

## Section 3

# Latin America and the Caribbean

## 1 Overview

### (1) Situations in Latin America and the Caribbean

The Latin American and Caribbean (hereafter referred to as “LAC”) region mostly consists of countries that share values such as democracy, the rule of law, and human rights, and has a population of about 640 million and a GDP of about 5.6 trillion US dollars. It is a major production area for natural resources such as minerals and energy as well as food, and has considerable economic potential such as its rapidly growing large market. In 2018, the LAC economy was overall supported by steady increases in domestic demand, and maintained slow growth. In addition, there was a trend of industrial added value through participation in the global value chain (international division of labor in the manufacturing industry), centered on countries along the Pacific Ocean. On the other hand, Argentina’s currency value plunged from the end of April, and the Government of Argentina requested support from the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

On the political front, presidential elections were held in six countries in 2018. Amidst a focus on issues of corruption and public security, candidates without a basis in traditional political parties secured victories in Mexico

and Brazil. On the other hand, in Venezuela, where confrontations are continuing between the administration and the opposition parties, a presidential election was held in May amidst a boycott by the main opposition parties and it was announced that President Maduro was reelected. The G7 and many countries in the LAC region have shown strong doubts about the legitimacy of the election. In addition, in the LAC region, there are communities of Japanese immigrants and descendants (the Nikkei community) numbering about 2.13 million, about 60% of the whole world’s Nikkei population. This is a bond that is unique to Japan. Contributions by Nikkei people to the local community for more than 100 years have established a traditional affinity toward Japan. On the other hand, due to generations change of the Nikkei community through more than 100 years since the beginning of migration, there is an increase in the young generation with a weak connection to Japan.

### (2) Japanese Diplomacy towards Latin America and the Caribbean Countries

Japan’s diplomacy toward the LAC region has developed under the guiding principle of the three “Juntos” (“progress together,” “lead together,” and “inspire together”) announced by Prime Minister Abe in 2014.

In 2018, in addition to Prime Minister Abe’s



Closing Ceremony for the 120th Anniversary of the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between Japan and Argentina (December 1, Buenos Aires, Argentina; Photo: Cabinet Public Relations Office)

visits to three Latin American countries, there were over 70 visits to countries in the LAC region by officials from MOFA and other ministries and agencies including the two visits to the region by Foreign Minister Kono. On these occasions, it has been confirmed to resolve various matters in the international arena together with LAC countries based on shared fundamental values.

On the economic front, supply chain connections are strengthening, including by doubling the number of Japanese companies operating in the LAC region over five years, and Japan is working to promote free trade together with LAC countries including through the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP11 Agreement), which Mexico, Peru, and Chile are participating in.

In the LAC region, as countries will “graduate” from the status of recipient countries by achieving economic growth, Japan is promoting triangular cooperation with these countries. On the other hand, Japan is developing cooperation in line with other countries’ needs in fields where continuous support is required, including responses to climate change and natural disasters.

During his visit to Argentina in December, Prime Minister Abe synthesized such results and announced the concept of the Initiative to Enhance Connectivity between Japan and Latin

America and the Caribbean to show the direction of further enhanced cooperation within Japan-LAC relations. The pillars of this concept are “enhancing connectivity of economies” pursuing free and open economic systems through the promotion of global value chains and quality infrastructure, “enhancing connectivity of values” that involves jointly preserving rules-based multilateralism through political dialogue, and “enhancing connectivity of wisdom” to strive to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) together through exporting innovation.

## 2 Regional Organizations

Japan is collaborating with regional organizations in the LAC region, where policy coordination on various issues is conducted, such as the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), the Forum for East Asia-Latin America Cooperation (FEALAC), and other organizations below.

### (1) Pacific Alliance

The Pacific Alliance (Mexico, Colombia, Peru, and Chile; hereafter referred to as “PA”) aims to conclude a comprehensive free trade agreement with Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and Singapore, and is currently conducting negotiations toward an early conclusion of the agreement. At the summit meeting in July, the Republic of Korea (ROK) and Ecuador expressed interest in participating in the negotiations.

Japan places importance on cooperation with the PA, as it is a group with which it shares fundamental values. In September, Foreign Minister Kono held the Japan-Pacific Alliance Ministerial Meeting in New York, U.S., and it was agreed to consider the method for specific cooperation.

### (2) Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR)

MERCOSUR is a customs union composed of Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay, Bolivia<sup>1</sup>, and Venezuela<sup>2</sup>. With a few exceptions, tariffs have been eliminated for all goods traded within the region since January 1995.

Japan has held the “Dialogue to Strengthen the Economic Relationship between Mercosur and Japan” a total of four times since 2012, and conducts exchanges of views on recent trade policies and experiences.

### (3) Caribbean Community (CARICOM)

CARICOM was founded by 14 Caribbean nations for its economic integration and foreign policy coordination. It shows a big presence in the international arena for their coordinated actions. Although CARICOM countries include many countries with relatively high incomes, they are threatened by natural disasters such as catastrophic hurricanes almost every year, and also have vulnerabilities particular to small island states from the small size of their populations and economies.

Japan is leading its diplomacy in accordance with the three pillars for Japan-CARICOM cooperation ((1) Cooperation toward sustainable development, including overcoming the vulnerabilities particular to small island states; (2) Deepening and expanding fraternal bonds of cooperation and friendship; and (3) Cooperation in addressing challenges of the international community) announced by Prime Minister Abe in 2014. Japan is also providing support to high income level countries based on their development needs and economic capabilities. In addition to holding the Sixth Japan-CARICOM Ministerial-Level Conference in September, Japan also took a number of other opportunities, such



Sixth Japan-CARICOM Ministerial-Level Conference (September 24, New York, U.S.)

as the Japan-Saint Vincent and the Grenadines Summit Meeting in August and the Japan-St. Christopher and Nevis Foreign Ministers’ Meeting in November, to further develop its relationship with CARICOM countries in 2018.

## 3 LAC Countries (See 2 (3) Above for Caribbean Countries)

### (1) Mexico

Mexico plays an important role in the international community by embracing values such as freedom, democracy, and the rule of law. In the presidential election held in July, the candidate Andrés Manuel López Obrador, who did not belong to any traditional party, won with a historic percentage of votes, acquiring a stable administration base by securing majorities in both the Chamber of Deputies and Senate of Congress. In addition, the renegotiation of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) among Mexico, the U.S. and Canada resulted in the signing of the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) by the three countries at the end of November. The USMCA has not entered into force yet because the ratification process needs to be completed in the three countries, but this agreement garners public attention because

<sup>1</sup> Accession protocol was signed in December 2012. Ratification by each country’s congressional assembly is currently underway.

<sup>2</sup> Membership currently suspended as of December 2018.



Courtesy Call from Secretary of Foreign Affairs Ebrard of Mexico (before inauguration) on Foreign Minister Kono (October 5, Tokyo)

it will also affect Japanese companies operating in Mexico.

2018 marks the 130th anniversary of the diplomatic relations between Japan and Mexico, and close political dialogues were celebrated through mutual visits by many authorities and officials, including Foreign Minister Kono's two visits to Mexico and Secretary of Economy Guajardo's visit to Japan. Approximately 1,200 Japanese companies operate in Mexico, making it the biggest economic base for Japan in the LAC region. Furthermore Japan and Mexico have together led free trade in the trans-Pacific region including cooperating toward the signing and entry into force of the TPP11 Agreement.

## (2) Central America (El Salvador, Guatemala, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Nicaragua, Panama, Belize, and Honduras)

In Central America, Costa Rica and Panama are achieving high economic growth under stable democracies, but on the other hand, the three countries of El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala in the northern part of Central America face the issue of an immigration outflow stemming from such issues as public security. In addition, in Nicaragua, a large number of casualties has arisen from issues such as the dispatch of security police against protests by students sparked by social security reform in April. After this, concerns



Special Envoy Takei attends the Costa Rican presidential inauguration ceremony (May 8, San José, Costa Rica)

have been raised in the international community about the series of responses by the Government of Nicaragua against anti-government groups.

Japan supports efforts to establish democracy in Central American countries, and seeks to resolve issues based on various democratic principles. In addition, Japan is strengthening relations with Central American countries through the Central American Integration System (SICA) with a focus on support for regional integration and development cooperation with countries in the region.

## (3) Cuba

In April, First Vice President of the Council of State of Cuba Miguel Díaz-Canel was elected President, succeeding former President Raúl Castro. This was the first time a President of the Council of State was elected who was not one of Castro's siblings, but there have been no major changes in the management and policies of the administration. The administration faces such issues as improving relations with the U.S., attracting foreign investment, and fostering domestic industries have been issues.

2018 marked the 120th anniversary of Japanese immigration to Cuba, and the traditionally favorable bilateral relations developed, including the establishment of the JICA office in Havana in March and agreeing to begin preparatory discussions for an investment agreement at the Third Public-Private Joint Meeting in December.

#### (4) Brazil

President Temer, who took over the administration due to the impeachment of the former president in 2016, improved efforts for structural reform, but the economic recovery slowed down due to the effects of the truck drivers' strike throughout Brazil in May 2018 and other factors. Issues over corruption continued to cast a shadow in politics, and former President Lula, the front runner for the October presidential election, did not run for the election because he was imprisoned. Instead, the candidate Jair Bolsonaro, who belonged to a minor party and criticized the existing politics, won the presidential election.

Brazil is known as one of the world's most pro-Japanese countries due to the presence of the world's largest Nikkei community, and in 2018, which marked the 110th anniversary of Japanese immigration to Brazil, many mutual visits by officials were realized including mutual visits by both countries' foreign ministers. In May, Foreign Minister Kono, who was visiting São Paulo, gave a policy speech at Japan House São Paulo calling for cooperation toward resolving various issues of the international community, and conveyed the new direction of Japan-LAC relations.

#### (5) Argentina

For the Macri administration, which has promoted liberal and open policies, economic management has been a major concern in response to the sudden drop of interest rates since spring in 2018, and it requested support from the IMF and drastically raised interest rates.

In terms of relations with Japan, Prime Minister Abe attended the closing ceremony for the 120th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Japan and Argentina in 2018 together with President Macri when he attended the G20 Summit held in Argentina, and the two leaders used the opportunity to sign the investment agreement and confirmed to strengthen bilateral relations.

#### (6) Peru

Under the Vizcarra administration inaugurated in March, the economy of Peru is maintaining steady growth in the fields of domestic consumption, investment, and trade. On the other hand, allegations of bribery from the Brazilian company Odebrecht have continued to shake the Peruvian political community, and in November, Keiko Fujimori, the leader of the largest opposition party, received a three-year imprisonment sentence.

In terms of relations with Japan, respective Foreign Ministers' Meetings have been held coinciding with Foreign Minister Kono's visit to Peru in August and the APEC Meetings in November, and it was concurred to strengthen bilateral relations as well as to cooperate to resolve issues in the international arena.

#### (7) Chile

President Piñera, who commenced his administration in March four years after his earlier presidency, has been placing importance on economic policies spurring economic growth, and also working on education and pension



Japan-Chile Summit Meeting (November 18, Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea; Photo: Cabinet Public Relations Office)

Special  
Feature

## 110th Anniversary of Japanese Immigration to Brazil – Her Imperial Highness Princess Mako of Akishino’s Visit to Brazil

Her Imperial Highness Princess Mako of Akishino visited 14 cities in five states in Brazil from July 18 to July 28, 2018 at the invitation of the government of Brazil, to attend commemorative ceremonies and other events held in various parts of Brazil to mark the 110th anniversary of Japanese immigration to Brazil.

It is said that as many as 2 million Nikkei people (Japanese descendants) live in Brazil and are active in all circles of Brazilian society. At the same time, approximately 190,000 Brazilians live in Japan, making it the second largest overseas Brazilian community after the United States. In this way, Japan and Brazil share a special bond. This bond dates back to June 18, 1908, when “Kasato Maru,” the first Japanese ship carrying Japanese migrants to Brazil, arrived 110 years ago at the Port of Santos in São Paulo, Brazil, with 781 passengers.

For many Japanese migrants, life in an unfamiliar foreign country involved a series of hardships and struggles. For the pre-war migrants during the initial wave of migration in particular, everything was a trial and error. There were too many stories of hardship to count; for example, a story of migrants who died from malaria in a migrant community or another story that clouds of locusts ravaged the agricultural land migrants had worked so hard to cultivate.

It is said that one of the things that sustained the spirit of these Japanese migrants throughout the history of their hardship was the presence of the Japanese Imperial Family. For Japanese migrants, their sentiments for their homeland overlap with sentiments for the Imperial Family, and these special sentiments were passed on from generation to generation. The visit by Her Imperial Highness Princess Mako of Akishino during the milestone year of the 110th anniversary marked a special occasion for the Nikkei community of Brazil, and people of the community worked enthusiastically to prepare for the commemorative ceremonies and other events.

To respond to the sentiments of the Nikkei community in Brazil, Her Imperial Highness traveled widely around Brazil during an 11-day visit and attended the commemorative ceremonies and events held in the respective regions. At each of the migrant communities, Her Imperial Highness expressed sympathy for the sufferings of the Japanese migrants and their descendants, and respect for their successes today. Some of the places that she visited were visited by a member of the Japanese Imperial Family for the first time, including the first migrant destinations in the inland areas of São Paulo (such as Marília, Promissão, Araçatuba), and Tomé-Açu in the Amazon region, which also used to be known as “the remote island on land” or the “green hell.” Her Imperial Highness’ visits deeply moved every Nikkei community.

The visit by Her Imperial Highness Princess Mako of Akishino to Brazil to mark the 110th anniversary of Japanese immigration to Brazil, which is a significant milestone in the relationship between the two countries, further promoted the friendly relations of the two countries for the future and consolidated these relations for the coming generations. It was truly a timely event.



Her Imperial Highness Princess Mako of Akishino delivering an address at the commemoration ceremony in São Paulo (São Paulo, Brazil, Photo: Federação das Associações de Provincias do Japão no Brasil (KENREN))

system reform. In terms of relations with Japan, in addition to the visit to Japan by Foreign Minister Ampuero in September, a summit meeting and foreign ministers' meeting were held on the side line of the APEC meetings in November and they confirmed cooperation for the success of APEC Chile 2019 as well as close partnership for promoting free trade.

### (8) Uruguay

The Vazquez administration has been actively promoting policies concerning society, education, and public health. In terms of relations with Japan, in addition to strengthening economic relations through an investment agreement, the two countries closely cooperate in the international arena. In December, Prime Minister Abe made the first visit by a Japanese prime minister to Uruguay, and confirmed with President Vázquez on strengthening bilateral relations in extensive fields including expanding trade and investment as well as sports exchanges.



Japan-Uruguay Summit Meeting (December 2, Montevideo, Uruguay; Photo: Cabinet Public Relations Office)

### (9) Paraguay

The Abdo Benítez administration, which is continuing the free and open economic policies of the previous administration, was inaugurated in August. Foreign Minister Castiglioni visited Japan in June before the inauguration, and Prime Minister Abe made the first visit by a Japanese prime

minister to Paraguay in December, confirming further strengthening of bilateral relations.



Japan-Paraguay Summit Meeting (December 2, Asunción, Paraguay; Photo: Cabinet Public Relations Office)

### (10) Colombia

In 2018, President Santos, who realized peace in Colombia, left his administration and, President Duque was newly elected, as the direction of the Colombia peace process gained attention again. In terms of relations with Japan, close relations have been built through commemorating the 110th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the two countries and realizing mutual visits by the foreign ministers immediately after the inauguration of the Duque administration in August. In addition, a tax convention was signed during the visit to Japan by Foreign Minister Trujillo in December.

### (11) Venezuela

In the beginning of 2018, there was a breakdown of dialogue with opposition parties related to the presidential election upon the expiration of the term, and the presidential election was held in May with the main opposition parties refusing to participate. The international community criticized reelection of President Maduro. On the other hand, accepting refugees became a regional issue as many Venezuelans poured into neighboring countries as refugees due to lack of

## Column

## Expressing Gratitude to the Nikkei Community in Brazil

Koji Miyashita, President of Mitsubishi Electric do Brasil

When I was a university student, I read a novel titled *Sobo* (“The People”), which told the story of Japanese settlers who had migrated to Brazil. This novel, written by Tatsuzo Ishikawa, received the inaugural Akutagawa Prize in 1935, in commendation of the work for depicting the setbacks, despair, and hope of Japanese settlers who had migrated to Brazil from Japan before the war, with their dreams and aspirations. Since I did not know much about the history of Japanese migration when I was in university, the story did not resonate with me. However, after I was posted to São Paulo in 2014, I re-read the novel and felt a closer connection to it this time.



Liberdade clean-up project (Photo: Sr. Gabriel Imakawa)

The author, Tatsuzo Ishikawa, had boarded the migrant ship “La Plata maru” as the supervisor of the migrants and crossed over to Brazil in 1930, and had based his story on his personal experiences of spending a few months in São Paulo and at the Japanese farms. Alongside other materials such as the NHK drama “Haru to Natsu,” this novel is an important historical resource for understanding the inconceivable hardships suffered by the Japanese migrants to Brazil.

There are currently an estimated 1.9 million Nikkei people in Brazil. 2018 marked the 110th anniversary of the arrival of Japanese migrants in Brazil. One of the things that I experienced while working in São Paulo is the respect that the Nikkei people, Japanese people, Japanese companies, and Japan itself enjoy in Brazil, thanks to the hard work and successes achieved by the Nikkei people in Brazil so far. The unity and solidarity among the Nikkei community that I have seen at Nikkei hospitals, welfare facilities, and other places in Brazil have left a deep impression on me, and there are many instances where I can feel a sense of the Japanese identity, which many Japanese people have forgotten, within the Nikkei community.

With the intention of giving back to the Nikkei community for these contributions, and as a part of our corporate social responsibility, we have continued to support the Nikkei community and the solidarity between Japan and Brazil by providing support for the Festival of Japan in São Paulo, Japan House São Paulo, Historical Museum of Japanese Immigration in Brazil, and clean-up project at Liberdade (the old Japan town). Naturally, there is the hope that these initiatives will circle back and contribute to our company’s business in some way, and we are blessed that this “win-win” relationship is being realized.

Of course, the Nikkei community faces its own issues, and I think that the detachment of young Nikkei people from the Nikkei community is a serious problem. There is an increasing number of young Nikkei people who do not speak any Japanese at all, so we have considered providing support and strengthening solidarity with young Nikkei people. With the success of the Rio Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2016 and Mitsubishi Electric being one of the sponsors for the Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2020, we came up with the idea of supporting young Nikkei Brazilian athletes based on the motto “From Brazil to Tokyo.” As a result of our search for potential athletes, we decided to sponsor three table-tennis athletes and support them in their journey to the Tokyo 2020 Games. Female table-tennis player Bruna Takahashi and male table-tennis player Gustavo Tsuboi already wear



From left, the author, Gustavo Tsuboi, Bruna Takahashi, Hugo Hoyama, and Yasushi Noguchi, Consul-General of Japan in São Paulo (Photo: Mitsubishi Electric do Brasil)



our company logo on their uniforms in their regular games, and we look forward to their success as representatives of Brazil in the Tokyo 2020 Games. Hugo Hoyama, as the coach of the female table-tennis team, is also expected to generate momentum toward the Games and become proof of the friendship between Japan and Brazil.

There are about one and a half years left until the Tokyo 2020 Games, and we are faced with the happy “problem” of having to decide which side to support if these Nikkei Brazilian athletes come up against Japanese athletes.



From left, Hugo Hoyama, Gustavo Tsuboi, Bruna Takahashi (Photo: Mitsubishi Electric do Brasil)

domestic investment and hyperinflation. Japan has been expressing its concerns about this situation and requesting a recovery of democracy in Venezuela, and has been implementing support for the Venezuelan people including those fleeing the country, as well as neighboring countries affected.

#### (12) Bolivia

The long-running administration of President Morales has continued since 2006, and during this time, an average annual growth rate of about 5% has been achieved thanks to abundant mineral resources. With regard to Japan-Bolivia relations, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Sato paid a visit to Bolivia in September, and signed an exchange of notes for Japanese grant aid concerning cooperation in the fields of infrastructure and disaster prevention.

#### (13) Ecuador

Ecuador, where President Moreno has been promoting liberalization of the economy, announced it would withdraw from the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA) mainly led by Venezuela in August, and strengthened relations with the PA, which promotes free trade. In 2018, which marked the



Japan-Ecuador Summit Meeting (September 5, Tokyo; Photo: Cabinet Public Relations Office)

100th anniversary of the establishment of Japan-Ecuador diplomatic relations, there were mutual visits including Foreign Minister Kono’s visit to Ecuador in August and President Moreno’s visit to Japan in September, and bilateral relations developed including reaching an agreement in principle on a bilateral tax convention.

#### (14) Collaboration with Nikkei Communities

The Nikkei community has built the foundation for the pro-Japanese sentiment in LAC countries, but the generations have transitioned over 100 years since Japanese immigration to LAC began, and the generation of young people with little connection to Japan is growing in number. Amidst such situation, policies were implemented toward strengthening cooperation with Nikkei

communities, including holding the Forum for the Next Leaders of Nikkei Communities in Latin America and the Caribbean (Tokyo) with the joint sponsorship of MOFA and JICA in June, and conducting discussions with LAC Nikkei people from the young generation regarding issues of the Nikkei communities in different countries and contributions to enabling development of Nikkei communities.

In addition, during the visit to LAC by Prime Minister Abe and Foreign Minister Kono in 2018, exchange with local Nikkei communities was conducted and the policy to further strengthen

cooperation with Nikkei communities was demonstrated.



Visit to Brazil by Foreign Minister Kono (May 19, São Paulo, Brazil)

## 100th Anniversary of the Establishment of the Diplomatic Relations between Japan and Ecuador – Performance by Sada Masashi in Ecuador

2018 marks the 100th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Japan and Ecuador, and the two countries held a number of cultural and other commemorative events. One of the most prominent events was the performance by singer-songwriter Sada Masashi in Ecuador. The following is his article about this experience.

### The beloved country that is far, far away Sada Masashi

In the summer of 2018, which marks the 100th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Japan and Ecuador, I visited Ecuador for the first time to realize the worldwide live broadcast of the NHK TV program “Konya mo Nama de Sada Masashi,” as well as the “Sada Masashi Concert.” This was the first time I had travelled to South America in my entire life. It was the result of the efforts by many people, including Mr. Masahiro Tanabe of Tanabe Farm (a banana farm in Ecuador), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Embassy of Japan in Ecuador, and All Nippon Airways Co., Ltd. (ANA). I was so touched that the Japanese Ambassador to Ecuador Noda came and welcomed me even though I arrived at the hotel close to 2:00 in the morning, and grateful to the hard-working staff of Toyota Tsusho Corporation who had prepared a kettle and oxygen cylinder for me onsite, and even bath additives and tea to place in my room. I was touched by their kind care for me, and realized that brotherly love is manifested through such thoughtful acts.

Despite its location almost immediately under the equatorial line, the capital city of Quito felt unexpectedly cold because it stands at an altitude of 2,800m above sea level. Quito, a world heritage site, is a truly beautiful stone-paved town. It is far safer than I had imagined, the people are kind, the food is delicious and rich, and I was surprised at how tasty the chocolate was. Thanks to the full support by the national broadcaster of Ecuador, the NHK program “Konya mo Nama de Sada Masashi” was a huge success. At the concert, the lyrics of the songs I was singing were translated into Spanish and displayed on the screen for the audience, so the spirit and sentiments of the Japanese people were communicated to the local audience, and pleased them.

Another unforgettable aspect of this trip was the concert that I held on Isla Santa Cruz of the Galápagos Islands. Thanks to the enthusiastic efforts by the staff of the Embassy, as well as Executive Director Izurieta of the local Charles Darwin Research Station, about 500 people attended the concert, and I received a touching standing ovation at the end of the concert. Even now, the memory of all the people who are working hard to preserve the precious environment there remains imprinted in my mind.

Though it was less than 10 days, I had a wonderful trip that far exceeded my expectations. Ecuador has dense forests where the headwaters of the Amazon River are located, crisp and clean air, clear blue skies, history and rich culture, as well as warm and kind people. Although Ecuador is far away, I wanted to go back there right away after I had returned to Japan. That is what Ecuador is like, this distant country on the equatorial line. It has been 100 years since the establishment of diplomatic relations. I am grateful to all the people involved in this trip and for the chance to meet them. I will never forget what the local people told me, “Mr. Sada, please come again in the 200th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations.” Yes, I will definitely be there if I am still healthy and well.



100th anniversary of the establishment of the diplomatic relations between Japan and Ecuador—“Sada Masashi Concert” ©Masashi



100th anniversary of the establishment of the diplomatic relations between Japan and Ecuador—“Japan Festival 2018” ©Masashi