

Bringing High-quality Made-in-Japan Lubricant to Senegal!

- A good example of the ABE Initiative, which connects leading talent in Africa with Japanese corporations -

Since the start of the ABE Initiative* in 2014, a total of 1,285 trainees from all 54 countries in Africa have come to Japan, and over half of these trainees have already completed the program and returned to their countries by FY2019. Mr. Serigne Mansour Diop from Senegal is one of those trainees.

Under the ABE Initiative, Mr. Diop studied for two years at the Nagoya University, School of Engineering, Graduate School of Engineering from 2016, and then undertook a half-year internship at Chugai Yukagaku Kogyo Co., Ltd. After completing the program, he returned to Senegal, and is now serving as an intermediary to introduce Chugai Yukagaku Kogyo's products to the country. Mr. Diop shared his inspiration for applying to the ABE Initiative.

"Since I was a child, I watched lots of Japanese anime, and was interested in Japanese culture. Japan also has quality infrastructure that is able to withstand earthquakes and other natural disasters. At university in Senegal, I majored in civil engineering (primarily bridge engineering), and was interested in large-scale infrastructure. When I found out about the ABE Initiative, I thought that it would be a great chance to study in Japan."

Despite the highly competitive nature of the application process for the ABE Initiative, Mr. Diop was selected as one of the trainees. After earning his master's degree, and influenced by his older brother who had started his own business in Senegal, Mr. Diop was interested in finding a business partner in Japan, and attended a business fair which invited all trainees from the ABE Initiative. He chose Chugai Yukagaku Kogyo Co., Ltd., who had a booth at the fair, for his internship.

Chugai Yukagaku Kogyo Co., Ltd. is a lubricant manufacturer headquartered in Saitama Prefecture, and sells engine oil and other automotive lubricants in Japan and overseas. However, since the global market for such lubricants is expected to shrink with the spread of electric vehicles, the company was investigating in the potential of Africa in addition to its established markets in Asia. In this situation, the company's participation in the aforementioned business fair became the trigger to start accepting trainees from Africa in the summer of 2017. Mr. Diop was one of their first 11 trainees.

During his internship at Chugai Yukagaku Kogyo, Mr. Diop gained experience in a wide range of roles. Not only did he deepen his understanding on automotive lubricants, the company's core products, he saw future potential in Senegal for the company's high-quality, high-performance road repair materials, and translated the product materials into French, the national language of Senegal as well as researched alternative materials available in his home country. Mr. NAKAMURA Daisuke of the Overseas Division at Chugai Yukagaku Kogyo, who worked together with Mr. Diop, was deeply impressed by his enthusiasm

toward the work.

"Mr. Diop was always very bright and cheerful, and responded to any work-related challenges with intelligence and insight. He was also skilled at making contact with people, and stood out with his ability to take action. Having gained an opportunity to study in Japan, I strongly felt his passion to gain something here and start a business in Senegal while maintaining a relationship with Japan."

After returning to Senegal in March 2019, Mr. Diop became a "navigator" for Chugai Yukagaku Kogyo's expansion into Senegal, and is currently conducting a market survey through a test sale of lubricants, with the aim of producing the lubricants locally through a joint venture with a local major manufacturer. In September 2019, Chugai Yukagaku Kogyo shipped its first container of "Rising (Engine Oil)," designed for the Senegal market, and Mr. Diop is providing total support for the sale of the product in Senegal.

Mr. Nakamura shared the following thoughts on the realization of this project.

"We were able to take the risk of shipping our first container to Senegal without arranging a business consultant thanks to the strong relationship of trust we have with Mr. Diop. Although some people in the company voiced concerns about expanding into Africa, understanding is growing on the possibility of business in Africa since we started accepting trainees. We have also recently hired a former trainee of the ABE Initiative from Morocco."

Furthermore, a survey (JICA SDGs Business Supporting Survey) is planned to assess the market potential and support business model formulation for Chugai Yukagaku Kogyo's road repair materials in Senegal. Mr. Diop also plans to serve as the local coordinator for this survey.

In addition to Mr. Diop, approximately 60 other young people from Senegal have used the ABE Initiative to earn an opportunity to study in Japan. The JICA Senegal Office conducts follow-up with each trainee to help build their experiences into even stronger relations between Japan and Senegal. These follow-up activities include matching trainees with Japanese companies, reports on local business needs, and one-on-one consulting.

Looking back on the program, Mr. Diop says, "The follow-up system for ABE Initiative trainees is very thorough, they provide help if I need anything even today. I am also very happy to have been able to connect Chugai Yukagaku Kogyo with a local road repair company, as they have joined hands and JICA's assistance is being considered."

The ABE Initiative is building a relationship of friendship between Japan and Senegal that contributes to the development of both countries by creating a network of business people connecting Japan and Senegal, and invigorating the economic activity of Japanese corporations in Senegal.



Mr. Diop working with a trainee from Mozambique to produce an engine oil sample (Photo: Chugai Yukagaku Kogyo)



ABE Initiative trainees observing the engine oil production process at the Saitama factory of Chugai Yukagaku Kogyo Co., Ltd. (Photo: Chugai Yukagaku Kogyo)

* See the glossary on page 27 for details.

Stories from the Field 2

Voices of Young Japanese Personnel in International Organizations Working Tirelessly on the Front Lines of Humanitarian Aid

- Saving as many lives as possible through emergency humanitarian aid coordination -

Public
nomination

From February to August 2019, I was dispatched to the Central African Republic, a country located in the center of the African continent, as a staff member of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and coordinated emergency humanitarian aid. The country has been the site of a long-running humanitarian crisis caused by armed conflict and other factors, and 2.6 million people, which is over half of its population of 4.66 million people, require humanitarian aid. Large-scale humanitarian aid is also being carried out in the city Bambari of Ouaka Prefecture, where I was based, located in the central region of the country. A number of international organizations and NGOs are working to provide assistance across several fields including food, healthcare, water and sanitation, and shelter. OCHA undertakes coordination work to ensure that these numerous organizations and groups collaborate to provide efficient humanitarian aid without overlap or gaps. At the Bambari Field Office, I worked in a variety of roles, such as running coordination meetings, and providing reports and analysis on humanitarian situations.

In my actual coordination work, I often found myself trapped in between the conflicting opinions of the many organizations, and struggled with challenging demands. For example, in June 2019, the Resident Coordinator / Humanitarian Coordinator (RC/HC)* for the Central African Republic requested us to dispatch a humanitarian needs assessment team to Mobaye City in Basse-Kotto Prefecture as quickly as possible. In such assessments, OCHA would serve as the coordinator and take the lead to ensure that various organizations could cooperate to carry out an efficient survey. Thus, as the team leader of the assessment team, I began the preparations. An escort by the UN peacekeeping mission was required to travel to Mobaye City, which suffered from political instability. Since OCHA is also responsible for coordinating this escort, I immediately began negotiating the arrangements with the Deputy Commander of the peacekeeping mission. I learned, however, that a peacekeeping force had already been dispatched to another region which suffered from increased instability, and that an escort to Mobaye City was not immediately available. Given these circumstances, I informed the RC/HC that it would be difficult to quickly arrange the assessment, but she repeated her prior orders, "The situation is severe, we cannot wait. Figure something out and get to the region." Therefore, I persistently continued my negotiations with the peacekeeping mission, and after changing plans two or three times, I was suddenly notified that "We can provide escort the day after tomorrow." While the assessment team members expressed concerns about the short notice, we set out for Mobaye City.

After the assessment, OCHA is also responsible for putting together a joint response plan based on the assessment results, as well as calculating funding requirements and garnering support from the UN headquarters and donors. However, differences in the way of thinking between the different organizations often make it difficult to achieve



Exchanging opinions with the Central African Republic Resident Coordinator / Humanitarian Coordinator (on the right) and representatives of field offices of different international organizations regarding humanitarian conditions at the time of her visit to Bambari (Photo: IOM Bambari Sub Office)

consensus. As a matter of fact, after the Mobaye City survey, the organizations disagreed on the priority of aid and how many people the aid should cover. Although meeting after meeting would end in deadlock, I rushed to and fro negotiating, explaining, and persuading stakeholders to come to an agreement.

The final assessment report and joint response plan do not directly help the people in need. I felt great satisfaction, however, in building consensus because the report and joint response plan are essential in sharing the voices of those in the most difficult situation in Mobaye City with the world, mobilizing funding, and implementing assistance. Sharing the voices of those who need aid the most with the world also allows me to serve as an advocate for those suffering in severe circumstances with no voice. I feel that this is my mission as a staff member of OCHA.

In this way, even on the front lines of humanitarian aid, OCHA always works behind the scenes. Nevertheless, I feel passionate about my coordination work. I believe that bringing together organizations and groups with different positions and specialties, and optimizing limited funds and resources to the fullest degree leads to saving as many lives as possible.

I set out on a career in humanitarian aid at the UN through the "Program for Global Human Resource Development for Peacebuilding and Development" (see page 36) and the JPO Programme (see page 140) run by MOFA, working in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Chad, and Ethiopia. I then moved to the Central African Republic, and have now returned to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, working to provide emergency humanitarian aid. I am often asked, "Why did you choose to work for humanitarian aid?" To me, providing humanitarian aid to people suffering under some of the most severe conditions in the world in a humanitarian crisis is an extremely precious and noble profession, and I have a strong ambition to contribute in the field as much as I can. As a member of OCHA, I wish to continuously work to deliver quick and efficient assistance for those who are most in need, and as many people as possible.

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On the way to visit refugees, a ferry carries UN vehicles across a river with no bridge (Photo: KIMURA Makiha)

* The Resident Coordinator / Humanitarian Coordinator (RC/HC) has overall responsibility for international assistance on humanitarian issues in the country of residence and also chairs a humanitarian country-specific team consisting of representatives of major international humanitarian organizations.

Stories from the Field 3

“As a Football Player and UNICEF Ambassador”

- A message from Mr. HASEBE Makoto, UNICEF Ambassador for Japan -

It was during the third or fourth year of my career as a professional football player in the J. League. I was visiting a number of different countries on overseas expeditions, and as I encountered numerous situations that were different from life in Japan, the feeling that, “I must do something” grew stronger and stronger. During that time, I began supporting children around the world through UNICEF after discovering its pamphlet on the airplane.

As you all may know, in other countries, many professional athletes are making a wide range of social contributions. Both the athletes and society consider such contributions as “only natural” for these individuals based on their success as professional athletes. Since I was also aiming to stand on the world stage of sports, I always thought that, “I will do the same someday as well.” In 2010, the Japan Committee for UNICEF (UNICEF Japan) approached me, and I began helping with their outreach activities. The Great East Japan Earthquake struck before even six months had passed in my new role, and UNICEF Japan also launched its activities to help people in the disaster areas. Thus, I supported their activities together with the many people who generously answered my call. How were our thoughts and wishes reaching the children? I visited the disaster areas many times to see with my own eyes and share with others how our activities were helping people.

The first time I visited a UNICEF project site overseas was in 2014, when I visited Banda Aceh in Indonesia, which had been struck by a major earthquake and tsunami ten years earlier. In preparation for the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (see page 77, “Cooperation in Disaster Risk Reduction” for details), UNICEF wanted to send out a message of “Child-centered Disaster Risk Reduction.” This experience kicked off my journey to visit many UNICEF project sites overseas, and the next place I visited was the UNICEF Global Supply Hub in Copenhagen, which delivers aid supplies to UNICEF country offices around the world. Immediately before this visit, I had begun an initiative together with many people who supported me as a football player, to deliver measles vaccines as a gift to children around the world. The UNICEF Global Supply Hub in Copenhagen procures and delivers 40% of the vaccines used in the world. Thus, I decided to start my “vaccine journey” from this Global Supply Hub.



Mr. Hasebe visiting Minamisanriku Town in December 2011. He has continued to visit disaster sites even after UNICEF Japan ended its humanitarian and recovery support programmes in 2016. (Photo: UNICEF Japan)



Mr. Hasebe visiting the Kutupalong Refugee Camp in Bangladesh in June 2016 (Photo: UNICEF Japan)

In 2017, I visited Ethiopia, and completed the latter half of my journey. I took part in the actual work to deliver vaccines from the central cold-room in Ethiopia's capital of Addis Ababa to the highland village of Gash-Anbar, which is surrounded by mountains over 3,000 meters high. I learned that delivering the vaccines to children required different types of activities, supports, and teamwork of many people, including securing the cold chain, training the staff and volunteers at the healthcare centers, and dispelling concerns and misconceptions the local people had regarding vaccines.

The 2018 FIFA World Cup Russia presented UNICEF with the opportunity to call upon the world for assistance to support refugee and migrant children, and I participated in this campaign through videos and other activities. I had witnessed issues of refugees and migrants on a daily basis in Germany, which has been the base of my life for the past ten years, and was looking for opportunities to take action. I thus visited a refugee camp in Greece towards the end of 2018, and the world's largest refugee camp located in Bangladesh in the summer of 2019. During these visits, I strongly felt that in addition to lifesaving assistance, it is essential that these children who face an uncertain future receive educational support to help them develop the power to create their own path in life. Children can only be children for a limited time in their lives.

As a professional football player and a UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador, I have been able to meet children in a variety of places around the world, learn many things, and experience many emotions. It is my hope that the younger generation who will take on the future of both Japan and the world will realize that our daily lives are interconnected with the circumstances faced by people in difficult situations. For that reason, I will carry on my activities as a UNICEF Ambassador.

HASEBE Makoto
UNICEF Ambassador for Japan

* HASEBE Makoto was appointed as the UNICEF Ambassador for Japan in December 2016. Details of his activities are published on the UNICEF website (<https://www.unicef.or.jp/partner/hasebemakoto/>) (in Japanese only).

Young Baseball Players from Brazil Fulfill their Dream to Visit Japan!

- Baseball coaching by a JICA Volunteer*1 makes children's dreams come true -

Public nomination

Many Brazilians of Japanese descent live in Manaus City in the northern region of Brazil, and many of the members of "Manaus Country Club," a youth baseball team founded by the first-generation immigrants from Japan, are Japanese-Brazilians. Mr. MIYATA Ryusei, a Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteer for Nikkei Communities*2 of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), has served as the manager of the team since 2018. Mr. Miyata was a player in the Fukuoka University baseball team, and after graduating university, applied to the JICA Volunteer Program, inspired by his desire to contribute to international cooperation through baseball. Mr. Miyata began his assignment to teach baseball in Brazil, where fully-qualified baseball coaches were needed.

After meeting his team in Brazil, Mr. Miyata realized that they were much more "Brazilian style" than he expected.

"Some children only joined according to their parents' wish and were not very motivated. In the beginning, there were several times when I went to the baseball ground and found nobody there. I therefore worked on making the practice as fun as possible to get the children to come to the ground. I also introduced games such as soccer and playing in the pool in the practices to make it more enjoyable."

In fact, before Mr. Miyata started his post, the team had no coach, and there were only five members. After Mr. Miyata arrived, however, word spread that his baseball practices with games were fun, and the team soon grew to 25 members.

That is not the only change Mr. Miyata brought to the team. In September 2019, Mr. Miyata led efforts to gather funds and brought nine members of the team between the ages of 11 and 15 to Japan.

One member of the team was a major driver for Mr. Miyata's efforts. He was Juan David, who had fled to Manaus as a refugee to escape the economic crisis in his home country of Venezuela. Baseball is a national sport in Venezuela, and although he passionately played baseball during his time in Venezuela, he had to give up continuing the sport after immigrating to Manaus. The support of the local Japanese-Brazilians, however, allowed Juan to play baseball once more on the team coached by Mr. Miyata.

Through the support provided by Japanese-Brazilians and the presence of Mr. Miyata as a coach, Juan became interested in Japan and Japanese baseball, and was filled with the desire to visit Japan. However, it was difficult for him to gather the expenses required to visit Japan. At the same time, Juan's father discovered that he had cancer. Juan strongly wished for his father to see him playing baseball in Japan to encourage his father in his battle against cancer in the hospital.

Having lost his own father to cancer, Mr. Miyata empathized strongly with Juan, and came up with the idea of using crowd funding to cover the expenses required for a trip to Japan. Mr. Miyata also visited local Japanese-Brazilian companies in the area to ask for their support. The



The Manaus Country Club children meeting with Softbank Hawks players (Mr. Miyata is at the left end in the front row) (Photo: Mr. MIYATA Ryusei)

children and parents on the team also contributed in collecting funds such as by selling sweets and organizing festivals. As a result of their efforts, the team was able to garner enough funds to send nine children to Japan.

The Manaus Country Club members had numerous precious experiences over the ten days they spent in Japan, including playing a baseball game with a junior-high club team in Fukuoka and watching a live professional game. At the professional baseball game, the staff of the baseball club kindly arranged for the children to meet directly with the players. Also, the Manaus Country Club children visited a Japanese junior-high school and saw Japanese students clean their own classroom and serve lunch, which was a profoundly stimulating experience for them, since there are no such customs in Brazil.

After visiting Japan, the children recounted their experiences by saying, "They were very disciplined," "I felt happy to be of Japanese descent," and "There are times when my Japanese-Brazilian grandfather and parents warn me about discipline and manners, and now I understand why after visiting Japan."

After the Manaus Country Club children returned to Brazil, they invited the parents and supporters of the team for a report of their trip to Japan. The children reported on their experiences in Japan, sharing what Brazilians could learn from the Japanese, such as discipline and manners. The children also planned and started a city cleaning campaign on their own to put the lessons they learned in Japan to practice. The local media has also shown interest in their activities, and the Manaus Country Club is receiving requests for coverage.

Mr. Miyata also feels that the children have changed after their trip to Japan.

"After their trip to Japan, the children are taking baseball more seriously than before, and no one comes late to practice anymore. I think that they have recognized the importance of greetings, discipline, and punctuality from their trip to Japan. I feel the trip has given them an opportunity to learn many lessons that are valuable not just in baseball, but in their future lives when they become adults."

Mr. Miyata's assignment as a coach will end in 2020, and he is now working with the team members' parents to foster a new leader who can carry on the team activities. Mr. Miyata is also searching for a way to become a baseball coach in Brazil. He also has the goal of creating an international team in Japan with his experience in Brazil, and develop global players of the future.



Commemorative photo from the friendly match with the Chikushi Endeavors, a junior-high club team, during the Manaus Country Club trip to Japan (Photo: Mr. MIYATA Ryusei)

*1 The current name is "Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteer (JOCV)" (name changed due to system revision in the fall of 2018).

*2 The current name is "Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteer for Nikkei Communities" (name changed due to system revision in the fall of 2018).

An All-Japan Effort Realizes the First Subway in Indonesia

- Changing Jakarta's urban transportation with Japanese technology -



The Jakarta MRT train (Photo: JICA)

In March 2019, the Jakarta Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) opened for service in Jakarta, the capital of Indonesia. The Jakarta MRT is the first “All-Japan” subway system project in Southeast Asia. Funded by a Japanese ODA loan over a span of approximately 13 years, the Jakarta MRT was constructed through Japan's total support in basic design, construction, and introduction of transportation systems, including the introduction of trains, signals, and gate systems, as well as their operation and maintenance (O&M). Japanese technology and operating know-how were introduced throughout the project.

Over the past 20 years, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of motorcycles and automobiles in Jakarta. It has increased around 14 times and three times, respectively. This has led to severe traffic congestion, air pollution, and an increase in traffic accidents, causing major damages to people's lives and the economy. Therefore, the establishment of a public transit network was an urgent challenge for Jakarta, that expects to see continuing population growth.

The MRT, which can transport a large number of people accurately, was highly expected to be a solution to the aforementioned issue. The section of the MRT that has opened for service this time is part of the “North-South” line, which connects central Jakarta with the southern residential district and covers a distance of about 15.7 kilometers. The line travels underground for 5.9 kilometers, and over elevated rails for 9.8 kilometers, stopping at 13 stations over its approximately 30-minute trip. The opening of the North-South line allows people to reach central Jakarta in just 30 minutes from the southern residential district, which previously took an hour and a half.

Mr. ADACHI Hiroaki of JICA describes the changes the MRT brought to the traffic situation in Jakarta as follows.

“The most appealing point of the MRT is its operating punctuality, which is as accurate as the Japanese rail system. People can now arrive at their destination on-time, without being affected by traffic jams and other conditions. The MRT is also defined by its clean and well-kept stations and trains, due to the efforts of the operating company, inspired by Japan.”

The MRT features the first signal system in Indonesia, the Communications-Based Train Control (CBTC), and an automatic-driving system. The system allows the trains to stop at stations and open their doors automatically, and on the main line, the drivers only need to close the doors and start the train. Currently, the trains operate at five-minute intervals during rush hours and ten-minute intervals at other times of the day, and have achieved more than 99% operating punctuality since opening its service in April. It is truly a railway established by Japanese advanced technology and systems.

With regard to the interior of the MRT, the seats are made of plastic in

order to reduce maintenance work, and eating and drinking is not allowed to preserve a clean and hygienic interior. However, since the majority of the Indonesian population is Muslim, during the month-long Ramadan fasting period, the train makes an announcement at sunset informing, “Dates and water may be consumed in the train cars to break the fast, but all garbage should be taken home.” This is a result of giving primary consideration to Indonesian culture in the operation of the MRT.

Mr. Adachi recounts the most difficult challenge in constructing the MRT.

“Construction management was particularly difficult. Land procurement for the stations and elevated rail did not proceed well, causing a major delay in the initial plan.”

In order to overcome the challenge, Jakarta MRT, the local operating company, Japanese construction companies managing construction, companies responsible for facility layout, and consultants in charge of construction supervision and employee training cooperated closely and carried out their respective work in parallel. Thus, after numerous changes of plans, the MRT was finally able to open for service in March 2019.

The MRT was the first subway in Indonesia, and the operating company Jakarta MRT had no experience beforehand. Ms. UTSUNOMIYA Mariko, deputy head of the technology department at Japan International Consultants for Transportation Co., Ltd., which provided operation and maintenance support shared the philosophy behind their role.

“In the future, it will be the local staff of Jakarta MRT who will have to manage this railroad and respond if an accident occurs. The Japanese way of doing things will not always be applicable here. For these reasons, we placed an importance on their autonomy when transferring the technology and operation know-how to the local staff.”

The opening of the MRT brought about a transformation in the lifestyles of the people living in Jakarta. Above all, the MRT has become widely recognized among users as a convenient form of transportation that allows them to arrive at their destination quickly without getting caught in traffic jams. A new style of transit was also born, wherein people use local buses or motorcycle taxis to travel between their homes and the station, and then travel to their destination by the MRT. Local buses, which served as the primary form of public transport before the opening of the MRT, are adjusting their routes to include the MRT stations, and motorcycle taxi pick-up stations are being established in front of the MRT stations. A major challenge going forward will be how the MRT fuses with the existing forms of transportation in the city. Mr. Adachi shared his vision for the future.

“Although Jakarta is as large as the 23 wards of Tokyo, in the near future, the population is expected to exceed 35 million people, including those living in the surrounding suburbs. In this context, further expansion of the MRT is critical. Tokyo has approximately 300 kilometers of subway lines, but Jakarta has only just opened service on 15.7 kilometers. We have only reached the starting line.”

Going forward, expectations toward the best Japanese railway technology and operation know-how will continue to grow to address the traffic issues of Jakarta and to offer a new lifestyle to the city's citizens.



Japanese and Indonesian engineers having a meeting during construction (Photo: JICA)

Changing the Future of The Gambia through Road Improvement Work using Do-nou

- Building sustainable peace by creating employment through infrastructure development -

Located on the western coast of Africa, The Gambia is one of the Least Developed Countries (LDCs)*, and approximately half of its citizens live on less than \$1.90 a day. The country also struggles with high unemployment. Especially among the country's youth, there are endless cases of illegal emigration as they seek work abroad. While democratization and economic reconstruction are proceeding in The Gambia as a result of the presidential election at the end of 2016, the country lacks sufficient infrastructure such as roads, water supply, and electricity that form the foundation of major national industries. The country is therefore economically unstable, and its unemployment rate remains at high levels.

In order to improve this situation, the International Labour Organization (ILO) launched a project to support "Employment Creation for Youth to Build Sustainable Peace in The Gambia" in April 2018. The project employed local youths in road repair and construction projects. Through funding from MOFA, the project was carried out in cooperation with the NGO Community Road Empowerment (CORE).

Up until now, CORE has worked with local people to improve the roads in 29 countries around the world starting in Kenya, using "Do-nou," which are locally available gunny bags filled with soil or gravel. CORE's road work allows the participants to learn about road improvement technologies while working, thus improving local employment conditions and contributing to human resource development. The process also ensures the minimum necessary use of machines, making road construction possible at a much lower cost compared to standard techniques. Moreover, even after the organization ends its support, the roads can be maintained by the local people themselves. This is a great advantage as it enables the roads to be well-maintained over a longer period of time.

In order to ensure that a larger number of local youths have access to employment information and are able to participate in the project, advertisement for recruitment was also broadcast over the radio in addition to traditional bulletin boards and job-seeking websites in consideration of the country's low literacy rate. Furthermore, to contribute to peace-building and social cohesion in The Gambia, employment priority was given to people in socially vulnerable positions, and 125 women, 30 returnee migrants, and 10 hearing-impaired people were chosen among the 250 people employed for the project.

Road improvement work was carried out for a 1.2-kilometer tourist walkway and a 2.5-kilometer road connecting the local fishing port with the main road. Although the tourist walkway was



A hearing-impaired woman performing road improvement work (Photo: ILO)

located in the center of a major tourist site for birdwatching, it was so poorly maintained that it could not be used by tourists due to the possibility of its collapse. As for the port road, it became impassable due to floods in the rainy season, striking a major blow to the local fishing industry. There were many challenges in improving these roads with Gambian youths who lacked experience in construction work and were unfamiliar with being employed. However, the Japanese staff of CORE and Kenyan staff who had gained experience through the CORE project in Kenya worked together to provide guidance and direct the project.

Director FUKUBAYASHI Yoshinori of CORE says, "While there were some people among the Gambian youth who were unfamiliar with preserving work discipline, and would take a rest on the job after getting bored or tired, I was impressed by the many people who were filled with the strong desire to earn a living and build their way of life on their own now that the situation in The Gambia is finally settled. Moreover, thanks to the staff from Kenya, which is an English-speaking country same as The Gambia, we were able to communicate smoothly with the local youths who participated in the project, and provide appropriate instruction while maintaining good relationships."

The local youths who received technical instruction in road construction using Do-nou are vigorously continuing the road repair activities even after the project's completion. For example, some have established their own road construction and maintenance companies through the training on entrepreneurship, which was conducted as part of the project, and are taking on projects requested by the local community. Ms. Sainabou Jammeh, who founded her own road construction and maintenance company after participating in the project was invited to the ILO side event at TICAD7 as a panelist, and shared her pride for her work with the participants, "I am no longer a job seeker, I am now a job creator." In addition, an initiative for the technology to take root in the country was conducted through incorporating the method of road repair using Do-nou into the curriculum of the Gambia Technical Training Institute to sustain the results of the project.

ILO and CORE are now carrying out road construction projects using Do-nou in other countries in Africa such as Mauritania, with an aim to create decent work for the local people. In this way, the made-in-Japan Do-nou technology is creating employment in local African communities, representing the steady progress of human-centered initiatives that realize people's economic stability and build peace in the region.



Women compacting Do-nou bags to create the road base (Photo: CORE)

* See the glossary on page 20.

Stories from the Field 7

Voices of Japanese Personnel Working in International Organizations

- Working to promote the health and protect the rights of women and youth -

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) marked its 50th anniversary in 2019. The organization covers four major fields: 1. Promotion of sexual and reproductive health and rights, 2. Advancement of gender equality, with a particular focus on preventing and responding to gender-based violence, 3. Empowerment of the adolescent and youth, and 4. Analyses and policy recommendations on population dynamics. I love the mission of the UNFPA that seeks to eradicate maternal mortality and gender-based violence including child marriage by 2030. Since the principles of contribution to peace and international cooperation mentioned in the preambles of the United Nations Charter and the Constitution of Japan overlap, to me, working for the UN is deeply connected with my love of my country, Japan. The slogan of the 2030 Agenda including the SDGs, which was endorsed by all UN Member States, is to “leave no one behind.” My current goal is to continue contributing to the realization of the 2030 Agenda as a staff member of the UN.

After graduating from International Christian University (Tokyo) in 1995, I first worked as a newspaper reporter. Over time, however, I could no longer hold back my desire to be in a position to directly support those suffering from conflict and poverty, rather than a reporter. Thus, I decided to quit my job as a journalist to become a UN staff. My first working experience at the UN was in 2002, when I worked on reducing small arms as an intern at the UNDP Cambodia Office, during my Master's at Columbia University School of International and Public Affairs (NY). I was then accepted to the JPO Programme (see page 140), and deployed to the UNDP headquarters in 2003. After having worked in several other UN/UNDP offices, in 2014 I joined UNFPA in Bangladesh, the fourth largest Muslim country in the world and a Least Developed Country (LDC) (see page 20). The most unforgettable experience during my four-year plus assignment there was the lead role I played as Acting Country Representative of UNFPA in spearheading efforts to respond to the influx of so-called Rohingya refugees, described back then as the “world's fastest growing humanitarian crisis.”

In August 2017, displaced people from Rakhine State in Myanmar flooded into the Cox's Bazar district in Bangladesh. Cox's Bazar, one of the poorest districts with a size comparable to Shinagawa City in Tokyo, suddenly saw the birth of the “world's largest camp for displaced persons,” totaling 920,000, about 2.4 times the population of Shinagawa City. As a result, the availability and access to the most essential needs of the people – shelter, food, water, and sanitation – faced enormous challenges. Since 80% of the displaced persons were women and children, UNFPA focused on preventing deaths during pregnancy and childbirth, and preventing and responding to sexual violence against women and girls. One of UNFPA's landmark initiatives was the establishment of Women Friendly Spaces (WFS) of women, by women, and for women that served as a “sanctuary.” The WFS is a multi-purpose facility where female psychosocial counselors and midwives support the displaced women, information-sharing is conducted on women's rights, and skills training is carried out to help the women rebuild their lives. It was such a fulfilling experience to witness those women who had arrived from Myanmar in



The author (in the middle) listening to displaced women at the WFS established by UNFPA at the Cox's Bazar camp for displaced persons, shortly after the outbreak of the crisis of the influx of so-called Rohingya refugees, on September 24, 2017 (Photo: UNFPA Bangladesh)

despair and fear gradually regain their smiles and liveliness by visiting the UNFPA WFS.

I became the Country Representative of UNFPA in the Philippines in October 2018. The Philippines faces countless challenges, including disparities between the rich and poor, and constant natural disasters. The country has seen the historic birth of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao as well. Since the Philippines is a middle-income country, the roles expected for the UN to play are different from those expected in an LDC. Therefore, I am still learning every day, but also feeling great satisfaction in my new role.

“A country can enjoy a ‘Demographic Dividend’ if and when an increase in the working-age population ratio results in further economic growth. This can only be achieved if the government ensures that its people have sufficient health, education and opportunities for decent work, together with the ability to save for their lives after retirement. Japan became a developed country because it succeeded in realizing the Demographic Dividend before it became an ageing society. If things are left unchanged, the Philippines might become an ageing society before it becomes a developed nation. The key is to invest now in young people and women.”

When I shared this message with Secretary of Foreign Affairs Mr. Teodoro L. Locsin Jr. at his office in the Department of Foreign Affairs in the Philippines, it seemed to have made an impression on him, as I saw him tweet my message right away. The Philippines is considered “youthful,” with close to half of its 108 million population still under 25 years of age. Whether and how these demographic issues are addressed more deeply in the upcoming Philippine Development Plan 2023 - 2028 is among the litmus tests for the quality and effectiveness of UNFPA's technical assistance in the country.

Japan's GNI per capita now is over four times that of the Philippines. My feeling is that an increasing number of young people of this abundant country, Japan, are now exercising their empathy and imagination about the situations of more vulnerable people around them, and translating such thoughts into action in their own ways. These actions can be undertaken regardless of your occupation, either working at a private company or NGO, or as an academic, a researcher, a diplomat, a journalist, or a volunteer. Becoming a UN staff is one option too. The main actors of the UN – the *United Nations* – are the Member States' governments and individual citizens, and we officers are merely their public servants, but this sense of serving the UN is exactly what motivates me the most to move forward.

KATO Iori

Country Representative

United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Philippines



The author discussing on topics such as the population issue with Secretary Teodoro L. Locsin Jr. at the Department of Foreign Affairs in Manila (Photo: Department of Foreign Affairs of the Philippines)

IV
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Part IV

2 Efforts for Spreading Awareness of Development Cooperation