

PRESS RELEASES ISSUED IN 2011 (backwards)

December 21, 2011

Japan Supports Rural Development in Ampara District

The Government of Japan extended US\$ 42,055 (approximately Rs. 4.7 million) grant aid for a rural development project in Ampara district. This project is designed to improve infrastructure facilities, agricultural activities and living conditions as well as livelihood of three villages in Uhana Divisional Secretariat (DS) division.

Under “the Project for Improving Livelihood and Living Environment of Communities in Uhana DS division, Ampara District,” seven tube wells, drinking water systems at two remote schools will be constructed. Furthermore, the project will also facilitate agricultural trainings and support the purchasing of bee keeping tools for those engaged in the trade.

This project will be implemented by Peragamana Guild and would benefit around 170 families and 600 students and teachers. This project is funded under the Grant Assistance Grassroots Human Security Project (GGP) scheme and expected to provide significant impact on the lives of the communities in terms of ensuring human security. Since 1989, 225 such projects have been supported by GGP scheme, at a total cost of around US\$ 29.3 million (around SLR 3,300 million).

Commenting on the provision of this grant, Mrs. Darma Samaranayake, Chairperson of Peragamana Guild said; “People live below poverty line in these villages at Uhana DS in Ampara and had no alternative but to use unsafe drinking water from shrinking mud of natural water holes through the ages, but they will now get safe drinking water for the first time in their life with the financial aid from the dearest and very unique favor of Japanese Embassy within the next year. Peragamana Guild, which initiated the project, conveys their sincere gratefulness to the Japanese Government on this merit action with the blessing of the board members of the organization and with the people of Uhana.”

As a strong development partner, Japan has been working together with the Government and the people of Sri Lanka to facilitate socioeconomic development of Sri Lanka. Considering Japan’s own history of the development, it can be said that rural

development is an indispensable component for the development of a whole country. This rural development project is envisaged to contribute greatly to the development of the targeted areas and human resources, and then lead to enhance national development of Sri Lanka.

The Grant Contract between His Excellency Mr. Nobuhito Hobo, Ambassador of Japan, and Ms. Darma Samaranayake, Chairperson of Peragamana Guild, was signed on December 21, 2011 at the Ambassador's Residence in Colombo.

December 16, 2011

Japan extended a US\$ 785,000 grant for demining in the North

The Government of Japan extended an additional US\$ 785,000 (approximately Rs. 86 million) grant aid for humanitarian demining in the North of Sri Lanka through the HALO Trust to expedite the efforts of the Government of Sri Lanka to achieve a mine-free Sri Lanka. Japan has been a major donor supporting mine clearance in Sri Lanka to accelerate the return and resettlement of Internal Displaced Persons (IDPs) and to facilitate recommencement of agriculture and other livelihood activities of returnees. In 2011, the Government of Japan has extended over a total of US\$ 2.2 million (around Rs. 250 million) grant aid for mine clearance including this project through the HALO Trust, Delvon Assistance for Social Harmony Sri Lanka (DASH) and Swiss Foundation for Mine Action (FSD), and has provided an accumulated amount of US\$ 23 million (approximately Rs. 2,500 million) since 2003 for demining activities in the North and the East under its Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects (GGP). Japan hopes that these assistances would directly benefit people at the grass-roots level, ensuring human security of the people.

Mr. Adam Jasinski, Programme Manager, The HALO Trust, says "We are very grateful to the Government of Japan for its continuing support, which will allow the HALO Trust to employ 200 local deminers and focus on clearing high-priority minefields in Kilinochchi and Jaffna Districts."

In addition to demining assistances, the Government of Japan has extended assistance for development in the North through projects such as improvement of central facilities of Jaffna Teaching Hospital, construction of Vavuniya-Killinochchi Transmission Line,

urgent rehabilitation of resettled communities in Jaffna and Mannar districts, digital topographic mapping, and training for public officers. Japan hopes that these assistances would holistically contribute to sustainable peace and development in Sri Lanka and promote the livelihood of the people.

The Grant Contract between His Excellency Mr. Nobuhito Hobo, Ambassador of Japan and Mr. Adam Jasinski, Programme Manager, The HALO Trust, was signed on December 16, 2011 at the Ambassador's residence in Colombo.

1st December 2011

Japan Supports Community Development in Jaffna District

The Government of Japan has extended US\$ 101,245 (approximately Rs. 11 million) grant aid for a community development project in Jaffna district in order to improve the living environment and livelihood of the recently resettled communities of three conflict affected villages in Telipalai Divisional Secretary Division in Jaffna. The project is a follow-up project of the development planning project in Jaffna, which have been executed by Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) from January 2010 to September 2011 to support quick recovery of Jaffna District through fishery and agricultural assistances and development planning.

Under "the project for enhancing the community development at resettlement locations in Jaffna district," three community centers and two wells will be constructed and rehabilitated and fishery equipments will be granted for targeted communities in Jaffna. This project will be implemented by Jaffna Social Action Center (JSAC) and would benefit more than 300 families. This project is funded under the Grant Assistance Grassroots Human Security Project scheme (GGP) and expected to provide significant impact on the lives of the communities in terms of ensuring human security. Since 1989, 223 such projects have been supported by GGP scheme, at a total cost of around 28.5 million US dollars (around 3,150 million Sri Lankan rupees).

Mr. Nadarajah Sukirtharaj, Coordinator of JSAC says; "we are very grateful and thankful to the Government of Japan for giving us the financial support for this project, and the project is much important in the resettlement process because when the basic

needs and the livelihood scenario develops, the displaced communities will come back to resettle. This grant will motivate the vulnerable communities to take constructive steps in the income generating process and fulfill the immediate basic needs.”

The Government of Japan has extended its supports in the North through various kinds of assistances such as demining assistances, improvement of central facilities of Jaffna Teaching Hospital, construction of Vavunia-Killinochchi Transmission Line, and training for front line officers, in addition to other assistances throughout Sri Lanka. Japan hopes that these assistances would directly meet the needs of the people and improve their living condition and contribute to sustainable peace and development of Sri Lanka.

The Grant Contract was signed between His Excellency Mr. Nobuhito Hobo, Ambassador of Japan and Mr. Nadarajah Sukirtharaj, Coordinator of JSAC on December 2, 2011 at the Ambassador's Residence in Colombo.

1st December 2011

Japan Supports Early Childhood Care Project in Trincomalee District

The Government of Japan provided assistance for an early childhood care and development project in Trincomalee District, extending USD 541,620 (approximately Rs. 60 million).

The project titled “Early Childhood Care and Development Project in Trincomalee District, Phase 3” will be implemented by a Japanese NGO, Save the Children Japan (SCJ). This is a follow up project from the previous two projects that helped to construct and renovate preschools and provide training for pre-school teachers in the district. The phase 3 project aims to develop sustainable system to offer early childcare by improving networks within communities and with local authorities, providing trainings for pre-school teachers and community members, and constructing preschools for the children of recently resettled communities. It is expected that more than 1,000 families and their community members will benefit from the project. The project is realized by the Japan-NGO Cooperation Grant Scheme, which supports economical and social developments and emergency humanitarian reliefs through Japanese NGOs.

Mr. Katsuya Yoshida, Representative of SCJ said, “Our mission is to inspire breakthroughs in the way we treat children. This project aims that all stakeholders including local authorities, communities, teachers, and children themselves become aware that they are the very agent that can bring lasting changes in children’s lives”

The Grant Contract was signed between His Excellency, Mr. Nobuhito Hobo, Ambassador of Japan and Mr. Katsuya Yoshida, SCJ, on 1st December 2011 at the Embassy of Japan in Colombo.

November 22, 2011

Japan Co-financed Southern Expressway Vested to the Public

Japan recognizes that an efficient road network is a basic requisite to facilitate social and economic development, because such a connectivity of communities can attract new investments, and generate more job opportunities. It is in this context that the Government of Japan provided 36.3 billion Japanese Yen (approximately Rs. 47.2 billion) towards the construction of the country’s first expressway. Japan funds were used for the construction of the 66.1 kilometers, i.e. the first section of the Southern Expressway from Kottawa to Kurundugahahetekma, while the Asian Development Bank financed the balance 29.3 kilometers of the expressway up to Galle. The new expressway will no doubt ease the traffic congestion and reduce the travel time between Colombo and Galle, and make the southern region more accessible and more attractive.

Japan, through its Official Development Assistance program, has contributed to Sri Lanka’s social and economic development for the past 60 years. Japan’s assistance has filtered through virtually every key sector of the social and economic development of Sri Lanka, and targeted poverty alleviation and meeting the basic needs of the people living in both urban and rural areas.

The Government and the people of Japan, hope that the Southern Expressway would be true gateway to prosperity and a strong link to peace and friendship between all communities.

Japan places high importance to this project, and therefore the Japanese section of the opening ceremony will be attended by Mr. Yasushi Akashi, Representative of the Government of Japan on Peace Building, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction in Sri Lanka, along with H.E. Mr. Nobuhito Hobo, Ambassador to Sri Lanka and representative from JICA.

18th November 2011

Four Ships of Japan Maritime Self Defence Force arrive at the Port of Colombo.

Sri Lanka Navy senior officials were welcomed by the Commander of the ships to a Ship Lunch onboard "URAGA" during the visit of two JMSDF ships at the Port of Colombo and Two Ships of Japan Maritime Self Defence Force (JMSDF) "URAGA MST-463", "TSUSHIMA MSO-302", which were dispatched by the Government of Japan for Naval joint exercise being held in the Persian Gulf, made a goodwill and supply visit to the Colombo harbour from 8th to 10th November 2011 and another two JMSDF ships "SAMIDARE DD-106", "UMIGIRI DD-158" dispatched for Counter Piracy Operations off the Coast of Somalia and in the Gulf of Aden, also visited the Colombo harbour from 12th to 16th November 2011.

The Commanding Officer of two JMSDF ships "SAMIDARE" and "UMIGIRI" Captain Hideyuki Ooban paid a courtesy call on the Western Naval Commander REAR ADMIRAL DAMMIKE SHIRANTHA UDAWATTE during the ship visit and exchanged the mementos with him.

The commanding officer of the two ships "SAMIDARE DD-106", "UMIGIRI DD-158" Captain Ooban visited Sri Lanka to take part in the International Maritime Security Conference, "Galle Dialogue 2011", and shared his knowledge and experience of Counter Piracy Operation with other countries. Hence it would be favorable for Sri Lanka which hosted this International Maritime Security Conference.

A JMSDF Doctor attached to "URAGA" discussing the medical equipment stored in the Navy Hospital, with a medical member attached to the Sri Lanka Navy.

The ships and their crew were ceremonially welcomed by the Sri Lanka Navy, in keeping with the naval traditions and they paid a courtesy call on the Western Naval Commander during the ship visit. A Friendship football game, Navy base visit, Ship tour and several friendship programmes between JMSDF and SLN were organized to strengthen the friendship and goodwill between the two countries.

The recent increase in ship visits by JMSDF to Sri Lanka represents further Defence relationships between Japan and Sri Lanka.

The crews of the JMSDF ships took part in a friendship Soccer match organized by the Sri Lanka Navy to strengthen the friendship and goodwill between the two countries.

16th November 2011

Japanese Assistance to Strengthen Essential Health Care Services in Northern Province

The Government of Japan allocated around Rs. 149 million from its Non-Project Grant Aid counterpart funds to “Strengthen Essential Health Care Services in Northern Province” as requested by the Government of Sri Lanka. The revival of health care services in the once conflict affected Northern areas is of utmost importance for ensuring the overall welfare of the people in these areas. The funds provided will be used for the following in order to promote the effective functioning of the health services in the Northern Province;

- (1) Construction of Regional Training Centre Jaffna- Rs. 51 million
- (2) Provision of Medical Equipment to ICU at District General Hospital Kilinochchi- Rs.25 million
- (3) Construction of Nursing Officers Quarters District General Hospital Kilinochchi- Rs.44 million
- (4) Construction of Blood Bank District General Hospital Vavuniya- Rs. 29million

The Government of Japan has been much involved in improving the health sector in Sri Lanka even during the conflict since it was concerned about the welfare and health of the people. In the Health Sector, Japan is currently assisting in improving the Central Functions of Jaffna Teaching Hospital and in preventing non-communicable diseases. Japan has also continuously provided support for demining in conflict affected areas to facilitate early resettlement of the displaced and for engaging in livelihood of returnees. In addition, Japan has assisted in a host of development initiatives including the ongoing Jaffna-Kilinchchi Transmission Line Power Project, and Digital Mapping of Northern areas. The Government and the people of Japan are looking forward to the speedy rebuilding of the Northern areas and hope that all these initiatives will enable the people to re-establish themselves, restore their livelihoods, and live healthy and normal lives thereby enjoying the dividends of peace. (END)

14th November 2011

Rakugo: Traditional Japanese Comedy for the first time in Sri Lanka

For the first time in Sri Lanka, Rakugo, the traditional Japanese stage comedy will be shown at the Sasakawa Cultural Center Auditorium on Tuesday 22nd November 2011 from 7.00 to 8.30 p.m. and will be presented in English by the Rakugo Master Utazo Katsura, a renowned Japanese comedian (Rakugo-Ka).

Rakugo is a Japanese humorous approach to fundamental human experiences. It is the art of imagination and the audience is free to imagine features and background of culture. The roots of Rakugo can be traced to the end of 17th century and Rakugo stories were intended to communicate the lighter side of what happens in the society and give people social knowledge. As it developed and became entertainment for common people, the halls (Yose) where Rakugo was performed became centers for social gathering in Japan.

Rakugo-Ka wears traditional formal Japanese costume (Kimono) and sits down on a cushion in the middle of the stage and tries to capture the audiences' imagination through facial expressions and humorous stories. The performer is usually equipped with a fan (Sensu) and hand towel (Tenugui). These items help the performer to express and act out the story. For example, the fan can be chopsticks, scissors, cigarettes, pipe,

or pen. The towel could be a book, bills, or an actual towel.

The Rakugo performance has been organized by the Embassy of Japan in collaboration with The Japan Foundation and the Japanese Graduates Alumni Association of Sri Lanka (JAGAAS). Admission to the show will be free of charge to the general public on a first come first served basis. (END)

8th November 2011

Japan Supports Rural Development in Ratnapura District

The Government of Japan has extended US\$ 85,104 (approximately Rs. 9.4 million) grant aid for a rural development project in Ratnapura district under its Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects (GGP) in order to improve the living environment and livelihood of the targeted communities in the Balangoda and Pelmadulla Divisional Secretariat (DS) divisions.

Under “the project for improving water supply facilities and access road in indigent communities in Ratnapura district,” four water supply schemes and seven agro wells will be constructed and one access road will be rehabilitated. The project will be implemented by Sabaragamuwa Community Development Foundation, and around 400 families will be benefitted directly.

Mr. Karunaratne, President of Sabaragamuwa Community Development Foundation says; “we are very grateful and thankful to the Government of Japan for giving us the financial support for this project, and we will implement the project for representing all the ethnic and religious groups such as Sinhala, Tamil and Muslims.” The project has been developed and will be implemented in cooperation with several parties including the Pelmadulla Estate, Plantation Human Development Trust, and Ms. Minako Hayashi, a Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteer (JOCV) attached to Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) working in the Pelmadulla Estate as a pre-school teacher.

As a strong development partner, Japan has been working together with the Government and the people of Sri Lanka to facilitate socioeconomic development of Sri

Lanka. Considering Japan's own history of the development, it can be said that rural development plays a leading role in the development of a whole country. This rural development project is envisaged to contribute greatly to the development in the targeted areas, and then lead to enhance national development of Sri Lanka.

The Grant Contract was signed between His Excellency Mr. Nobuhito Hobo, Ambassador of Japan and Mr. Palitha Karunarathna, President of Sabaragamuwa Community Development Foundation on November 8, 2011 at the Ambassador's Residence.

31st October 2011

Japan extended a US\$ 650,000 grant for demining in the North

The Government of Japan has extended an additional US\$ 650,000 (approximately Rs. 70 million) grant aid for humanitarian demining in the North of Sri Lanka through Delvon Assistance for Social Harmony Sri Lanka (DASH), a Sri Lankan Mine Action NGO, to expedite the efforts of the Government of Sri Lanka to achieve a mine-free Sri Lanka.

Japan has been a major donor supporting mine clearance in Sri Lanka to accelerate the return and resettlement of Internal Displaced Persons (IDPs) and to facilitate recommencement of agriculture and other livelihood activities of returnees. Since 2003, the Government of Japan has provided a sum of US\$ 22 million (approximately Rs. 2,400 million) for demining activities in the North and the East under its Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects (GGP) and has recently extended US\$780,000 (around Rs. 85 million) for humanitarian demining through Swiss Foundation for Mine Action.

Mr. Ananda Chandrasiri, Demining Programme Manager of DASH, says "the project will cover mine clearance in the land stretch between Kilinochchi and Mullaittivu and benefit more than 2,000 of recent returnees to rebuild their homes and recommence their livelihood activities on the land cleared of mines. The project will also facilitate employment opportunities to over 115 personnel including a number of female single-parents and breadwinners of the resettled families, whilst supporting the reconciliation and rehabilitation process of the area by generating additional income to residents through this project."

In addition to demining assistances, the Government of Japan has extended assistance for development in the North through projects such as improvement of central facilities of Jaffna Teaching Hospital, construction of Vavuniya-Killinochchi Transmission Line, and urgent rehabilitation of resettled communities in Jaffna and Mannar districts. Japan hopes that these assistances would holistically contribute to sustainable peace and development in Sri Lanka and promote the livelihood of the people.

The Grant Contract between His Excellency Mr. Nobuhito Hobo, newly appointed Ambassador of Japan and Mr. Ananda Chandrasiri, Demining Programme Manager, DASH, was signed on October 31, 2011 at the Ambassador's Residence in Colombo. Addressing the gathering, Mr. Hobo, who has a wide experience in the Economic Cooperation said "Japan's economic cooperation has played an active role in the development of Sri Lanka. I would like to make the most of my past experience while serving as Ambassador in Sri Lanka."

27th October 2011

**Japan Provides Assistance for Reintegration and Reconciliation
to Northern Conflict-affected Communities through IOM**

The Government of Japan has decided to extend financial contribution amounting to 122 million Japanese Yen (approximately US\$ 1.5 million) through the International Organization for Migration (IOM) for reintegration and reconciliation to Northern conflict-affected communities. The grant funds will contribute to human security and stability of Sri Lanka by catalyzing the process of reintegrating ex-combatants and conflict-associated vulnerable groups into society through community based projects and community reconciliation programs etc.

The signing of the Exchange of Notes in this regard took place today between H.E. Mr. Nobuhito Hobo, Ambassador of Japan to Sri Lanka and Mr. Richard Danziger, Chief of Mission, IOM Sri Lanka at Embassy of Japan. Ambassador of Japan H.E. Mr. Hobo said "We sincerely hope that this assistance would effectively be utilized to meet the initiatives for the social and economic reintegration".

Japan's overall assistance to the Northern Province has covered a wide range of areas to promote development and has continuously addressed humanitarian needs as

well. Japan's ongoing projects in the Northern Province include the improvement of the central functions of Jaffna Teaching Hospital, construction of Vavuniya-Kilinochchi Transmission Line, demining assistance, Development Planning in Jaffna and Mannar districts and livelihood assistance. Japan hopes that these initiatives would benefit the people in the Northern Province as well as surrounding areas, and assist them to restore their livelihoods.

The Government of Japan will continue its proactive support for the speedy recovery in the North, and the overall development of Sri Lanka in cooperation with the Government of Sri Lanka as well as the international community and NGOs.

24th October 2011

Five Sri Lankan artists honoured with BUNKA (CULTURAL) AWARDS

The 18th Bunka (Cultural) Awards ceremony organized by the Japan Sri Lanka Friendship Cultural Fund was held on Saturday 22nd October 2011 at the Sri Lanka Rupavahini Corporation Colombo 07. The Bunka Awards are presented annually by the Fund, which was established in 1993, on the initiative of the Japanese Solidarity Association and the Japanese Commerce and Industry Association in Sri Lanka, in collaboration with the Embassy of Japan. For the past seventeen years, 98 such awards have been presented to mid-career individuals and organizations on the basis of their creative activities in culture and the arts, in order to encourage and promote individual and collective talent in these fields in Sri Lanka.

This year the following five Sri Lankan artists received the prestigious Bunka (Cultural) Awards.

Dr. Sriranganathan Darshan	-	Music
Ms. Champani Devika Devaraja	-	Art & Poetry
Mrs. Tracy Holsinger	-	Theatre
Mr. Samarage Samantha Perera	-	Music
Mr. Nalaka Swarnathilake	-	Drama

Hon. T.B. Ekanayake, Minister of Culture and the Arts graced the occasion as Chief Guest, while H.E. Mr. Nobuhito Hobo, Ambassador of Japan, Mr. Akihiko Nakauchi and

Prof. Carlo Fonseka, Co-Chairpersons of the Selection Committee of the Japan Sri Lanka Friendship Cultural Fund and a distinguished gathering of invitees including several renowned Sri Lankan cultural artists were also present on this occasion.

Addressing the gathering Ambassador Hobo reiterated the excellent friendly relations which exists between Japan and Sri Lanka and said that this Fund is a symbol of goodwill on the part of Japanese residents living in this country towards the Sri Lankan people.

Apart from the performances and presentations by the award winners themselves, the highlight of the ceremony was a classical musical performance by Special Guests artists Ms. Asa Nakajima, a talented violinist from Japan, who was accompanied on piano by renowned Sri Lanka pianist Mr. Eshantha J. Peiris.

17 October 2011

**NEW JAPANESE AMBASSADOR PRESENTS HIS CREDENTIALS
TO H.E. THE PRESIDENT**

His Excellency Mr Nobuhito HOBO, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Japan to the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka arrived in Sri Lanka on 16th October 2011. Ambassador HOBO succeeds Ambassador Kunio Takahashi who left Sri Lanka on 9th October. Ambassador HOBO presented his credentials to His Excellency President Mahinda Rajapaksa, on 17th October 2011.

Ambassador HOBO is the twenty-first Japanese Ambassador in Sri Lanka since diplomatic relations was established between the two countries in 1952.

Born on 9th August 1950, he graduated from the Faculty of Agriculture, Hokkaido University in 1975 and joined the Forestry Agency of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries. In 1983, he joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and served as an officer in the Technical Cooperation Division of the Economic Cooperation Bureau. In 1993, he was appointed as Senior Coordinator, Press Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Thereafter, he assumed duties as First Secretary, Embassy of Japan in Indonesia and in 1994, was promoted to the rank of Counsellor at the same Embassy. Since 1996, he served as Director, Multilateral Cooperation Division, Technical

Cooperation Division, and Aid Policy Division, respectively of the Economic Cooperation Bureau and Director, Information and Communications Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In 2001, he assumed duties as Deputy Assistant Vice Minister (Parliamentary Affairs) and in 2003 was appointed as Director General, Policy Coordination Department of Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). In 2007, he was appointed as Consul-General of Japan at Sydney, Australia and in 2010, he assumed duties as Vice-President of Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).

Equipped with a wide experience in the Economic Cooperation Bureau and JICA behind him, Ambassador Hobo is hopeful that he would be able to contribute positively towards further promoting bilateral relations between the two countries.

September 30, 2011

Japan extended a US\$ 780,000 grant for demining in the North

The Government of Japan has extended US\$ 780,000 (approximately Rs. 85 million) grant aid for humanitarian demining in the North of Sri Lanka through Swiss Foundation for Mine Action (FSD) to expedite the efforts of the Government of Sri Lanka to achieve a mine-free Sri Lanka.

Japan has been a major donor supporting mine clearance in Sri Lanka to accelerate the return and resettlement of Internal Displaced Persons (IDPs) and to facilitate recommencement of agriculture and other livelihood activities of returnees. Since 2003, the Government of Japan has provided a sum of US\$ 21.5 million (approximately Rs. 2,300 million) for demining activities in the North and the East under its Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects (GGP).

Through this demining project, it is envisaged that more than 5,000 people in Vavuniya and Mannar Districts would gain access to safe lands and resume their livelihood activities. The project will also simultaneously contribute to providing employment opportunities to more than 100 residents in the area. The Grant Contract between His Excellency Mr. Kunio Takahashi, Ambassador of Japan and Mr. Nigel Robinson, Country Programme Manager, FSD, was signed on September 30, 2011 at the Embassy of Japan in Colombo.

In addition to demining assistances, the Government of Japan has extended assistance for development in the North for projects, such as improvement of central facilities of Jaffna Teaching Hospital, construction of Vavuniya-Killinochchi Transmission Line, and urgent rehabilitation of resettled communities in Jaffna and Mannar districts. Japan hopes that these assistances would holistically contribute to sustainable peace and development in Sri Lanka and promote the livelihood of the people.

At the signing ceremony, H.E. Mr. Kunio said, “looking back over my service in Sri Lanka in the last two and half years, I could say there has been tremendous improvement in terms of security and development of Sri Lanka. However, I believe that the efforts of the Government and the people of Sri Lanka toward reconciliation and reconstruction should be continued. The Government of Japan will maintain a mutual supportive relationship with Sri Lanka.”

September 29, 2011

Japan Provides Rs. 9.3 billion to Rehabilitate Flood Affected Areas

The Government of Japan has provided concessional loan funds amounting to Japanese Yen 7 billion (approximately Rs. 9.3 billion) towards the “Emergency Natural Disasters Rehabilitation Project”. The funds will be used for rehabilitating infrastructure damaged by the floods in Central, North Central and Eastern Provinces of Sri Lanka.

The heavy rains during the first half of this year caused massive floods in many parts of Sri Lanka, and seriously damaged basic infrastructure such as roads, irrigation systems and livelihoods of the people living in these areas. Rehabilitating the damaged infrastructure is pre-requisite for restoring social and economic services and the livelihoods of the people in the affected areas. The Government of Japan will continue to make appropriate and active contribution to the international community in humanitarian assistance in spite of the recent serious domestic natural disaster, the Great East Japan Earthquake.

H.E. Mr. Kunio Takahashi, Ambassador of Japan said “I recall with gratitude the support from the government and people of Sri Lanka to East Japan Great Earthquake. Japan is well aware of how natural disasters impact the lives of people, and understands the need to rebuild these areas better than before targeting the most

vulnerable. We hope that the funds provided by Japan will be used very effectively and also that relevant authorities would take measures to maintain the infrastructure for the people of Sri Lanka in the long-term”.

The signing of the Exchange of Notes in this regard took place today, September 29, 2011 between H.E. Mr. Kunio Takahashi, Ambassador of Japan in Sri Lanka and Dr. P.B. Jayasundera, Secretary, Ministry of Finance and Planning. The signing of the Loan Agreement also took place between Mr. Akira Shimura, Chief Representative of JICA, Sri Lanka office (implementing agency) and Dr. P.B. Jayasundera.

13th September 2011

**Japan assists Construction of Manmunai Bridge across
Batticaloa Lagoon**

The Government of Japan provided grant assistance amounting to Japanese Yen 1,206 million (approximately Rs. 1,600 million) for the Construction of the Manmunai Bridge across the Batticaloa lagoon, aimed at expediting the ongoing development initiatives in the Eastern Province and thereby improving the social and economic conditions of the people living in these areas. The project will be implemented through JICA.

The tsunami in 2004 caused widespread damage to the Batticaloa district. Subsequently, the eastern part of the lagoon was reconstructed with donor assistance including Japan. However, the western part of the lagoon remained inaccessible during the conflict and as a result no development could be launched in these areas for the benefit of the people. The main transport mode across the lagoon is small ferries, which are not available during heavy rains and flooding. The Manmunai Bridge across the lagoon will connect the western part with the eastern part, and thereby improve accessibility to health and education services, trade and commerce and open up new livelihood opportunities for the people. The Eastern Province has vast potential for development with its abundance of natural resources including fisheries and the thriving agriculture. The Manmunai Bridge is expected to bring new hope and prosperity to the people in the Eastern province.

The signing of the Exchange of Notes in this regard took place today between H.E. Mr. Kunio Takahashi, Ambassador of Japan to Sri Lanka and Dr. P.B. Jayasundera, Secretary, Ministry of Finance and Planning at the Ministry of Finance and Planning. The signing of the Grant Agreement also took place between Mr. Akira Shimura, Chief Representative of JICA, Sri Lanka office and Dr. P.B. Jayasundera.

7th September 2011

JAPANESE EDUCATION SEMINAR 2011 - Gateway to study in Japan

A Japanese Education Seminar organized by the Embassy of Japan together with the Japanese Graduates Alumni Association of Sri Lanka (JAGAAS), and the Japan International Cooperation Centre (JICE) will be held on Saturday 10th September 2011 at the Sri Lanka Foundation Institute Auditorium at Independence Square Colombo 7 from 10.00 am to 4:00 p.m.. Admission to the Seminar is free of charge.

A total of seven reputed national as well as private universities in Japan will participate in this seminar. They are the Asia Pacific University (APU), Ritsumeikan University, Sophia University, University of Kyoto, University of Tohoku, University of Tsukuba and University of Yamaguchi. Representatives of these universities will be professors and administrative staff who are in charge of international study programs and will provide detailed information to visitors about their prospectus, the special features and characteristics of their respective universities. Students and visitors will be provided with guidance on admission procedures, study courses, support systems and general student life in Japan. A special booth will be assigned to provide general information such as administrative procedures on entering Japanese universities. These universities provide high quality undergraduate and post graduate programs in English for international students and have international scholarships programs.

The Embassy of Japan will also provide information about the Monbukagakusho Scholarships awarded by the Government of Japan while members of JAGAAS will also assist visitors in obtaining first hand information about studying in Japan based upon their own experiences. Multimedia presentations depicting studying in Japan will also be screened at the seminar. This seminar is a rare occasion for students interested in obtaining a first class university education that will become a launching pad for a bright future career.

23rd August 2011

Japanese Foreign Minister's Commendations 2011

-Two Commendations to Sri Lanka

On 28th July this year, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan announced the list of recipients for the Foreign Minister's Commendation for the fiscal year 2011. The Foreign Minister's Commendations are awarded to individuals and groups for their outstanding achievements in international fields, to acknowledge their contribution to the promotion of friendship between Japan and other countries.

Two individuals and one group have been awarded this commendation in Sri Lanka. Shihan Mr. Tadashi Komenoi, a Japanese national who was the founder of Sri Lanka Aikido Association, was awarded this commendation for his outstanding contribution in promoting Aikido in Sri Lanka. (Aikido is a Japanese art of self-defense.) Mr. Komenoi who returned to Japan in March this year after residing in Sri Lanka as a businessman for many years, received his commendation on 28th July 2011 at a special ceremony held in Tokyo. The second individual recipient of the Foreign Minister's Commendation is Mr. Sylvester Merrick Gooneratne, for his outstanding contribution to the promotion of mutual understanding between Japan and Sri Lanka. The Shi-En Ikebana and Floral Society of Sri Lanka has been awarded this commendation in the group category in recognition of their outstanding contribution to the promotion of Japanese culture in Sri Lanka.

Mr. Merrick Gooneratne, an old boy of Maris Stella College, Negombo and a graduate from the Peradeniya University was a Research Scholar who lived and studied in Japan under the Monbukagakusho scholarship scheme and earned his Post Graduate Research Certificate in International Economics from the Kyoto University, Japan. He also completed Module I of the Masters Degree Program in Japanese Studies at the University of Colombo and is fluent in Japanese language conversation. Having served in the Sri Lanka Administrative Service, he was appointed as Commissioner, Sri Lanka Tea Board in Tokyo, Japan. Since his postgraduate studies in Japan, he had joined the Japanese Graduates Alumni Association of Sri Lanka (JAGAAS) and is now the President of that association. He was also the Secretary General of Lanka Japan Friendship Society and as a member of both these associations, he has actively promoted the friendly relations between Japan and Sri Lanka in various ways.

Furthermore, he has forged trade ties with Japan and is presently the Executive Director, Tos Lanka Co. (Pvt.) Ltd. – a fully Japanese owned BOI Enterprise in Hi Tech Electronics.

The Shi-En Ikebana and Floral Art Society of Sri Lanka was established in 1991 and has been holding annual floral exhibitions and demonstrations with the participation of renowned international Ikebana experts, and promoted the art of Ikebana in Sri Lanka for many years. They have also extended their fullest support to the Japanese Embassy at the annual Japanese cultural exhibitions by displaying their beautiful exhibits and offering the services of their members as resource persons for the demonstrations. They have also been instrumental in establishing the Ikebana International Sri Lanka Chapter, thereby becoming full-fledged members of the Ikebana International, Tokyo.

His Excellency Mr. Kunio Takahashi, Ambassador of Japan, formally awarded these certificates of commendation to Mr. Gooneratne and the Shi-En Ikebana and Floral Art Society of Sri Lanka on behalf of the Foreign Minister of Japan at a special ceremony held at the Ambassador's residence in Colombo yesterday.

23rd August 2011

Japanese “Yosakoi Dance” in Peradeniya and Colombo

The Embassy of Japan in collaboration with the University of Peradeniya will present a Japanese “Yosakoi Dance”, on Thursday 25th August 2011 at the E.O.E. Pereira Theatre, University of Peradeniya, (Faculty of Engineering) at 6.00 p.m. followed by another performance in Colombo on Saturday 27th August 2011 at the New Town Hall auditorium, (next to Mahaweli Centre) at 6.00 p.m.

The “Yosakoi Dance” will feature “Hokuto-gumi”, which is an elite unit of Team Yamabiko, a Yosakoi dancing team which mainly performs at Kobe, Japan. ‘Yosakoi’ (which means “Come at night”) is a unique style of dance which originated in Japan in the city of Kōchi in 1954, as a modern rendition of Awa Odori, a traditional summer dance. The style of dance is highly energetic, combining traditional Japanese dance movements to modern music.

The Japanese dance performances are part of the cultural events marked for the Japanese Cultural Month in August, which has been organized with a view to further enhancing the friendly relations between the peoples of Japan and Sri Lanka. Admission to both these performances will be free of charge to the general public on a first come first served basis.

August 17, 2011

**Japan extended Rs. 7.3 million for two rural development projects
in Monaragala and Hambantota Districts**

The government of Japan has provided a sum of US\$ 68,072 (approximately Rs. 7.3 million) grant aid for two rural development projects in the Monaragala and Hambantota districts under its Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Project (GGP).

The first project, “the Project for Constructing Tube Wells at the Arid Zone in Buttala, Monaragala District,” will help to construct five tube wells in Unawatuna, Buttala Divisional Secretary division in the Monaragala district. Approximately Rs. 2.3 million is allocated to the project through Dimuthu Community Development. This project will support to improve living condition and livelihood of the targeted communities and benefit 25 families directly and 400 families indirectly.

The second project, “the Project for Constructing of Pre-schools at Tsunami and Poverty Affected Communities in Hambantota District,” will support to construct five pre-schools in Ambalantota and Tangalle Divisional Secretary divisions in Hambantota district. Around Rs. 5million is allocated to the project through Wanasarana Thurulatha Swechcha Society, and it is expected that the project will contribute to improving the educational standards and socio-economic development of 160 children and families by providing better educational environment in the area.

As a strong development partner, Japan has been working together with the government of Sri Lanka to facilitate socioeconomic development of Sri Lanka, ranging from infrastructural development at the national level to rural development at the grass-roots level. Considering Japan’s own history of development, it is evident that

rural and human resource developments play a leading role in the development of a whole country. It is envisaged that the two projects would contribute greatly to rural and human resource development, and thereby enhance national development of Sri Lanka.

The Grant Contracts between His Excellency Mr. Kunio Takahashi, Ambassador of Japan and the representatives of Dimuthu Community Development and Wanasarana Thurulatha Swechcha Society were signed on August 17, 2011 at the Embassy of Japan in Colombo.

August 12, 2011

Japan Awards MA Scholarships to 15 Public Service Officers

Fifteen recipients of the scholarship and other officials with H.E. Mr. Kunio Takahashi, Ambassador of Japan

The Government of Japan under its Human Resource Development Scholarship scheme has provided an opportunity for fifteen promising Sri Lankan young public service officers to pursue a two year Masters Degree course in Japan enabling them to contribute to the development efforts of Sri Lanka after completion of the study programme.

A farewell reception was held for the 15 scholars with the participation of H.E. Mr. Kunio Takahashi, Ambassador of Japan. The immediate supervisors of the scholars and other related officials who were engaged in the selection process also attended the reception.

The Government of Japan gives much emphasis to human resource development and technical cooperation through “people” and provides various study and training opportunities for Sri Lankans. The scholars will pursue their studies at the International University of Japan, the International Christian University and Hiroshima University, and are expected to play leading roles in the public sector of Sri Lanka in the future.

August 5th 2011

**Japan provides further humanitarian assistance to IDPs and returnees
in Sri Lanka through UNHCR**

His Excellency Mr. Kunio Takahashi, Ambassador of Japan in Sri Lanka handing over the official communication to His Excellency Mr. Michael Zwack, UNHCR Representative in Sri Lanka. Mr. Shinsuke Okawa, Second Secretary, Embassy of Japan (on left) and Ms. S. Wimaladarma, Executive Assistant of UNHCR (on right) were also present on this occasion.

The Government of Japan recently decided to extend a financial contribution of 100 million Japanese Yen (approximately 1.26 million US dollars) through the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) for humanitarian assistance to internally displaced persons (IDPs) and IDP returnees in Sri Lanka. This grant will be utilized for various activities of UNHCR such as shelter cash grant for returnees.

Japan's overall assistance to the Northern Province has covered a wide range of areas to promote development and continuously addressed humanitarian needs as well. Japan's ongoing projects in the Northern Province include the improvement of the central functions of Jaffna Teaching Hospital, construction of Vavuniya-Kilinochchi Transmission Line, demining assistance, Development Planning in Jaffna and Mannar districts and livelihood assistances. Japan hopes that these initiatives would benefit the people in the Northern Province as well as surrounding areas and assist them to reconstruct their livelihoods.

The Embassy of Japan will continue its proactive support for the recovery in the North and East and development of Sri Lanka in cooperation with the Government of Sri Lanka as well as the international community and NGOs.

26th July 2011

Japanese Cultural Month

The Embassy of Japan is pleased to announce the launch of the “Japanese Cultural Month” during the month of August 2011, featuring several cultural events in Colombo and Kandy, with a view to disseminating information on Japanese culture and lifestyle as well as its popular performing arts and aesthetics, and thereby to further enhance the friendly relations between the peoples of Japan and Sri Lanka.

The film festival will feature seven contemporary films including two animated movies namely, ‘Glass Rabbit’ and ‘Chibi Maruko-chan’, a Comedy movie entitled ‘Nabbi’s Love’; a story based on an old woman’s incubated passionate love, ‘A Stranger of Mine’, ‘Hotel Hibiscus’ and ‘Shangri-la’ which are full of excitement, adventure and entertainment.

The Cultural Exhibition will feature Ikebana, Bonsai, Origami and Calligraphy together with demonstrations of these typically Japanese arts.

The “Yosakoi Dance” will feature “Hokuto-gumi”, which is an elite unit of Team Yamabiko, a Yosakoi dancing team which mainly performs at Kobe. ‘Yosakoi’ (which means “Come at night”) is a unique style of dance which originated in Japan in the city of Kōchi in 1954, as a modern rendition of Awa Odori, a traditional summer dance. The style of dance is highly energetic, combining traditional Japanese dance movements to modern music.

Admission to Japanese Cultural Month events are free of charge to the public and will be on first come first served basis.

22nd July 2011

**Government of Japan confers prestigious decoration
on Isfahani Sameen**

On 18th June this year, the Government of Japan announced the conferment of “The Order of the Rising Sun, Gold Rays with Rosette” upon Mr. Isfahani Sameen, Former World President of the Junior Chamber International and Former Provincial Councillor of the Western Provincial Council, in recognition of his invaluable contributions in promoting bilateral relations between Japan and Sri Lanka as well as international relations between Japan and other countries.

The conferment ceremony took place on Friday 22nd July 2011 at the residence of the Japanese Ambassador at Colombo 7, amidst a distinguished gathering of his family, friends, special invitees and the media. On behalf of His Majesty the Emperor, H.E. Mr. Kunio Takahashi, Ambassador of Japan to Sri Lanka presided over at the conferment ceremony and presented the prestigious decoration to Mr. Sameen.

A congratulatory message was sent by Mr. Takeaki Matsumoto, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, on 18th June upon the announcement stating: "Please accept my sincerest congratulations on the conferment of 'The Order of the Rising Sun, Gold Rays with Rosette', in recognition of your outstanding contribution, and my best wishes for your continued good health and happiness".

Mr. Isfahani Sameen was an old boy of St. Aloysius College Galle and Carey College Colombo. He was an active member of the Jaycees in Sri Lanka and the founder member of the Wellawatte Jaycees in 1973. He was unanimously elected as the 44th World President of Junior Chamber International for the year 1989. As World President of Junior Chamber International, Mr. Sameen contributed significantly to promote international relations between Japan and other countries including Sri Lanka.

As President of the Wellawatte Jaycees Mr. Sameen was successful in signing a Sister Chapter Affiliation agreement with the Kitakyushu Jaycees of Japan and since then has been engaged in numerous activities to promote bilateral relations between Japan and Sri Lanka. Among some of his greatest achievements are the mega project of the “Gifting of two Baby Elephants from the Government of Sri Lanka to the Mayor of

Kitakyushu City”. Being conversant in the Japanese language Mr. Sameen served as project chairman of the Sri Lanka Trade Fair in Kitakyushu City in 1977, which also won the World Award at the Jaycees International World Congress. Mr. Sameen was also the Leader of the Organization when the Asian Pacific Conference was held in Yokohama City in 1989, which attracted a record 16,650 delegate participation from 52 countries and regions at which His Imperial Highness the Crown Prince of Japan was the Chief Guest at the opening ceremony. Since 2005, he has also played the roles of coordinator and Host Family to many Japanese children visiting Sri Lanka under the Asian Pacific Children’s Convention. In the aftermath of the tsunami in Sri Lanka in 2004 Mr. Sameen was instrumental in spearheading numerous post-tsunami rehabilitation projects as well as securing numerous other donations to help various educational as well as welfare projects in Sri Lanka between 1977 and 2010. These were some of his major contributions among many others. (END)

29 June 2011

**Japan Provided Human Resource Development Scholarships
to Young Sri Lankan Public Officials**

The Government of Japan has provided opportunities for young public officers with high potential to pursue a two-year Masters Degree in Japan with a view to contributing to the development efforts of Sri Lanka under its Human Resource Development Scholarship scheme. A sum of 208 million Japanese Yen (approximately Rs. 280 million) was provided to cover the expenses for the 1st and 2nd batches of 30 scholars.

This scholarship scheme was initiated in 2010 in Sri Lanka and this year 15 officials were awarded the scholarship. They have been selected from four Ministries, namely, Ministries of Finance and Planning, Public Administration and Home Affairs, Economic Development and Provincial Councils and Local Government to pursue their Masters Degree programs in public policy, public administration, regional development and poverty alleviation, and macro and development economics at the International University of Japan, International Christian University and Hiroshima University. Upon completion of the study program, the officers are expected to contribute towards the preparation of comprehensive development and poverty reduction plans as well as public policy for Sri Lanka utilizing their practical knowledge and skills gained in Japan.

The Government of Japan gives much emphasis to human resource development and technical cooperation through “people” and provides various study and training opportunities for Sri Lankan people. So far over 11,000 Sri Lankan trainees have completed short and long-term training in Japan and in third countries through Japan’s assistance. In addition, Japan is presently conducting training programs on community development for frontline officers in the Northern and Eastern Provinces.

The signing of the Exchange of Notes for the Human Resource Development Scholarship scheme took place on 29 June at the Ministry of Finance and Planning between H.E. Mr. Kunio Takahashi, Ambassador of Japan on behalf of the Government of Japan and Dr. P.B. Jayasundera, Secretary, Ministry of Finance and Planning on behalf of the Government of Sri Lanka. In addition, the signing of the Grant Agreements took place between Mr. Akira Shimura, Chief Representative of JICA Sri Lanka Office and Dr. P.B. Jayasundera,

20th June 2011

**Government of Japan confers prestigious decoration
on Mr. Isfahani Sameen**

On 17th June this year, the Government of Japan decided the conferment of “The Order of the Rising Sun, Gold Rays with Rosette” upon Mr. Isfahani Sameen, Former World President of Junior Chamber International and Former Provincial Councillor of the Western Provincial Council, in recognition of his invaluable contributions in promoting bilateral relations between Japan and Sri Lanka as well as international relations between Japan and other countries.

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The conferment ceremony of this prestigious decoration will be held at Colombo in due course.

18th April 2011

**JAPANESE GOVERNMENT SCHOLARSHIP 2012
(MONBUKAGAKUSHO – MEXT)**

The Government of Japan will award scholarships to Sri Lankan Students under the Monbukagakusho (MEXT) Scholarship scheme 2012, in the categories of Postgraduate Research, Undergraduate and College of Technology. The closing date for applications to the Ministry of Higher Education is on 6 May 2011. Selection of candidates will be done

through an examination conducted jointly by the Japanese Embassy and the Ministry of Higher Education.

Prospective candidates are kindly requested to forward their applications to the Ministry of Higher Education, No. 18, Ward Place, Colombo 07, according to the specimen application format published by the Ministry. Application forms downloaded directly from the website of the Government of Japan will not be accepted for the preliminary processing. Undergraduate and College of Technology applicants should apply for ONE SCHEME ONLY (Either Undergraduate or College of Technology).

Further information regarding this scholarship could be obtained on <http://www.mohe.gov.lk>

For Past Papers of the qualifying examination
<http://www.studyjapan.go.jp/en/toj/toj0308e.html>

17th March 2011

Condolence Book opened at Embassy of Japan in Colombo

In the aftermath of the most devastating natural disasters, namely, the Tohoku-Pacific Ocean Earthquake, which occurred in Japan on Friday 11th March 2011, resulting in tremendous loss of life, destruction of property and affecting thousands of Japanese and other nationals, the Embassy of Japan in Colombo will open a condolence book for the public.

The condolence book will be open at the Embassy of Japan, No.20, Gregory's Road, Colombo 7, on (Friday) March 18, and from (Monday) 21st to (Wednesday) 23rd March 2011, from 09:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and from 1.30 p.m. to 4.30 p.m. each day.

The Embassy sincerely appreciates the goodwill of the public during this calamity but notes that it is unable to accept donations in terms of goods towards the cause. Financial donations towards the earthquake and tsunami affected people in Japan can be channeled through the Sri Lankan Red Cross Society or the Japan Red Cross Society to the bank accounts in the attachment below. (End)

14th March, 2011

Agreement for Air Services between Japan and Sri Lanka Amended

Mr. K.V.P. Ranjith de Silva, Secretary, Ministry of Civil Aviation
with H.E. Kunio Takahashi, Ambassador of Japan

The Government of Japan and the Government of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka have agreed to amend the schedule attached to the Agreement between the Government of Japan and the Government of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka for Air Services. The Exchange of Notes to this effect were signed today between H.E. Mr. Kunio Takahashi, Ambassador of Japan and Mr. K. V. P. Ranjith de Silva, Secretary, Ministry of Civil Aviation at the Embassy of Japan.

With this amendment, flight routes operated by designated airlines of Japan and Sri Lanka will be liberated in principle, at the specified locations in Japan, Sri Lanka, intermediate points and points beyond. Ambassador Takahashi said “I believe this amendment is expected to open up an opportunity for operating new flights and thereby strengthening links between the two countries in various fields.”

10th March 2011

**Japan extended Rs. 18 million for two livelihood projects
in Trincomalee and Ratnapura Districts**

The Government of Japan provided a sum of US\$162,611 (approximately Rs.18 million) for two livelihood projects in the Trincomalee and Ratnapura districts under the Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Project (GGP).

“The Project for Conflict Affected Community Uplift in the Trincomalee District” will be implemented by the Association of Social Activities Development Sri Lanka (ASAD). This project, to which US\$89,995 (approximately Rs. 10 million) is allocated, will support agricultural and fishery activities of the resettled communities in Seruwila Divisional Secretary division in the Trincomalee district by rehabilitating a tank and fishery centre, constructing 4 agro wells, and providing agricultural and fishery equipments as well as agricultural seeds and plants. This project will benefit 1,520 families directly and 3,500 families indirectly in the communities and the surrounding areas.

“The Project for Improvement of Hygiene and Living Environment at the Plantation Sector Communities,” will be implemented by Community Development Foundation (CDF) on a budget of US\$ 72,616 (approximately Rs.8 million). This project will help to improve the living environment and standard of hygiene and sanitation of three estates and two schools in the Ratnapura district by providing water supply systems and awareness programmes. These activities are expected to benefit 485 families and 1,500 students and teachers.

The Government of Japan has been focusing its assistance to Sri Lanka on (1) the consolidation of peace and reconstruction and (2) the medium and long-term development, and assisting a number of projects in the fields of the reconstruction in the North and East, agriculture and fisheries development, and rural development. The projects range from large-scale projects such as Upper Kotmale project and Improvement of Jaffna Teaching Hospital to grass-roots projects supported through GGP. The GGP projects have advantages of providing quick and direct impact to the needs of grass-roots communities, and US\$1.7 million (approximately Rs.190 million) was granted for 10 projects including 2 projects signed this time in the Japanese fiscal year 2010 (April, 2010 – March, 2011). These GGP projects are expected to promote social and economic developments as well as to enhance peace and reconciliation from the grass-roots level, which would contribute to the development and consolidation of peace throughout Sri Lanka.

The Grant Contracts between His Excellency Mr. Kunio Takahashi, Ambassador of Japan, and the representatives of ASAD and CDF were signed on March 10, 2011 at the Ambassador’s Residence in Colombo.

3 March, 2011

**Japan Provides Rs.61.2 million for Improving Livelihood of
the Resettled Communities in Trincomalee District**

Mr. Kaoru Shimazaki, Chargé d'Affaires a.i., and Ms. Yukari Nishino,
Head of Sri Lanka Office of Peace Winds Japan at the signing ceremony

The Government of Japan has extended US\$551,547 (approximately Rs.61.2 million) for a livelihood project to be implemented by Peace Winds Japan (PWJ), a Japanese NGO, under its Japan-NGO Cooperation Grant scheme.

The project aims at improving livelihoods of the resettled communities in Gomarankadawela, Muttur, and Eachchilampattai Divisional Secretary divisions in the Trincomalee district, and helps to (1) rehabilitate six irrigation systems, (2) provide trainings to agricultural and dairy farmers, and (3) improve a public milk factory. This project is expected to benefit 1,047 families directly in the district.

PWJ has been implementing a number of emergency and livelihood projects in the North and East through Japan Platform (JPF). A total of seven Japanese NGOs, namely, PWJ, Association for Aid and Relief, Japan, Japan Agency for Development and Emergency (JADE), JEN, PARC Inter-Peoples Cooperation (PARCIC), Save the Children Japan, and World Vision Japan have been providing support to the people affected by conflict and floods in Sri Lanka assisted by the Government of Japan. These assistances from Japan show the strong relationship between our two countries not only at the governmental level but also at the grass-roots level.

The Grant Contract was signed between Mr. Kaoru Shimazaki, Chargé d'Affaires a.i., and Ms. Yukari Nishino, Head of Sri Lanka Office of PWJ, on 3 March 2011 at the Embassy of Japan in Colombo.

25 February, 2011

Japan Provides Additional Assistance for Flood Affected People

The Government of Japan has decided to provide additional emergency grant amounting to US\$ 1.2 million (around SL Rs.132 million) to Sri Lanka through

international organizations including WFP, UNICEF and IFRC/SLRC for flood affected people. Accordingly WFP will receive US\$ 700,000 (around SL Rs.77 million) for supporting relief and early recovery, UNICEF will receive US\$ 300,000 (around SL Rs.33 million) for providing safe water and hygiene kits, while IFRC/SLRC will receive US\$ 200,000 (around SL Rs.22 million) for providing tents for those displaced.

Ambassador of Japan, H.E. Mr. Kunio Takahashi, said that “I am very impressed that the Government of Sri Lanka has made great efforts for implementing humanitarian and reconstruction activities for the benefit of the flood affected people. I hope the assistance from Japan would further contribute towards improving the humanitarian situation in the affected areas”.

In response to the urgent needs of the flood victims, the Government of Japan has already provided 230 tents and 1,500 sleeping pads amounting to US\$ 240,000 (around SL Rs.27 million) on January 14. Besides, the Government of Japan provided US\$ 570,000 (around SL Rs.63 million) to five Japanese NGOs affiliated to the Japan Platform for provision of food and non-food items, support for cleaning of contaminated wells and reconstruction of education facilities, on February 2.

In total, the Government of Japan has provided approximately US\$ 2 million (around SL Rs.220 million) as humanitarian assistance for flood affected people during January and February 2011. The Government of Japan sincerely hopes that the assistance provided will be used effectively for the welfare of those affected and that the areas will return to normalcy as soon as possible.

February 18, 2011

**Japan extended Rs. 27.2 million for three livelihood projects
in the Monaragala, Ampara, and Matara districts**

The government of Japan has provided a sum of US\$241,768 (approximately Rs. 27.2million) grant aid for three projects to improve livelihoods of the communities in the Monaragala, Ampara, and Matara districts under its Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Project (GGP).

The first project, “the Project for Uplifting Living Standards of Communities in the Monaragala District,” will be implemented by Lower Uva Development Centre. Approximately Rs. 12 million is allocated to improve 4 access roads, 3 culverts and 1 anicut, and to construct 4 wells, 1 causeway, and 1 water supply system in Bible, Medagama, and Siyabalanduwa Divisional Secretary divisions in the Monaragala district. This project will uplift the living standards of 620 families directly and benefit 2,830 families in the surrounding areas indirectly.

The second project, “the Project for Livelihood Development Assistance in the Conflict Affected Area in the Ampara District,” will be implemented by Eastern Rehabilitation and Relief Organization on a budget of around Rs. 9.6 million. This project will support to improve agricultural infrastructure of 3 agricultural roads, 3 culverts, 2 anicuts, 1 bund, and 1 channel in Sammanturai Divisional Secretary division in the Ampara district. It is expected that the project will increase agricultural production and uplift livelihoods of 800 farmers directly.

The third project is “the Project for Economic Empowerment of Women through Increased Production of Dry Fish in Weligama Divisional Secretary Division in the Matara District” being implemented by Soba Kantha Environment Management and Community Development Foundation. Approximately Rs.5.6 million is allocated to provide 20 ovens, necessary equipments and trainings to the women’s communities in Walliwala East Grama Niladari Division in Weligama Divisional Secretary Division in order to assist in improving livelihoods of 150 families through increasing the production of dry fish. This is the second dry fish project implemented by Soba Kantha, following the successful implementation of a similar project in 2010.

Japan focuses its assistance to Sri Lanka on (1) the consolidation of peace and reconstruction and (2) the medium and long-term development, and has assisted the programs such as reconstruction in the North and East, agriculture and fisheries development, and rural development. In this context, the government of Japan has decided to assist these three projects, which are expected to promote Sri Lanka’s social and economic development as well as to enhance peace and reconciliation at the grassroots level. The Grant Contracts between His Excellency Mr. Kunio Takahashi, Ambassador of Japan and the representatives of these organizations were signed on February 18, 2011 at the Embassy of Japan in Colombo.

10th February 2011

Japan Provides Cultural Grant Aid to Sri Lanka Rupavahini Corporation

The Government of Japan has decided to provide 41.7 million Japanese Yen (approximately Rs. 54 million) towards the “Project for the Improvement of TV Production Equipment of Sri Lanka Rupavahini Corporation” under its Cultural Grant Aid Scheme.

The funds provided through this grant would be utilized to purchase and install ultra-modern equipment for the establishment of a new 2D and 3D animation production studio at Sri Lanka Rupavahini Corporation (SLRC). The establishment of this animation studio will enable SLRC to produce 2D and 3D animation movies for children, and utilize the popular 3D movie medium to disseminate information related to national development, enhance educational programmes, promote good social habits and values among the children, and promote national harmony. The project will be implemented through the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).

The Sri Lanka Rupavahini Corporation is the government owned national television broadcasting station in Sri Lanka managed by the Ministry of Mass Media and Information and was established in 1982 with funds provided by the Government of Japan under its Grant Aid Scheme. Further grant assistance was provided by Japan to SLRC in 1985 for its expansion (fully equipped new studio) and in 1997 for its rehabilitation (equipment replacement).

Japan has been providing Cultural Grant Aid to Sri Lanka since 1979 and a total sum of 979.7 million yen (approximately Rs 1.3 billion) has been granted up to 2009 under this scheme towards various projects, such as the provision of a Language Laboratory System at the Kelaniya University (1990/91), Astronomical Observatory to the Sri Lanka Planetarium (1993), Educational Program Software to Sri Lanka Rupavahini Corporation - SLRC (1994/95), Film Preservation Equipment to the Government Film Unit (1995/96), Audio Visual Equipment to the Sri Lanka Planetarium (1996/97), Microfilm Equipment to the National Museum Library (1997/98), Musical Instruments to the Aesthetic Training College (1998/99), Audio and Lighting Equipment to the John de Silva Memorial Theatre (1999/00), Sound and Lighting Equipment to the Tower Hall

Theatre (2001/02) and Improvement of display equipment to the new Sigiriya Museum (2009).

The signing of Exchange of Notes for the provision of this grant to Sri Lanka Rupavahini Corporation was held on 10th February 2011 at the Ministry of Finance and Planning in Colombo between H.E. Mr. Kunio Takahashi, Ambassador of Japan and Dr. P.B. Jayasundera, Secretary, Ministry of Finance and Planning in the presence of Mr. Rohana Perera, Deputy Director General, Sri Lanka Rupavahini Corporation, Mr. Athula Ransirilal, Director Film and Dubbing Unit, SLRC and Mr. Kiyohiko Hamada, First Secretary, Cultural Affairs and Information. A Grant Agreement was also signed between Mr. Akira Shimura, Chief Representative of JICA and Dr. P.B. Jayasundera for the implementation of the project.

3rd February 2011

Japanese NGOs Assist Restoration of Flood Victims

Five Japanese NGOs affiliated to the Japan Platform (JPF), namely, Association for Aid and Relief Japan, Peace Winds Japan, PARC Interpeople's Cooperation, Save the Children Japan and World Vision Japan is providing relief assistance worth 47.2 million Japanese Yen (over SL Rs. 62 million) to flood victims with funding from the Government of Japan.

The assistance includes provision of food and non-food items, support for cleaning of contaminated wells and reconstruction of education facilities in flood affected areas. This assistance is aimed at facilitating the early resettlement of those displaced and ensuring normalcy in the affected areas. This is an additional support from the people of Japan to the flood victims. On January 14, 2011 the Government of Japan provided 230 tents and 1,500 sleeping pads amounting to SL Rs. 26.7 million to meet the urgent needs of those displaced by the floods.

21st January 2011

Commencement of the Project for Improving Jaffna Teaching Hospital

On January 21, 2011, H.E. Mr. Kunio Takahashi, Ambassador of Japan together with Hon. Maithripala Sirisena, Minister of Health participated at the official commencement of the Project for the “Improvement of Central Functions of the Jaffna Teaching Hospital” in Jaffna. This project supports to construct a three story building with all facilities and equipment, worth up to Rs. 2,877 million (2,298 million JPY), and contribute towards enhancing the health of the people in the Northern and surrounding regions.

Ambassador Kunio Takahashi at the commencement ceremony of the Jaffna Teaching Hospital Improvement Project

It is expected that the facilities, a gift from the people of Japan, would serve as a symbol of friendship and strong cooperation between Japan and Sri Lanka.

January 18, 2011

Japan Provides Urgent Relief Items to Flood Victims

Ambassador Kunio Takahashi handing over the sleeping pads and tents to Hon. Mahinda Amaraweera, Minister of Disaster Management

On 17th January 2011, H.E. Mr. Kunio Takahashi handed over to Hon. Mr. Mahinda Amaraweera, Minister of Disaster Management, emergency assistance worth 20 million Japanese Yen (approximately SL Rs. 26.7 million) for immediate distribution among displaced people who are affected by current floods in the Northern, Central, Eastern and North Central Provinces.

The emergency assistance includes 230 Tents and 1,500 sleeping pads for those displaced by the recent floods. The Government of Japan decided to provide the assistance in line with the needs of those displaced and as requested by the Government of Sri Lanka. The relief items are distributed through the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).

Meanwhile, Mr.Seiji Maehara, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, has sent a message to Hon. Prof. G.L.Peiris, Minister of External Affairs, expressing hope that this aid would contribute to improving the humanitarian situation in the affected areas, and that this disaster would come to an end as early as possible.

January 14, 2011

Japan Provides Urgent Relief Items to Flood Victims

The Government of Japan has decided to donate emergency assistance worth 20 million Japanese Yen (approximately SL Rs. 26.7 million) to the Government of Sri Lanka for immediate distribution among displaced people in flood affected areas.

The emergency assistance includes 400 Tents and 2,000 sleeping pads for those displaced by the recent floods. The assistance is being provided in line with the needs of those displaced and as requested by the Government of Sri Lanka. The relief items will be distributed through the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).

Meanwhile, Mr.Seiji Maehara, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, has sent his message to Hon. Prof. G.L.Peiris, Minister of External Affairs, expressing the hope that this aid would contribute to improving the humanitarian situation in the affected areas, and that this disaster would come to an end as early as possible.