

## Operational Approach

### ◆ Diversity and socio-culturally sensitive approach :

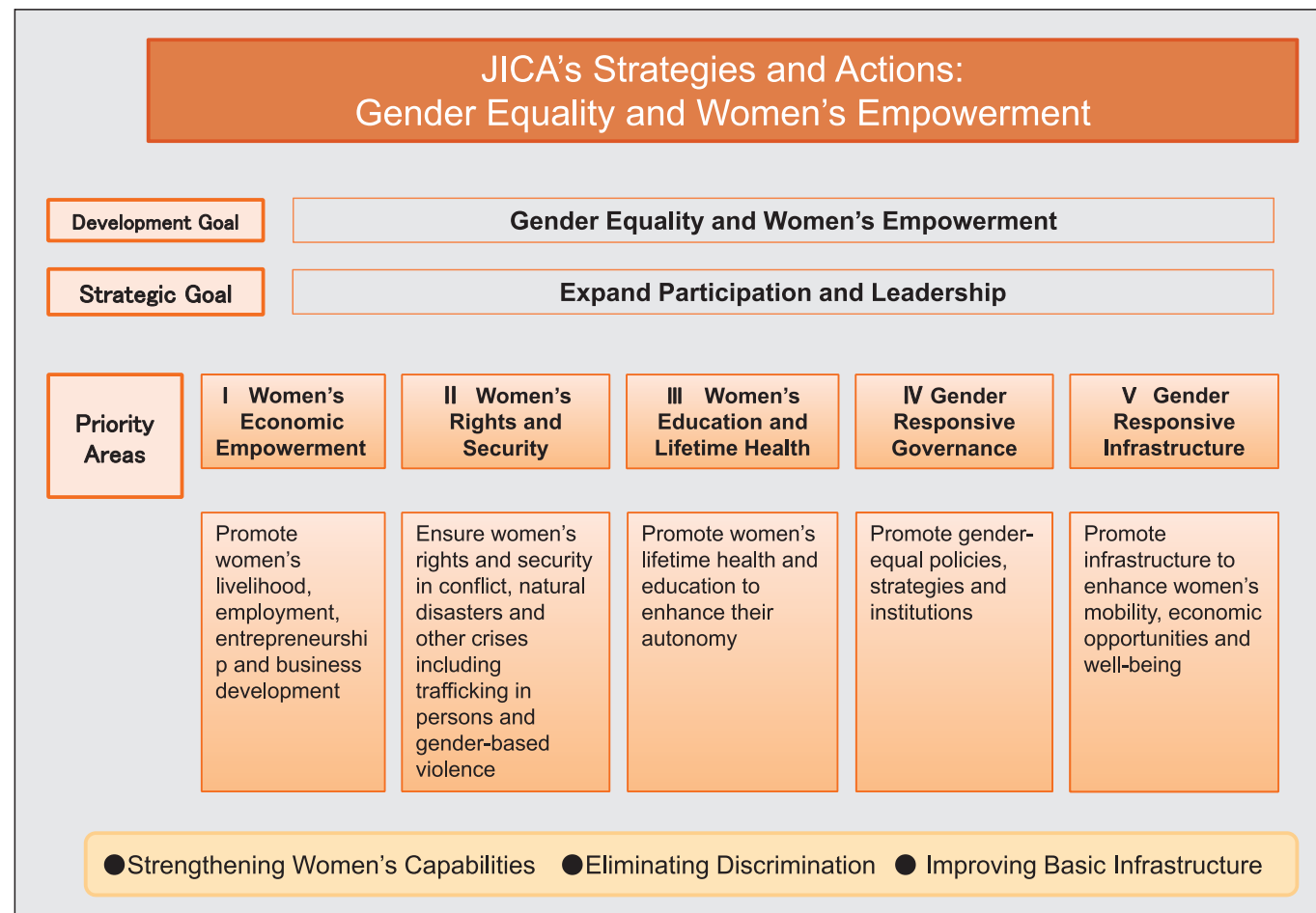
Gender equality and women's empowerment cannot be achieved without considering the socio-cultural contexts in which men and women live. JICA will adopt inclusive approaches to development, paying due attention to the diversity of people, including gender, ethnicity, age, education, and other socio-economic attributes.

### ◆ Harness schemes for impact :

JICA will strengthen its efforts to address gender equality and women's empowerment by combining the three schemes of Technical Cooperation, Loan Assistance, and Grant Aid, as appropriate.

### ◆ Partnership :

JICA will further enhance partnerships with civil society, national and international NGOs and international development organizations.



### Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)

Office for Gender Equality and Poverty Reduction,  
Infrastructure and Peacebuilding Department  
1st-6th floors, Nibancho Center Building, 5-25, Nibancho, Chiyoda-ku,  
Tokyo 102-8012, Japan  
E-mail: eiggh@jica.go.jp <http://www.jica.go.jp/>



## Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment JICA Strategies and Actions

Promoting gender equality and women's empowerment is a key to achieving sustainable and equitable development. Gender equality is a matter of fundamental human rights. In addition, gender equality and women's empowerment are crucial drivers of development progress. Evidence vigorously suggests that gender equality and women's empowerment are vital for improving economic, social, and political conditions and fostering poverty reduction and economic development.

Decades-long efforts of the international community, including towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), have remarkably reduced gender disparities in

health, education, employment and political participation. However, substantial gender inequality persists and women remain disadvantaged and vulnerable in many ways around the world. These include gender disparities in girls' secondary education enrolment and completion; high maternal mortality rates; women's unequal access to economic resources; disproportionate burdens of unpaid work; legal and social discrimination against women and girls; and widespread gender-based violence. In settings affected by conflict, natural disasters and other crises, gender inequalities are often magnified and their negative impacts on development are exacerbated.

### Visions and Strategies

JICA envisions "Inclusive and Dynamic Development" in its efforts for promoting human security, poverty reduction, sustainable economic growth and improving governance in its partner countries. Gender equality and women's empowerment are essential for achieving Inclusive and Dynamic Development. JICA has been adopting gender mainstreaming as the key strategy for promoting gender equality and women's empowerment across the work of its operations. JICA recognizes women as a key agent of change for development, and

ensures that women have an equal voice and leadership in decision-making in all its interventions.



### Priority Areas of Interventions

JICA will make strategic investments in its gender mainstreaming efforts to promote

gender equality and women's empowerment by focusing on five priority areas as follows.

## I Promote Women's Economic Empowerment

Investing in women's economic empowerment leads to gender equality, poverty reduction and economic growth. However, gender inequalities persist in women's access to economic opportunities including employment, decent work and access to productive resources (such as land, property, credit, and financial services). As a result, women are more likely to work in low-productive agricultural employment and in low-wage informal jobs. As women perform the bulk of reproductive work, they often have little time left to pursue economic opportunities.

JICA will support women to explore their capabilities for a better and dignified life. JICA

will provide support to strengthen the role of women in economic activities including agricultural production, and to empower rural women for income generation, livelihood improvement and gender equality by enhancing their voices, leadership and participation in decision-making. JICA will strengthen women's access to productive resources, marketing, extension services, technology, training and information in both rural and urban areas. JICA will also promote women's entrepreneurship and business development through supporting women's capacity building and leadership to expand their opportunities in industries and employment.

## II Ensure Women's Rights and Security

Women's safety and security in public and private spaces remain precarious and require urgent action around the world. Women face intimidation and threats to their safety when they try to take active roles in their communities. In the context of conflicts, crisis and natural disasters, women and girls in particular are exposed to additional risks and exploitation due to gender-based discrimination and norms in the society. Gender-based violence including domestic violence, sexual assault, trafficking in persons and forced prostitution has been a facet of many recent crises.

JICA's work in crisis response, including conflicts and natural disasters, will ensure that all stages of interventions will be responsive to the different needs and priorities of women, men and diverse groups as well as their security and equitable access to services and livelihood support. JICA will also enhance women's participation in decision-making and promote women's roles at all stages

of interventions for peacebuilding and natural disasters from early recovery to reconstruction and prevention stages.

Closer attention will be paid to the issue of trafficking in persons (TIP) as a serious human rights violation and a form of gender-based violence. The number of trafficked persons has been on the increase amid regional economic integration and globalization processes. JICA will focus on the prevention of TIP and the protection of trafficked persons and will enhance institutional capacities and coordination among the concerned stakeholders mainly in the Asian region. JICA will promote a victim (survivor)-centered approach and the empowerment of trafficked persons. In addition, JICA will pay close attention to women and girls with disabilities who face multiple discrimination – because of their disabilities, gender and other social factors– and support their empowerment and leadership.

## III Promote Women's health and Education

Gender inequality continues to have a negative impact on a range of health and education issues. Gender-based discrimination contributes to excess female mortality across the life cycle: at birth, during infancy and early childhood, and throughout the reproductive years. While significant progress has been made towards gender equality in primary education in the past decades in many developing countries, progress in primary completion and secondary education remains a challenge in sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia and the Arab States. Girls still have lower educational attainment,

especially at the secondary and tertiary levels, limiting their options for future employment, income and economic opportunities.

Promoting education and health for women and girls is the first step for their job opportunities. JICA will pursue equal access to education through the creation of social and economic environments including the establishment of gender responsive education-related policies and institutions; gender responsive teacher training and education administration; curriculum and teaching

material development; and promoting community awareness including parents and decision makers concerning the importance of girls' education. JICA recognizes that the challenges are not only to get girls into schools, but also to keep them there, as well as to assist their transition from school to work and expand their career options. JICA will support women to explore their possibilities in traditionally male-centered areas, such as natural science, information and communications technologies, business management, medicine, law, trade and economics and finance, and support them to seek new professional careers and empowerment.

With respect to health issues, JICA will further strengthen its efforts to support women's lifetime health by: (1) strengthening maternal and child health services for reducing infant and maternal mortality rates; (2) ensuring equal access of

women and men to qualified medical and health services; (3) promoting women's empowerment in decision making on their health including family planning and other reproductive health issues; and (4) developing female medical human resources such as doctors, nurses and midwives.



## IV Promote Gender Responsive Governance

Socio-cultural norms and discrimination based on gender, ethnicity and class/caste as well as stereotyped perceptions of gender roles exist in every aspect of society such as politics, governance, the workplace and the household. Women in many countries still have limited opportunities to play important roles in the process of development and peace building. Women's voices and needs tend not to be reflected in the decision-making of the family, local governance and policy making.

JICA will support efforts by developing countries to establish legislation as well as to achieve gender equality based on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination

against Women (CEDAW) and other international human rights agreements and conventions. JICA promotes gender equality in social, political and economic structures that often place women in subordinate positions. Major areas of concern are as follows: strengthening national machinery to promote gender mainstreaming; and supporting public and legal institutions at the central and local level to formulate and implement laws, policies and strategies that support gender equality and women's empowerment. JICA will also support the capacity development of the concerned judicial and law enforcement authorities to respond effectively to gender issues including gender-based violence.

## V Promote Gender Responsive Infrastructure

In many parts of the world, women still lack access to water supplies, sanitation, electricity, roads and transportation. As a result, they spend significant time for work to meet domestic needs, and have limited access to education and health services. Basic infrastructure is critical for reducing women's reproductive workload and time poverty by releasing women from time-consuming drudgery. It also enhances the mobility, economic opportunities, and well-being of women and socially excluded groups.

JICA will expand its efforts toward gender-

responsive infrastructure development. Closer attention will be given to reducing the workloads and time poverty of women and children, and to support for their overall economic and social empowerment. JICA will support water supplies and sanitation, rural energy, rural roads and rural electrification as well as enhance urban infrastructure and services in order to promote the mobility, safety, economic empowerment and well-being of women and vulnerable groups. JICA will also promote women's active participation and leadership in improving and operating these infrastructures.