Addis Ababa, December 8 (WIC) - The Embassy of Japan here on Friday celebrated the 40th anniversary of the Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCV) program in Ethiopia.

Speaking on the occasion Japanese Ambassador to Ethiopia, Hiroyuki Kishino said Ethiopia is the 7th African country, which concluded an agreement with Japan in 1971 for the dispatch of JOCV members.

Since the first 25 volunteers set foot in Ethiopia in 1972 a total of nearly 600 volunteers have been dispatched and engaged in development activities in various parts of the country.

The volunteers' activities cover a wide-range of areas such as education, information technology, water resource management and agriculture, among others, he said.

Foreign Affairs State Minister, Ambassador Berhane Gebre-Christos on his part said the Japanese volunteers have done exceptional work at the grass-root level in clean water provision, education and health sectors.

Ambassador Berhane said the grants and technical assistance of friendly countries like Japan have played significant contribution to Ethiopia's development. Education State Minister, Fuad Ibrahim on his part said JOCV members have been sharing their knowledge in schools in a bid to improving quality of teaching.

Science and math, health and physical education, computer technology, water management, tourism, agriculture and rural community development are among the fields they are involving.

He said 13 volunteers are working with teachers in primary schools in Amhara, Oromia and Addis Ababa to improve quality of science teaching. Improving science and math education is one of the major priorities set in the country's education plan, he said.

The JOCV Program is designed to support activities to enhance the economic and social development of developing countries.

The Japanese government has modified its ODA policy in a bid to effectively help Ethiopia implement the Growth and Transformation Plan.

The policy particularly emphasizes on food security, industrial, infrastructure and human development. Japanese ODA to Ethiopia has reached 110 million US dollars last year, according to the Embassy. (ENA)