

# Groups Collaborate On Somalia Aid

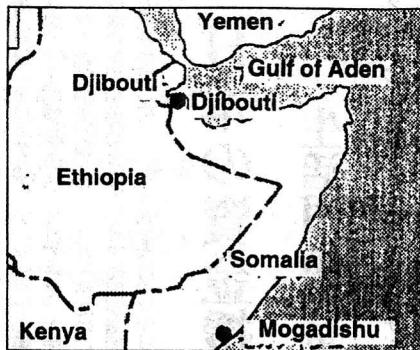
By Kakuya Ishida  
Daily Yomiuri Staff Writer

Three Japanese nongovernmental organizations are to collaborate on a relief project for Somali refugees in Kenya at the request of the Kenyan Home Affairs Ministry. A member of one of the groups said he believed the collaboration would set an important precedent for future NGO activities.

The project, which is estimated to cost over ¥200 million, will involve more than 70 volunteers. An advance party flew to Kenya Saturday.

Members of the Association of Medical Doctors for Asia Japan Chapter, headquartered in Okayama-ken, will team up with Myanmar and Kenyan medical staff to provide an outpatient service in Mandera in northern Kenya, and a traveling clinic based in El Wak, Somalia, a town on the Kenyan border.

The African Education Fund, which provides education and vocational training, will distribute protein-rich food, clothing, tents, and supplies of rice, wheat flour and oil direct to the refugees with help from local and Japanese volunteers. They will also coordinate well-digging and windmill programs. They will be protected



by Kenyan troops.

The Buddhist organization Rissho Koseikai will assist the association from the sidelines and get involved in solo projects to improve refugees' welfare.

"It's very rare for Japanese nongovernmental organizations with different fields of specialty to collaborate in this manner on an overseas venture. I hope this will set the future course for Japanese NGOs," said Yoneyuki Kobayashi, the association's Japan chapter deputy manager.

According to a U.N. report, as of December 1992, 425,000 refugees fled to Kenya from Somalia. Somalis account for 70 percent of all refugees in the

country. Another 100,000-150,000 Somalis are trying to cross into Kenya, according to the Kenyan government.

Tsuyoshi Nishikata, Kanto district branch manager of the African Education Fund, said the Kenyan government's refusal to permit the establishment of new refugee camps is leading to overcrowding, friction among camp residents.

"The three groups have a lot of experience with overseas activities in every field," Kobayashi said.

## AMDA To Help Djibouti

The association will launch an urgent medical relief project for Somali refugees in Djibouti in January at the request of Rachad Farah, ambassador to Japan in Djibouti.

Djibouti, which borders Somalia and the Red Sea, has a population of 400,000. There are 65,000 Somali refugees in the capital city of Djibouti and 20,000 refugees in four refugee camps in Ali-Sabieh. Between 100 and 200 refugees cross the border every day.

About 20 doctors will participate in the project from the association's chapters in Japan, Bangladesh, Nepal and the Philippines. They plan to establish a medical clinic in the camps and provide a traveling clinic along the border.