Millennium Summit in 2000 was followed by the adoption of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)* in 2001. These goals are taken seriously by the international community as important goals which they intend to achieve through concerted efforts in the areas of poverty alleviation, basic education, and health and medical care.

When turning our attention to domestic conditions, more

Transformation into an Independent Administrative Institution

Meanwhile, the government has worked to reform special public institutions as part of its domestic administrative reforms. A decision to transform JICA into an independent administrative institution was endorsed by the Cabinet in December 2001, and the law that addresses the establishment of the New JICA was enacted in November 2002 at the 155th National Assembly.

The independent administrative institution is a corporate body system, which is established as a pillar of the reforms for central administrative institutions. Based on this system, a corporate body is now expected to provide more efficient and flexible administrative services with a clear distinction of roles between the corporate body and the government. New JICA needs to carry out programs more autonomously, effectively, and efficiently with an aim to achieve mid-term objectives set by the government and at the same time reveal its management more transparently by disclosing the process and results to the public.

Operation Management of the New JICA

The New JICA will operate according to the Law Concerning the General Rules of Independent Administrative Institutions in addition to the law that established the New JICA.

Rules stipulated in the Law Concerning the General Rules of Independent Administrative Institutions are designed under the principle of keeping government involvement to a minimum and providing optimum discretion to corporate agencies at the stage of implementation. Specifically, mid-term objectives management and ex-post evaluation will be the basis of the project operations in line with mid-term objectives and plans; and general management, which is conducted by a competent minister thus far, will be abolished in principle.

The guideline defines the management responsibility of the new institution more clearly than that of the present special public institution; and at the same time, this enables project management to be more efficient and flexible.

New JICA will basically assume the following operations, except in urgent cases.

● Operation

Every three to five years

- Presentation of mid-term objectives by the Minister for Foreign Affairs
- Preparation of a mid-term plan by JICA, and authorization by the Minister for Foreign Affairs
- Performance evaluation concerning mid-term objectives carried out by the Evaluation Committee of

Independent Administrative Institution established by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

- Review and appropriate measures for JICA's administration and activities by the Minister for Foreign Affairs

Every Fiscal Year

- Submission of Annual Plan from JICA to Minister for Foreign Affairs
- Autonomous project management by JICA
- Performance evaluation by the Evaluation Committee of Independent Administrative Institution established by Ministry of Foreign Affairs

(Note) The Evaluation Committee of Independent Administrative Institution commissioned by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is a third-party institution established within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in order to evaluate the performance of independent administrative institutions, over which the Ministry of Foreign Affairs holds jurisdiction.

● Information Disclosure

Independent administrative institutions are required to maintain transparency. The Law Concerning the General Rules of Independent Administrative Institutions stipulates that the institutions and competent ministries should disclose all of the following information on their homepage, etc.

- Mid-term objectives/mid-term plans/annual plans
- Project report
- Result of performance evaluation
- Items relating to the executive officers
- Financial statement
- Benefits/salaries, etc.

Reform

Based on the conditions surrounding development assistance and the principles of the independent administrative institutions, JICA will strive to transform itself. JICA held an Advisory Panel for Transformation into an Independent Administrative Institution, a private advisory body to JICA's president, from June to October 2002. The panel provided various recommendations on reform issues for JICA from the viewpoint of the public and taxpayers. JICA, having taken these recommendations into account, now places importance on the following four points as pillars and promotes these reforms: (1) results-orientation/efficiency, (2) transparency/accountability*, (3) public participation, and (4) peacebuilding assistance.



Refugee children living in a suburb of Trinco, Sri Lanka

1. Results-orientation/Efficiency

1) Results-oriented Programs

In recent years, JICA has strongly promoted the introduction and enforcement of a country- and issue-specific approach, which is a framework of coordinating cooperation programs that involve different project types and fields by making plans on a country or issue basis. In fiscal 1999, in order to consolidate this approach fundamentally, JICA implemented organizational and operational reforms through the establishment of regional departments and the introduction of plans for the implementation of country-specific projects.

The current norm in the international community is coordination to solve issues (education, infectious diseases, environment, etc.) specific to developing countries represented

by the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and, domestically, emphasis is given to the necessity of more strategic ODA.

Under these circumstances, the importance of a country- and issue-specific approach is becoming increasingly dominant. Taking the opportunity to become an independent administrative institution, JICA intends to promote results-oriented project management by reinforcing this approach. To be more specific, the following reforms will be implemented.

First, the function of overseas offices will be strengthened in order to respond to local needs promptly and appropriately. In order to make the country- and issue-specific approach more effective, it is necessary to maintain constant communi-

Advisory Panel for Transformation into an Independent Administrative Institution

In the course of proceeding with reforms for becoming an independent administrative institution, JICA realized the necessity of external opinions from intellectuals in view of the public and taxpayers about current situations, problems, and the future state of JICA. Thus, an Advisory Panel for Transformation into an Independent Administrative Institution, which is a private advisory body to JICA's president, was set up in June 2002. At the four meetings of the panel, ten committee members expressed opinions covering a broad range of themes, including new priority issues such as public participation, peacebuilding, and ideal ways of evaluation and public relations, as well as human resources development. The outline of the discussions is available on JICA's homepage (<http://www.jica.go.jp/>).

● Major opinions

- JICA should become an organization that exercises an intellectual leadership in international cooperation. To this end, JICA should make efforts on the formation of an intellectual international network through friends and persons of Japanese ancestry in developing countries. It should also enhance public outreach and try to disseminate more information regarding the overall assistance provided by Japan.
- The disadvantage of JICA is the prolonged decision-making process and lack of flexibility. Although this may be associated with self-discretionary power, JICA should make efforts to manage projects promptly and flexibly with an emphasis on achieving goals, after becoming an independent administrative institution.
- There is a security issue that limits JICA's involvement in peacebuilding efforts on a broader scale. Safety

issues should be based on public opinion to some extent; however, it is important to keep in mind that if you became entrenched in the conventional concept, it might limit the scope of projects, and you might lose touch with the realities of the world.

- A new point of view is necessary for the independent administrative institution, not from the view of how to make citizens participate in JICA's projects, but what JICA can do to build foundations so that people may participate in international cooperation when they wish to do so.

■ List of panel members (without titles; positions are at the time of the establishment of the panel)

- Yasushi Akashi
(The Chairman of the Japan Center for Conflict Prevention)
- Mitsuya Araki
(President of the International Development Journal Co., Ltd.)
- Michio Ito (Secretary General, Japan NGO Activity Center for International Cooperation: JANIC)
- Hiroshi Kadota
(International Cooperation Group Manager of Japan Kaidanren)
- Etsuko Kita (Professor, International Public Health, Japan Red Cross Kyushu International College of Nursing)
- Keiko Kiyama (Secretary General of JEN)
- Atsushi Kusano
(Professor, Faculty of Policy Management, Keio University)
- Kanna Kozu (Writer)
- Keizo Nakamura
(Full-time auditor of Mainichi Newspaper Company)
- Hiromitsu Muta
(Professor, Faculty of Engineering, Tokyo Institute of Technology)

cation with the recipient government, other donors and agencies in the cooperation field, and reflect the results on country-specific strategies and project formulation. From this viewpoint, the ODA Task Forces comprising local diplomatic missions and implementing agencies were established in many recipient countries as recommended in the Liberal Democratic Party's Concrete Measures for More Understandable ODA. As a member of these task forces, JICA is reviewing its organizational structure for the purpose of delegating greater authority to overseas offices in order to contribute to the formulation of aid plans and projects.

Along with strengthening the capacity of the overseas offices, the structure of regional departments of the headquarters will be reviewed. A framework will be structured in such a way that the regional departments, in cooperation with overseas offices, can select country-specific priority issues and formulate comprehensive cooperation plans to address those issues more effectively.

Furthermore, the framework of issue-specific approach will be strengthened. Basic policies for 24 tasks were laid out as a guideline for issue-specific projects. However, the organization framework itself should be restructured from the perspective of more efficient accumulation and effective utilization of expertise and experience. Therefore, the current organizational framework based on project modality will be reviewed. Preparation is being made toward the establishment of issue-specific departments.

As far as methods of implementing projects are concerned, components such as dispatch of experts and acceptance of training participants will be flexibly combined so that results-

oriented programs will be implemented in the most effective way to solve the development issues of recipient countries.

In addition, in the process of doing so, JICA will adopt different methods of implementation such as selecting competent personnel from broader areas of resources and consigning the execution of whole projects so that the power, creativity, and expertise of the private sector including NGOs will be fully utilized.

2) Efficiency

JICA tried to improve efficiency in the past, but it will endeavor to promote efficiency in a more thorough manner while working on the maintenance and improvement of the quality of projects using numerical targets.

Specifically, we aim for unit cost reduction in activities such as dispatching experts, accepting training participants, and dispatching study missions. We will also simplify and expedite clerical procedures by reviewing the institutional decision-making processes, as well as procurement and accounting systems from all directions.

Many efforts made from a results-oriented perspective will also contribute to efficiency; for example, abolishing project-specific departments will eliminate some overlapping operations, and transfer of authorization to overseas offices will accelerate decision-making.

2. Transparency/Accountability

1) Provision of Information

Since most of JICA's projects are carried out in developing countries and its activities are not familiar to the public, it has worked actively on the provision of information.



Skill training for demobilized soldiers in Eritrea

Information covering broad areas is open to the public on the homepage, etc.; specifically, basic information about ongoing projects, summary sheets of comprehensive evaluations including ex-ante, terminal, and ex-post evaluations of technical cooperation projects. Full text of research and study reports, results of various forms of project, and contract information are also available.

The New JICA will work harder to provide more prompt and understandable information by improving information provision such as the method for describing evaluation results and timing of disclosure, as well as a full revision of the homepage.

2) Reinforcement/Expansion of Evaluation

As a means of improving the quality of ODA and ensuring transparency, the importance of evaluation is becoming clearer. JICA has reinforced project evaluation for the past several years. At the start of the independent administrative institution, JICA will improve the objectivity of the evaluation, increase the number of projects to be evaluated, and improve ways for disclosing the evaluation results.

● Improvement of the Objectivity of the Evaluation

With an emphasis on establishing a consistent process from ex-ante to ex-post evaluations, JICA has compiled a guideline concerning systematic evaluation methods (Guideline for JICA Project Evaluation). Ex-ante evaluations on technical cooperation projects, development studies, and grant aid programs (basic design studies) started in fiscal 2001. Ex-post project-specific evaluations on technical cooperation projects and grant aid programs (basic design studies*) started in fiscal 2002 at overseas offices.

An External Advisory Committee on Evaluation was established to improve the objectivity of evaluation in fiscal

2002. With recommendations from members of this committee, a review on evaluation systems and methods is underway. Secondary evaluations of some of the results of JICA's internal assessment are delegated to the Committee. In this way, JICA works to improve the quality of evaluation.

● Expansion of Evaluations

From the view of accountability as an independent administrative institution, it is necessary to conduct evaluations on the programs that have not been evaluated previously; for example, Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers and Japan Disaster Relief Team. The process is now at the preparatory stage with the External Advisory Committee on Evaluation providing the necessary advice.

● Improvement of Ways to Disclose Evaluation Results

Evaluation results are disclosed to the public through the homepage or the Annual Evaluation Report. JICA works on improving the method of information provision for more prompt and understandable information.

As far as speed is concerned, we will try to reduce the time taken in preparation for disclosure, and in addition to ex-ante evaluation, terminal and ex-post evaluation will be disclosed on the homepage immediately after they are completed.

In order to provide more comprehensible information, appropriate evaluation indexes have been designed for evaluation tables, and unfavorable results and external factors are clearly described in general terms. The Annual Evaluation Reports will also be drastically revised so that they become message-oriented reports.

3. Public Participation

The participation of various organizations such as NGOs, universities, local governments, and private companies in

Programs Newly Included for Evaluation

1) Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers

In line with the recommendations of a research study called "the JICA Volunteer Projects in the 21st Century," evaluations are conducted from fiscal 2003 on a trial basis and in a step-by-step manner after conducting research on evaluation framework (evaluation items, index, evaluation method, etc). In an attempt to assure the objectivity of the evaluation, results will be described in numerical figures as much as possible by conducting questionnaires and interviews on items, including the level of satisfaction of recipient countries and participants, mutual understanding, and contribu-

tion to social return activities.

2) Japan Disaster Relief Team

Based on the experimental evaluation study carried out in fiscal 2001 and 2002, a Guideline for the Evaluation of the Japan Disaster Relief Team, which includes evaluation policies and methods, was compiled and adopted in fiscal 2003. Major items are known as "STOP": specifically, "speed", "target group", "operation", and "presence." Indexes including target figures such as "arriving at the site within 24 hours of the decision to dispatch (in case of rescue team)" will be applied.

ODA programs not only contribute to the implementation of effective programs by bringing together the wisdom of Japan, but also increase public understanding of ODA.

Public interest in international cooperation and volunteer activities has increased rapidly in recent years. Such grass-roots cooperation contributes greatly to the cultivation of citizens with international views and to the stimulation of regional society in Japan.

From these points of view, broad-based public participation in ODA is needed in the future as well. The New JICA, while reinforcing ties with citizens, will place "public participation" as an important pillar of its programs.

1) Promotion of Public Participatory Programs

Under such a concept, JICA will increase opportunities for the public to participate in various projects and promote these public participatory programs more actively, including JICA Partnership Programs and Volunteer Dispatch Programs.

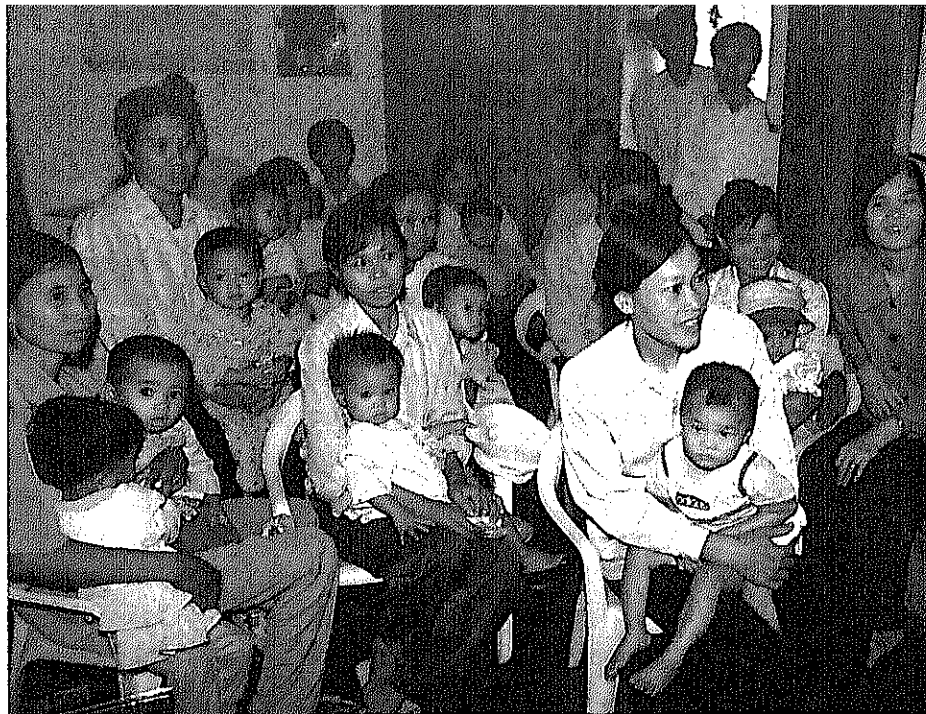
● JICA Partnership Program

In fiscal 2002, JICA dissolved the Partnership Program with NGOs, Local Governments and Institutes and Grassroots Partnership Program with NGOs, Local Governments and Institutes, which had been typical programs involving conventional cooperative projects with NGOs, and then established the JICA Partnership Program. This is a program for the dispatch or acceptance of personnel in response to public proposals. The New JICA will promote this program as a means of facilitating and promoting "cooperative activities of citizens, etc.," treating it on the same legal basis as Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers and Senior Volunteers.

● Volunteer Dispatch Program

The effectiveness and efficiency of the Volunteer Dispatch Programs through which Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers and Senior Volunteers are sent will be improved while taking advantage of the transformation into an independent administrative institution to respond steadily to the needs of the public, volunteers, and recipient countries.

Specifically, program reforms will be examined, including the diversification of new participatory schemes: for example, an increase in the number of dispatched short-term volunteers and extension to new areas and occupations, and revision of



Infant checkups, nutrition education, and training for grass-roots nurses as a measure to prevent the malnutrition of children in Viet Nam

classification by age groups of Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (20 to 39 year-olds) and Senior Volunteers (40 to 69 year-olds).

2) Reinforcement of Functions of the Information Desk of International Cooperation

JICA will work on the provision of broad information, activity support, and human resources development through 18 domestic offices such as international centers and branch offices as centers of public participation in international cooperation so that more people will be able to understand ODA and will have opportunities to participate in it.

● Provision of Information/Activity Support

With the recent nationwide establishment of JICA Plaza at international centers and branch offices and an increase in the number of coordinators for international cooperation, JICA has reinforced its support for the provision of information and international cooperation activities. By upgrading Programs to Support Citizen Participation in International Cooperation, which started last year, JICA will facilitate necessary assistance (staff training, seminars, etc.) so that the enthusiasm of individuals, organizations, and local governments that carry out community-based international cooperation activities throughout Japan will be transformed into actions.

The NGO-JICA Japan Desk was set up last year and full-time coordinators in five overseas offices were allocated there. The Desk provides Japanese NGOs with basic local information, aid-related information, and information necessary for local activities and carries out operations required to link with JICA overseas offices. The number of offices for the Desk will be increased to 14 by the end of fiscal 2003.

Based on recommendations made by the Second Consultative Committee on ODA Reform, the Human

Resources Information Center for International Cooperation will be established and start providing services. This center will provide information on training and job openings in JICA and other international cooperation-related organizations (United Nations, NGOs, etc.) to those who have enthusiasm and interest in participating in international cooperation.

● Human Resources Development

In recent years, JICA has been placing efforts in human resources development from a broader perspective. Rather than simply securing manpower for JICA's activities, promoting public participation in overall international cooperation is considered important. Specifically, in addition to training to support international cooperation promoted by local governments, in fiscal 2001 JICA launched the NGO Capacity Building Program to provide training in methods and skills in international cooperation and long-term domestic training at graduate schools. This program reinforces the organizational framework of NGOs.

In order to nurture future leaders of international cooperation and promote further international cooperation with public participation, JICA is actively involved in programs in support of development education in the school curriculum. The Salmon Campaign, which dispatches JICA employees and former JOCVs to educational facilities, has grown dramatically as the introduction of comprehensive studies in the curriculum. Fiscal 2002 resulted in 1,937 lectures for 220,000 students.

4. Peacebuilding Assistance

In the wake of the end of various international conflicts in recent years, such as those in Afghanistan and Iraq, international and domestic expectations for ODA's role in the area of assistance for peacebuilding—consolidation of peace and nation-building—have increased.

Utilizing its expertise and experience as a development aid agency, JICA has promoted cooperation in the field of peacebuilding assistance in Cambodia, East Timor, and Afghanistan. In Afghanistan, in particular, JICA restored schools and medical institutions, dispatched more than 360 experts in fields ranging from TV media to establishment of a constitution, and accepted 68 training participants as of March 2003.

New JICA's policy is to promote such peacebuilding assistance even further, and it will reinforce the framework and systems necessary to do so. To clarify this policy in the law regarding the establishment of the New JICA, the purpose

of the establishment of the institution is stipulated as "contributing to the socioeconomic development or reconstruction" of developing regions, etc.

1) Reinforcement of Developing and Securing Human Resources

In the area of peacebuilding assistance, there are few human resources with sufficient expertise as of yet. Reinforcement of developing and securing human resources is a major task for promoting support in this area more actively.

Therefore, in May 2003, JICA formulated a basic plan for developing and securing human resources with the focus on acquiring expertise in this field. Based on this plan, training related to peacebuilding assistance has been upgraded using external training courses such as those offered by international organizations. At the same time, JICA will promote the registration of human resources through the Human Resources Information Center for International Cooperation.

2) Reinforcement of Safety Measures

Since in many cases, the security of the recipient country is unstable and vulnerable, cooperation in the area of peacebuilding assistance requires more attention to the safety of personnel than it would in the case of normal cooperation activities.

JICA then works on reinforcing collection and analysis of safety related information, improving crisis management and a prompt emergency response system through the expansion of study teams for security measures, promoting close liaison with international organizations, developing security control manuals, and upgrading security control training.

Actual Activities to Create the New JICA

■ New Phase of Public Participatory Cooperation

JICA has started the following programs in a new phase of public participatory cooperation.

1. JICA Partnership Program

1) What is the JICA Partnership Program?

● Background

The Japanese government offers various assistance programs to meet the diverse needs of developing countries through ODA. In international cooperation, the role of NGOs or local governments has become more important, both in Japan and in developing countries. Therefore, the JICA Partnership Program (hereinafter referred to as "JPP") was introduced in 2002 as a new scheme of JICA, the Japanese