

Japan's assistance to Flood-affected Pakistan

The floods in Pakistan have reportedly affected more than 17 million people in Pakistan. Recognising the dire humanitarian situation in the key country to regional and international peace and stability, the Government of Japan is actively taking part in international efforts to provide much needed assistance.

August 19 saw the Special Meeting of the UN General Assembly, where high-level delegates gathered to discuss the situation. Mr. Osamu Fujimura, State Secretary for Foreign Affairs, attended on behalf of Japan, and announced Japan's intention to send Self-Defense Forces (SDF) helicopters for disaster relief mission, alongside the grant assistance totaling approx. 14.6 million dollars. A civilian medical team will also follow.

On 31 August, 3 SDF UH-1 helicopters started its relief mission, based in Multan, Punjab. Additional 3 CH-47 helicopters are on their way to Pakistan, to reinforce this capability. These contingents will consist of about 200 SDF personnels.

This is the second time for the SDF to conduct a humanitarian relief mission in Pakistan. Following the earthquake in October 2005, the Self-Defense Forces sent 6 UH-1 helicopters for humanitarian relief.



JSDF Airlift Unit commences the relief mission on the 31st of August.

(Pictures reproduced courtesy of the Ministry of Defence, Japan)

= Notes for the Editors: Overseas Activities of the SDF=

Since 1998, the SDF have been engaged in various humanitarian assistance, by means of medical, airlift and seaborne support. Their first deployment under the International Emergency Assistance Law was in Honduras, in response to the havoc wrought by Hurricane Mitch in 1998.

Prior to such missions, the Self-Defense Forces started to participate in UN peace-keeping missions in 1992, when military observers and engineering units were sent to the UN Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC). The SDF also currently participate in UN Disengagement Observer Forces (UNDOF) in the Golan Heights, UN Mission in Nepal (UNMIN) and UN Mission in Sudan (UNMIS). The most recent addition to their UN peace-keeping activities is that in Haiti, where an engineering unit participated in MINUSTAH this year.

In other areas, the Maritime Self-Defense Force destroyer and patrol aircraft are currently engaged in anti-piracy mission off Somalia.