



Sakura-Meskel

Newsletter

Embassy of Japan in Ethiopia
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March 2009

MESSAGE FROM THE AMBASSADOR

Dear Readers,



H.E. Mr. Kinichi Komano
Lecture at Addis Ababa University

This year coincides with the 20th anniversary of the launching of the then called small scale grant assistance scheme by the Japanese Government. Through the passage of time, it has evolved into the presently called community-based small scale and human security grant assistance program (GGP). You might have heard about events and ceremonies related to the projects supported by this financing scheme. If not, I will apprise you of the gist of this scheme.

The goal of our development cooperation in developing countries is clearly mentioned in Japan's ODA (Official Development Assistance) Charter: that is to support the realization of human security throughout

the world. My interpretation of human security is simple: it means people can achieve securing a decent and better life with hope for the future not only for themselves but also for their children. Human security is simple in meaning but very difficult in implementation and realization. The whole development cooperation program of Japan with the Government of Ethiopia is designed along these basic lines. However, we should admit that this is not enough. We are always asking ourselves how we can reach the most needy people in the country.

One answer to this question is to collaborate with NGOs, local administrations and development associations, which are located close to and working closely with the most vulnerable people. The community-based small scale and human security grant assistance program is aimed at financially supporting the projects prepared by these organizations to directly help these otherwise neglected people. The projects include, among others, the construction of schools, bridges, digging water holes etc. and supporting cooperative activities and the like. Although the amount of money we can donate to each project is limited up to approximately US\$ 100,000 (one hundred thousand dollars), most projects are completed with local inputs such as labor and locally available raw materials provided by the local people themselves.

Recently, I attended the completion ceremony of one of those projects implemented with the financial support of this grant assistance scheme in Debre Libanos. Just about 200 meters below the well known church at this site, there used to be a bridge called Agad linking both sides of the river with the same name. It was by the order of Taitu that the bridge was first constructed about 90 years ago. However, the bridge was destroyed by a strong earthquake in the early 1960s. Since then, people living on the other side of the river have been disconnected from the benefits enjoyed by the people living on the church side, mostly women and elders. Now, after over half a century, the bridge has been reconstructed and this has enabled the local administration to locate the area's health center at the far side of the river. This is the first ever public facility on the far side to be used by people of the whole region.

This is an example of an annual average of 25 projects implemented through this grant assistance scheme to benefit people in Ethiopia, making the country the largest recipient of Japanese GGP in Africa. We are committed to continuously pursuing ways and means to reach the people who really need our cooperation.

JAPAN TO JOIN ANTI-PIRACY EFFORTS IN GULF OF ADEN AND OFF THE COAST OF SOMALIA

On 28th January, the Minister of Defense issued an order to the Commander in Chief of the Self-Defense Fleet to prepare for measures against piracy off the coast of Somalia and in the Gulf of Aden.



Defence Minister Hamada Issued an Order

Piracy off the coast of Somalia and in the Gulf of Aden is a threat to the international community including Japan, and is an issue that should be addressed immediately. For measures against such acts of piracy, the Minister of Defense plans to issue an order for maritime security operations as an emergency measure for the time being.

To cope with this situation, the Commander in Chief of the Self-Defense Fleet will carry out the necessary preparations for a swift and appropriate implementation of measures.

The Government of Japan conducted the field investigation in Yemen, Djibouti, Oman and Bahrain from 8th to 20th February for the purpose of gathering technical and specialized information necessary to conduct reviews on bases of operation for vessels and patrol aircraft as well as operational guidelines when an order for maritime security operations is issued.

JAPAN EXTENDS A 110 MILLION BIRR GRANT AID FOR FERTILIZERS AND A WATER SUPPLY PROJECT

A grant agreement signing ceremony between the Government of Japan and the Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia took place on January 23, 2009, at the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development (MOFED). H.E. Mr. Kinichi Komano, Ambassador of Japan to Ethiopia and H.E. Ato Ahmed Shide, State Minister of Finance and Economic Development were the signatories.

The grant agreements, with a total amount of 110 million Ethiopian Birr, were signed for the extension of the following two assistance programs, Non-project Grant Aid (NPGA) allocated for the procurement of fertilizers, and Rural Water Supply in the Oromia Region.

On the occasion, H.E. Mr. Kinichi Komano explained that, having recognized the great importance of food security in Ethiopia, Japan has been providing unswerving assistance to Ethiopia in fostering its agricultural productivity by providing agricultural inputs, mainly fertilizers. Since 1985, through the Grant Aid for Underprivileged Farmers, and from 2004, through its scheme of NPGA, including this grant, Japan has extended a total amount of 15.25 billion Japanese yen to date, approximately 1.68 billion birr, for the procurement of fertilizers. At this juncture, His Excellency noted that the Government of Japan will continue to enhance food productivity through supporting the self-help efforts of Ethiopia. In addition,

it was also noted that this grant is also aimed to help alleviate the financial imbalance by providing foreign currency for the import of necessary commodities.

H.E. Ambassador Komano further stated that improved access to safe and clean water is an essential component of development in Ethiopia. Japan has been contributing to the water sector of this country with the provision of drilling rigs and other equipment required for the maintenance of those facilities. In addition to water supply facilities, the development of human resource needs is required in order to carry out the operation and maintenance of those facilities. Therefore, Japan has trained more than 1,700 people who are in charge of water

and sanitation, at the Ethiopian Water Technology Center (EWTEC). Japan also intends to disseminate the fruit of this successful project all over the country, through experts trained at EWTEC, even where direct support may be difficult due to various reasons.

Finally, H.E. Ambassador Komano expressed his trust that this grant aid would be implemented within its timeframe and used as efficiently and effectively as possible so that it would make a substantial contribution towards improving the lives of the people of Ethiopia. He also sincerely hoped that this grant would serve to reinforce and promote the good relations that exist between the two peoples and governments of Japan and Ethiopia.



A Grant Agreement Signing Ceremony

ENTREPRENEURIAL TRAINING FOR SHOES AND GARMENT ENTREPRENEURS

Ayako Ishiwata
JICA Consultant

Entrepreneurship and management training was conducted for the owners of 42 shoe and 47 garment manufacturers at the Federal Micro and Small Enterprises Development Agency (FeMSEDA) between 3 November and 17 December, 2008. This training was organized by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) in collaboration with the Foundation for Advanced Studies on International Development (FASID) and the Ethiopian Development Research Institute (EDRI). The training consisted of 3 modules; namely, 1) entrepreneurship, marketing, and business strategy, 2) production and quality management, and 3) business accounting. Each module lasted for 8 consecutive week days between 5 p.m. and 7.30 p.m.

Since all the participants had their own businesses to attend to during the day time, there was initial concern that they might not survive a 24-consecutive evening training. However, the eagerness of the participants to learn soon proved that such initial concerns were wrong. Surprisingly, evaluation results showed that 60% of the participants wished that the training had lasted longer.

The level of the participants varied. Some were from very small companies, which are just operating on a more or less survival basis while others are more stable. Yet, one doesn't have to be an established owner of a company to be motivated to become a successful entrepreneur. As the lecturer of Module 1, I constantly challenged

the participants about whether they were willing to become an entrepreneur or just remain as a normal proprietor of a company. I gave an illustrative example from the story of Mr. Soichiro Honda and told the participants how he was eager to develop the fastest motorcycle in the world when the Japanese technology was globally unknown. Then I emphasized the importance of having a clear vision, relationships based trust and working hard to realize the vision.

Many people in developing countries see Japan only from the perspective of how she is now but Japanese development could not have happened without very talented entrepreneurs like Mr. Honda. These legendary entrepreneurs appeared with the



Business Strategy Planning

have experienced rapid growth. The participants can observe such successes closely but simply following the steps of the established companies will not make them more successful. In the training, I tried to equip them with a strategic way of thinking which guides them to strengthen their core competency that differentiates them from others.



SS Exercise



Presentation and Discussion by the Participants

advent of the long-awaited peaceful and free economy after the disastrous war. Compared to what it is now, I believe that the business environment is much more favorable to nurture entrepreneurship in Ethiopia: the market is rapidly growing, yet there are still a few competitive domestic enterprises.

Within the shoe and garment sectors, there are already a few successful companies that

The enthusiasm of the participants for the training clearly indicates that Ethiopia has a good pool of potential entrepreneurs who are eager to absorb knowledge for their growth. It is my sincere hope that some of the participants will put into action what they have learned and become the most successful entrepreneurs in Ethiopia.

THE COMPLETION CEREMONY FOR THE PROJECT FOR REHABILITATION OF TRUNK ROAD, PHASE III, 9 FEBRUARY 2009

On 9 February 2009, the Completion Ceremony for the Project for Rehabilitation of Trunk Road, Phase III was held at the side of the Hedase Bridge. H.E. Ambassador Komano together with H.E. Dr. Kassu Yilala, Minister of Works and Urban Development and Ato Zaid, Director General of the Ethiopian Roads Authority celebrated the completion of this project.

This Project covered about 40 km length of road rehabilitation between Goha Tsiyon in Oromia and Dejen in Amhara,



Hedase Bridge

including construction of the 303 m. long Hedase Bridge, which is built over the Abay River. The road is part of the Northern Trunk Road linking Ethiopia and a neighboring country of Sudan.

The Government of Ethiopia is focusing on improving the national road network in order to connect potential agricultural and industrial areas with markets as a major component of development policy in the country. Japan has been supporting the rehabilitation of the Addis Ababa - Debre Markos Trunk Road including the Hedase Bridge since 1998.

On the occasion, H.E. Ambassador Komano announced further cooperation in the infrastructure sector between Japan and Ethiopia; the 70 km Dejen - Debre Markos road rehabilitation, the countermeasures against landsliding in the Abay Gorge, the rehabilitation and replacement of bridges on federal roads and the continuation of the capacity development project for bridge management.



H.E. Dr. Kassu and H.E. Ambassador Komano Inaugurating the Project

JAPAN DAYS IN MEKELLE: KICK-OFF OF THE JAPANESE LANGUAGE UNIT IN MEKELLE UNIVERSITY



Ambassador Komano Marking the Kick off of a Japanese Language Unit

On January 10, a kick-off event was held in Mekelle to celebrate the start up of the Japanese Language Unit in Mekelle University. This unit is the first Japanese language course which is established in Ethiopia. This unit started October 2008 with the support from the Japanese Foundation. This unit is established within the College of Social Science and Language and aims at three year program for mastering Japanese language and culture.

On this occasion, Experts on Japanese culture gathered with the representatives of the relevant institutions. Japanese movies, an exhibition on contemporary Japanese architecture and workshops on heritage conservation took place at several venues in Mekelle.

MEKELLE UNIVERSITY, DEPARTMENT OF HERITAGE CONSERVATION

Mekelle University, department of Heritage Conservation was established aiming high level of education in the field of heritage conservation in Ethiopia, as an African firstly established academics institute which specializes in a particular subject in 2007.

The department of Heritage Conservation carries on education and research of management method in natural and cultural heritage, such as conservation scheme in each region over Ethiopia.

The department expands research activities on historical heritage conservation mainly in Tigray state, for instance Axum, cave association and monastery; meanwhile it aims to establish its position as a preceding organisation in heritage conservation study, in Ethiopia and Africa, through holding conferences as for conservation or international corporative study.

On the occasion of the establishment, vehicles for research and field work were

donated by Isuzu motors through Keiou University, which turned their activities into more practical phase.

At present, the department promotes, as a pilot project of conservation activity, restoring Gunda Gundo monastery, conservation scheme of traditional houses that are built based on unique stone loading, which are seen mainly in Mekelle city, Tigray region, are carried on.

RESTORATION PROJECT OF GUNDA GUNDO MONASTERY

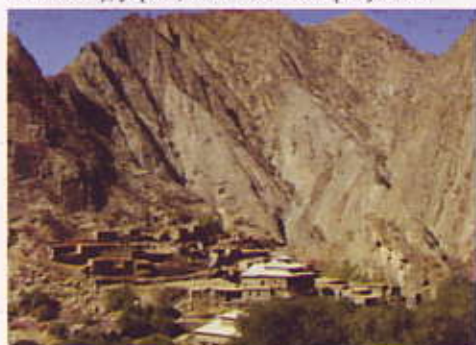
Gunda Gundo is a historical monastery in Tigray, established in the 15th century. The main church of the monastery, called 'Debre Garzen', was seriously damaged by an earthquake several decades ago.

In December 2002, CAT (Cultural Association of Tigray), Tourism Commission of Tigray (TCT), Mekelle University and Keio University, Japan, commenced a project to

restore Debre Garzen, taking into account not only the architectural aspect, but also the historical, environmental and socio-economic aspects of the project. With this in mind, the project was developed mutually through workshops and research.

The project team also developed a long range restoration project containing three campaign periods. The first period dates from January 2008 to May 2009 during which a temporary shelter will be constructed and the façade and damaged wooden beam will be reconstructed. The second campaign period commences in October 2010 and runs to February 2011. Repair works for the walls, maqdas and floor will be undertaken during this period. The third period is scheduled from October 2010 to February 2011 with the activities of maintaining the roof and the exterior.

According to the project document, participants in this restoration project are drawn from the Authority for Research and Conservation of Culture Heritage, the Tigray Cultural Association, the Mekelle University, the Gunda Gundo Monastery and Professor Riichi Miyake, Conservatoire National des Arts et Métiers(CNAM).



Gunda Gundo Monastery



Bird's-eye View of Gunda Gundo Monastery