

The Role of JICA in Thailand

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I. Direction of co-operation with upper developing countries.

1) Present economic and social condition of upper developing countries

1. Countries that have already succeeded in variable economic growth are now trying to attain economic stabilization. Economic growth has been successful through the full utilization of natural resources in and out of these countries and through infrastructure. So, they already understand the limitations of economic growth in the future. They are now trying to attain economic stabilization through the economic development of human resources and preparation of infrastructure.
2. The problem is how to distribute the fruits of economic growth. Any country which successful in variable economic growth has a lot of earning differentials between urban areas which have developed in industry and rural areas which have remained in the same condition as before. In addition, there are many earning differences between social levels in these countries. Such differences are expanding even now, and there seems no effective way to stop them.

3. Environmental problems are growing more and more acute.

As the result of the full pursuit of rapid economic development without concern for environment conditions, there have resulted costs, especially non-economic and social costs. Environmental conditions have changed for the worse in industrial sectors. Rapid urbanization has brought more serious urban environmental conditions. Furthermore, as a result of the acquisition of foreign currency by the export of primary industries, almost all countries are losing natural resources like forests, and it is very difficult to protect natural land from soil erosion and other worse degradations.

2) The present condition of co-operation to upper developing countries.

JICA has recognized such economic and social problems in upper developing countries from their own experiences in their earlier stages and has decided on policies to co-operate, with the following points in consideration:

1. Maintenance of infrastructure should be improved.

This is important to maintain economic stabilization. Co-operation means not only to maintain hard infrastructure but also to maintain administrative systems, improvement of productivity, and the development of human resources.

2. Attempts should be made to abolish the earning differentials between urban and rural areas and social strata. JICA has put into practice such concrete projects as increasing income or preparation of public health for farmers or low income city dwellers.

3. JICA will co-operate in maintaining good environmental conditions and sustainable development of natural resources. In particular, maintenance of the environment is positively supported by using high level techniques around the world. This co-operation is offered at the request of upper developing countries.

Japan has a great deal of experience because Japan has just reached developed country status and has recently experienced economic growth. Recipient countries also have high potential and absorption capacity through their economic power and high level techniques.

It is difficult to attain effectiveness without considering the special circumstances of upper developing countries when they want to start defined plans. These countries are excluded from grant aid, so it is required that projects be co-ordinated through Japan's Yen loans or international cooperation organizations.

3) Special characteristics of co-operation with more upper developing countries.

JICA often faces dilemmas when considering co-operation with upper developing countries.

1. One issue is related to co-operation with the least developing countries. Most experts think co-operation should be given to the least developing countries rather than to upper developing countries which have already succeeded in reaching economic growth and are now rich countries. But upper countries also experience difficult conditions in maintaining economic stabilization in the economy. It is not wise to stop co-operation to upper developing countries which have a lot of difficult problems which they find impossible to resolve themselves.

2. Another issue is the self-reliance of upper developing countries. Some members say that developing countries already have enough resources to resolve problems for themselves. If Japan continues to help the independence of countries, it is important to stop co-operation for sectors which are able to deal with their own problems themselves. They would like to request co-operation for difficult matters which require complicated action and various measures. This is difficult to put in force because so many members have various interests. At the present time, Japan must continue to co-operate while at the same time consider encouraging the self-reliance of recipient countries.

3. Finally, there is the issue of already finished projects or development study sectors. It is true in the case of initiating new projects that often these duplicate already existing co-operative projects in related sectors. But in the case of upper developing countries the issue of development is complicated so the issue should not be dealt with by standard rules, and sometimes it is required that it be dealt with more flexibly even when there is duplication.

4) Upper developing country becoming donors and measures in the future.

When considering upper developing countries, JICA should take care to prepare for effective measures for changing countries from recipients to donors.

The cost sharing of third country training expands in upper developing countries. Second country training is also important for self-reliance in these countries. In particular, it will be realized that countries which lead regional development (partnership programs in technical co-operation) will try to co-operate with Japan on an equal basis for the advantaged sectors of third countries. This movement to donor countries in upper developing countries occurs in various and complicated circumstances around the world. Japan will receive requests to support the change to a donor country.

It is true that the issue of co-operation with upper developing countries is very important and a key point in JICA activity in the future. JICA must operate with more flexibility and not hold to past orthodox theory and must survey each country's approach through JICA offices abroad, in particular, peculiarities and complications in each upper developing country.

II. Data

I. Budget and Organization of JICA

- 1) JICA is an official agency of Japan whose main function is to extend government-based technical and grant aid co-operation to developing countries in accordance with the Japan International Cooperation Agency law.
- 2) The JICA's budget consists of a grants budget, an investment budget from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and funds in a trust budget from the Ministry of International Trade and Industry. The 1993 fiscal year budget is about 160,000 million Yen which is equal to 40,000 million Baht.
- 3) JICA staff numbers about 1,200 members only. There are 13 training centers and institutes. There are 9 branches in Japan. JICA has established 72 overseas offices.

II. Function of JICA in Thailand.

JICA has expanded since 1950 and has proven itself as a partner in the country's development efforts through various co-operation programs, and now has 4,328 members in total. JICA

- 1) invites Thai officials for technical training in Japan. Total 10,150 members.
- 2) dispatches Japanese experts and Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCV), totaling 229 members.
- 3) dispatches survey teams to help in the formulation of development plans and projects.
- 4) supplies necessary equipment for technical co-operation.
- 5) extends integrated co-operation known as project-type technical co-operation.
- 6) extends capital grant assistance.
- 7) has invited a total of 1,248 young Thai people to Japan to join friendship programs.
- 8) total amount of cooperation: No. 1 Indonesia, No. 2 Thailand Yen 108,724,000.

I hope this gives you a general picture of the “Role of JICA in Thailand”.

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