

Giving Substance to Human Security

*In recent years, human security has emerged as a major issue in the international community. **Sadako Ogata**, president of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), has devoted her energies to developing the concept. The Japan Journal's Osamu Sawaji asked Ogata for her thoughts on human security and on related activities in which Japan is involved.*

Japan International Cooperation Agency President Sadako Ogata



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Why has human security come to the fore in the international community in recent years?

Sadako Ogata: In the 1990s when I served as United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the Cold War ended, and regional conflict broke out in various regions followed by the disintegration of federal nations such as the former Soviet Union and the former Yugoslavia, and large numbers of refugees fled across national borders to other countries. The state, which should protect people inside its own boundaries, was not able to do so due to conflicts. Furthermore, in the countries into which the refugees fled, there was no obligation to protect those who were not countrymen. Refugees were no longer protected by anyone. In light of these situations, the view gradually spread that the traditional state-centric approach alone is insufficient when it comes to the safety of human beings, and that

perhaps what is required more is the human-centric perspective.

How did the Commission on Human Security, of which you used to be co-chair, come to be established?

In 2001, Kofi Annan, the then secretary-general of the United Nations, paid a visit to then Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori. Wishing to accomplish “freedom from fear” which was freedom from military conflict, and “freedom from want” which was freedom from blights such as poverty and infectious disease, he sought the cooperation of Japan, which had a track record of nonmilitary international cooperation. Prime Minister Mori, who had been thinking about adopting human security as a specific policy goal, agreed to this request. Thus, the Commission on Human Security was established as a result of their proposal.

The Commission on Human Security pub-

lished its final report as a commission in 2003. This report suggests two broad strategies of achieving human security. One is that states must assume responsibility for protecting people, that they must conduct policies that take into consideration the survival, dignity, and livelihood of people, and that they must strengthen those policies. In concrete terms, this applies to such things as legislation, governance and decisions on systems. However, this alone cannot achieve the safety of human beings. What is also required is the empowerment of people. This is, in other words, the strengthening of the power of people to think for themselves about what is needed, and then take action. The report points out that the combination of these two things will accomplish human security.

How has Japanese official development assistance (ODA) changed in accordance with the concept of human security?

In 2003, I assumed the post of president of JICA, which implements Japan's ODA. In the same year, the Japanese government revised the ODA Charter, and stipulated that the perspective of "human security" should be incorporated into ODA. In response to this, JICA reviewed the projects that they implement based on the notion of human security.

Firstly, JICA decided to enhance the approach of putting together a support program while holding detailed discussions with recipient governments on what kind of support was required, and then implementing it. The agency had previously carried out support and de-

velopment for specific individual goals, such as building schools for children's education, or building hospitals to help sick people, but by incorporating the perspective of human security, this changed to providing multi-faceted support from the viewpoint of "what should be done to enhance the livelihood of this person in a comprehensive way?"

Could you give us some recent examples of JICA support based on the notion of human security?

For example, there had been ongoing civil war for years in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in Africa, with many people suffering from violence and poverty. The United Nations Peacekeeping Operations (PKO) are now being deployed in the Congo in an effort to maintain public order, but in the future, PKO withdrawal is anticipated. When this happens, the people will have to maintain public order by themselves. So since 2004 JICA has been conducting training for police officers in cooperation with the United Nations. This training is a re-education program on the role of police officers in protecting citizens, the rules of correct conduct of police officers, police activities that respect human rights, and so forth. So far, more than 17,000 police officers have participated in the training.

In this region, through the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security (see p. 9), primary schools are being renovated and built, and activities are being carried out for infectious disease prevention. By combining several approaches such as these, JICA aims to accomplish human security.