

Chapter 4 Future Focus of Assistance in the Environmental Field

Iraq is attempting to overcome adversity and make progress with democratization, but it will likely require considerable time for the political and social situation to stabilize. As such, the Committee has categorized its recommendations into cooperation initiatives that could be launched under the current unstable circumstances and those that should be implemented with a more mid- to long-term perspective when stability is attained.

4.1 Cooperation Initiatives Possible under the Current Circumstances

(1) Assistance projects that could be implemented under the current circumstances

The Committee feels that assistance projects that can be implemented outside Iraq, such as training or the investigation of needs by inviting relevant Iraqi personnel for hearings in Japan or third country locations, would be effective. Particular efforts should be made to boost the environmental management capacity of the Iraqi Ministry of Environment. For example, exploiting Japanese expertise to train government officials would open the way to the drafting of environmental standards and the transfer of methodology and technology for other environmental management and monitoring. In its report, JICA has proposed training programs for improving environmental management capacity,¹⁴ and it should be possible now to provide assistance for creating curriculums, selecting instructors, and ensuring that the training programs are effective. Training should moreover be combined with investigation of needs, with trainees serving at the same time as information sources.

Japan should also pursue projects that can be implemented without the on-site involvement of Japanese personnel, such as the provision of equipment through grant aid, and support for reconstruction activities being conducted mainly by Iraqis themselves. The initial \$1.5 billion pledged by Japan has already been spoken for, and further grant aid is unlikely to be of such a large scale, but Japan should respond flexibly to address new needs emerging as reconstruction proceeds.

Project preparations such as mid- to long-term infrastructural assistance to be financed by yen loans and other sources should be considering the guiding principles of the guidelines of the environmental and social considerations of Japan's ODA.

Another important area is the provision of support for efforts by international agencies to rehabilitate the southern marshlands. The first stage of UNEP's marshland management project will be completed in FY2005, but a second stage is being planned, and Japan should continue to support such activities.

(2) Planning of projects to be implemented once the political situation stabilizes

The building of partnerships with local agencies capable of conducting activities within Iraq is important. The Iraqi Ministry of Environment is Japan's primary counterpart where environmental assistance is concerned, but CRIM should also be included as a cooperation partner for southern marshland projects. Partnership building calls for consideration firstly of such policies as the promotion of supervisor-level exchanges through inviting supervisors to Japan as trainees, and the building of official government ties through high-level meetings and other means.

Another measure would be to establish a structure outside Iraq for the on-site implementation of projects as soon as political situation stabilizes sufficiently to allow entry, and for the training of Iraqi personnel while conducting research for the formulation of projects. As a neighboring country, Jordan would be a convenient location outside Iraq. Egypt too has a partnership program agreement with Japan for joint implementation of assistance for nearby countries, and Egypt's Environmental Monitoring Training Center could be used for South-South cooperation to develop the capacity of Iraqi government personnel.

(3) Active participation in frameworks for donor coordination

Japan should actively pursue opportunities for participation in donor gatherings to cultivate complementary and non-overlapping ties with other donors that secure a role for Japan (including information sharing and joint investigation and research). It is of vital importance for Japan to prepare for such meetings by drafting a list of priorities and negotiating for allocation of roles and cooperation, etc. in accordance with these priorities.

Possibilities for Japan to contribute technologically not only to projects being implemented by the UN but also to other donor country agencies should be considered. For example, thought could be given to ways of tying Japanese projects into Italy's southern marshland project.

(4) Promotion of teamwork between research institutes and universities

Joint research by Japanese and Iraqi universities and research institutes on shared themes aimed at resolution of Iraq's environmental problems should be promoted both for the role it could play in improving the capabilities of Iraqi researchers and its importance for identifying future assistance needs. Japan has a grant program for supporting overseas students aimed at assisting efforts by the governments of developing countries to nurture human resources, and this program could be used to provide Iraqi students with opportunities for study in Japan.

4.2 Cooperation to Be Provided From the Mid- To Long-Term Perspective

(1) Drafting of assistance plans for specific environmental fields

Field-specific assistance plans for respective environmental fields should be drafted in preparation for when Iraq's public order has been restored sufficiently to permit their implementation. Such plans should clearly explain the distinctive features of Japanese assistance and their superiority compared with other donors. This will require the drafting of strategic plans based on a sound examination of available Japanese environmental technologies for those that could be applied effectively to Iraq's geographical, social, and economic circumstances.

(2) Formulation and implementation of cooperation projects

Japan should identify feasible projects that utilize its strengths, such as personnel training and the localization of Japanese technology. Another important approach would be to consider the dispatch of a joint public/private sector mission for joint identification of projects, and to contribute from both public and private sectors to the building of systems in Iraq including the adoption of Japanese technology and the building of structures for supporting that technology.

A concrete example would be contribution to the rehabilitation of Iraq's southern marshlands from the following perspectives:

- Rehabilitation of the marshland ecosystem that pays due consideration to the recycling of resources
- Reconstruction of the foundations of everyday life of the marshland dwellers
- Activating mechanisms for the coordination of cross-border water resource management

Japan must also consider how it can team up with international organizations and other donors to provide effective assistance. Coordinating efforts would be one way of avoiding duplication of aid projects and boosting the efficiency of assistance provided.

(3) Support for participation in frameworks related to global environmental issues

It is important for Japan to support Iraq's participation in frameworks related to global environmental issues being implemented by the international community. Iraq is a signatory to almost no international conventions in the environmental field, and Japan could almost certainly contribute to the process of Iraq's participation in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, and to the establishment of structures within Iraq for the implementation of these conventions. Because acceptance of such conventions imposes international obligations whose fulfillment will require the building of relevant capabilities within the organizations concerned, Japan should consider the planning of programs for the comprehensive raising of capabilities from institutional, structural, and personnel-related perspectives.

Japan should also consider assistance for the listing of the southern marshlands as a Ramsar Convention site. Listing the marshes in their present state of degradation is difficult, but Japan could argue for their international importance and once they have been rehabilitated, provide support for their listing under the Ramsar Convention to protect them internationally and ensure their sustained conservation.

(4) Support for the creation of structures aimed at preventing environmental degradation caused by reconstruction development

In view of anticipated large-scale reconstruction development throughout Iraq, there is a need to support initiatives aimed at coping with the environmental issues expected to emerge from such development. Where projects implemented by Japan are concerned, there is a need to ensure that due consideration is paid to environmental and social concerns, and Japan could also provide support for the appropriate implementation of projects of other donors.

There is a particularly urgent need to establish systems for environmental assessment and for addressing other environmental and social considerations, along with structures for their implementation, and to train required personnel. It will require assistance from both legislative and human resource training perspectives in order to build institutions within the Iraqi government itself for addressing environmental and social concerns and to improve its capabilities for implementation of plans, environmental monitoring, and compliance with laws and so forth. In more specific terms, Japan could consider cooperation that bundles a number

of different items such as the development of human resources through training, supply of monitoring equipment, and the dispatch of legal system experts.