



Sakura-Meskel

Newsletter

Embassy of Japan in Ethiopia

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March 2010

MESSAGE FROM THE AMBASSADOR

Dear Readers,



H.E. Mt. Kinichi Komano

The other day, I visited Kumami town, which is located in the Afar Regional State, 10km from the Addis-Mekele road at the point of an Amhara town called Shoa Robit, just after the Debre Sina tunnel. It was a bit bumpy driving because rehabilitation work for the national highway was on-going. Anyway, I enjoyed a nice view from the car, all the way to Shoa Robit and then to Kumami. The purpose of the visit was to celebrate the completion of a program that Japan has supported to construct a water supply system in nine towns in the Afar Region. Kumami was the most difficult place of the program in terms of detecting water sources. After failing three times to find enough water from wells, Japanese experts finally found ample water sources in a place another 10km away from the town towards the east. Therefore, a 10km pipeline was set up from there, together with two pumping stations for piping water to the town.

Before this project, the local people of Kumami, especially the women and girls, had been compelled to walk up to 10km to fetch water. It is a great relief for them now. At the ceremony for the completion of the work, children were so excited that they drenched their whole bodies with the water when the guests opened the taps of the public water point and water started to gush out.

According to the Minister of Water Resources, H.E. Ato Asfaw Dingamo Kame, 66% of people currently have access to potable water in Ethiopia. In the coming PASDEP 2 phase, while continuously to expand the portable water coverage throughout the country, emphasis will be put on developing water for irrigation. Pastoralists are on the move for a long time looking for water and grazing for their livestock. Unfortunately, natural pastureland is diminishing. Hence, a new approach and idea is necessary. Now, a new strategy is under formation and is partially implemented, for development in pastoralist areas, which have long been neglected. By digging deep-wells for irrigation, which, of course, can be used for drinking water also, and preparing fundamental services, such as health and education, pastoralists can voluntarily settle without being compelled to move long distances, and engage themselves in feeding animals and agriculture there.

Without properly catering for the requirements of these pastoralists and incorporating them into the national economy, overall development in those regions that are now designated as emerging states, is not possible, nor can the nation-wide development and stability be sustainable. I welcome this new approach and we will try to accommodate this new program into our development strategy with Ethiopia. Kumami is, I am sure, part and parcel of this new approach.

JAPAN EXTENDS 474 MILLION BIRR GRANT AID TO THE GOVERNMENT OF ETHIOPIA

A grant signing ceremony between the Government of Japan and Ethiopia took place at the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development on March 18, 2010. H.E. Mr. Kinichi Komano, Ambassador of Japan to Ethiopia, and H.E. Ato Ahmed Shide, State Minister of Finance and Economic Development, signed the grant agreement.

The signing ceremony was for three Grant Aid schemes for which Japan is extending an aggregate grant amount of approximately 474 million birr.

The areas of intervention are: Food Aid [KR], grant aid for agricultural inputs for underprivileged farmers [KRII], and grant aid for a forest preservation program. All three programs will be implemented by the Japan International Cooperation System (JICS). The grant aid will disburse 128 million birr for KR, 89 million birr for KRII, and 256 million birr for the forest preservation program.

The grant aid KR aims to contribute to the efforts of the Government of Ethiopia in alleviating the existing problems related to food shortages in the country, whereas KRII aims to contribute towards increasing food production with special emphasis on underprivileged farmers through supporting the efforts of the Government of Ethiopia. The grant aid for the forest preservation program aims to adapt and mitigate climate change as well as improve access to clean energy through the construction of tree seed processing and storage centers, and a feasibility study for a geothermal energy station at Aluto-Langano.

JAPAN INAUGURATES WATER PROJECT IN AFAR REGION



An inauguration ceremony for the project for water supply was held in the Afar Region on 21 March 2010. H.E. Mr. Kinichi Komano, Ambassador of Japan to Ethiopia, together with H.E. Ato Ismael Alisero, President of the Afar National Regional State, inaugurated the project.

On the occasion, H.E. Ambassador Komano explained that under this project, the government of Japan has provided, among other things, equipment and machinery for water supply facilities including motor pumps and generators, pipeline, distribution reservoirs, and public fountains through a grant aid in the amount of 5.2 million US dollars, which is equivalent to 69.9 million Ethiopian birr.

The equipment and machinery from the Government of Japan has strengthened the ability to maintain water supply facilities, enabling 9 facilities to be constructed benefitting more than 34,350 people. H.E. Ambassador Komano also said that it is a fact that "water is essential for life". However, in Ethiopia today, the national safe water supply coverage is 42.2 percent. Sanitation services coverage is 30 percent. The MDG targets for Ethiopia are to provide 63 percent access to safe water and 58 percent access to improved sanitation by 2015.

The Ambassador also said that in Ethiopia, Japan has been making invaluable contributions in the area of water and sanitation. This project is a continuation of these contributions and is a concrete example of the "Initiative for Japan's ODA on water", which is accompanied by broad-ranging efforts regarding aid for the water sector. It is for these reasons that the Governments of Japan and Ethiopia have reached a mutual understanding to work hand-in-hand on water development as one of the priority areas of bilateral development cooperation.

In his concluding remarks, H.E. Ambassador Komano further expressed his hope and belief that the water supply facilities will be used efficiently and effectively to benefit the needy people in the region.



GGP PROJECTS EXHIBITION AND GIRLS' DAY (*Hina Matsuri*) FESTIVAL

On 3 March 2010, the Embassy of Japan organized a photographic exhibition of Grassroots Human Security Projects (GGP) at the Residence of the Ambassador of Japan. Photographs of different development activities carried out by the government of Japan throughout Ethiopia were exhibited.



The GGP is designed to provide assistance to development projects in the sectors of Education, Water Access, Health and Nutrition, Infrastructure, Basic Education, Agriculture and Alternative Dispute Resolution Mechanisms (ADRM) that are implemented by non-profit organizations and local authorities with a grant of up to 10 million Japanese Yen (equivalent to approximately 106,000 USD) for each project. Ethiopia is the largest receiver of GGP in Africa, and every year the Embassy implements around 25 GGP projects throughout the country. So far since 1989, over 300 GGP projects with more than 25 million dollars have been implemented by the Embassy.



At the photo exhibition, Ambassador Komano said that the government of Japan provides support to non-profit organizations that are engaged in the social development sector centering upon priority areas that are given to meeting basic human needs and coping with human security.

March 3 also signifies the Japanese Doll Festival, (Hina Matsuri), or Girls' Day. On the occasion, a set of ornamental dolls representing the Emperor, Empress, attendants, and musicians in traditional court dress of the Heian period were displayed on platforms covered with a red carpet. The dolls caught the guest's attention by its gracefulness and elaboration.

This event was attended by Ethiopian Government officials, Ambassadors, representatives of the non-profit organizations, beneficiaries of the GGP projects and the media, among others.

TEN GGP PROJECTS TO ENHANCE BASIC HUMAN NEEDS IN ETHIOPIA

On 16 March 2010, the 5th signing ceremony for Japanese Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects (GGP) took place at the Embassy of Japan in Ethiopia. Ten non-for-profit organizations received a total sum of USD 934,070.

At the signing ceremony, the Ambassador of Japan, H.E. Mr. Kinichi Komano assured that all types of ODA have improved the environment for the Ethiopian people and produced great benefits for the most vulnerable communities in Ethiopia.



The Ambassador further noted the projects are to be undertaken in seven of the nine regions of the country so as to bring about regional balance in the distribution of Japanese ODA in Ethiopia.

From April 2009 to March 2010 alone, the Embassy of Japan signed 25 grant contracts amounting to a total sum of USD 2,270,000 with various organizations for the improvement



of water resources, education, health, social issues and agriculture. In particular, the projects have targeted enhancing the lives of the most vulnerable groups - women, girls, the aged and people with disabilities.



SEVEN STUDENTS AWARDED MONBUKAGAKUSHO (MEXT) SCHOLARSHIP

Seven Ethiopian students from different disciplines have been awarded MEXT scholarships to study in Japan this year. The successful candidates of this year's selection comprise five researchers, one undergraduate and one technical college student. The awardees were selected based on stiff competition from among high scoring students.

The scholarship benefit includes monthly allowances, travel costs (travel to and from Japan) and school fees. The duration of the MEXT scholarship for research students lasts for over 24 months and could be extended in cases where the awardees qualify for MA/MSc or PhD programs. In the case of undergraduates the MEXT scholarship lasts for 5 years, and 4 years for college students.

On 24 March 2010, the Embassy of Japan organized an orientation and introduced the awardees to senior students who have studied in Japan in order to ease their transition to life in Japan and acquaint them with the Japanese life style.

H.E. Mr. Kinichi Komano, Ambassador of Japan to Ethiopia welcomed the students at his office. On the occasion, Ambassador Komano congratulated the students on their success. His Excellency commented that Ethiopia is currently developing quickly. "Our hope for this country is to succeed to overcome chronic poverty" the Ambassador said, adding, "based on our experience, the key to economic growth and development is human resources - education and training of the best people".

The Ambassador noted that there is a high expectation of the awardees as researchers so that they can make a difference to their life and the situation of their country.

Former Monbukagakusho Scholarship winners Dr. Taye

Nigusssie and Dr. Fikremarkos Birhanu, both from the Addis Ababa University, shared their experience of life in Japan with the awardees. The scholars discussed cultural similarities and differences and the social and academic environments, among other things.

One of the seven awardees, Mr. Abdela Mohammednur is a lecturer of Physics at Haromaya University. He is going to study Nuclear Physics in Japan. Asked about his dream, Mr. Abdella said he wants his country to benefit from Nuclear Energy instead of relying on hydro power because global climate changes could drain the water from the hydro dams. He said other African countries, especially South Africa, Nigeria and Egypt, have already launched nuclear energy programs. Another awardee, Mr. Yared Beyene is going to study for a PhD in Chemistry. His research will be on the influence of pesticides/insecticides on Lake Zuway, Abijata and Awassa.

The seven awardees were drawn from Mekele University, Haromaya University, Addis Ababa University and the Ethiopian Institute of Agricultural Research.



JAPAN DONATES EQUIPMENT FOR HOMINID FOSSIL RELATED FACILITIES TO THE NATIONAL MUSEUM



H.E. Ambassador Mohammed Drir, Minister of Culture and Tourism

On 25 March 2010, a handing over ceremony of Equipment for Hominid Fossil Related Facilities to the National Museum of Ethiopia was held at its premises.

For the purpose of contributing to the promotion of historical research activities in Ethiopia, the Government of Japan granted 40.1 million Japanese Yen (approximately 5.9 million birr) to the National Museum of Ethiopia. The equipment includes, Iron Safe Cabinets for Hominid Fossils, Microscopes, and Projectors etc. It is believed that the equipment will enable the museum to keep valuable fossils safely and improve the quality of display and research environment as well.

This project aimed to manage the "world treasure" class human fossils of Ethiopia within a modern museum environment, to promote international scientific research that would lead to further discoveries of such human fossils and also to promote public interest and education concerning these fossils.

The ceremony was held in the presence of esteemed guests including H.E. Ambassador Mohammed Drir, Minister of Culture and Tourism. The Minister expressed his highest appreciation to the Government of Japan for its kind cooperation. The Ambassador of Japan also remarked that the Hominid Fossils found in Ethiopia were not only a treasure of Ethiopia but also of the world. Therefore, it was Japan's pleasure to implement this kind of project.



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