

Panel of Experts on Collaborating with Communities of Japanese Immigrants and  
Descendants (“Nikkei”) in Central and South America  
Summary of comments from the 1<sup>st</sup> meeting (March 6<sup>th</sup>)

- What form of collaboration should take place, including cultural challenges, as generation turnover takes place in the Nikkei communities of Central and South America? Prefectures in Japan play a significant role in forming Nikkei identity. It is hoped that Nikkei associations such as the Association of Nikkei & Japanese abroad will make further contributions.
- How do we assist human resources development among the Nikkei? It appears that study abroad or training funded by prefectures is not growing much. Is proactive participation of Nikkei students in Nikkei conventions abroad leading to continuous cultivation of Nikkei identity and human resources development? This is a challenge also shared by the Association of Nikkei & Japanese abroad.
- There are areas in Northern Kanto and Kansai where Nikkei laborers reside. Contrary to the ideal, these Nikkei communities and Japanese communities are not close. Taking this opportunity, we wish to work on these relationships.
- When I visited Brazil, I was reminded of hardships Nikkei immigrants had gone through, and felt their sense of belonging to Japan and refreshing spirit. I hope this panel will help us look at Nikkei communities with the idea that Nikkei communities offer some insights the Japanese today must learn. I hope the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, various organizations, local public agencies, and even the business community can work together to come up with cross-cutting proposals.
- We assist those who come to Japan from Brazil regardless of their ethnic backgrounds. It is part of our mission as a corporation to offer scholarships to elementary schools in Brazil, support NPOs from areas where many Brazilians reside, and to help Brazilian children adapt to their new life back home in Brazil after they leave Japan.
- Because of their large population, how to deal with the Nikkei in Central and South America as a whole is a challenge. We hope that Embassies and Consulates can gather the opinions of the Nikkei at the grassroots level. Then we can consider how we can provide assistance. Extending assistance to all Nikkei in a fair manner is a challenging

task.

- I agree that we should not distinguish the Nikkei from non-Nikkei too much. I am concerned that it would make non-Nikkei who would otherwise have a favorable view of Japan feel they are being discriminated against. There can be various concepts we can use, such as “those who study Japanese.” We should not consider non-Nikkei as just a fringe. Our target should be a pro-Japan community within which Nikkei communities play vital roles.

- Strategic development of human resources is important. One of the keys to nurturing personnel who can act as a liaison is to appoint them also in an English-speaking environment instead of just limiting them to work in a Japanese-Portuguese, or Japanese-Spanish speaking environment.

- Inviting the Nikkei to experience Japan as part of training has a significant impact. We should examine each program to make sure they are attractive and they are not building a wall between the Nikkei and non-Nikkei. Central and South America need to be seen as one of the most important regions from the view point of marketing Japan to the world and creating fans of Japan.

- By continuing research on Nikkei communities in Central and South America, we can send a message that the Japanese government and the Japanese have not forgotten the Nikkei, which can help establish good relations.

- I cannot agree more that the Nikkei and non-Nikkei should be treated equally. Second and third generation Nikkei bring their non-Nikkei friends to the conventions of the Association of Pan American Nikkei (COPANI). These Nikkei act as a gateway to Japanese culture. Nikkei are involved in world-class joint research. This makes it easier to propose exchange in the academic community as well.

- How are a variety of communities linked through the Nikkei, and how are they going to be connected? There is also diversity among the Nikkei themselves and I look forward to seeing them playing vital roles with that versatility. It is also an issue for me to look into how second and third generation Nikkei who move to Japan from Latin America are able to become part of Japanese society.

- So many of these countries really understand and have positive views about Japan. We must further enhance this. Japan's national interest is also mentioned in the Development Cooperation Charter. It would not make sense to shift away from places where we are about to see results and start from scratch somewhere else instead. JICA's original mission was to support Japanese immigrants but I believe it will also contribute greatly to Japan's national interest to also further enhance relationships with Japanese descendants abroad and those around them who are knowledgeable and have positive views about Japan. In addition to that, I would like to be able to offer insights from the view point that three G20 member states are in Central and South America, which makes this region an important player in diplomacy in the United Nations Security Council. (End)