Acting together in times of crisis

FAO and Japan share the view that timely, well-focused assistance is critical to protect and restore the agricultural livelihoods of crisis-affected people. As a country that is itself much affected by natural disasters, Japan has been at the forefront of international relief efforts for over 30 years. Between 2012 and 2018, Japan provided US$106 million for FAO’s work in countries and regions affected by crises. Current funding provided by Japan is supporting a wide range of activities in Africa, in Asia and the Near East, including:

- supporting the agricultural seed service sector in South Sudan;
- resilience building via increased livelihoods opportunities and strengthened social cohesion for Syrian refugees and host communities in Turkey;
- enhancing Foot-and-Mouth Disease Control and restoring livelihoods in Federally Administered Tribal Areas in Pakistan; and
- assisting countries in preventing, responding to, controlling and eradicating transboundary animal diseases. Activities have involved rapid response missions and disease intelligence gathering through the Emergency Management Centre-Animal Health established at FAO, in collaboration with the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE).

Japan-FAO Strategic Consultation

In January 2017 the first Japan-FAO Annual Strategic Consultation was held at FAO headquarters with representatives of Japan’s Ministries for Foreign Affairs and Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries. On this occasion Japan and FAO reaffirmed their commitment to strengthen their partnership for addressing challenges related to food security, climate change, resilience and emergencies, nutrition, and agriculture, forestry and fisheries. Both agreed to act jointly in order to increase the visibility of the Japan-FAO partnership, and to hold annual Strategic Consultations to ensure continued dialogue.

For decades the Government of Japan has been among FAO’s foremost partners, working to build food security and promote sustainable use of natural resources. The country is the second largest contributor to the Organization’s regular budget, a lead voluntary contributor and one of the top resource partners supporting FAO’s 2,500 ongoing field programmes. Moreover, Japanese expertise and personnel are vital for achieving sustainable agriculture, fisheries and forestry development.

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Supporting global knowledge transfer

Japan has had a pioneering role in promoting and developing South-South (SSC) and Triangular (TrC) Cooperation over the past two decades. Through FAO SSC and TrC schemes, the country has supported the Coalition for African Rice Development (CARD), which aimed at doubling rice production from 2008 levels by 2018. Currently, a five-year Japanese-funded SSC project, worth US$2.5 million, is working to improve the capacity of CARD countries for timely collection and provision of reliable statistics on rice production. Under way since 2013, the project draws on expertise drawn from Asian countries and developed through projects implemented in the past by JICA and Japan’s Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries. Another project is providing advisory and analytical work towards the development of efficient and inclusive rice value chains. FAO also contributed to CARD by providing assistance in reviewing the National Rice Development Strategy of some countries (such as Benin, Côte d’Ivoire, Tanzania and Uganda) and in reviewing the phase one of the CARD Initiative. In the last CARD General Meeting held in 2018, it was reported that the objective was almost being achieved and also agreed that the second phase of CARD would be launched at the margin of TICAD 7 with the renewed commitment to further double rice production by 2030.

Projects: Strengthening Agricultural Statistics and Food Security Information in CARD Countries through South-South Cooperation; Advisory and analytical work towards the development of efficient and inclusive rice value chains; and Partnership for Sustainable Rice Systems Development in Sub-Saharan Africa (funded by Venezuela).

Partnering in Afghanistan

Aiming to improve water delivery, while increasing efficient use of water resources, Japan has been supporting irrigation rehabilitation and hydropower projects in Afghanistan since 2010. The projects have served 180,000 hectares of land with improved irrigation structures and provided micro-hydropower generators that benefit approximately 35,000 rural people. A new Japan-funded project, which began in 2018 with US$10 million, builds on the previous experiences and aims to further increase agricultural production and productivity through rehabilitating, modernizing and extending irrigation facilities and training government officials and farmers on efficient water management.

“By promoting and protecting Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems, and the people who rely on them, we take an important step towards a sustainable and hunger-free future.”

José Graziano da Silva
FAO Director-General

Tokyo International Conference on African Development

Two new initiatives launched

By 2050, the population in sub-Saharan Africa is expected to exceed 2 billion, requiring a 100 percent increase in food supply. Yet the effects of climate change, such as higher temperatures and extreme weather events are expected to hamper food production in various regions. Addressing such challenges will require colossal and collective efforts by African countries and their partners. Given Africa’s predominantly young and rural population – with over 11 million youth expected to enter labour markets over the next decade – FAO and Japan believe that the continent’s agriculture sector can be an effective catalyst for inclusive growth, shared prosperity and improved livelihoods in the region.

FAO has committed to support two major initiatives of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) launched on the occasion of the 2016 Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD VI), held in Nairobi, Kenya. The Organization serves as member of the Steering Committee for the “Initiative on Food and Nutrition Security in Africa (IFNA)” and is a partner in the “Initiative for Combating Desertification to Strengthen Resilience to Climate Change in the Sahel and Horn of Africa”.

Supporting Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems

Japan is contributing financial and human resources to support the Globally Important Agricultural Heritage System (GIAHS). This major conservation initiative was launched by FAO in 2002 to identify and safeguard the many unique and ingenious ways that the world’s agriculturalists have developed to produce food in harmony with nature. For example, in Shimbewe Juu Village in northern Tanzania, farmers have established an agroforestry system that combines different types of natural trees, banana, coffee and fruit trees, and staple food crops to increase efficiency of resource use. Efficiencies can also be achieved by harvesting solar energy and using soil nutrients and moisture. The system provides local people not only with food, but also fodder, fuel, timber and medicinal plants, while maintaining soil fertility and water flow from Mount Kilimanjaro.