

World Nature Conservation Day: protecting the planet health for a better future

~ JICA celebrates World Nature Conservation Day in its commitment to build a sustainable tomorrow ~

New Delhi, July 28, 2020: India rose from 177 rank in 2018 to 168 rank in the 12th edition of the biennial Environment Performance Index (EPI Index 2020) that measured the environmental performance of 180 countries, released by Yale University. While there is substantial improvement in rankings, however, India scored below the regional average score on key parameters: environmental health (air quality, water and sanitation, heavy metals) and ecosystem vitality including issues of biodiversity and habitat.¹ To reiterate Japan's commitment in working together with India, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) today celebrated World Nature Conservation Day.

Speaking on the occasion of World Nature Conservation Day, Mr. Katsuo Matsumoto, Chief Representative, JICA India said, "As UN and international organizations emphasize, the novel coronavirus pandemic is a reminder that human health is linked to the planet's health. Coronaviruses are believed to be zoonotic, meaning they are transmitted between animals and people. Human incursions into natural areas and loss of wild life habitat will result in the increased contact between human and wildlife, that is to say the risk of infection. To prevent future outbreaks, we must maintain wild life habitat and enhance ecosystem vitality. Further, enhancing environmental health through waste management, water and sanitation and introduction of clean energy will reduce the vulnerability of communities to pandemics and thus improve overall societal resilience., we believe our longtime cooperation in the area of environmental health and ecosystem vitality has been contributing to the effort of Government of India."

In the field of ecosystem vitality, JICA has supported 29 projects (27 ODA loan projects across 14 states and 2 Technical Cooperation projects, which include 1 ODA loan project and 1 TCP targeting at capacity development of front line staff at national level) in the forest sector, which includes ODA loan provisions of 270 billion Japanese Yen (approximately INR 18,000 Crore) since 1991/92 towards the sector.

Those projects have been implemented across the states including Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Nagaland, Odisha, Sikkim, Rajasthan, Uttarakhand, West Bengal, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh and Tripura, empowering over 18,000 Joint Forest Management (JFM) committees and 24,000 Self-Help Groups (SHGs) in the process. Responsible forest management will help in developing sustainable environment solutions, thereby averting natural calamities and mitigating such risks. We expect more than 3 million hectares coverage will be achieved through plantation and regeneration activities under JICA projects by 2030.

In light of environmental health, JICA has extended our support in waste management, water & sanitation, and clean energy projects in order to preserve the environment. Kolkata Solid Waste Management Improvement Project, which was implemented during 2006-2016, has contributed to promote appropriate solid waste management by developing regional waste management system including

¹ <https://epi.yale.edu/epi-results/2020/component/epi>

sanitary landfill site for six municipalities in Kolkata Metropolitan Area. Now 30% of total collected waste in the area has been recycled owing to the contribution of the project.

In water & sanitation sector, Japanese ODA loans of more than 722 billion Japanese Yen (approximately INR 48,000 crore). With the support, approximately 30 million people have access to clean water and about 15 million people are expected to be benefited from sewerage projects.

JICA has also been supporting promotion of new and renewable energy initiatives and grid stabilization projects in India. To live up to its promise, JICA has extended ODA loans to Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency (IREDA) covering over 36 sub-projects in wind, solar and small hydro sectors.

With its consistent support in India, JICA aims to reiterate the need for a healthy environment, and reinforce its commitment to conserve nature to build the foundation of a sustainable society. Moreover, JICA's efforts in India are not just a promise to ensure the well-being of the present generation, but also for the betterment of the future generation.

About JICA

Established, by a specific law, as an incorporated administrative institution under the Government of Japan, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) aims to contribute to the promotion of international cooperation, as a sole Japanese governmental agency in charge of ODA implementation. JICA is the world's largest bilateral donor agency. JICA works as a bridge between Japan and emerging countries, and provides assistance in forms of loan, grant and technical cooperation so that the emerging countries can strengthen their capabilities.

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JICA India Brochure:

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