

دور الوكالة اليابانية للتعاون الدولي (جايكا) في إعادة إعمار العراق لمحة عامة

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An Overview on the Role of Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) in Reconstruction Assistance for Iraq

An Overview on the Role of Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) in Reconstruction Assistance for Iraq

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Abstract

This research aims to describe the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) activities and provide an overview on JICA reconstruction assistance for Iraq. It is chartered with assisting economic and social growth in developing countries, and the promotion of international cooperation. JICA is supporting the construction of the infrastructure and institutional system which would contribute to upgrading citizens' lives through studies and capacity development programs. JICA's support to Iraq is primarily focused on: 1) the promotion and diversification of industry for economic growth, 2) strengthening the basic economic infrastructure, and 3) building a foundation for the livelihoods of the people. The conclusions show that JICA is currently conducting various technical cooperation projects, as well as studies for infrastructure rehabilitation and construction as well as

emphasize that JICA has been one of the biggest donors supporting Iraq's reconstruction and development since 2003. Although JICA helping Iraq and Iraqi people with minimum interest rate, they are facing many difficulties. The delay in Al-Hartha water project due to some problems related to Iraqis side such as security and others are examples of that challenges. JICA assistance have contributed to the uplift of the life standard and reduce the suffering of Iraqi people. There are much works from Iraqis side to do for achieving the JICA goals for improvement and development of Iraq.

ملخص:

تعتبر الوكالة اليابانية للتعاون الدولي (جايجا) من المنظمات الحكومية التي تتسق المساعدات الانمائية المقدمة رسميا من حكومة اليابان ، وتختص بدعم النمو الاجتماعي والاقتصادي في الدول النامية وتعزيز التعاون الدولي فيها.

لقد عانى الشعب العراقي خلال العقدين المنصرمين من ويلات الحصار والحروب مما ادى الى تدهور البنى التحتية فيه، وتدنى مستواه المعيشي بشكل كبير، فعملت جايجا على دعم بناء البنى التحتية والنظام المؤسسي فيه من خلال تقديم برامج تنمية القدرات والمنح الدراسية التي تسهم في تحسين حياة المواطن العراقي .

تتمحور مساعدات جايجا الى العراق في ثلاثة محاور هي: - 1 - دعم التنوع و التوسع الصناعي والنمو الاقتصادي. - 2- تقوية واسناد قواعد البنية الاساسية كالمطرق ومحطات الطاقة. - 3- المساهمة في بناء الأسس العملية التي تساعد على رفع المستوى المعيشي للشعب العراقي مثل دعم المعاهد والجامعات اضافة الى اقامة الدورات التدريبية المهنية للعراقيين في المؤسسات اليابانية.

يهدف هذا البحث الى وصف أنشطة جايجا وتقديم لمحة عامة عن المساعدات التي قدمتها ولازالت تقدمها للعراق من اجل إعادة إعمارها، وتوضح الخاتمة ان جايجا تضطلع حاليا بمختلف مشاريع التعاون التقني فضلا عن الدراسات لإعادة تأهيل البنى التحتية وتشبيدها، ولا بد من التأكيد على ان جايجا تعتبر واحدة من أكبر المانحين الذين يدعمون تنمية وإعادة إعمار العراق منذ 2003 ، حيث أسهمت المساعدات التي قدمتها جايجا الى العراق بشكل واسع في ارتفاع المستوى العام للخدمات والتقليل من المعاناة التي يواجهها الفرد العراقي.



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على الرغم من أن جايكا تعتبر منظمة غير ربحية، إلا أنها تواجه بعض الصعوبات والتحديات في الكثير من الأحيان والبطء في تقديم المساعدات ومنها على سبيل المثال مشروع تصفية المياه في الهارثة الذي تأخر انجازه بضع سنوات، بسبب المصاعب التي تواجهه .

Introduction

Iraq is distinguished by the great balance between its area, population, and natural resources. It occupies an important geographical location. In addition, the characteristics of the Iraqi economy offer competitive advantages and hidden development abilities compared to other promising economies in the region [1]. Iraq had been showing steadily economic growth until 1980s, thanks to the world's third-largest oil reserves and great abundance of human resources. However, since 1980s, domestic economy and social infrastructures have been damaged and deteriorated due to three wars (the Iran-Iraq War, the Gulf War, and the 2003 Iraq invasion War) with the economic sanctions over 10 years after 1991 Gulf War. Also, the controlled economy and huge military expenditures under the former regime had limited opportunities for economic development [2,3]. Almost two decades after the 2003 war, the country remains with instability, a lack of jobs, corruption, and poor service delivery remain among the most important risks to the country's long-term growth [1]. However, many Iraqis continue to eke out livings in a poor environment with inadequate supplies of power and water, thus developing socioeconomic infrastructure is a critical issue. When Japan emerged as an economic power on the global stage, a role in shaping the international community prosperity through economic cooperation, whether in the form of bilateral or multilateral, has been widespread [4]. The Japanese Government announced that it would focus its efforts on the reconstruction of citizens' lives by revitalizing electricity, education, water & sanitation, health, and job creation, and on improving security situation for short term. For mid to long term, it would focus on other infrastructure such as telecommunication and transportation. The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) conducted various studies to formulate substantial rehabilitation and reconstruction projects and is facilitating implementation of those projects. JICA is advancing its activities around the pillars of a field-oriented approach, human security, and enhanced effectiveness, efficiency, and speed. JICA pays special attention to the Iraq national development strategy which was publicized at the third donor committee meeting and expanded meeting of international reconstruction fund facility for Iraq (Tokyo Meeting) in October 2004. In the 10 years since the 2003 Iraq War, security has

greatly improved, and the economy is in a recovering trend. Its prosperity in the past and being an oil producing country, Iraq has a great potential for self- sustaining development; however, it will take some time to economic reconstruction [2,5,6].

JICA is part of Japan's official development assistance effort, with a role in providing technical cooperation, capital grants and yen loans. The new JICA has become one of the largest bilateral development organizations in the world with a network of 97 overseas offices, projects in more than 150 countries, and available financial resources of approximately 1 trillion yen (\$8.5 billion) [7]. JICA oversees administering all ODA such as technical cooperation, ODA loans and grant aid in an integrated manner, except contributions to international organizations. JICA assists and supports developing countries as the executing agency of Japanese ODA [8,9,10]. Very little work done regarding Japan assistance to Iraq. Radhi discussed the role of Japan Self-Defense Forces as humanitarian functions implemented in Al Muthanna province and its process of reconciliation [11].

The new ODA Charter (revised in 2003) defines the objective of Japan's ODA as "to contribute to the peace and development of the international community, and thereby to help ensure Japan's own security and prosperity." To this end, the charter establishes five basic policies:

- (i) supporting self-help efforts of developing countries. (ii) incorporating "human security" perspectives; (iii) assurance of fairness, considering vulnerable groups; (iv) utilizing Japan's experience and expertise; and (v) partnership and collaboration with the international community [12].

In accordance with its vision of "Inclusive and Dynamic Development," JICA supports the resolution of issues of developing countries by using the most suitable tools of various assistance methods and a combined regional-, country- and issue-oriented approach [13].

This research aims to describe the Japan international cooperation agency (JICA) and its activities and aims at exploring the four pillars of Iraqi development strategies and JICA assistance that is primarily focused on: 1) strengthen foundations for economic growth, 2) promote the private sector, 3) improve the quality of life and 4) strengthen the governance.

JICA activities in Iraq



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Japan's ODA is structurally divided into bilateral and multilateral assistance provided to developing nations. The bilateral assistance is normally granted by the Japanese government to the governments of developing nations and is categorized into grants-in-aid with no interest rate, technical assistance aid or grants-in-aid to NGOs. In most cases, this assistance is administered by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) [14]. The new JICA aims at effective and efficient assistance for Iraq to further support the development of social and economic infrastructure that provides the underpinnings of improved living conditions and economic growth, thereby contributing to reconstruction and peace-building in Iraq through medium- and long-term economic stability [13]. JICA conducted various studies to formulate substantial rehabilitation and reconstruction projects and is facilitating implementation of those projects. JICA provides strategic and comprehensive assistance considering the four pillars of reconstruction and development in accordance with the reconstruction plan by the Iraqi government.

JICA Assistance for Iraq Development Strategies

1. Strengthen the Foundations for Economic Growth; Iraq economic depend on mostly on oil with good agriculture if resources management improve. Foreign adds, specially JICA assistance have provided the required needs to uplift the Iraq economy at different sectors, among them,

1.1. Crude Oil Export Facility Reconstruction Project

Though most of the oil sector related infrastructure was developed in 1970's, their capacity is substantially deficient due to lack of adequate new investments, operation and maintenance. Oil export facilities in the offing of Fao, Basrah in southern Iraq, where about 80% of oil exports are handled, have seriously deteriorated [3]. Iraq has some of the largest estimated oil and gas reserves in the world. The oil sector dominates Iraq's economy: comprising 74% of GDP. Iraq depends solely on oil exports for finance of investment and consumption expenditures, for government revenues—of which oil export proceeds exceed 93%—and for 98% of foreign currency earnings [1]. JICA assists Iraq with installing pipelines connecting inland oil storage and shipping facilities and offshore shipping terminals and offshore shipping facilities to promote the export of oil [3].

1.2. Basrah Refinery Upgrading Project

Iraq is a world-leading oil producer, but the capacity of its oil refining facilities has decreased because of aging and damage from the war. For this reason, even though Iraq is a producer of oil, Iraq imports



oil products and amount of \$ 200 million foreign currency (equivalent) flow out every month. To improve current situation, JICA assists in building new plants to improve oil refinery efficiency in existing facilities at Basrah in southern Iraq [3].

1.3. Irrigation Sector Loan

Agriculture is an important industry in Iraq to diversify industries and create job opportunities especially in non-urban areas. Major agricultural products such as wheat, barley, date palm, cotton and various vegetables were produced in irrigated farming areas [1]. Recent crop production including barley, wheat, and rice has been significantly decreased due to economic sanctions, military conflicts, and frequent droughts. Although irrigated agriculture is indispensable in many regions of Iraq since it has low annual precipitation, only 60% of the possible irrigable farmland has been irrigated. JICA assists agriculture in Iraq in introducing materials and equipment to manage irrigation facilities to further promote agriculture in the country [2,3]. JICA too, have contributed in solving the problem of water resources management in Uzbekistan through necessity cooperation between grass-roots approach and high level and capital to achieve sustainable water resources [15].

1.4. Khor Al-Zubair Fertilizer Plant Rehabilitation Project

Previously, in Iraq, two fertilizer plants (Khor Al-Zubair and Beiji) had supplied fertilizers to domestic market. Since 2003, however, due to insufficient supply of natural gas, which is a raw material in fertilizers, shortages of electricity, aging of equipment, and insufficient backup supplies, production in these plants has been significantly reduced, causing shortages in the fertilizer supply. JICA is helping to rehabilitate the existing fertilizer plant in Khor Al- Zubair, Basrah, contributing to the reconstruction of the fertilizer industry and the development of agriculture in Iraq [3].

2. Develop Basic Infrastructures and Investment Environments

2.1. Al-Mussaib Thermal Power Plant Rehabilitation Project

The electricity sector in the country is facing a lack of capacity in all sub-sectors, i.e. generation, transmission and distribution, due to insufficient operation and maintenance and a lack of new investment in the past, despite its importance for all economic and social activities. The electricity sector is thus one of the most important sectors for reconstruction in Iraq. The generation capacity that exceeded 9,000 MW in the 1990s has plunged to less than 4,000 MW in recent years, leading to frequent load shedding throughout the country. Power outages are affecting not only household and business activities but also the operations of basic infrastructure facilities such as water supply and



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sewerage systems, and hospitals, posing a major obstacle to the restoration of social stability and economic recovery. Rehabilitation of power generation facilities is therefore an urgent challenge in the country. JICA assists power transmission sector by introducing materials and equipment in mid-western and southern Iraq [3].

The objective of the project is to expand the power generation capacity of Iraq and increase its efficiency and reliability. The project consists of rehabilitation of the existing Al-Mussaib Thermal Power Plant (300 MW 4), located near the Baghdad metropolitan area and one of the key power plants in Iraq, whose power output and capacity utilization rate have significantly decreased due to inadequate operation and maintenance. The proceeds of the loan will be applied to rehabilitation of two power generation units (Units No.1 and No.3), repairing common facilities and relevant consulting services.

On September 16, 2019, the Ambassador of Japan in Iraq attended the completion ceremony of “Al-Mussaib Thermal Power Plant Rehabilitation Project”. This project aims to restore and stabilize Iraq’s power supplying capability by rehabilitating the Unit No.3 (out of the 4 units) of Al-Mussaib Thermal Power Plant which is considered one of the most important power plants in Iraq situated near the national capital Baghdad.

2.2. Human Resource Development in the Electricity Sector

The current electric power supply satisfies only 50% of demand in the country, which is partly because of the loss of engineers due to several war. JICA provides training for Iraqi power engineers at the Power Generation Training Center of the Jandar Electric Power Training Center (JTC) established in Syria in 1998 under JICA grant assistance; it contributes to the autonomous development of the JTC and to improve efficiency of electric power supply in Iraq [3].

2.3. Port Sector Rehabilitation Project

Iraq’s transport sector comprises 40,690 kilometers of roads, two international and three major domestic airports, six cargo ports, two oil terminals, and 2,456 kilometers of rail lines. Roads accommodate about 70% of all traffic in Iraq [1]. The transportation sector in Iraq has been facing substantial functional insufficiency due to military conflicts and/or economic sanctions in all sub-sectors. The sector needs significant resources and policy changes in order to rise to regional standards. In particular, the Umm Qasr Port and the Khor Al-Zubair Port, which are two of the most important physical distribution bases and industrial ports in this country, have suffered serious functional declines. JICA contributes to the economic and social reconstruction of Iraq by providing



assistance i.e., dredging, removal of sunken vessels, and provision of equipment primarily in the Umm Qasr Port in Basrah, the gateway to maritime transportation in Iraq [3].

2.4. Improvement of Port Operation and Maintenance Skills

In parallel with the Port Sector Rehabilitation Project (an ODA loan project), JICA provides training on port operation and maintenance for workers at Umm Qasr Port with the corporation in Yokohama. After this training, JICA expects that the Umm Qasr Port will be operated and maintained smoothly even after full- scale operation so that the project will be sustainably operated [3].

3. Develop Foundations That Help Stabilize and Improve Citizens' lives

3.1. Electricity Sector Reconstruction Project in Kurdistan Region of Iraq

The Kurdistan region, consisting of the three northern governorates of Duhok, Erbil and Sulaymaniyah, receives its electricity supply primarily from two hydropower plants in the region and the national power grid. However, due to lack of new investment and insufficient operation and maintenance, electricity supply to the region has gradually decreased from an average of 700 megawatts (MW) in 1991 to 400 MW in 2006. This has met only 40% of power demands for household use, and, as a result, power outages last more than 12 hours a day on average. The power supply thus remains unreliable and unstable for households and basic infrastructure facilities such as hospitals. While other donors have provided their assistance mainly for power generation/transmission systems in the Kurdistan region, there still has been a lack of support for substation and distribution sectors. Given that a significant decline in the capacity of substations and distribution facilities is one of the causes of the deteriorating electricity supply in the region, there is an urgent need to rehabilitate and develop these facilities.

The objective of the project is to improve the levels of reliability and availability of the electricity network in the Kurdistan region by developing substation and distribution sectors.

JBIC signed the project agreement in October 2007 with United Nations Development Programmed (UNDP), which has maintained an operational base in the region to conduct reconstruction assistance and has had much field experience of assisting the electricity sector reconstruction and development in the Kurdistan region for years, for capacity building and procurement assistance services for this project. Through this service, JBIC will proactively promote preparation for efficient implementation of this project. The proceeds of the loan will be applied to the procurement of machinery and equipment for substation and distribution networks, and



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relevant consulting services. The project will assist the currently, Kurdistan region for its energy supply mainly depends on fossil fuels, with about 85% of its energy produced by Gasoline and natural Gas. while the remaining 15% are covered by hydro-electrical plants and by using Solar energy which is very limit less than 1% [16].

3.2. Basrah Water Treatment and Supply Improvement Project

Water supply conditions in Iraq have significantly deteriorated due to economic sanctions and military conflicts. The water sector in Iraq needs urgent and intensive assistance in terms of facilities and human resources. Compared to the situation before the Gulf War, per-capita water supply amount has declined by 30% in urban areas and by half in rural areas. In Hartha and Basrah, the second largest city in Iraq, the water treatment capacity is less than half of the demand, and the daily water supply is limited to less than 12 hours about 70% of all households. To supply safe water, JICA assists the country in developing water treatment plants, transmission line and distribution network, and water supply facilities in Hartha and Basrah, Basra Province in southern Iraq [2,3].

3.3. Water Supply Operation and Maintenance

Long lasting conflicts and successive economic sanctions caused the water supply and sewage systems in Iraq to be obsolete and dysfunctional. Compared to the situation before the Gulf War, per-capita water supply amount has declined by 30% in urban areas and by half in rural areas. In Baghdad, about 500,000 cubic meters of wastewater is discharged directly into the Tigris River every day without due treatment. This is grossly affecting the health of the people around the region especially for children. The functional declines in the water supply sector in Iraq have affected the health of children and caused an increase in the death rate from diarrhea of children aged 5 or younger. Administrative problems in this sector include a lack of proper development planning, the deterioration of capable administration and technical divisions, and a shortage of human resources. In parallel with assistance in the development of facilities, JICA also assists the country in establishing proper systems or planning functions, improving operational efficiency, developing operation and maintenance systems, and solve other administrative problems [3,5,7]. As for solid waste, collection systems are not properly functioning, and waste disposal sites are insufficient. It is strongly expected to formulate policies and set up management systems.

3.4. Training on Management and Maintenance of Medical Equipment

Iraq was proud of its high standard of medical services in the region till the end of eighties but is now downgraded due to a lack of proper operation of maintenance and technology isolation. Cancer, respiratory diseases, cardiac infarction, diabetes and tuberculosis are regarded to be urgent issues to tackle, since those are the major causes of deaths of the Iraqi people over five years old. Major death causes for children less than five are diarrhea and respiratory diseases. The health sector in Muthanna Governorate includes Samawah faces a critical situation. 70 to 80% of health care facilities in this region have fallen into disrepair after the Iraq War, and scarcity of medical equipment and drugs both in type and amount and face an absolute shortage of medical staff. Mortality rates in rural areas are 30% higher than that of urban areas. It is important to support a primary health care (PHC) system in rural areas, not only in urban areas. It is also important to increase the number of qualified pharmacists, as well as the rehabilitation of PHC facilities and equipment. Emergency medical service is also a priority issue. JICA has contributed to medical care in Muthanna by offering lectures and training on maintenance of medical equipment provided in ODA projects and humanitarian and reconstruction assistance by the Ground Self-Defense Force [3].

3.5. Medical Training in Egypt

Pediatric Hospital in Cairo University constructed by a grant assistance project of Japan, JICA has contributed to development of human resources involved in medical care, strengthening of systems for medical treatment, and establishment of emergency medical systems. In order to apply high-level medical know-how of this hospital to Iraq which has the same language and culture as Egypt, JICA trained 504 Iraqi participants to take medical training courses. JICA also contributed to the improvement of the quality of medical care in Iraq by providing four training courses, courses on ICU, endoscopic surgery, pediatric internal medicine, and nursing [3].

4. Strengthen Governance by Enhancing the Abilities of Human Resources and Developing the Foundations of Transparent Administration

4.1. Assistance for Iraqi Police

The reconstruction of the police organization in Iraq is an important issue, and the Iraqi Ministry of Interior has promoted its reconstruction by training and assigning policemen. JICA trained the Iraqi personnel from Ministry of Interior and Iraqi police in Japan and provided training including lectures on police practices (overview of a police organization and identification technologies) and inspection tours



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(to the Fingerprint Identification Center and the National Research Institute of Police Science). JICA also provided equipment for identification to participants when they left Japan to help them reconstruct identification facilities and improve the functionality of Iraqi police. Hence, JICA contributes to the improvement of security in Iraq [3].

4.3. Iraqi Constitution Establishment Assistance Seminar Training on Election Administration for the members of the Independent Electoral Commission of Iraq

Since the end of the Iraq War in May 2003, Iraq has been in political turmoil for years. A parliamentary election was held in January 2005 for the first time after the Iraq War, and a constitution was approved in October. A permanent government was formed in 2006, and local council elections were held in January 2009 [3]. The Iraqi Government is transforming into a decentralized and market oriented governing system from a centralized authoritarian governing system. It is quite important to establish a solid social-economic infrastructure and develop a democratic institutional system to enhance democracy and good governance. Particular attention shall be paid to:

1. Building a democratic institutional system: Enforcement of the rule of law to secure fundamental human rights and political rights.

2. Good governance: Optimizing power balance between the national authority and civil society, improving capacity of government, a fair coordination mechanism for stakeholders, and improving capacity of civil society including media.

3. Building socio-economic infrastructure to sustain democracy: Satisfy basic human needs, stabilize economy, and building peace.

Democratization and good governance are the system and capacity necessary for both government and citizens to sustain outcomes of development. JICA must design assistance programs carefully so that it can attain the utmost synergetic effect [1].

Basrah Water Supply Improvement Project.

It is of important to look in detail to one of JICA assisted project. We selected Basrah Water Treatment Project due to its import and effect on Iraqi people and Iraq. The Basra Governorate in southern Iraq is during a transformational programmed aimed at restoring its water infrastructure. A historical lack of investment, exacerbated by war and instability, has led the province to suffer from a chronic shortage of safe and clean drinking water for much of the past three decades. As a result, the way of



water supply in Basrah is neither systematic nor efficient. Furthermore, since many water pipes were installed in the 1950s or earlier, and have received insufficient maintenance to date, the water supply system has degraded to the extent that the rate of water leakage today is estimated to be as high as 50% of the total water supplies. The decrepit water supply facilities in Basrah are causing all manners of problems, so there is an urgent need to develop water supply facilities in the cities. Safe drinking water is a basic requirement for good health, and it is also a fundamental human right. Fresh water is already a limited resource in many parts of the world, and, in the next century, it will become even more limited due to increasing populations, urbanization and climate change [3,17,18]. For that it become highly necessary to initiate a plane for starting project to elevate water shortage and provide clean water for Basrah city and surrounding areas. That was accumulated by signing a loan agreement between Japan (JICA) and Iraq (Ministry of Municipalities and Public Works) to finance Basrah Water Supply Improvement Project. The project will provide water supply facilities, including a water treatment plant and a water distribution network, in Basrah and Hartha in Basrah Governorate in southern Iraq, thereby improving the water supply in both cities. Figure 1 shows aerial view of the project site.



Figure 1. Aerial view of JICA assisted Water Treatment Project in Hartha, Basrah, Iraq.

The project is a JV between the Arab Contractors Company, Hitachi “Japanese Company” and OTV “French Company”. The plant will provide potable water for 3. 2 million people in Al Basra. The



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3rd phase, which started in October 2014, includes the construction of water purification plant with 360,000m³/day. It comprises an intake with productive capacity 540,000m³/day, chlorine ward, drying building, distribution chamber, alum ward, sedimentation tanks, water tank, electricity distribution building for intake, chlorine injection building, warehouses building, transformers and power generation buildings and fuel tanks. The 4th phase includes the construction of desalination plant with a capacity of 199.000m³/day, construction of medium voltage transformers plant which includes turbid water tank, filtration unit, CIP & Neutralization UF building, washing tanks, electricity distribution panels, purification unit, CIP & Neutralization RO building, RO Electrical building, chemical admixtures, low voltage building and administrative building. This is in addition to operate and maintain the distribution system for 5 years after the completion of the plant. Up to February 2022, nearly 98% of the project was completed.

Work was intended to be finished in 2016 but the project faced delays due to tribal demands for labour and alleged efforts to extort contractors, as well as delayed payments from the government side [19].

Limitation of Cooperation to Iraq by JICA

The JICA's activities have limitations in Iraq as follows:

- Securities problems do not allow JICA to send any Japanese staff, experts, volunteers, and consultants to Iraq.
- JICA established Iraq section in JICA/Jordan Office and liaison office in Baghdad that has Iraqi staff only.
- JICA's activities for capacity development are limited to training programs in Japan and surrounding countries (Egypt, Jordan, Syria, and Tunisia).
- Japanese consultants involving JICA's studies are assigned to Jordan. Consultant's activities in Iraq are done by mainly Iraqi consultants [19].

Prospect of Japan's development assistance policies

Japan establishes its own philosophy of development assistance and aims to lead the world amid such changing trends in international assistance, poverty reduction symbolized by the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) should be an essential first objective of assistance. That have been done with improving the economic structure of Iraq. If there were no poverty in the world, people's living conditions could be improved through ordinary economic activities, and subsequently sources of crimes and violent conflicts would decrease, thereby greatly reducing the need for development assistance. The importance of poverty reduction notwithstanding, both the original MDGs and the post-MDGs currently being formulated merely set target values to be achieved by a certain

point in time. Even if they are achieved, the improvements may not last for long, or people's capacity to deal with future downside risks may not be developed. In order not only to attain numerical targets, but also to maintain achievements, further improve, and prepare for any downside risk, we need interfaces that can link the benefits of poverty reduction with the vitalization of private economic activities and continuous economic growth based thereon. This target will be achieved by JICA through improving the infrastructure of Iraq [20].

Conclusion

Since the Iran-Iraq war of 1980, the socioeconomic infrastructure has been devastated because of repeated conflicts and economic sanctions. Iraq faces several challenges, particularly preserving and improving the environment, solving its problems and harmonizing it with national, regional and international requirements. Iraq suffers from several problems which can be attributed to natural and human factors and incorrect policies that isolated Iraq from the rest of the world for many years. These factors, among others, have formed significant pressures on Iraq. Therefore, it entails multi-level collaboration of stakeholder efforts to develop strategies and action plans to achieve the goals of reaching a promising future where we and future generations live safely and stably in a healthy and sustainable environment. The process of preparing and adopting integrated, flexible, and applicable strategies with clear goals in light of the available human and financial resources constitutes an urgent need for decision makers in Iraq.

The Government of Japan has strongly committed itself to support Iraq reconstruction. The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) is a governmental agency that coordinates [official development assistance](#) (ODA) for the [government of Japan](#). JICA is extending its capacity development programs as quickly as possible in an effective manner. JICA is responsible for the major portion of bilateral technical cooperation. JICA has committed itself to the Iraq reconstruction since the end of the last conflict. JICA is currently conducting various technical cooperation projects, as well as studies for infrastructure rehabilitation and construction. Under the current security situation in Iraq, it would be very difficult for donors to send large numbers of international experts to Iraq to carry out reconstruction projects. JICA is conducting capacity development programs in a way to minimize the security risk and maximize effectiveness as much as possible. JICA organizes various technical trainings and workshops with a view to enhancing the capacity of Iraqi officials who could take responsibility for reconstructing their



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own country. They are learning state-of-the-art technical skills as well as Japanese aid systems and how to conduct master plans and feasibility studies for actual reconstruction work to be carried out. In some programs, they can attain internationally accredited licenses and certificates at the end of the programs. Those certifications will enable them to be more involved in reconstruction works. In other courses, they learn effective management skills in training centers where Iraqi trainers can train their staff on the ground efficiently. Through those programs, JICA facilitates the Iraqi people's participation in the reconstruction processes and enhance their ownerships. The new JICA integrates three major types of assistance offered by Japan: technical cooperation, ODA loans, and grant aid.

JICA provides strategic and comprehensive assistance in light of the four pillars of reconstruction and development in accordance with the reconstruction plan by the Iraqi government as follows:

- 1) Strengthen foundations for economic growth: Strengthen infrastructure of the oil, gas, agriculture, and the mining/manufacturing sectors.
- 2) Promote the private sector with economic growth: Restore the supply of electricity and develop infrastructure of transportation and communication.
- 3) Improve the quality of life: Maintain water supply and sewerage system, improve the quality of medical care and education. It is as part of Japan commitment to the adoption of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by the UN Millennium Summit in 2000 made clear the emphasis on poverty reduction in international assistance [20].
- 4) Strengthen the governance: Develop administrative foundations and human resources.

JICA is carrying out the activities in order to reconstruct the citizens' lives in Iraq. As a result, JICA has become one of the most important comprehensive development assistance institutions in the world especially in Iraq.

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