

Chapter 2 Specific Initiatives of Japan's Official Development Assistance

This chapter discusses specific initiatives of the official development assistance (ODA) that Japan provides around the world, viewing them from five different perspectives (sections 1 through 5).



Children enjoying a video created by Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers in Senegal to introduce regions and schools. Children who don't attend school also get interests in school. (Photo: Erina Hirobe)

Japan's ODA policies promote efforts in each developing country in accordance with the ODA Charter (see page 196). Section 1 describes the ODA Charter, which serves as the foundation for Japan's ODA in developing countries, as well as the content of policies that are based on the Charter.

Section 2 further breaks down the issues of "poverty reduction," "sustainable growth," "addressing global issues," and "peace-building" listed in the ODA Charter, and introduces Japan's approach to each area.

The world is faced with largely different economic and social environments and cultures, and confronts a different set of issues depending on the region and country. Section 3 presents specific examples of Japan's ODA by region. The eight regions are: East Asia, South Asia, Central Asia and the Caucasus, Sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East and North Africa, Latin America and the

Caribbean, Oceania, and Europe.

The government of Japan provides development assistance in compliance with the assistance principles of the ODA Charter, in consideration of the principles of the United Nations Charter as well as other factors, and after determining the developing country's need for assistance, socio-economic conditions, and the bilateral relations with the recipient country. Section 4 provides a concrete explanation of the factors that are taken into consideration for the operation of Japan's ODA.

Finally, Section 5, the last section, introduces the system of implementation of Japan's ODA and a series of reform measures for providing more efficient and effective ODA, which are divided into the following three categories: "system of formulation and implementation of aid policy," "increasing public participation," and "Requirements for Implementation of Strategic and Effective Assistance."

Section 1

Initiatives Relating to the Basic Policies of the ODA Charter

The philosophy and principles of Japan's current ODA policy are set forth in the ODA Charter. The Medium-term Policy on ODA, Japan's Country Assistance Policy, Sectoral Development Policy, and Priority Policy Issues for International Cooperation, and Rolling Plans are set under this Charter. This section explains the existing policy framework.

1. Official Development Assistance Charter (ODA Charter)

The current ODA Charter (revised in August 2003) consists of "I. Philosophy," "II. Principle of ODA Implementation," "III. Formulation and Implementation of ODA Policy," and "IV. Reporting on the Status of Implementation of the ODA Charter."

In "I. Philosophy," the objective of ODA is defined as "to contribute to the peace and development of the international community, and thereby to help ensure Japan's own security and prosperity." It sets out five basic policies for the attainment of these objectives: (i) "supporting self-help efforts of developing countries" based on good governance; (ii) the perspective of "human security" for the implementation of support focused on individuals; (iii) the "assurance of fairness" with consideration given to the socially vulnerable, particularly for improving the status of women, and to the gaps between rich and poor, and between regions; (iv) the "utilization of Japan's experience and expertise" to make full use of its own experience in economic and social development to promote the growth of developing countries; and (v) "partnership and collaboration with the international community" with a view to pursuing collaboration with international organizations, other donor countries, and other assistance providers including NGOs

and the private sector. Based on these objectives and basic policies, Japan provides support focusing on the following priority issues of (i) "poverty reduction," (ii) "sustainable growth," (iii) "addressing global issues," and (iv) "peace-building."

"II. Principle of ODA Implementation" stipulates that ODA is to be provided with full attention given to balancing the environment and development, preventing any use of ODA for military purposes, and promoting the democratization of developing countries.

"III. Formulation and Implementation of ODA Policy" states that it is important to take a government-wide coherent and unified approach to ODA planning and implementation, and to improve the strategic value, flexibility, and efficiency of Japan's ODA. In addition, because ODA is funded by taxpayers, this section stipulates that the Government must strive to enhance public understanding of ODA.

"IV. Reporting on the Status of Implementation of the ODA Charter" clarifies the accountability for the implementation of ODA, stating that the Government must report the status of implementation of ODA to the Cabinet through yearly publication of the ODA White Paper.

2. Medium-Term ODA Policy

The Medium-term ODA Policy (see page 202) details Japan's position, approaches, and specific actions outlined in the ODA Charter, focusing on items that require more concrete explanation. The latest revision took place in February 2005, listing specific issues to be addressed under the

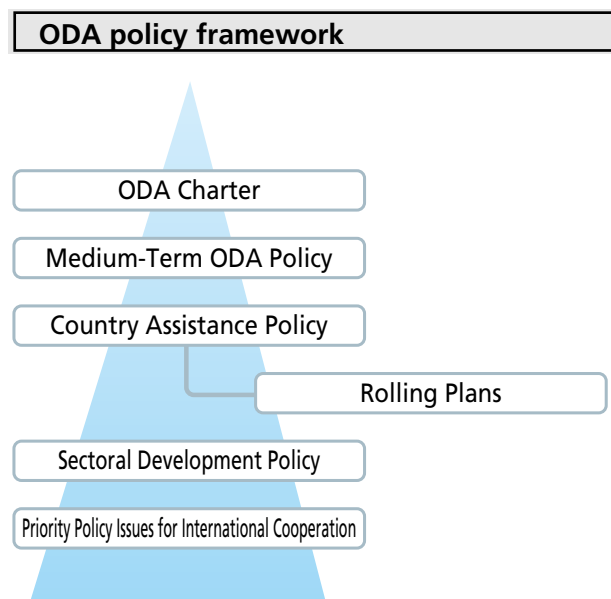
three categories of (i) perspective of human security, (ii) priority issues of "poverty reduction," "sustainable growth," "addressing global issues," and "peace-building," and (iii) "measures to ensure the efficient and effective implementation of assistance."

3. Country Assistance Policy

The Country Assistance Policy is Japan's country-specific assistance policy. To formulate the documents, the political and socio-economic situations as well as development strategies and needs of each recipient country are taken into consideration. As a general rule, it is to be revised every five years. As of 2009, the "Country Assistance

Programs" were formulated for 28 countries, but in accordance with the "ODA Review Final Report" that was released in 2010, it was determined that, for the policies to be more concise and strategic to highlight the priority areas and the direction of assistance for each country, it would be changed as follows: (i) the name will be changed

from “Country Assistance Programs” to “Country Assistance Policy,” (ii) as a rule, the policy will be formulated for all recipient countries of Japan’s ODA (iii) the contents will be explicit and the formulation process streamlined, and (iv) the Rolling Plans to be combined as an appendix to the Country Assistance Policy. In accordance with this policy, over the next three years from FY2011, the Country Assistance Policy will be formulated for 40 to 50 countries every year, taking into consideration the input from the “Country-based ODA Task Force” comprised mainly of the Embassy of Japan and the JICA office in each recipient country.



4. Sectoral Development Policy

Japan formulates Sectoral Development Policy in order to effectively implement assistance in specific sectors including health, education, water and sanitation, and environment considering the discussions in the international community. In other words, by reflecting these policies in the planning and proposal of ODA projects through the formulation of sectoral development

initiatives, Japan implements assistance that is favorable to the recipient countries in the medium to long-term as well. Formulating Sectoral development policy in addition to the ODA Charter, Medium-term ODA Policy, and Country Assistance Policy further clarifies the guiding principles of the Japan’s assistance and makes its approach easier to understand.

5. Priority Policy Issues for International Cooperation

Japan designs and announces its Priority Policy Issues for International Cooperation every fiscal year to define the priorities in the area of international cooperation as a part of its efforts to better reflect the most updated development on Japan’s foreign policy as well as newly emerging development challenges. The five top priorities of FY2010 are: (i) support for efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (see the figure on page 10) and

promotion of human security, (ii) support for developing countries measures against climate change, (iii) encourage Asia’s development and improve the environment for Japanese private-sector activities in developing countries, (iv) assistance to Afghanistan and Pakistan to combat terrorist acts, and (v) support for the activities of NGO and strengthened partnerships with them.

6. Rolling Plans

As a rule, a “Rolling Plan” is a document made for each recipient country of Japan’s ODA. In a Rolling Plan, basically all on-going ODA projects are classified and listed according to the country-specific priority areas, development issues, and programs, at each stage from its approval to completion. By utilizing a variety of Rolling Plans, it is aimed to better adopt different development

schemes in an integrated manner when designing, planning, and implementing ODA projects. This also helps strengthen the predictability on how assistance will be carried out. In accordance with the “ODA Review Final Report,” the Rolling Plans will be combined as an appendix to the Country Assistance Policy.