

Editor's Note

JAs are a treasure trove of human resources. They are also a treasure trove of organizational activities. IDACA has been introducing the organization and activities of JAs in Japan to developing countries for more than 50 years. In field study visits, etc., during which I visited the JAs and related facilities together with participants, I was surprised by the passion and expertise of the JA executives & staff and farmers concerning agriculture, and I have also heard an innumerable number of words from the participants saying that JAs are their future models. Many

requests have been delivered from various Asian and African countries asking for the dispatch of experts on JA business operations and farm guidance to those countries.

I hope that the latest agreement reached between JA-ZENCHU and JICA will increase opportunities for conveying the know-how possessed by JAs in Japan to developing countries that need such know-how, and that such items as support for developing countries and international exchanges will be added to the activities of the JAs.

Request:

To all ex-IDACA participants

Dear Mr. and Ms. IDACA Alumni:

IDACA wishes, above all, that its ties with you remain solid and long-lasting. So, why not keep us updated on your recent status and how we can reach you.

Please write us if your place of work, your position or your address have changed. There is no specific form that you have to follow in sending the information, but the following may serve as an example. We would appreciate it so much if you could mail (or e-mail) or fax it to IDACA, for the attention of Eiko Oshita.

Name (nationality):	_____
Training course / Seminar	_____
Changes	_____
1) New address (home, telephone number and fax number):	_____
2) New place of work (office, telephone number, fax number, and e-mail address):	_____
3) New position:	_____

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IDACA NEWS

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No. 114
August 1, 2019



Partnership between JA Group and JICA on International Cooperation

Flow of New International Cooperation by JA Group and JICA

Witnessing a change in the era name and the accession of a new emperor, Japan has entered a new era. International cooperation by the JA under a new mechanism will also start.

On May 7, after the consecutive holidays ended, a signing ceremony for a “partnership agreement” was held between the Japan International Cooperation Agency (hereinafter referred to as JICA) and the JA Group. While Yasuhiro Ozato, State Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, and Norikazu Suzuki, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs, who made efforts to bring about this partnership agreement, looked on, JICA President Shinichi Kitaoka and JA-ZENCHU President Toru Nakaya, who is concurrently the president of



JA-ZENCHU President Nakaya and JICA President Kitaoka exchanging agreement documents (from left: Ozato, State Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries; JA-ZENCHU President Nakaya; JICA President Kitaoka; and Suzuki, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs) [Photo courtesy of JICA]

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REPORT ON G20 AGRICULTURE MINISTERS' MEETING

JA-ZENCHU and IDACA Introduction Booths Set Up at G20 Niigata Agriculture Ministers' Meeting

Prior to the “G20 Osaka Summit” (scheduled to be held on June 28 and 29), which will be chaired by Japan for the first time, the “G20 Niigata Agriculture Ministers' Meeting” was held from May 11 to 12 at Toki Messe in Niigata City to discuss challenges facing the global agricultural sector and future prospects. At the meeting themed on “Toward Sustainable Agro-Food Sector: Emerging Issues and Good Practices,” an active exchange of opinions was conducted among minister of G20 member countries, ministers of invited countries such as Thailand, the chairing country for ASEAN, and representatives of international organizations on three main issues: (1) Fostering innovative human resources and new technology that causes responsible innovation of the next generation of agriculture; (2) Focusing on Food Value Chain, facilitating farmers and other FVCs stakeholders' benefit; and (3) Pursuing possible contribution to achieve SDGs.



Agriculture Ministers' Meeting display panel



Grisada Boonrach, Minister of Agriculture and Co-operatives (3rd from left)



Visit by Shuichi Takatori, State Minister of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries and Haruyuki Yamada, Director of the Niigata Prefectural Department of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries

With around 48 exhibition booths set up in the venue introducing advanced agricultural technologies in Japan as well as agriculture and food in Niigata Prefecture, JA-ZENCHU and IDACA also set up a booth to introduce such matters as the JA Group's international cooperation and initiatives related to fostering agricultural cooperatives in developing countries.

During the event, Shuichi Takatori, State



JA-ZENCHU President Nakaya and JICA President Kitaoka signing the agreement documents



JA-ZENCHU President Nakaya answering questions at a press conference after the signing ceremony

IDACA, sat in the center and signed the agreement, after which they exchanged the agreement documents.

The official name of the agreement is the “Basic Agreement on the Promotion of Partnership and Cooperation between the Japan International Cooperation Agency and the Central Union of Agricultural Cooperatives.” Its purpose is as follows: “JICA and JA-ZENCHU will contribute to the resolution of development issues in developing countries by utilizing the knowledge possessed by related organizations (JA Group) such as primary level JAs and prefectural unions and federations of agricultural cooperatives all over Japan, and carry out partnership and cooperation for the purpose of contributing to the resolution of domestic issues by fostering Japanese human resources through international cooperation and by strengthening networks with developing countries.”

To promote partnership and cooperation, the following initiatives are incorporated in the agreement: “information and opinion exchanges for studying the possibility of partnership,” “holding of seminars, etc. on disseminating and strengthening activities related to the JA Group, etc. and international cooperation at international conferences on human resources development and capacity building,” and “programs to dispatch experts and fact-finding missions,” “participant acceptance projects,” “overseas cooperation volunteers projects,” “grassroots technical cooperation projects,” and “private sector partnership projects” using the knowledge of the JA Group.

Recognizing that the establishment of cooperatives is one way to overcome problems in agriculture, JICA intends to promote opportu-

nities in various forms for developing countries where agricultural cooperatives are underdeveloped to learn from Japan about the mechanism of the marketing business, etc. by cooperatives.

The JA Group has long been involved with JICA, and IDACA, which is a member of the JA Group, has been accepting training participants from developing countries. Among IDACA training courses, JICA-commissioned training programs, which started in 1963, have the longest history, and at the same time, they have a tangible track record as a training course with a history within JICA.

In this edition of “IDACA News,” although we have introduced them in the past, JICA training courses scheduled to be implemented this year include “Establishment and Development of Farmers' Organizations,” “Agricultural Policy,” and “Agribusiness Promotion for Small Scale Farmers in African Countries,” a course for the staff of organizations in charge of promoting cooperatives in Malaysia based on the EPA (Economic Partnership Agreement) with Malaysia, and training participant acceptance projects for “Japanese emigrants” with which the JA Group has long been involved (training courses by JAs themed on farming and livelihood, women's activities, etc.). We have been commissioned by JICA from four to five training courses every year.

In the future, while continuing and executing JICA-commissioned training courses, we will be actively involved in the “partnership agreement” between JA-ZENCHU and JICA and promote activities that will lead to fostering human resources who will be engaged in agriculture and agricultural organizations in developing countries and Japan.

Information on Participating Countries (Total of 34 countries/organizations)

G20 member countries	Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, European Union (EU), France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Republic of Korea (ROK), South Africa, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, United Kingdom, and the United States
Invited countries (six countries)	Chile, Netherlands, Senegal, Singapore, Spain, and Thailand
Invited international organizations (eight organizations)	ERIA (Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia), FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nation), IFAD (International Fund for Agricultural Development), IFPRI (International Food Policy Research Institute), OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development), World Bank, WFP (United Nations World Food Program), and WTO (World Trade Organization)

Minister of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries, Hideyo Hanazumi, Governor of Niigata Prefecture, and Haruyuki Yamada, Director of the Niigata Prefectural Department of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries took time from their busy schedule and visited the exhibition booths. Also, Grisada Boonrach, Minister of Agriculture and Co-operatives of Thailand, stopped by on May 11 and expressed appreciation for the JA Group's long-standing support for agricultural cooperatives in Thailand and IDACA's training programs for accepting

many training participants from Thailand.

The Ministerial Declaration was adopted on the final day, and a collection of good practices from each country was distributed as one of the annexed documents. On the occasion, the results of action plans created by incorporating Japanese knowledge by three former participants (from the Philippines, Laos, and Thailand) who participated in IDACA training courses based on projects funded by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries were introduced.

REPORTS ON TRAINING COURSES

(1) FY2018 JICA Knowledge Co-Creation Program “Agribusiness Promotion for Small Scale Farmers in African Countries (A)” Course

This training course is one in which participants examine multifaceted initiatives in agriculture and explore ideas. Six participants from Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Namibia, Nigeria, and Sierra Leone participated in FY2018, and in addition to classroom lectures at IDACA, field study visits were conducted in the Kanto and Tokai regions, such as Ibaraki Prefecture, Tochigi Prefecture, Saitama Prefecture, Tokyo, and Shizuoka Prefecture. In Ibaraki Prefecture, the participants attended a hearing at the prefectural government office on general conditions in agriculture in the prefecture and visited paprika producers, while in Tochigi Prefecture, the participants visited a ginger processing company and a local confectionery maker that uses locally grown barley as raw material. In Saitama Prefecture, the participants visited a roadside station, and in Hachioji, Tokyo, they visited passion fruit producers. Finally, in Shizuoka Prefecture, the participants visited JAs engaged in mikan (mandarin orange production/marketing and direct sales as well as the



Observation of the scene of agriculture-welfare collaboration activities at Kyomaru-en Co., Ltd. in Hamamatsu City, Shizuoka Prefecture

sixth industrialization of agriculture; they also visited other places including a company that processes kocha (Black tea) from tea leaves grown in Shizuoka and sells the product and a company that practices nofuku renkei (agriculture-welfare collaboration). Through this training course, the participants seem to have learned a lot about organizational approach over “individual” approach as well as the creation of the mechanism of collaboration and business.

(2) FY2018 JICA Malaysia Country-Focused Training Course “LEP 2.0* Capacity Building for Cooperative Marketing for Malaysia” Course

This training course was conducted from November 18, 2018 to December 20, 2018 targeting 10 lecturers at the Cooperative College

of Malaysia (CCM), which is responsible for training and guidance; the Malaysia Co-operative Societies Commission, which handles

legal systems, registration, and supervision; the Farmers' Organization Authority, which promotes farmers' organizations; and the Federal Agricultural Marketing Authority, which is involved in agricultural product sales. The cost of this training course is paid by both JICA and the government of Malaysia, which is a newly industrialized country (NIC).



Participants enjoying apple picking during a visit to a farm

The purpose of this training course was to enhance knowledge and guidance on agricultural product marketing, and the participants visited Hyogo Prefecture and learned about the mechanism of the FVC, ranging from upstream to downstream chain flows with regard to the marketing and distribution of agricultural products. The participants visited farmers, JAs, Co-ops (consumer cooperatives), related administrative agencies, etc., and expanded their knowledge about the prefecture's marketing strategy, ways to establish a brand, and ways to train successors, female entrepreneurs, etc. In addition, the participants visited the Land Improvement District Office, a Farmers academy in Hyogo, Agricultural Improvement Extension Center, JA Hyogo

(3) FY2018 ICA-Japan Training Course on “Fostering Leaders for Management and Development of Agricultural Cooperatives”

This training course was commissioned by the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA), and it aims at fostering core leaders responsible for revitalizing agricultural cooperatives and farmers' organizations in order to improve agricultural productivity and income. Japan's MAFF provides funding to ICA for the implementation of this training course.

This time, nine participants from seven

Minami Nij-iro Fa-min (direct sales shop), Agricultural Production Incorporation “Farm Inakakendani Einoh,” Business Union “Saiun,” Kobe City Central Wholesale Market, and Consumer Co-operative Kobe (Co-op Kobe).



Borrowing a jacket for a visit to a cold storage facility at Co-op Kobe

Lastly, the participants drafted a booklet compiling a collection of good practices for marketing agricultural products in Japan, and the training course ended. At the JICA training course closing ceremony, a participant acting on behalf of the other participants made the following concluding remarks on the participants' impression of the training course: “The lesson learned from this training course is that in addition to the experience that can only be gained in Japan, overseas training has fostered a sense of solidarity among us.” In addition, this participant expressed gratitude to the organizations and agencies that the participants visited.

* LEP 2.0: Abbreviation for Second Wave of the Look East Policy. It refers to the second wave of the Look East policy advocated in 1981 by Prime Minister Mahathir of Malaysia calling for “looking toward developed countries in Asia such as Japan as a model rather than Western countries.”

countries – Bhutan, Cambodia, Kyrgyzstan, Laos, Maldives, Nepal, and Sri Lanka – participated, and the training period in Japan lasted 20 days from February 25 to March 16, 2019. A characteristic of this training course is that prior to the training in Japan, preliminary training is conducted in a third country. Since the participating countries are the least developed countries, it is thought that it would be

more effective to receive training in Japan after receiving training in Thailand, a newly industrialized country, serving as a cushion. In Thailand, with the cooperation of the Cooperative League of Thailand (CLT) and the Cooperative Promotion Department



Participants who were impressed with the practical technologies of JA-ZENNOH Agricultural Research & Development Center

(CPD), the participants received basic lectures on the establishment, operation, business plans, cooperative principles, legal system, and other matters related to agricultural cooperatives and underwent training on case examples of agricultural cooperatives through on-site visits.

Meanwhile, with regard to the training course in Japan, study visits were conducted after preliminary classroom lectures on agricultural cooperatives, agriculture, etc. were completed. The participants then visited JA Fruit Yamanashi and a horticultural farmer in an area under the jurisdiction of JA Minami-Alps City in Yamanashi Prefecture; a farmer

cultivating shiitake mushrooms on fungus beds, a poultry farmer, herb farmer, organic farmer, and Tomoe Dairy Processing Co., Ltd. in Ibaraki Prefecture; JA Sano tourist farm "Agritown," Endo Foods Co., Ltd., Tochigi Prefecture Kawa-chi Agricultural

Promotion Office (agricultural extension center), Utsunomiya City Central Wholesale Market, and JA ZEN-NOH Tochigi Utsunomiya Food Center in Tochigi Prefecture; and JA Hadano, JA Kanagawa Prefectural Union, and JA ZEN-NOH Agricultural Research & Development Center, etc. in Kanagawa Prefecture.

During this training period, Norikazu Suzuki, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs, visited IDACA to hear about the overview of our organization, to observe the scene of the training course, and to exchange views with the participants.

REPORTS ON VISITORS TO IDACA

(1) Norikazu Suzuki, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs, Observes ICA-Japan Training Course on Fostering Leaders for Management and Development of Agricultural Cooperatives

– Meeting to Exchange Views with Participants –

On March 11, 2019, when the ICA-Japan Training Course on "Fostering Leaders for Management and Development of Agricultural Cooperatives" was being conducted at this organization, Norikazu Suzuki, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs, visited IDACA for observation and set aside time for exchanges with the participants.

Vice-Minister Suzuki spoke to the participants about the importance of the role of JAs in Japan's agriculture and rural areas, and about the Japanese government's policy on strengthening ties with Asia.



Opinion exchange meeting between Parliamentary Vice-Minister Suzuki and participants

After completing the observation, Vice-Minister Suzuki stated, "I want the participants to study Japanese agricultural cooperatives thoroughly to help them enrich the rural areas and farmers in their respective countries.

The Japanese people do not know that these training courses are being conducted, and it is necessary to have them know more about this."



Group photo with participants surrounding Parliamentary Vice-Minister Suzuki and ICA Regional Director of Asia-Pacific Balu

(2) Balasubramanian ('Balu') Iyer, ICA Regional Director of Asia-Pacific, Visits IDACA

At the same time as Norikazu Suzuki, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs, Balasubramanian ('Balu') Iyer Bal, ICA Regional Director of Asia-Pacific (ICA-AP), visited IDACA to hold talks with IDACA officers and staff on future ICA training courses. ICA-AP and IDACA have established long-term cooperation through training courses. Even today, we carry out three annual training sessions and follow-up guidance and research



Discussion between Balu, ICA Regional Director of Asia-Pacific, and IDACA officers and staff



Enjoying Japanese cherry blossoms

projects in collaboration.

Director Balu heard from the participants in the ongoing ICA training course about their impressions of the training course in Japan and progress in their action plans. He encouraged the participants with the following remarks: "Japan's agricultural cooperatives were not like they are now from the beginning, but they are what they are today upon overcoming various difficulties with the power of cooperation. I would like for you to start working on your activities from what you can do by making use of local resources."