

The Panel of Experts on Collaborating with Communities of Japanese Immigrants and
Descendants (“Nikkei”) in Central and South America
Greeting by Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida

Thank you for taking part in this expert panel today.

The Central and South America region is extremely important to Japanese diplomacy from the standpoint of sharing fundamental values, possessing strong economic potential and being very friendly toward Japan. And this friendly sentiment toward Japan in particular is founded on the region’s Nikkei community, which at over 2.1 million people is the largest in the world.

While visiting Central and South America in 2014, Mr. Shinzo Abe, Prime Minister of Japan, clarified three points:

1. The foundation of the Central and South America region’s trust in Japan is the very trust that people of Japanese descent have built locally.
2. Japan will strengthen ties with the young leaders who will be responsible for the future of Central and South America.
3. Japan will make efforts to create a Japan that people of Japanese descent are proud of, and will deepen ties between Japan and Nikkei communities.

These ideas form the axis of collaboration between Japan and Nikkei communities.

More than 16 years have passed since the Overseas Emigration Council issued its last recommendation document in December 2000. The Central and South American Nikkei community is undergoing a generational change and its activities are also changing. There is a need to ensure that the members of this new generation firmly inherit the trust that exists today, which arose out of the enormous struggles faced by their predecessors. Japan too must collaborate solidly with the new generation to develop a multilayered and bidirectional relationship.

Up to now, various entities on the Japanese side including the government, local governments, business community, academia and civil society have formed a diverse range of relationships with Nikkei communities.

Representatives from various sectors are gathered here today under the chairmanship of Mr. Kotaro Horisaka, Professor Emeritus, Sophia University, leading authority on research on the region. I intend to report the panel's recommendations to the Prime Minister, and share and utilize them across the Government as a whole. Therefore, I would like to sincerely request your dedicated contribution.

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