Japan and FAO
Partnering to build global food security

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.

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”.

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.

Acting together in times of emergency

FAO and Japan share the view that timely, well-focused emergency 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 2011 and 2016, Japan provided US$99 million for FAO’s emergency work in Africa, in Asia and the Near East. In 2015-2016 funding provided by Japan went towards a wide range of activities, including:

- Providing emergency seed support to vulnerable households severely affected by the current El Niño-induced drought in Ethiopia.
- Improving the livelihoods and resilience of conflict-affected rural communities in ethnic minority areas of Myanmar.
- Assisting countries in preventing, responding to, controlling and eradicating transboundary animal diseases (TADs). Activities have involved rapid response missions and disease intelligence gathering through the Crisis Management Centre-Animal Health (CMC-AH) established at FAO, in collaboration with the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE).
Supporting global knowledge transfer

Japan has had a pioneering role in promoting and developing South-South Cooperation (SSC) and Triangular Cooperation (TrC) over the past two decades. Through FAO’s SSC and TrC schemes, the country has supported the Coalition for African Rice Development (CARD), which aims to double rice production from 2008 levels by 2018. A recently concluded US$6 million FAO-Japan SSC project, which started in 2007, shared key Japanese-developed rice-growing and aquaculture technologies with 29 African countries. The intervention built the capacities of more than 1,500 participants for the formulation, review and implementation of the National Rice and Aquaculture Development Strategies.

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 for Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries.

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 Shimbwe 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.

Partnering in Afghanistan

Since 2010, Japan has contributed over US$100 million to FAO’s agricultural interventions in Afghanistan, including substantial support to irrigation and water management development. The construction of community-based micro-hydropower stations is improving water and electricity supply, with a positive impact on agriculture-based livelihood through rural development. Farmers have received high-yield quality seeds and the necessary hands-on training through the farmer field school approach to secure improved agricultural productivity of vulnerable household facing food and nutrition insecurity.

With a US$16.7 million from Japan, FAO is helping to boost the resilience and livelihoods of Afghan livestock producers. As the first responder in the case of transboundary animal diseases such as foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) and peste des petits ruminants (PPR), FAO is also helping to prevent animal disease outbreaks at the community level.

As a part of peace-building efforts, FAO Afghanistan is planning cross-border meetings with Government authorities of Iran, Pakistan, Tajikistan, and other neighbouring countries. The intention is to promote the role of FAO’s technical assistance in fostering regional cooperation within the framework of Central Asian-Japanese relations.

Aiming to improve water delivery, while increasing efficient use of water resources, a recently completed micro hydro and irrigation systems project has upgraded over 70 percent of Afghanistan’s irrigation infrastructure. Another project funded by Japan began in 2016 to boost agricultural production livelihoods and resilience through improved on-farm water management and virus-free potato production. The project is also providing training on the Peace Medical Services (PMS) methodology in order to extend its application to a larger user community. Supporting Geographical Indication (GI) protection systems will be aligned with Japan-funded projects.

Support to normative instruments

Japan is a firm supporter of FAO’s normative work, providing financial assistance and technical expertise for International Food Safety Standards, the Codex Alimentarius Commission, the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) and the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture.