

## Outline of Humanitarian Aid Policy

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Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan

### 1. Humanitarian Aid and Human Security

- Humanitarian assistance is activities to save lives, alleviate suffering and maintain human dignity during and in the aftermath of natural and man-made disasters, as well as to prevent and strengthen preparedness for the occurrence of such situation.
- Human Security, which is one of the principal pillars of foreign policy of Japan, means focusing on individual people and building societies in which everyone can live with dignity by protecting and empowering individuals and communities that are exposed to actual or potential threats. Therefore humanitarian assistance can be considered as one of the undertakings to realize human security.
- 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. Moreover, Japan believes that the reconstruction of Japan from this disaster is possible only through cooperation with international community.
- The steady implementation of humanitarian assistance requires understanding of the general public, and the Government of Japan will continue to make efforts for ensuring effectiveness and efficiency of the assistance as well as for increasing transparency through monitoring and dissemination of information such as evaluation results in order to fulfill its accountability to the public.

### 2. Current Challenges

#### (1) Prolonged and more complex humanitarian crisis

Humanitarian crisis has tendency to continue longer and get more complex, partly because of the complexity of the causes of conflicts, such as ethnic and political feuds and scarcity of natural resources.

#### (2) Increase of Natural Disasters

In recent years natural disasters are increasing both in number and scale. This is caused by many factors including climate change. Rapid urbanization is considered to increase the vulnerability of the community and disturb economic and social development, which may also negatively affect political stability.

(3) Security of aid workers

Diversification of nature and actors in conflicts, especially the involvement of non-state actors in conflicts, blurs the line between combatants and non-combatants. This situation tends to increase non-compliance of international humanitarian law, such as targeted attack to aid workers.

(4) Diversification of actors in humanitarian assistance

With the increasing complexity of humanitarian crisis, there are more cases where humanitarian assistance is conducted in parallel with peace-keeping operations and reconstruction assistance. In addition, military assets are more often utilized in humanitarian assistance. Thus, the role of military assets and its coordination with civilian assets have become an important issue.

3. Basic Principles

- The Government of Japan respects the basic principles of humanitarian assistance which are humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence.
- The Government of Japan complies with principles of the Good Humanitarian Donorship (GHD), Oslo Guidelines on the use of foreign military and civil defense assets in disaster relief and other international guidelines regarding humanitarian assistance.

4. Response to the Challenges

(1) Assistance to refugees and IDPs

The Government of Japan considers that assistance to refugees/IDPs is not only essential for human security but also contributes to peace and stability in the region. We provide necessary supplies such as shelter, food and water to them and also assist voluntary repatriation, resettlement and reintegration for ultimate solutions. In cases where refugees /IDPs put burden on the host community in terms of water and other resources, the Government of Japan exerts its efforts to provide assistance which will benefit the host community in order to prevent possible friction between refugees/IDPs and the host community.

(2) Smooth transition

The Government of Japan believes that it is extremely important to implement smooth transition from emergency humanitarian assistance to early recovery and reconstruction so that affected people can stand on their own feet again and

will never require humanitarian assistance.

(3) Response to natural disasters

The Asian region including Japan is one of the most affected region by natural disasters. Damages caused by natural disasters around the world greatly hinder sustainable development, and it is important to protect people against possible damages and strengthen their ability and preparedness to withstand natural disasters. As emergency response, the Government of Japan, in cooperation with JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency), dispatches Japan Disaster Relief team and delivers emergency relief goods. One or combined assistance of them is offered depending on the scale of natural disasters and the needs. As Japan has extensive knowledge on disaster reduction based on its own experiences from domestic natural disasters, it will continue to lead international efforts for disaster reduction. In concrete terms, the Government of Japan, in cooperation with UNISDR, promotes further implementation of Hyogo Framework for Action and intends to host the 3<sup>rd</sup> World Conference on Disaster Reduction in 2015. It also cooperates with developing countries for mainstreaming of disaster reduction in development plan and community-based disaster reduction efforts.

(4) Security of aid workers

The Government of Japan shares the concern over the lack of security of aid works, known as the issue of "humanitarian space". Ensuring humanitarian space is essential for implementing humanitarian assistance, and we put maximum efforts on security of humanitarian aid workers and assist the activities of UNHCR eCenter for emergency training of humanitarian aid workers in the Asia and Pacific region. It requests all actors in conflicts to comply with international humanitarian law and assists the efforts of ICRC for promotion of international humanitarian law.

(5) Civil-military coordination

According to international guidelines, humanitarian assistance should be implemented, in principle by civilians, and the military assets can be utilized only where there is no comparable civilian alternative. In large scale natural disasters, however, military assets can play an important role in delivering humanitarian assistance. The Government of Japan actively participates in international dialogue and training for civil-military coordination in this field.

## 5. Effectiveness and Efficiency

- Rapid and efficient implementation is essential for humanitarian assistance, and the Government of Japan decides its assistance based on needs on the ground, request from affected countries and/or international appeals. In order to increase the effectiveness, appropriate tools of assistance will be selected and combined if necessary. In concrete terms, dispatch of relief teams, delivery of relief goods and financial contribution to international organizations will be utilized, taking into consideration effective coordination between bilateral and multilateral assistance. The Government of Japan supports the efforts of international organizations in identifying the needs and pays attention to international appeals by United Nations and Red Cross Movement, especially flash appeals. The Government of Japan considers that CERF (Central Emergency Response Fund) plays a significant role in speedily funding necessary resources to humanitarian agencies, and will continue its contribution.
- As various actors, such as affected government, foreign assisting teams, international organizations, Red Cross Movement and NGOs, participate in humanitarian assistance, mutual coordination among these actors is essential. The Government of Japan tries to promote networking/partnerships with different actors, and supports coordination efforts and capability building of UNOCHA (United Nations Office on Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance), which is responsible for global coordination of all humanitarian actors.
- Adequate monitoring/evaluation is necessary in order to ensure effective and efficient implementation of humanitarian assistance. The Government of Japan exerts its efforts to improve the quality of its humanitarian assistance by feedback of lessons from monitoring and evaluation of its assistance. It also actively disseminates information on the results of its assistance for achieving accountability to the general public.