

## UNITAR Afghanistan Trainees Visit JICA

On November 10 2008, 40 trainees visiting Japan through the UNITAR Fellowship for Afghanistan paid a courtesy visit to Deputy Director Kenzo Oshima at JICA Headquarters.

The trainees, who are administrative officials and researchers from Afghanistan, are increasing their capacity in leadership and management through the UNITAR Fellowship for Afghanistan and are expected to shoulder the burden of Afghanistan's nation building in the future.

During an informal discussion, Deputy Director Oshima, among others, explained the Human Security basis of JICA's aid to Afghanistan. During a frank exchange of views, the trainees not only outlined their expectations of comprehensive aid to be borne by "the new JICA", but also asked concrete questions such as "How are regions selected?", and "How is project planning and enactment undertaken?"

During the trainees stay in Japan, prior to visiting JICA, a public Roundtable was held at the Afghanistan Embassy in Japan entitled "Afghanistan Reconstruction – Challenges and Commitments" with Senior Minister Hedayat Amin Arsala and Ambassador Haron Amin addressing the issues surrounding the existing state of Afghanistan's reconstruction.

From the Japanese side, Mr. Masahiko Shibayama, a Parliamentary Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Tadahiro Abe, Ambassador in Charge of Afghanistan Assistance Coordination, and JICA Deputy Director Oshima made assertions regarding results from Japan's aid as well as the continuation of aid to be enacted according to the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS). Deputy Director Oshima summarised JICA's aid in Afghanistan as well as the October creation of the new JICA, the world's largest bilateral assistance agency and the willingness to expand the breadth of activities undertaken thus far. In addition, at the end of the seminar, a silent prayer was offered for Mr. Kazuya Ito, of the "Peshawar-kai" who died in Afghanistan in August this year.

JICA has been involved in the reconstruction of Afghanistan from very early on and has been working at developing a cooperative relationship in the fields of healthcare, education, agriculture and gender in order for people to regain a stable livelihood as soon as possible.

At present JICA is providing assistance in Kabul, Nangarhar, Bamiyan and Balkh provinces and is engaged widely in aid provision; from Human Resource Development for nation building through several programmes such as the *Tuberculosis Counter Measures*, *Strengthening Teacher Training* and *Work Training for the Unskilled* Projects, to projects that maintain the economic basis of the country for reconstruction, such as the *Construction of the New Kabul International Terminal*.

Through the exchange of opinions with the UNITAR trainees, we could feel their sincerity and enthusiasm for reconstruction. Henceforth, JICA will work in collaboration with locals so that the people of Afghanistan can enjoy the fruits of liberty and accomplish the reconstruction they hope for.

South Asia Department, Third South Asia Section