

STS Forum - Science and Technology for Developing Countries -

Sadako Ogata, President of JICA

Your Excellencies, Distinguished Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is my great honor and pleasure to have the chance to meet you and to share my thoughts on science and technology in developing countries. JICA has a long history of working with developing countries and contributing to their economic advancement through technical cooperation. I fully recognize that the advancement of human resources in science and technology has significant impact on both accelerating and sustaining development.

(Importance of Human Resource Development in Science and Technology)

Asian countries have experienced extraordinary economic growth, which is frequently referred to as “the Asian economic miracles”. It was achieved largely through intensive economic strategies, focusing on technological capacity building. The private sector also participated and invested in economic infrastructure building.

Recently, African leaders such as Prime Minister Meles of Ethiopia, are focusing to Asian experiences and are eager to utilize the lessons learned and applying these lessons to their development strategies. Several African countries have adopted national development policies focused on science and technology, particularly ICT. They concentrate on human resource development especially in science and technology.

In fact, I find myself facing a series of requests from African governments to support education and training programs related to science and technology.

(JICA's Activities)

I would like to highlight several situations in developing countries that JICA is currently involved in.

To begin with, I wish to recall that since early days, Japan's development assistance has concentrated on human resource development, particularly in the fields of science and technology.

In Asia, while undertaking the training of researchers and technicians and strengthening the institutions to which they belong, JICA has established an ASEAN-wide network of top level engineering institutions dedicated to enhance engineering skills. The project is called the SEED-Net or Southeast Asia Engineering Education Development Network.

In Africa, new advancement has been observed, in education as a whole but science and technology in particular. I visited Rwanda in June and formally opened the Tumba College of Technology. This institution was established with the help of Japanese grant aid in the early 1990's, but was destroyed during that country's civil war. JICA decided to support the rebuilding of the college facilities as well as providing equipment and teaching staff in response to the request from Rwandan government. JICA has also extended a wide range of cooperation to Rwanda, from strengthening primary and secondary education to prepare for further advancement in science and technology training.

In the Middle East, JICA is currently working with the Government of Egypt to establish the Egypt-Japan University of Science and Technology which aims at attracting students from countries in the Middle East and North Africa. This university will carry teaching and research activities in a broad range of fields related to science and technology. We expect that the university will not only be limited to learning about the existing technology in developed countries but will respond to the future needs of Middle East and North African countries.

(Poverty Reduction through Economic Growth led by Science and Technology)

The Japanese Government hosted the forth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD IV) in May and the G8 *Hokkaido Toyako* Summit in July this year. Participants held intense discussions on ways to achieve "poverty reduction through economic growth". The advancement of science and technology was noted as the force to accelerate economic growth.

In this connection, one specific caution that the African leaders expressed would be worth mentioning. In Rwanda, the educational authorities will study the need to prevent the rise of inequality. Rapid economic growth in general, tends to cause inequality, between the rich and the poor, particularly between the urban and rural areas. Having survived the genocide in the mid-1990, and pursued an intensive policy of "national unity and reconciliation," the leaders are more aware of the possible adverse consequences that result from rapid advance in science and technology.

The Rector of the National University of Rwanda confided to me that he was hoping to install some program for national service for university graduates upon graduation. He wants to ask some of them upon completing higher education to go around the country and serve in rural areas for a year or two on a voluntary basis, before moving on to enhance their careers. I was very much impressed by his wise vision.

I have introduced a few examples to show that development and spread of science and technology are achievable through efforts that are beyond borders and public and private boundaries.

I believe that science and technology are keys not only to rapid development of developing countries, but also to the stability, peace and prosperity of the world.

Thank you very much.