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Realizing Peaceful, Secure, and Stable Societies, and Maintenance and Strengthening of a Free and Open International Order Based on the Rule of Law

(1) Support for Peacebuilding and Refugees/Displaced Persons

The international community continues to witness regional and internal conflicts due to various factors such as ethnic, religious, and historical differences, as well as poverty, disparities, and other issues. In recent years, intensifying geopolitical competition and heightened tensions between nations, as well as the emergence of countries that challenge the existing international order more assertively, have left considerable negative impacts on the global economy, society, and stability.

Such conflicts generate a great number of refugees and displaced persons, resulting in humanitarian crises. These conflicts also undermine years of development efforts and cause significant economic losses. The impact of a conflict in one country or region affects the entire world in one way or another, and the prolongation of such conflicts has become a challenge. Russia's aggression against Ukraine, which started in 2022, and the situation surrounding Israel and Palestine since the terrorist attacks by Hamas and other terrorist groups in October 2023 have spurred a serious humanitarian crisis, and had a major negative impact on the global economy, society, and stability. In addition, there are concerns about the impact of climate change on peace and stability. As the challenges faced by the international community become more complex and diverse, peacebuilding efforts aimed at establishing the foundations for development are increasingly important for the consolidation of sustainable peace.



A Japanese expert inspecting a cocoa farm under the "Project for Strengthening Inclusive Agricultural and Rural Development to Promote Peace Building with Legality (DRIP de PAZ)" in Colombia (Photo: JICA)

Japan's Efforts

■ Support for Peacebuilding

In response to humanitarian crises caused by conflicts, among other causes, Japan promotes the "Humanitarian-Development Nexus," in which urgently needed humanitarian assistance is provided, taking into account the medium- to long-term perspective of development cooperation from its early stage. As humanitarian crises become more prolonged and diverse, Japan also places importance on the idea of the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus (HDP Nexus),³⁸ in which assistance is provided to sustain peace through resilient state-building and social stabilization from a medium- to long-term view even in times of peace. In various countries and regions, Japan seamlessly extends humanitarian assistance, support for poverty reduction and economic development, and peacebuilding and conflict recurrence prevention assistance in order to bolster self-reliant development and address the root causes of crises.

In order to provide seamless assistance, Japan combines different types of support such as assistance through international organizations, grant aid, loan aid, and technical cooperation, and provides humanitarian assistance for refugees and displaced persons affected by conflicts, and assistance for conducting elections for post-conflict political peace processes. To promote the consolidation of peace and prevent the recurrence of conflict, Japan also supports the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) of ex-combatants, security sector reform, and the enhancement of administrative, judicial, and police functions. Furthermore, Japan supports the development of economic infrastructure and institutions, as well as social sectors such as health and education. Japan also extends support for displaced persons' coexistence with host communities, reconstruction in areas such as the repatriation and resettlement of refugees and displaced persons, and the rebuilding of basic socio-economic infrastructure. In these efforts, Japan actively promotes women's participation in conflict prevention, conflict resolution, and peacebuilding in line with UN Security Council resolutions, including UNSC resolution 1325, which recognizes the importance of the role of women in peacebuilding (see page 83 regarding Women, Peace and Security (WPS)).

As cases of sexual violence during Russia's aggression against Ukraine have been confirmed, in 2023, Japan

³⁸ In parallel with humanitarian assistance, the approach of the HDP Nexus is to provide development cooperation to enhance refugee self-reliance and reduce the burden on host countries, and also to address the root causes of refugee issues by promoting peace efforts to resolve and prevent conflicts.

provided protection, counseling, and necessary services through UN Women to displaced women and girls affected by the war in Ukraine and its neighboring countries, including approximately 2,000 women who were survivors of sexual violence, and also conducted language and basic life skills training for approximately 1,500 women and girls to help maintain their livelihoods.

Discussions are taking place in the international community on conflict resolution and prevention, as well as post-conflict recovery and assistance for nation-building in forums such as the UN Peacebuilding Commission (PBC).^{*} Japan has been a member of the PBC since its establishment, and has made active contributions by emphasizing the importance of efforts to build institutions and to develop human resources, and the need to strengthen cooperation among related organizations (related UN bodies such as the UN Security Council, UN General Assembly and the PBC, donor countries, regional agencies, international financial institutions such as the World Bank and the IMF, and the private sector). As of December 2023, Japan contributed a total of \$63.07 million to the UN Peacebuilding Fund (PBF)^{*} and supported it as a major donor. Japan started its two-year term as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council in January 2023 and has contributed to peacebuilding efforts at the UN as one of its priorities during its term. For example, Japan hosted a ministerial-level open debate on peacebuilding in January 2023 during its presidency of the UN Security Council.

Japan has long made efforts to strengthen coordination between development cooperation and international peace cooperation activities such as UN peacekeeping operations (UN PKOs). In the countries and regions where UN PKOs are deployed, many initiatives are underway that contribute to efforts for protecting refugees/displaced persons, women, and children affected by conflict and developing basic infrastructure. To maximize the benefits of these efforts, it remains important for Japan to promote such forms of coordination. For example, in 2023, Japan provided assistance to approximately 4,500 victims of gender-based violence in Yemen. In addition, Japan provided capacity development training for 50 people involved in protection services, livelihood support to 200 women, and support for the capacity building of 100 women who will participate in peacebuilding, in order to promote efforts toward peace and stability in the country.

Japan proactively contributes to the “UN Triangular Partnership Programme (TPP),” in which trilateral parties, namely the UN, Supporting Member States, and Troop Contributing Countries, work together to

conduct training and other activities for uniformed personnel to be dispatched to UN PKO missions. Under this framework, for example, Japan Self-Defense Forces (JSDF) personnel are dispatched to Africa and Asia to train engineering personnel on the operation of heavy engineering equipment. In the field of medical care, Japan dispatches JSDF personnel to conduct training on life-saving treatment and contributes to the development of telemedicine systems for UN PKO missions. At the UN General Assembly in September 2023, Prime Minister Kishida announced that Japan would expand support for peacebuilders. Specifically, given that African Union (AU)-led Peace Support Operations (AUPSOs) play an important role in maintaining peace and stability in Africa, the Government of Japan decided to contribute approximately \$8.5 million for conducting training for personnel to be dispatched to AUPSOs under the TPP framework.

In addition, since the skill sets demanded of those in the field of peacebuilding are increasingly diversified and complex, Japan cultivates civilian specialists who can make a significant contribution on the ground both in Japan and abroad through the “Program for Global Human Resource Development for Peacebuilding and Development.”³⁹ So far, a total of over 950 people have participated in training programs in Japan. Many graduates of these programs are playing active roles in the fields of peacebuilding and development around the world including regions such as Asia and Africa.

■ Support for Refugees and Displaced Persons

Given the situations in Syria, Afghanistan, Myanmar, Ukraine, and other countries, the number of forcibly displaced people including refugees and displaced persons worldwide has been increasing year after year. In 2022, the number surpassed 100 million people, the highest level since the end of World War II, and humanitarian situations are becoming increasingly severe. Japan co-hosted the Second Global Refugee Forum (GRF) in Geneva in December 2023 and called for strengthening unity and cooperation of the international community to prevent the deterioration of humanitarian situations, to help refugees and displaced persons both at home and abroad become self-reliant, and to ease the pressures on host countries (see also “ODA Topics” on page 49). In addition, Japan provides humanitarian assistance from the viewpoint of human security, including assistance for refugees, displaced persons, and others, in order to ensure the life, dignity, and security of the people in the most vulnerable positions and to enable each person to get back on their own feet.

³⁹ In FY2007 Japan began the “Program for Human Resource Development for Peacebuilding,” and in FY2015, the program was renewed with expanded content as the “Program for Global Human Resource Development for Peacebuilding and Development” (https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/gaiko/peace_b/f_ikusei_shokai.html (in Japanese only)). The renewed program includes the “Mid-Career Course,” which supports the career advancement of those with a certain degree of practical experience in fields related to peacebuilding and development, in addition to the existing “Primary Course,” which offers training in Japan to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary on the ground and on-the-job training at the field offices of international organizations.



Refugees in Uganda at a workshop on post-harvest rice processing by JICA (Photo: JICA)

In particular, Japan works with international organizations, including the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the World Food Programme (WFP), and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to continue to provide assistance around the world by delivering supplies for basic human needs such as shelter and food. Japan works with the above UN agencies, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), and other international organizations, and provides assistance for refugees, displaced persons, and others, even in areas with security concerns by utilizing their expertise and coordination capabilities. For example, in 2023, Japan extended Emergency Grant Aid to Sudan and its neighboring countries through WFP, UNHCR, IOM, and other organizations in order to provide food, essential goods, etc. in support of refugees and internally displaced persons affected by the military engagement in Sudan. Additionally, emergency humanitarian assistance is provided by Japanese NGOs through the Japan Platform (JPF)⁴⁰ (see also “Japanese Personnel at International Organizations Playing Active Roles on the Front Lines across the World” on page 50).

Upon providing this kind of assistance for refugees, displaced persons, and others through international organizations, Japan promotes cooperation among JICA, NGOs, and the private sector. For example, in the case of refugee assistance, UNHCR works in collaboration with JICA to implement a program combining emergency and reconstruction assistance. In addition, Japan provides assistance for refugees, displaced persons, and others in collaboration with JPF (see also “Featured Project” on page 133).

■ Actions against Anti-Personnel Landmines, Unexploded Ordnance, and Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons

In post-conflict countries and regions, anti-personnel landmines and unexploded ordnance (UXO) remain, and illicit small arms and light weapons are still in wide circulation. This weaponry not only harms civilians indiscriminately and hinders reconstruction and development efforts, but also exacerbates animosities. Therefore, it is important to render sustained cooperation with a view to ensuring safety and increasing stability in these countries and regions through assistance for the disposal of anti-personnel landmines and UXO, proper management of small arms and light weapons, support for landmine survivors, and capacity building for personnel involved in UXO/mine action.

Japan also conducts steady international cooperation from the perspective of the HDP Nexus as a signatory to the “Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction” and the “Convention on Cluster Munitions,” through preventive measures such as risk reduction education, in addition to mine clearance and assistance for survivors. For example, Japan supports the Cambodian Mine Action Centre (CMAC) with an overall capacity enhancement program, such as strengthening its training capacity at home and abroad, capacity building of its administrative staff, and the development of its information systems so that CMAC can make further international contributions. Japan also supports the upgrading of CMAC’s training complex and outreach facility in order to improve its training and educational environment for mine-action personnel and to raise awareness of landmine issues among visitors.

Through such comprehensive support, CMAC has provided training for mine action officials in third countries, such as Colombia and Laos. In addition, CMAC has conducted training for officials of the Government of Ukraine on the use of mine detectors in Cambodia in January 2023 and in Poland in July 2023, as well as awareness-raising activities for residents, thereby, contributing to the realization of South-South cooperation.⁴¹ In Laos, where the damage caused by UXO is particularly severe, in addition to training at CMAC, Japan dispatches experts to UXO Lao, a UXO countermeasure organization, to strengthen its operational capacity for formulating work plans and monitoring, while also developing facilities for its activities and providing equipment such as mine detection sensors. Utilizing its experience and knowledge gained through many years of cooperation in mine action in Cambodia and other parts of the world, Japan proactively assists in the clearance of mines and UXO in Ukraine, which is essential not only to ensure the safety and security of

⁴⁰ See the glossary on page 137.

⁴¹ See the glossary on page 103.

residents but also to rebuild livelihoods, agriculture, and industries in its post-war reconstruction.

Japan also contributes to the improvement of connectivity in the Western Balkans by supporting mine clearance activities in Bosnia and Herzegovina conducted by a Slovenia-based international nonprofit organization ITF Enhancing Human Security in cooperation with the Bosnia and Herzegovina Mine Action Center.

In Afghanistan, the Association for Aid and Relief, Japan (AAR Japan), a Japanese NGO, implements education projects such as the development of educational materials and conducting seminars, with the aim of raising awareness on the risks of landmines, UXO, and other remnants of conflict, and on the appropriate ways of avoiding them, through the Grant Assistance for Japanese NGO Projects (since FY2009) and projects by JPF (since FY2001). The reach of these awareness activities to residents is steadily expanding.

In addition to providing such bilateral support, Japan is proactively engaged in measures against mines and UXO through international organizations. In 2023, Japan conducted clearance, risk education, and victim assistance against landmines and UXO through the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) in Afghanistan, Syria, Palestine, Sudan, Nigeria, and South Sudan. For example, in Syria, Japan provided assistance to victims of explosive ordnance and worked to formulate a framework for the implementation of assistance to victims through UNMAS. In 2023, Japan also provided support for mine risk reduction education in the Central African Republic,



Mine detection dogs training at the CMAC training complex (Photo: JICA)

Chad, Iraq, Palestine, South Sudan, Ukraine, and Yemen via the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). It also provides support including risk reduction education in countries and regions such as Afghanistan, Myanmar, Syria, Ukraine, and other countries through the ICRC.

Small arms and light weapons are called "the de-facto weapons of mass destruction" because they are still used in actual conflicts and claim many lives. Japan is a donor country to the "Saving Lives Entity (SALIENT)," a UN fund established to embody the commitment made by UN Secretary General Guterres in "An Agenda for Disarmament (2018)," and actively contributes to the discussions on countermeasures against small arms and light weapons.



Glossary

UN Peacebuilding Commission (PBC)

An advisory body to the UN Security Council and the General Assembly established in accordance with the Security Council and General Assembly resolutions in 2005. The PBC aims to advise and propose integrated strategies for post-conflict peacebuilding and recovery. It provides advice to the Security Council and the General Assembly, among others through briefings and written submissions. Japan has consistently served as a member of the Organizational Committee, which is a central body of the PBC, since its establishment.

UN Peacebuilding Fund (PBF)

A fund established in 2006. The fund provides assistance in Africa and other regions to prevent the recurrence of regional conflicts and civil wars after their end, and assistance for conflict prevention. Specifically, it supports peace processes and political dialogue, revitalization of economies, institution building of states, and participation of women and youth in state-building, among other efforts.



The Second Global Refugee Forum – Co-Convenor Japan’s Effort –

The number of forced displacements has more than doubled in the last decade, and the number of people forced to leave their homes exceeded 100 million for the first time in 2022.*1 This surge is due to prolonged man-made conflicts around the world. While refugees are still unable to return to their home countries, new crises such as Russia’s aggression against Ukraine are causing more outflows. Recent intensified natural disasters caused by climate change have further worsened this situation.

In 2018, the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) was adopted by the UN General Assembly as a new international framework for refugee assistance. Its aims were; (1) to ease the pressures on host countries, (2) to enhance refugee self-reliance, (3) to expand access to third country solutions, and (4) to support conditions in countries of origin for return in safety and dignity. The Global Refugee Forum (GRF) is a follow-up meeting to the GCR that is held every four years, with the aim of sharing efforts to resolve refugee issues and encouraging cooperation among the international community. The first meeting was held in December 2019.

The second GRF was held in December 2023, with more than 4,200 participants from countries and regions around the world, and Foreign Minister Kamikawa attended from Japan, which served as a co-convenor along with France, Colombia, Jordan, and Uganda.

At the opening ceremony of the second GRF, Foreign Minister Kamikawa stressed in her statement that to halt the worsening humanitarian situation, we must all envision a future where each and every refugee and displaced person can have opportunities to work hard to make their dreams come true. She pointed out that women and children are particularly vulnerable among refugees and displaced persons, and that the concept of Women, Peace and Security (WPS)*2 is essential when addressing forced displacement. She also explained Japan’s efforts to support the self-reliance of the displaced both overseas and within Japan, and to ease the pressures on host countries. Moreover, the Minister strongly called for greater unity and cooperation in the international community, and announced that Japan would expand the efforts of the Humanitarian-Development-Peace (HDP) Nexus*3 as a platform for collaboration among the international community.

Foreign Minister Kamikawa held bilateral meetings with refugee host countries of Jordan, Lebanon, Iran, and Uganda, which participated in the GRF. Minister Kamikawa highly valued the fact that these countries contribute to peace and stability in the region by receiving many refugees despite their own difficulties, and announced the intention of the Government of Japan to strengthen support to ease the pressures on the respective countries. At the bilateral meeting between Japan and France, the two foreign ministers concurred to further strengthen cooperation



Foreign Minister Kamikawa making a statement at the opening ceremony of the Second Global Refugee Forum



Refugees and the people in the host community participating in a rice cultivation workshop in Uganda (Photo: JICA)

under an “Exceptional Partnership,” by following up on the Roadmap on Japan-France Cooperation issued by the leaders of the two countries.



Displaced women in Bangladesh receiving sewing skill training as part of self-reliance support, conducted by UNIQLO in collaboration with UNHCR (Photo: Fast Retailing Co., Ltd.)

Japan organized a dialogue with representatives from international organizations on the occasion of the GRF, titled “WPS + Innovation – from the field of humanitarian aid especially for refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs).” Foreign Minister Kamikawa heard from the representatives of the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) about the challenges they face on the ground and asked about the role they expect from Japan. Foreign Minister Kamikawa stated that she would like to apply WPS specifically to the current situation in Ukraine and the Middle East, as well as issues faced by countries in Africa and Latin America, while applying the knowledge gained from the international organizations to future international assistance from the perspective of WPS.

The second GRF recommended that multiple countries and organizations form multi-stakeholder pledges (MSP) for various types of support and work together under the pledges. A total of 43 MSPs were announced in areas such as HDP nexus, gender equality, peacebuilding, and education, which will be led by the lead countries and organizations of each MSP over the next four years.

*1 UNHCR “Global Trends Report 2022”
<https://www.unhcr.org/global-trends-report-2022>

*2 See Part III, Section 3 (6) on page 81.

*3 See 38 on page 45.

Japanese Personnel at International Organizations*¹

Playing Active Roles on the Front Lines across the World

– From the Field of Support for Refugees and Displaced Persons –

ARAKAKI Shoko

Humanitarian Response Division Director, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

I am based in Geneva and serve as the first Director of the UNFPA Humanitarian Response Division, which was newly established in July 2019. UNFPA works to provide access to a wide range of sexual and reproductive health² and gender-based violence protection services to women, girls, and young people in more than 150 countries. The Humanitarian Response Division focuses on approximately 60 countries facing humanitarian crises. In emergencies caused by natural disasters or conflicts, we oversee the deployment of personnel and relief supplies, including the dispatch of emergency response teams to transport supplies. In November 2023, during the pause in fighting in the Gaza Strip, Palestine, we were in charge of logistic support for transporting relief supplies and ensuring stockpiles.

As a Division Director, I regularly visit humanitarian countries including refugee and internally displaced persons (IDP) camps to gain a good grasp of the actual situation on the ground and to be able to provide more tailored humanitarian assistance. This year, I visited refugee and IDP camps in Kenya and Ethiopia, where I observed sports activities for refugees with disabilities and the deployment of mobile clinics supported by the Government of Japan. Through these visits, I genuinely felt that the efforts to promote “human security” were recognized and appreciated by the local people.

UNFPA sets the transformative goal of ending preventable maternal death and gender-based violence by 2030, much of which occurs amid humanitarian crises. In collaboration with other international organizations, partner organizations, and donor countries, including Japan, UNFPA will continue to deliver humanitarian assistance and advocate the specific needs of women and girls in humanitarian emergencies.



The author (on the left) listening to the people living in a camp for internally displaced persons in Mozambique (Photo: UNFPA)

YAMAMOTO Yuichiro

Child Protection Specialist, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
Afghanistan Country Office

In Afghanistan, after the Taliban announced the formation of a “transitional government” in August 2021, humanitarian needs have become unprecedentedly high due to rapid economic decline, collapse of the national social service systems, recurring natural disasters, and the exclusion of women and girls from public life. Following the end of fighting between the Government of Afghanistan and the Taliban, Afghans who had taken refuge in neighboring countries such as Iran and Pakistan have returned to their home country, but many of them face the same or even worse hardships and conditions that had prompted their initial migration.

I was assigned to the UNICEF Afghanistan Country Office in 2022. In order to ensure that all children in Afghanistan are protected from violence, abuse, and exploitation, one of my responsibilities is to work with the Taliban’s “transitional government” to strengthen the child protection system in the country. As part of our efforts, I coordinate the recruitment, training, and deployment of social workers who identify and respond to cases of child rights violations across the country. Since 2022, with financial contributions from Japan, UNICEF has been providing psychosocial and social support to vulnerable children in addition to referrals to much-needed services such as education and health. We also provide opportunities for vocational training and income generating activities to support their reintegration into society. Regarding the support for unaccompanied and separated children who have returned from neighboring countries, we help them reunite with their families and facilitate their transfer to their location of origin.



The author (second from the right) interacting with returnee children at a “Child Friendly Space” set up by the border point between Afghanistan and Pakistan (Photo: UNICEF)

ITO Tsuneko

Reporting Liaison Officer, United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS)
Multi-Country Office in Amman

Lebanon is said to be the country that hosts the largest number of refugees per capita in the world,³ with approximately a quarter of the population being refugees. The sharp increase in the refugee population since the onset of the Syrian civil war in 2011 has put pressure on the provision of basic public services, particularly in the health sector. In addition to the chronic shortage and aging of medical devices, the daily power outages caused by the economic crisis, soaring fuel prices, and supply shortages have been affecting even the operation of emergency lifesaving medical equipment at health facilities.

With funding from the Government of Japan, since 2021, UNOPS has supported strengthening the strained health system by providing medical equipment and installing solar panels in critical public hospitals that serve vulnerable Lebanese populations living in difficult situations as well as refugees.

Since 2020, in the UNOPS Multi-Country Office, which covers the Middle East region, including Lebanon, I have been coordinating partnerships development and supporting project implementation leveraging the UNOPS’ expertise in procurement, infrastructure, and project management. To serve as a bridge between people in need of assistance and donor organizations, together with colleagues, I am working to deliver sustainable support that promotes the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus. Such endeavors include incorporating responses to medium- to long-term development challenges into humanitarian assistance that benefits both host communities and refugees, shown in the instance of introduction of renewable energy solutions addressing climate change.



Handover ceremony at Baabda Governmental Hospital in Lebanon (the author is second from the left) (Photo: Ministry of Public Health of Lebanon)

KOBAYAKAWA Akiko

Head of Programme, United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS)
Myanmar Country Office

I have been working for UNOPS since 2000 and have been responsible for resource mobilization and project implementation for mine action and infrastructure works in conflict-affected countries. Mines, explosive remnants of war, and improvised explosive devices impede the return of refugees and displaced persons, further reconstruction and development, and the consolidation of peace. Many people became victims of unexploded ordnance (UXOs). For example, children often mistake them for a toy, and others try to scrap the metals for money when the ordnance explodes. Therefore, comprehensive mine action is imperative, covering risk education, clearance and victim assistance. I previously worked for the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS)/UNOPS Syria Office. After three years of negotiations with the government, we were able to start the demining of agricultural land in the outskirts of the capital, which leads to farmers returning to farming.

Myanmar, where I took up my current post in May 2022, is still in the midst of ongoing conflict. Approximately 2 million people, equating to approximately 4% of the country's 55 million population, have become IDPs and are living in dire situations. With funding from the Government of Japan, UNOPS provides essential items such as hygiene products, water buckets, and mosquito nets in the IDP camps of tropical regions where many ethnic minorities live. Solar lanterns, also provided by UNOPS, allow people to charge mobile phones and study at home, in addition to enabling protection, as they allow women and children to use the toilets safely at night. We also installed solar panels at the health clinics, supporting continuous patients' visits and consultations, and caring for pregnant women and nursing mothers, even when there is no electricity. In Myanmar, humanitarian mine action is also an imminent priority but activities are currently limited to mine risk education. We are carefully continuing joint efforts to start mine clearance activities in the future ahead.



The author (on the right) visiting the clinic UNOPS supported, with the clinic midwife (Photo: UNOPS)

AKAO Kunikazu

Head of Sub-Office (Shire, Tigray Region) and Durable Solution Manager, International Organization for Migration (IOM)
Ethiopia Country Office

I joined the IOM Ethiopia in 2021. After engaging in projects to support refugees from South Sudan and border management initiatives, since February 2022, I have served as the Head of the IOM Shire Sub-Office in the Tigray Region located in northern Ethiopia. The Tigray Region was under two-year-long armed clashes between the Federal Government of Ethiopia and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), which started in 2020. As an official in charge of this region, I was responsible for securing shelter and providing daily necessities and other necessary services, such as water and health, to IDPs, with support from the Government of Japan and other donors. In August 2022, when the town of Shire, my duty station, became the scene of an armed clash, I stayed in Shire to ensure that humanitarian assistance could continue while protecting the safety of our office staff through coordinating with the military and police of the federal government in the region.

With the signing of the peace agreement in November 2022, a certain degree of stability returned to the region. Following this situation, IOM has shifted its focus from emergency assistance to reconstruction and peacebuilding support. In addition to working as the Head of the Sub-Office, I also belong to the IOM's Peace and Development Coordination Unit where I am responsible for a support program called "Durable Solutions." This program supports IDPs in rebuilding their lives over the medium- to long-term by providing them with different types of durable solutions depending on their situation, such as assisted return to their places of origin, local integration, or settlement in a third location.



The author (on the right) handing over relief supplies from Japan in Tigray Region (Photo: IOM)

*1 Contributed by personnel at international organizations. Titles of individuals are as of the writing of the articles.

*2 A state of not only being free of disease or disability but also being in complete physical, mental, and social well-being in all matters related to sexuality and reproduction.

*3 United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) "Global Trends Report 2022" <https://www.unhcr.org/global-trends-report-2022>

(2) Ensuring Safety and Stability in Society

Transnational organized crime and acts of terrorism continue to pose a threat to the entire international community. Effective response to these threats cannot be achieved by the efforts of a single nation alone. Therefore, in addition to strengthening countermeasures by individual nations, the entire international community must work together through assistance to build capacity in the fields of justice and law enforcement in developing countries.

As a State Party to the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC), a legal framework for preventing transnational organized crime, Japan is promoting international cooperation that includes mutual legal assistance based on the Convention. Additionally, Japan is engaged in international efforts to combat transnational organized crime, including countermeasures against illicit drugs (see Part III, Section 1 (2) on page 35 for measures against threats to cyberspace).

For Japan, which depends on imports for a large part of its energy resources and food, ensuring marine traffic safety, including through addressing threats to maritime transport, is an issue that directly affects its existence and prosperity. A free and open maritime order based on the rule of law is extremely important not only for the realization of a Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) promoted by Japan but also for the development of the entire region including Japan. Therefore, Japan cooperates with various countries and international organizations to promote efforts to ensure marine traffic safety and maritime security cooperation (see “ODA Topics” on page 42 regarding initiatives for the realization of a Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)).



An inspection of a police substation conducted during police training in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo (Photo: JICA)

Japan's Efforts

■ Enhancing the Capabilities of Security Authorities

Based on the track records and experiences of the Japanese police in international cooperation, they provide support for establishing systems, improving administrative capacities, and developing human resources, while transferring knowledge and skills to police agencies in developing countries, who play a key role in maintaining security.

As one example, in 2023, the National Police Agency (NPA) of Japan dispatched experts and provided training and technical cooperation projects to Indonesia, which continued from 2001, while receiving trainees from countries in Asia, Africa, and Oceania to show them how the Japanese police act.

■ Counter-Terrorism

The environment surrounding terrorism has changed greatly as a result of the spread of COVID-19. Although the restrictions on movement as a countermeasure against COVID-19 have reduced terrorism in urban areas, the increasing dependence of people on information and communication technology (ICT) facilitates the spread of extremism by extremist groups using the internet and social media. In some areas where the governing capacity of the nation was already vulnerable, the spread of COVID-19 has further degraded the governance and helped expand the scope of terrorist organizations' activities. Some have pointed out the possibility of a number of terrorist attacks as a result of the easing of movement restrictions that were a countermeasure against COVID-19.

In 2023, Japan has strengthened cooperation and information exchange with other countries in order to respond quickly to changes in the environment surrounding terrorism, through measures such as holding counter-terrorism dialogues with partner countries and hosting the G7 Rome-Lyon Group meeting in Japan as the G7 Presidency.

■ Countermeasures against Illicit Drugs

While actively participating in relevant international conferences such as the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) under the UN, Japan proactively makes efforts to combat illegal drugs as an issue to be tackled globally. In 2023, Japan provided financial contributions to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) to monitor the distribution of illicit drugs, including new compounds,⁴² strengthen border control capabilities, and continuously survey the illegal cultivation of opium poppy, a raw material used in drug production, in cooperation with related organizations in Southeast Asian and other countries.

⁴² New Psychoactive Substances (NPS). Also known as “designer drugs.” These are substances that are produced synthetically to have effects similar to controlled drugs (narcotics, etc.). They are not recognized as legal medicines, and are compounds that exhibit unregulated psychotropic effects.



A workshop for problem analysis conducted under the “Project for Strengthening Crime Prevention Capacity of Bangladesh Police” (Photo: JICA)

In addition, the NPA invites officials from countries mainly in the Asia-Pacific region to share information on the regional drug situation, relevant investigational measures, and modes of international cooperation, and strengthen cooperative structures.

■ Measures against Trafficking in Persons

Based on the “Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children,” a comprehensive international agreement concerning trafficking in persons,⁴³ and Japan’s “2022 Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Persons,” Japan is engaged in various efforts to eradicate trafficking in persons.

Japan provides support to foreign victims of trafficking who are sheltered in Japan, through its contribution to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), for their safe return to their home countries, and their independence and social rehabilitation through the provision of mental health and medical assistance and vocational training. Japan supports measures against trafficking in persons and efforts to strengthen the law enforcement capacity in Southeast Asia and other countries, through bilateral technical cooperation and financial contributions to projects delivered by UNODC and other UN agencies. Japan also cooperates in strengthening border control and taking measures against trafficking in persons as part of its support for Ukraine and Moldova, which have seen large numbers of refugees and displaced persons due to Russia’s aggression against Ukraine. In addition, Japan provides financial contributions to and participates in the Bali Process, an Asia-Pacific regional framework against people smuggling, trafficking in persons, and related transnational crime.

■ International Measures against Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing

There is a high risk for the profits of transnational organized crime to be used to fund further organized crime or acts of terrorism, and thus, eliminating such flows of illicit funds is an important task for the international community. Therefore, Japan actively participates in discussions on international measures against money laundering⁴⁴ and terrorist financing through intergovernmental frameworks such as the Financial Action Task Force (FATF).⁴⁵ In order to implement effective global measures against money laundering and terrorist financing, each country needs to properly implement the international standards in this field set by the FATF so as not to create loopholes in the measures. Assistance for countries and regions with insufficient capacity and resources to deal with money laundering and terrorist financing will contribute to the improvement of international measures to counter money laundering and terrorist financing. Therefore, Japan provides assistance for FATF-style Regional Bodies, which promote the effective implementation of the FATF standards in non-FATF member countries, with a particular focus on supporting activities such as technical assistance conducted by the Asia Pacific Group on Money Laundering (APG), an FATF-style Regional Body in the Asia-Pacific region.

■ The Seas

In order to establish and promote the rule of law at sea, Japan seamlessly supports the improvement of the law enforcement capacity of maritime security agencies in the Indo-Pacific region through the provision of patrol vessels and technical cooperation, while promoting cooperation for capacity building in Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) among recipient countries. Specifically, Japan promotes human resources development through the training and dispatch of experts for maritime countries along the sea lanes important to Japan, including Indonesia and Malaysia, in addition to providing vessels and maritime security-related equipment to the Philippines, Viet Nam, and other countries. Furthermore, Japan supports Pacific Island countries, such as Samoa and the Federated States of Micronesia, through providing patrol vessels and other equipment related to maritime security and safety to Pacific Island countries as well as supporting them through a grant aid project, “Project for Strengthening Capacity of Maritime Law Enforcement Agencies for Effective Maritime Crime Control in the Pacific Island Countries (UN Cooperation / UNODC Implementation).”

⁴³ The act of recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring, or receipt of persons for the purpose of exploitation, such as forced labor or prostitution (Article 3 (a) of the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children).

⁴⁴ The act of disguising criminal proceeds as legally obtained assets, or the act of hiding such funds. One example is the act in which a drug dealer hides money gained through drug trafficking in a bank account opened under a false name.

⁴⁵ Established based on the Economic Declaration of the Arch Summit (G7 Summit) in 1989.

As an effort to promote regional cooperation in countering piracy and armed robbery against ships in Asia, Japan led the formulation of the Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia (ReCAAP), and supports its activities. Since 2017, Japan has implemented its comprehensive training programs aimed at capacity building for maritime law enforcement agencies of the ReCAAP Contracting Parties. In 2023, 12 countries, including the ReCAAP Contracting Parties, Indonesia, and Malaysia, participated in this training program to share their best practices, which contributed to deepening the anti-piracy-related knowledge of the participating countries and to promoting cooperation among coastal countries.

In order to counter the threat of piracy off the coast of Somalia and in the Gulf of Aden in Eastern Africa, Japan has been conducting anti-piracy operations since 2009. Moreover, from FY2009 to FY2019, Japan contributed a total of \$15.53 million to the Djibouti Code of Conduct Trust Fund, which was founded by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) to implement the Djibouti Code of Conduct.⁴⁶ This Trust Fund was used to establish information-sharing centers for anti-piracy measures and the Djibouti Regional Training Centre, where training programs to improve maritime security capacities in countries neighboring Somalia have been held.



Suppression training conducted under the “Project for Capacity Development of Djibouti Coast Guard Phase III” in Djibouti (Photo: Japan Coast Guard)

In cooperation with the Japan Coast Guard, Japan holds maritime law enforcement training courses on anti-piracy measures for Asia and off the coast of Somalia. In 2023, 17 maritime security officers from 13 countries in total participated in the courses. Recognizing that the reconstruction and stability of Somalia are essential for a fundamental solution to the piracy issue in the area, Japan has disbursed a total of \$579 million since 2007

for the restoration of basic social services, improvement of policing capabilities, and revitalization of domestic industries in Somalia.

Oil spillages from ships that occur on sea lanes not only have an impact on the safe navigation of ships passing through, but can also cause fatal damage to the fishery and tourism industries of coastal countries by polluting the coast. Hence, it is important to strengthen the capacity for dealing with such oil spill incidents. In March 2023, Japan dispatched the Japan Disaster Relief (JDR) Expert Team to respond to the oil spill disaster caused by a small tanker that capsized and sank off the coast of Mindoro Island in the central Philippines (see Part III, Section 2 (4) on page 58 for the details of JDR).

The International Hydrographic Organization (IHO) has been conducting a training program in the United Kingdom every year since 2009 with the aim of nurturing nautical chart experts in developing countries. This program is carried out with grant assistance from the Nippon Foundation. The training program has produced 92 graduates from 49 countries by December 2022. The IHO and Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (UNESCO-IOC) are engaged in a joint project to create the General Bathymetric Chart of Oceans (GEBCO), a topographical map of the world’s seafloor. The map is under revision through the cooperation of experts around the world, including the Hydrographic and Oceanographic Department of the Japan Coast Guard.

■ Outer Space

Japan contributes to addressing global issues, including climate change, disaster risk reduction, marine and fishery resource management, agriculture, forest conservation, as well as natural resources and energy, through the implementation of development cooperation and capacity building assistance utilizing space technology. Japan also proactively provides assistance in the field of human resources development for emerging countries in their efforts toward space development and utilization. In particular, Japan’s initiatives, such as providing opportunities to utilize the space environment and deploying CubeSats by utilizing Japanese Experiment Module “Kibo” on the International Space Station (ISS), are highly acclaimed in the international community. From June to December 2023, a new round for the application to the “KiboCUBE” program (the 8th round) was conducted.⁴⁷ As of 2023, the Central American Integration System (SICA), Mexico, and Tunisia, which were selected in the previous rounds, are developing CubeSats under the program.

Japan formulated a basic policy in 2016 to strategically and effectively provide all-Japan support for the capacity building of emerging space faring nations and has

⁴⁶ A regional cooperation framework for Somalia and its neighboring countries.

⁴⁷ A cooperation program between the UN Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA) and the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) that provides developing countries with the opportunity to deploy CubeSats from “Kibo.”



Project participants checking drone footage during a field survey using satellite and AI technology under the “Project for improving control of illegal deforestation through advanced SAR and AI technologies in the Brazilian Amazon” in Brazil (Photo: JICA)

actively supported such nations. For example, Japan is conducting forest monitoring in 78 countries in the regions of Asia, Africa, and Latin America and the Caribbean, utilizing a tropical forest monitoring system (JICA-JAXA Forest Early Warning System in the Tropics: JJ-FAST) that uses satellite data from “ALOS-2.”

In order to contribute to the realization of the rule of law in outer space, Japan provides capacity building assistance to emerging space faring nations in the development and operation of domestic space-related laws. Since Japan began cooperating with the UN Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA)’s “Space Law for New Space Actors Project” in FY2021, Japan has been providing assistance to emerging space faring nations in the Asia-Pacific region for the development and operation of domestic space-related laws and regulations. Japan also contributes to building the legal capacity needed to properly manage and supervise their space activities, including private-sector activities. In 2023, Japan conducted legal capacity building assistance for countries in the Asia-Pacific region, focusing on supervision as well as licensing of space activities.

(3) Technical Assistance for the Development of Legal and Judicial Systems and Assistance for Democratization

In order to achieve “quality growth” in developing countries, it is necessary to equip them with social infrastructure that is equitably and stably managed, so that the rights of individuals are guaranteed, and people can be engaged in socio-economic activities with a sense of safety. To strengthen such foundations in developing countries, the sharing of universal values, such as freedom, democracy, respect for basic human rights, and the rule of law, realizing good governance, and ensuring peace, stability, and security are of great importance.

In such circumstances, corruption cases involving

public officials, such as bribery and embezzlement can also be a cause of impediments of the environment for fair competition and sound economic growth of developing countries. Therefore, it is necessary for donor countries to support good governance, including anti-corruption measures in developing countries to realize fair and stable societies.

It is also a critical component of encouraging medium- to long-term stability and development in developing countries to strengthen the foundation for democracy such as by the people’s participation in governance and development and by protecting and promoting human rights. In particular, it is important to support developing countries that take proactive steps toward democratization in their efforts to move toward democratic systems, such as through assistance for holding fair and transparent elections, and assistance for the media in ensuring the citizens’ right to know and protecting freedom of expression.

Japan’s Efforts

■ Development of Legal and Judicial Systems

Japan actively provides assistance for the development of legal and judicial systems in order to establish the rule of law, realize good governance, promote and solidify democratization, and respect basic human rights in every country. Specifically, Japan provides assistance on legal and judicial system reform, drafting of laws and regulations, capacity development of national and local government officials for the operation and execution of legal systems, enhancement of internal audits, and establishment of civil codes, competition law, intellectual property law, taxation system, internal audit, and public investment systems in countries such as Bangladesh, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Mongolia, Nepal, Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka, Timor-Leste, Uzbekistan, and Viet Nam. For instance, in Laos, as a result of Japan’s continuous support over more than 20 years for the development of legal and judicial systems, the country’s first civil code entered into force in May 2020, and support for the operation of the civil code continues to be provided, including the completion of the Commentary Book of the Civil Code in April 2023. In Indonesia, Japan promoted the preparation of a guidebook for judges outlining the contents of trademark and copyright laws, conducted training and seminars for judges in regional cities throughout the country, utilizing a collection of judgments (trademark cases edition) for judges dealing with intellectual property cases (published in 2022), and worked on the capacity building of legal practitioners in the country. Furthermore, Japan invited judges in the intellectual property field in May 2023, as well as government officials in charge of drafting and reviewing laws and regulations in September of the same year, for training to share Japan’s systems and experiences that could serve as a reference for the country.

Japan takes a leading role in the implementation of

the “Kyoto Declaration”⁴⁸ adopted at the 14th UN Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (Kyoto Congress)⁴⁹ held in Kyoto in March 2021. Specifically, Japan promotes the efforts to realize the “Kyoto Declaration” by leading the formulation of the “UN Standards and Norms on Reducing Reoffending” through using knowledge of reducing reoffending from Japanese public-private partnerships, and by regularly holding related forums, such as the “Global Youth Forum for a Culture of Lawfulness” (Col-YF), which aims to empower youth who will lead the next generation, and the “Criminal Justice Forum for Asia and the Pacific” (Crim-AP), an information-sharing platform for criminal justice practitioners in the Asia-Pacific region to further promote international cooperation to fight crime. In December 2022, the “2nd Global Youth Forum for a Culture of Lawfulness” was held. More than 100 youth from over 50 countries and regions participated and discussed the theme of “The Role of Youth in Achieving a Diverse and Inclusive Society.” In February 2023, the “2nd Criminal Justice Forum for Asia and the Pacific” was held, where participants from 18 countries and 5 organizations engaged in a lively exchange of views. Furthermore, in July, in conjunction with the ASEAN-Japan Special Meeting of Justice Ministers, Japan and the Thailand Institute of Justice (TIJ) co-hosted the “ASEAN-Japan Special Youth Forum for Promoting the Rule of Law,” with the support of UNODC. More than 60 youth from Japan, ASEAN member states, and Timor-Leste gathered to discuss the theme of “Building Justice Literacy for Enhanced Access to Justice – the Key to the Rule of Law in the Digital Era –.”

With regard to capacity building assistance for national and local public officials to operate and enforce legal and judicial systems, Japan conducts international training courses, studies, and local seminars, specifically with the aim of strengthening the development of human resources, such as legal practitioners. In 2022, as in 2021, Japan conducted online training while the new entry of foreign nationals to Japan was restricted due to the COVID-19 pandemic. But from autumn 2022 onwards, Japan gradually resumed face-to-face training domestically. Whether online or face-to-face, the training is conducted on topics such as drafting laws and legislation, improving operation of legal and judicial systems, and capacity building of relevant professionals, taking into account the needs of the above-mentioned countries, the latest national political situation, and the activities of international organizations such as the UN. The training was attended by legal practitioners

and lawmaking professionals, including justice ministry officials, judges, and prosecutors from these countries. Additionally, as travel restrictions in various countries were eased or lifted, Japan gradually resumed participating in face-to-face seminars and workshops held locally and conducted training on similar topics.

In order to proactively promote assistance aligned with the needs of developing countries, Japan works to implement effective assistance by conducting broad and basic studies regarding the legal systems of the countries, and their interpretations and operations. As one of the efforts, since April 2022, Japan regularly holds the “Asia-Pacific Real Estate Legislation Study Group” as a forum for conducting comparative research on real estate legal systems in Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, and the Philippines, and in October 2023, held the “11th Symposium on International Civil and Commercial Law.”

■ Assistance for Governance Including Anti-Corruption Measures

As a State Party to the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) and through its cooperation with UNODC, the secretariat of the Convention, Japan is actively engaged in developing legal systems concerning the prevention of corruption and law enforcement operations, as well as in providing capacity building assistance to justice and law enforcement agencies.

Through the United Nations Asia and Far East Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders (UNAFEI),⁵⁰ which is jointly operated by the Ministry of Justice of Japan and the UN, Japan conducts annual training programs and seminars for criminal justice practitioners in developing countries, such as in Asia and Africa, as part of legal technical cooperation and support for governance including anti-



The 25th UNCAC Training Programme (Photo: UNAFEI)

⁴⁸ An outcome document of the Kyoto Congress that provides medium- to long-term guidelines for the UN and UN Member States in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice.

⁴⁹ The largest UN international conference in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice, held once every five years. UNODC serves as the secretariat of the conference.

⁵⁰ Established in 1962 based on an agreement between the UN and the Government of Japan. It is operated by the UN Training Cooperation Department of the Research and Training Institute within the Ministry of Justice. It has produced over 6,300 graduates from 142 countries and regions since its establishment.

Featured Project



Conducting Elections during the COVID-19 Pandemic: Achieving both the Promotion of Participation in Politics and Infectious Disease Control

COVID-Resilient Elections in Timor-Leste Project

Contributions to Multilateral Institutions (March 2021 – July 2023)

Timor-Leste



Timor-Leste, one of the countries where democracy has taken deep roots in Southeast Asia, has actively promoted the participation of its people in politics since the restoration of independence in 2002. However, in the 2022 presidential election and the 2023 parliamentary election, which were to be held while COVID-19 was not yet under control, there were concerns about whether infectious disease countermeasures could be sufficiently taken under the country's fragile medical system.

In response to the situation, Japan, in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), strengthened the country's resilience to infectious diseases in order to support the country in achieving equal, direct, and active participation in politics during the spread of COVID-19. In providing cooperation, consideration was given to promote the participation in politics of women, youth, and persons with disabilities, for the realization of an inclusive society.

In this cooperation, Japan supported the installation of handwashing stations in 13 regional offices of the Technical Secretariat for Electoral Administration and the National Commission on Elections. In addition, Japan prepared emergency



A UNDP Japanese staff member working with sign language interpreters to support the dissemination of electoral information to persons with disabilities (Photo: UNDP)

response manuals, provided personal protective equipment, and conducted training for staff on infectious disease countermeasures. Furthermore, toward the realization of inclusive elections, Japan also supported the installation of facilities for persons with disabilities, such as ramps and accessible restrooms. Through dissemination of election information toward women, youth, and persons with disabilities, Japan promoted broader participation of people in politics.

At polling places on election day, face masks were distributed, and body temperature checks and hand sanitization were thoroughly conducted. There were no reports of COVID-19 infections during the election. Improvements to the facilities of election administrative institutions ensured that voters felt safe and satisfied, which led to participation in politics. Despite the spread of COVID-19, the voter turnout in the presidential election was as high as 77.26% and in the parliamentary elections in the following year it was 79.28%, with female voter turnout exceeding 80%, the highest ever.

Japan will continue to support Timor-Leste in achieving sustainable development and building a healthy democratic society.



A staff member at a polling place implementing infectious disease countermeasures for citizens who came to vote in the 2022 presidential election (Photo: UNDP)

corruption measures.

As an example of a specific initiative, Japan has annually held a training course to support the criminal justice for anti-corruption since 1998, except for the year when it was canceled due to the spread of COVID-19. The training course is held with themes selected from the key issues of the UNCAC, and contributes to the sound development of the criminal justice system and the strengthening of cooperative relationships for preventing corruption in each country. In November 2023, the 25th UNCAC Training Programme on the main theme of "Effective Corruption Investigation Utilizing International Cooperation" was held. A total of 30 criminal justice practitioners from 25 countries participated in the training, including 5 participants from Ukraine.

Furthermore, Japan has held a seminar titled "Regional Seminar on Good Governance for Southeast Asian Countries (GG Seminar)" every fiscal year since 2007, except for the year when it was canceled due to the

spread of COVID-19, with the objectives of supporting governance initiatives in Southeast Asian countries and contributing to human resources development in the area of criminal justice and anti-corruption. In December 2023, the 17th GG Seminar on the theme of "Protecting



The 17th GG Seminar (Photo: UNAFEI)

Judges, Prosecutors and Law Enforcement Officials from Undue Interference Including Bribery” was held face-to-face in Japan. It was attended by 19 criminal justice practitioners from 10 countries, namely 9 ASEAN member states (Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Viet Nam) and Timor-Leste.

UNAFEI’s activities are not limited to anti-corruption efforts, but also address important issues related to crime prevention and criminal justice in the international community. UNAFEI responds to the changing global society by holding training programs and seminars on these topics to criminal justice practitioners widely in developing countries around the world. For example, in 2023, various seminars and training were held face-to-face: the 180th International Senior Seminar on the theme of “Promoting Legal Aid for Offenders and Victims” was held from January to February, the 181st International Training Course on the theme of “Countermeasures against Transnational Organized Crime” from May to June, and the 182nd International Training Course on the theme of “Effective Support for Reintegration of Released Inmates – Toward Seamless Support for Employment, Housing and Medical Care” from September to October.

■ Assistance for Democratization

In Kosovo, Japan has implemented the “Project for Capacity Development of Radio Television of Kosovo (RTK)” since January 2015 to deliver accurate, neutral, and fair broadcasting to all citizens. In order to improve the accuracy of reporting in multiethnic areas, Japan provides assistance for preparations of the opening of branch offices in ethnic minority areas and mixed ethnic areas, and for the capacity enhancement of program production staff through on-the-job training and workshops by JICA experts. These activities contribute to the broadcasting of fair and impartial programs to all citizens, including ethnic minorities.



Rescue teams working in the areas affected by the earthquake in Türkiye (Photo: JICA)

(4) Humanitarian Assistance during Natural Disasters

In recent years, due in part to the impact of climate change, the frequency of short-term and localized abnormal torrential rainfall increases worldwide, and the damage caused by floods and landslides also tends to be more intense and frequent. Since developing countries have fragile economic and social infrastructures, many of them suffer great damage from disasters and require assistance from the international community.

In the event of a large-scale disaster overseas, Japan stands ready for the immediate provision of emergency assistance upon the request of the government of affected countries or international organizations. Japan offers several forms of assistance, such as the deployment of disaster relief personnel, in-kind assistance, and financial assistance. Japan provides either one or a combination of these forms of assistance considering the scale of the disaster and the request from the affected country or international organization.

Japan's Efforts

There are five types of Japan Disaster Relief (JDR) teams that provide humanitarian assistance: (i) Urban Search and Rescue Team, (ii) Medical Team, (iii) Infectious Diseases Response Team, (iv) Expert Team (to provide technical advice or instructions on emergency disaster mitigation measures and recovery activities), and (v) Self-Defense Force Unit (to undertake medical activities and/or transportation of aid supplies and personnel when it is deemed particularly necessary). These teams are dispatched either individually or in combination.

Emergency relief goods are provided as in-kind assistance. Japan stockpiles, in three overseas warehouses managed by JICA, tents, blankets, and other supplies needed and to be provided for the affected people swiftly in the wake of a disaster.

As financial assistance, Japan provides Emergency Grant Aid to the governments of countries affected by



Emergency relief goods arriving at Damascus Airport (Syria)



Medical team performing pre-surgery procedures in the areas affected by the earthquake in Türkiye (Photo: JICA)

natural disasters and/or conflict, and to international organizations that provide emergency assistance in affected areas for the purpose of providing relief to victims, refugees and displaced persons of natural disasters and conflicts overseas, and others.

In 2023, Japan supported emergency rescue operations in response to the earthquake that occurred in the southeastern part of Türkiye in February immediately after the disaster. While swiftly providing emergency relief goods to Türkiye and Syria through JICA, Japan dispatched rescue, medical, and expert teams to Türkiye to conduct search and rescue operations and provide medical assistance. Japan also inspected the condition of buildings and infrastructure damaged by the earthquake and provided technical advice on recovery and reconstruction. Additionally, Japan rapidly transported materials and equipment for the medical team to the site using a Japan Self-Defense Force aircraft, as well as approximately 89.5 tons of disaster relief supplies including tents located in Pakistan to Türkiye, in coordination and cooperation with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). On top of that, Japan provides assistance for recovery and reconstruction in Türkiye by Emergency Grant Aid of \$6 million through international organizations and \$2.5 million through Japanese NGOs, as well as grant aid (¥5 billion), loans

(¥80 billion), and technical cooperation, making use of Japan's expertise (see "Stories from the Field" on page 60 for Japan's efforts on disaster risk reduction in Türkiye to date).

Furthermore, in March 2023, Japan dispatched the Japan Disaster Relief (JDR) Expert Team to respond to the oil spill disaster caused by a small tanker that capsized and sank off the coast of Mindoro Island in the central Philippines. In September, Japan provided Emergency Grant Aid in response to the earthquake disaster that struck the central region of Morocco and the flood disaster in the eastern part of Libya, and also provided emergency relief goods to nine countries.⁵¹

Japanese NGOs also provide various forms of assistance to disaster victims utilizing ODA. They often work as a partner with international organizations and others in emergency relief activities. Japan Platform (JPF)⁵² provides humanitarian assistance to refugees, displaced persons, people affected by conflicts and/or natural disasters, and others. The NGOs affiliated with JPF provide various forms of support to meet the local needs in regions where local government assistance is not readily available, such as Morocco (earthquake), Afghanistan (earthquake), Pakistan (flood), Ukraine (conflict), and other regions (see page 133, Part V, Section 1 (3)).

Disaster response is a common challenge for Japan and ASEAN countries, both of which are prone to natural disasters. Japan has supported the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (AHA Centre), which was established in 2011, and has contributed to strengthening its capacity. In 2023, Japan continued to support the establishment of the Disaster Emergency Logistic System for ASEAN (DELSA) to quickly transport emergency relief items to affected countries and the provision of assistance through this system. Japan also provided human resources development for the ASEAN-Emergency Response and Assessment Team (ASEAN-ERAT), which conducts emergency assessments of the damage, and for potential leaders of the National Disaster Management Organizations in ASEAN countries.

⁵¹ The nine countries are Afghanistan, Chile, Iran, Libya, Malawi, Mozambique, Syria, Türkiye, and Vanuatu.

⁵² See the glossary on page 137.

Japan's Efforts on Disaster Risk Reduction Education in Türkiye, an Earthquake-Prone Country

– Spreading Knowledge through the Turkish Version of “Bosai Koshien” –



Türkiye has many active fault lines, and like Japan, it is one of the most earthquake-prone countries in the world. Türkiye has experienced large-scale earthquakes in 2011 and 2020, in addition to the Izmit earthquake in August 1999 with its epicenter in northwestern Türkiye, and the Düzce earthquake in November of the same year. In February 2023, an earthquake centered in southeastern Türkiye caused severe damage, claiming nearly 50,000 casualties. Densely populated areas including Istanbul, the center of economic development, are said to be at great risk, and further efforts are required for disaster risk reduction.

Japan, also a disaster-prone country, has utilized its experience and knowledge to provide Türkiye with yen loans to contribute to strengthening seismic reinforcement and earthquake reconstruction, promote joint research on seismic observation and earthquake engineering, and provide technical cooperation to formulate disaster risk reduction plans and improve disaster risk management capabilities. After the 1999 Izmit earthquake, efforts were put into disaster risk reduction education, and the “School-Based Disaster Education Project” was implemented in two phases from 2010 to 2014 and from 2017 to 2020. In Phase 1, Japan targeted 80 basic schools in 10 provinces with large economic scales and conducted disaster risk reduction training with three teachers from each school as master teachers. In Phase 2, activities to disseminate and expand the disaster education were carried out nationwide. Dr. Emin Özdamar, a former staff engaged in the disaster risk reduction education at the JICA Türkiye Office and currently the Vice-Chairman at the Turkish Japanese Foundation, looks back at their initial efforts and says, “With the cooperation of Hyogo Prefecture, an area affected by the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake, we compared Hyogo Prefecture’s educational curriculum with Türkiye’s curriculum and incorporated parts that could be applied to Türkiye. We also worked with teachers to come up with a game so that children could learn disaster risk reduction knowledge while having fun. In addition, we worked to help children acquire knowledge naturally without being bound by the framework of disaster risk reduction, such as by incorporating disaster risk reduction content into math and other courses.”

Since the implementation of the project, master teachers who have completed their training have passed on their disaster risk reduction knowledge to teachers at other schools, trying to create an environment in which each school has at least one teacher with disaster risk reduction knowledge. Regarding the ripple effects of disaster risk reduction education, Dr. Özdamar says, “When we provide disaster risk reduction education to children, they pass on that knowledge to their families and classmates.



School-Based Disaster Education Project (Photo: JICA)

Basic knowledge, such as placing beds in safe places and securing furniture, is being shared by trained teachers with children and their families. During the earthquake in February 2023, some teachers and students did what they had learned and crouched next to their beds to protect themselves.”

From 2021, the Turkish-Japanese Foundation Culture Center and JICA co-host the “Disaster Education Materials Development Contest” (the Turkish version of “Bosai Koshien”^{*1}) in order to ensure the continuing effects of the School-Based Disaster Education Project. “When I visited Miyagi Prefectural Tagajo High School, where the Disaster Science Course was established, I learned about ‘Bosai Koshien.’ In order to spread the achievements of the School-Based Disaster Education Project, I thought we would need to involve young people, so we took action to hold a Turkish version of ‘Bosai Koshien.’” says Dr. Özdamar. The first competition was held for teachers, and the organizers received 40 entries from 21 provinces. The target audience was later expanded to include students, and in 2023, 156 applications were received from 29 provinces, including tabletop games related to disaster risk reduction and disaster risk reduction simulation devices using models. In addition, in the university student category, there were 86 projects from universities with departments related to disaster risk reduction.



Award ceremony for the Turkish version of “Bosai Koshien” (The person on the right in the photo is Dr. Özdamar) (Photo: JICA)

However, even if people in Türkiye receive disaster risk reduction education, if they do not comply with building standards and strengthen the ground, the effectiveness of the education will be halved. Chief Representative of JICA Türkiye Office Ms. TANAKA Yuko describes the prospects as follows. “In response to the earthquake damage in February 2023, we are also reviewing disaster risk reduction cooperation in Türkiye based on the recommendations of the expert team. We will continue to cooperate in building cities that are resilient to disasters, using the disaster-stricken cities as model cities.”

Currently, through a student exchange project connecting high schools in Hyogo and Miyagi Prefectures with Turkish students, young people learn about each other’s experiences in disaster-affected areas. It is expected that the achievements of Japan in the field of disaster risk reduction will be further utilized for disaster risk reduction in Türkiye.

^{*1} This nationwide competition honors children and students who are engaged in disaster risk reduction education and activities in their schools and local communities in order to pass on the experiences and lessons learned from the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake that occurred on January 17, 1995, to the future. It is held every year by the Hyogo Earthquake Memorial 21st Century Research Institute (Disaster Reduction and Human Renovation Institution), based in Kobe City.