

## 4 Latin America and the Caribbean

Latin America and the Caribbean is an enormous market and a region of strategic importance in terms of trade. With democracy taking root in the region, it is also a supplier of mineral, energy, and food resources, and has been steadily increasing its presence in the international community. On the other hand, it is also characterized by wide disparities in wealth with a large number of people still suffering from poverty. Furthermore, this region has a traditionally strong personal and historical bond with Japan due to the Nikkei community (community of Japanese immigrants and their descendants), numbering more than two million. Japan has thus maintained stable and friendly relations with this region for a long period.



Then Foreign Minister Motegi exchanging notes with Foreign Minister Brolo on grant aid for reconstruction after a hurricane disaster in Guatemala (July 2021)

### Japan's Efforts

Through two rounds of trips in 2021 (January and July), then Foreign Minister Motegi visited a total of eight Latin American and the Caribbean countries, the largest number among all previous foreign ministers, and announced that Japan would continue cooperation in areas such as COVID-19 countermeasures and disaster risk reduction. In addition, at the Foreign Ministers' meetings with the Central American Integration System (SICA) and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), he stated that, besides the aforementioned areas, Japan would promote cooperation in the field of environment and climate change, and particularly with SICA in supporting migrants in Central American countries. Following the inauguration of Prime Minister Kishida as well, Japan has worked to further strengthen its relationship with the Latin America and the Caribbean region. In November, the Vice President and Foreign Minister of Colombia and the Foreign Minister of Paraguay visited Japan and made a courtesy call on Prime Minister Kishida and held a foreign ministers' meeting, respectively. Also the Japan-Brazil Foreign Ministers' telephone talk and Japan-Argentina Foreign Ministers' video conference were held in December.

### ■ Efforts toward Disaster Risk Reduction and Environmental Issues

While the Latin American and the Caribbean region is blessed with abundant nature, the region is prone to natural disasters such as earthquakes, tsunamis, hurricanes, and volcanic eruptions. Therefore, it is of great importance that Japan supports this region with its knowledge and experience in the field of disaster risk reduction.

Japan has provided emergency relief goods and \$3.25 million in Emergency Grant Aid to deliver humanitarian assistance including food, water and sanitation measures to Haiti, which was devastated by the 7.2 magnitude earthquake in 2021. In 2021, Japan also provided equipment for reconstruction to Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua, which suffered damage from hurricanes. In addition, for Saint Vincent, which was affected by a volcanic eruption, Japan provided emergency relief goods as well as \$1.58 million in Emergency Grant Aid for shelter renovation and food. Furthermore, Japan has provided assistance that utilizes Japan's expertise in the disaster risk reduction field to the Caribbean countries and the countries bordering the Pacific Ocean including Chile, Ecuador, Mexico, and Peru, where earthquakes frequently strike.

The Project on Capacity Development for Disaster Risk Management in Central America named "BOSAI," which aims to share knowledge on disaster risk reduction and reduce disaster risks at the local community level, has achieved significant results in the region (see also "Project Introduction Column" on page 80). Moreover, Japan has been assisting the Caribbean countries from perspectives other than those based on per capita income, to overcome the unique vulnerabilities of small island developing states against natural disasters and climate change. In addition to developing disaster-resilient bridges and emergency communications systems and supplying equipment that contributes to strengthening the capacity to cope with disasters, Japan also dispatches experts who are specialized in flood control and soil erosion control.

Moreover, Japan has been providing cooperation on a wide range of environmental issues in the region, including assistance for scientific and technological research on climate phenomena, conservation of biodiversity, conservation of the Amazon rainforest using remote sensing, and construction of waste disposal facilities. In the area of promoting energy conservation and reducing greenhouse gas emissions, Japan provides support for introducing solar power generation in many countries. In 2021, Japan provided ODA loans to the Dominican Republic and Paraguay to increase energy efficiency (see also "Stories from the Field" on page 109).

### ■ Economic and Social Infrastructure Development

In order to promote economic and social infrastructure development of the Latin American and the Caribbean region, Japan actively engages in developing water supply



Distributing school meals through Japan's support in hurricane-affected areas in Nicaragua (Photo: WFP)

and sewerage infrastructure in metropolitan regions and the countryside. In addition, Japan has worked on spreading its terrestrial digital broadcasting system (ISDB-T format) through public-private collaboration. As of December 2021, 14 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean adopted the Japanese system. For these countries, Japan provides technical transfer and carries out human resources development to achieve smooth introduction of the system.

#### ■ Initiatives in the Areas of Health and Medical Care, and Education

Japan also provides various kinds of cooperation for Latin American and the Caribbean countries in the fields of health and medical care. In this region, due to the underdeveloped medical system, non-communicable diseases, infectious diseases such as HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis, and tropical diseases are still serious public health concerns. Furthermore, the spread of COVID-19 urges the establishment of a system capable of rapid and accurate diagnosis and treatment (see also “Master Techniques from Japan to the World” on page 60 for the efforts toward achieving UHC in Ecuador).

In 2021, Japan provided grant aid in response to COVID-19, which includes the development of cold chain systems <sup>18</sup> in Cuba, Guatemala, Haiti, Jamaica,

Nicaragua, Paraguay, and Venezuela. Japan also extended loans to the Dominican Republic and Honduras to support their response to COVID-19, and provided approximately 500,000 doses of vaccines manufactured in Japan to Nicaragua. Furthermore, in addition to such bilateral cooperation, Japan has provided assistance for capacity building and the supply of goods through the Japanese Trust Funds at the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB).

Japan has also continued efforts for Nikkei communities in various countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, such as providing support for the welfare facilities of the Nikkei communities, accepting trainees, and dispatching Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCVs).

Assistance in the sector of education is extremely important for Latin American and the Caribbean countries, where poverty still persists and education budgets are inadequate. Japan implemented technical cooperation for mathematics and arithmetic education in 2021.

#### ■ South-South Cooperation and Cooperation with Regional Organizations

Brazil, Mexico, Chile, and Argentina have achieved results in South-South cooperation\*, and Japan has signed partnership programs with these countries. Based on such partnerships, Japan collaborated with Argentina in 2021, for example, to provide assistance to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Latin America, as well as in Africa. In Chile, Japan conducts human resources development programs through triangular cooperation in the field of disaster risk reduction and has succeeded in training 5,169 people, exceeding the initial target of 4,000 (see “Project Introduction Column” on page 107). In Brazil, as a result of many years of cooperation from Japan, the Japanese-style community police system has become widespread. Utilizing this experience and based on the framework of triangular cooperation, Brazilian experts



State Minister for Foreign Affairs Odawara receiving a courtesy call from Mr. Santiago Pardo, Ambassador of Colombia to Japan (November 2021)



Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs Uesugi receiving a courtesy call from Ms. Shorna-Kay M. Richards, Ambassador of Jamaica to Japan (December 2021)

<sup>18</sup> See 2 on page 2.

are currently dispatched to Central American countries to pass on knowhow in the field of community policing.

Furthermore, Japan cooperates with regional organizations such as the Central American Integration System (SICA) and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) to provide more effective and efficient support and formulate regional projects related to common development issues in the Latin American and Caribbean region.

#### ■ Assistance for Central American Migrants and Venezuelan Refugees and Migrants

Central America faces the problem of migrants who aim to immigrate to the United States and Mexico to flee from poverty and insecurity in their country. Japan provides support in the areas of poverty, security, and disasters, which are the root causes of their migration. Moreover, in cooperation with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and World Food Programme (WFP), Japan provides assistance to Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras for the promotion of voluntary repatriation of migrants, prevention of outflow of migrants, and social reintegration of returnees.

Moreover, due to the deterioration of the economic and social conditions in Venezuela, approximately 6 million Venezuelan refugees and migrants have flowed mainly to neighboring countries as of December 2021. This has caused the deterioration in the living conditions of the host community residents and the instability of the region, and

the lack of adequate response has been a challenge. With regard to Colombia and Peru, which have been receiving displaced Venezuelan people, Japan has provided social integration support such as protection for vulnerable people and vocational training, through the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and IOM. In addition, due to the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Venezuela, Japan also cooperates through the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to support routine immunizations for children and expectant and nursing mothers in the country.



Checking the conditions of flowing water in the water supply system completed with Japan's support in the Dominican Republic



#### Glossary

##### South-South cooperation (Triangular cooperation)

South-South cooperation refers to cooperation provided by relatively advanced developing countries to other developing countries, utilizing their own development experiences, human resources, skills, funds, and knowledge. In many cases, the cooperation, primarily technical cooperation, is conducted in countries that have similar natural environments, linguistic, cultural, and economic circumstances, and are facing similar development processes. When supported by donors or international organizations, such South-South cooperation between developing countries is referred to as "triangular cooperation."



## Chile

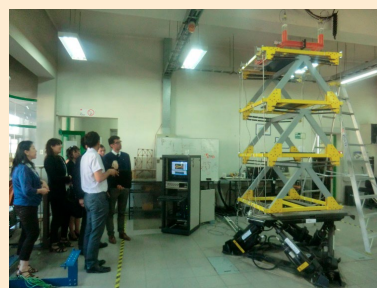
# Disaster Risk Reduction Training Program for Latin America and the Caribbean (KIZUNA Project)

## Technical Cooperation Project (March 2015 – March 2020)



Chile is located on the Pacific Ring of Fire,<sup>\*1</sup> just like Japan, and earthquakes, tsunamis, volcanic eruptions and other natural disasters often occur. In 1960, after the Great Chilean Earthquake, the largest earthquake ever on record, tsunamis hit all of the areas around the Pacific Rim, and there was significant damage in Japan as well. Given these circumstances, since the 1960s, Japan has provided cooperation to the Government of Chile in disaster risk reduction (DRR), through the improvement of disaster observation technologies, revision of seismic standards, human resources and organizations development for DRR, and other efforts.

Among them, the KIZUNA project is a triangular cooperation<sup>\*2</sup> project that intends to spread the techniques and knowledge in the field of DRR that Japan and Chile have cultivated in Latin America and the Caribbean, and to build an international network through sharing the techniques and experience from different countries. Experts were dispatched from Japan and they collaborated with the Government of Chile, universities, local communities, and others to implement training and seminars for researchers and officials



Trainees on a visit to an earthquake-resistant engineering laboratory (Photo: JICA)

in Latin America and the Caribbean. As a result, 5,169 experts and officials were trained across the region, greatly exceeding the initial target of 2,000, and they have become human resources responsible for DRR in their own country, resulting in a significant contribution to networking within the region.

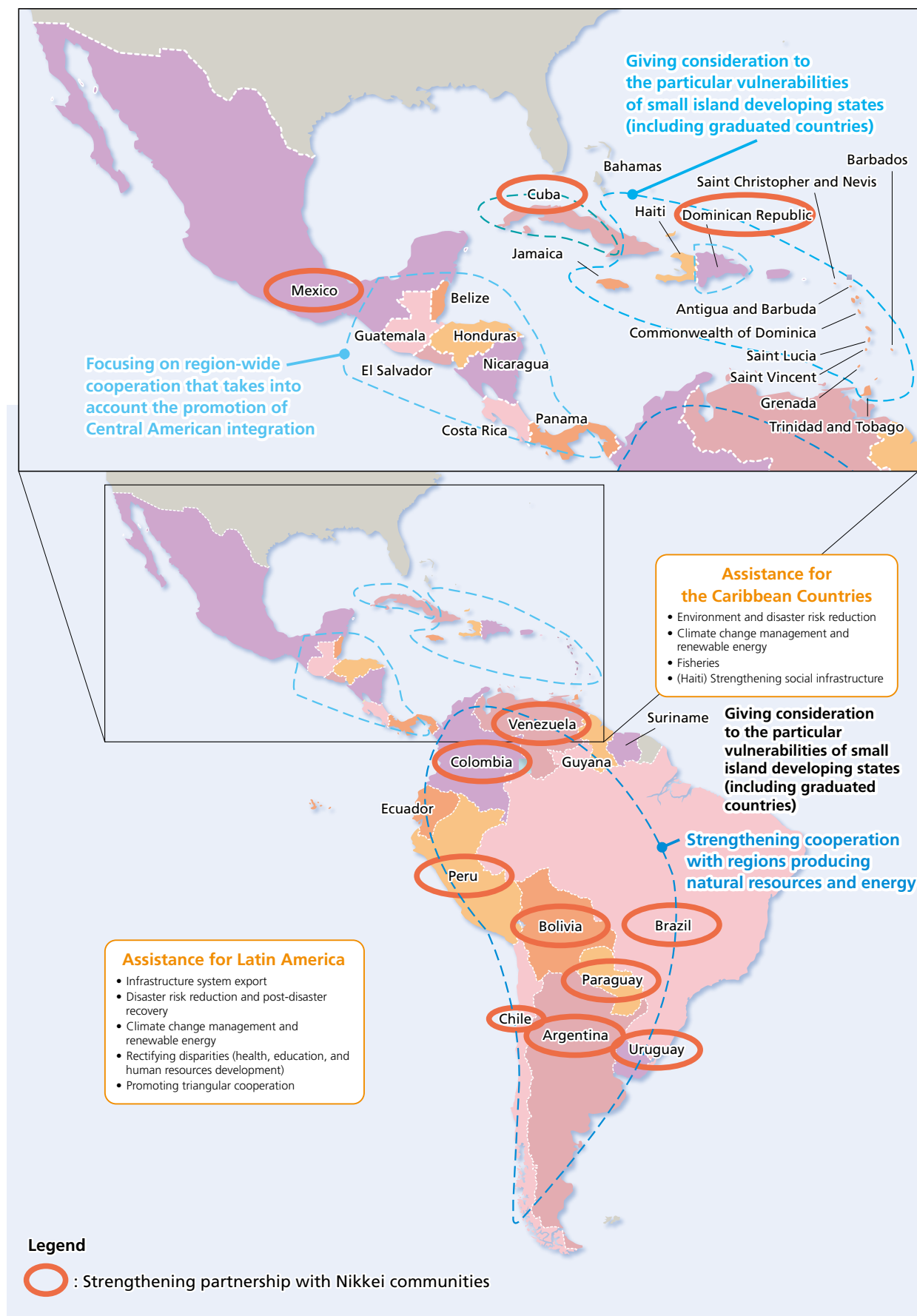
The KIZUNA project is highly valued by the Government of Chile, and it is a model case where Japan's cooperation not only greatly contributed to the strengthening of Chile's DRR systems but also developed into cooperation for Latin America and the Caribbean. A successor project was also commenced from 2021, and going forward, it is expected to lead to the further enhancement of DRR measures throughout Latin America and the Caribbean.



First aid and rescue training implemented with the cooperation of firefighters from Japan (Photo: JICA)

<sup>\*1</sup> A volcanic belt that circles the rim of the Pacific Ocean, and is the collective name of various volcanic archipelagos, including the Japanese archipelago, and volcanic groups.

<sup>\*2</sup> See the glossary on page 106.



## Stories from the Field

### Making Use of Japanese Techniques and Expertise to Improve the Environment in Bolivia!

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—The success of ECO-TOMODACHI created by ex-JICA trainees—



In Bolivia, tourism areas such as the Uyuni Salt Flats located at an altitude of over 3,000 meters above sea level are littered with trash brought in by tourists and lack available toilets. Improving the environment and sanitary conditions in these areas has become an urgent issue. The JICA Bolivia Office cooperates to improve these environments with the aim of revitalizing tourism, which has slumped in the wake of the global spread of COVID-19. In specific terms, JICA works with the Departmental Autonomous Government of La Paz to support the conservation of tourism resources as well as the establishment of a foundation for sustainable development, including training in sanitary management for tourism operators.



ECO-TOMODACHI's logo (Photo: JICA)

As part of this support, six Bolivians who had received JICA training in Japan formed a group called "ECO-TOMODACHI (Tomodachi means friend in Japanese)" in 2017. ECO-TOMODACHI carries out a variety of activities such as waste management, improvement of sanitary environments, and promotion of environmental education across Bolivia in cooperation with local public entities, private companies, NPOs and others. It promotes sustainable tourism development as well.

Having studied waste management and the composting\*1 of organic waste in JICA's Knowledge Co-Creation Program (KCCP), they are applying the techniques and expertise acquired in Japan to Bolivia and working on their practical implementation and dissemination in a way suitable for the local environment, with JICA's support for their activities. ECO-TOMODACHI is not limited to JICA returnees, therefore the network has expanded considerably and Japanese technology for waste management and improvement of sanitary conditions has been utilized throughout Bolivia.

Mr. Edwin Encinas, a founding member of ECO-TOMODACHI who proactively promotes activities to spread waste management and composting, said as follows: "Legislation on waste management in Bolivia's local public entities was enacted only in 2015, and initially there was a lack of awareness in the country, and we had difficulties in gaining the cooperation of residents. Nevertheless, with the support of JICA, and through steady progress, more local public entities and residents are getting involved in waste management and reduction." He continued, "Japanese techniques for waste management and composting require some time and effort, however the approach itself is simple and is characterized by a high level of adaptability to natural environments. It is very pleasing and enjoyable to let people know that they can turn waste into resources through cyclical composting and use it to grow vegetables."

Ms. WATANABE Mariko, a JICA Bolivia Office staff, also said about their future activities, "While rolling out promotion, technical



Mr. Encinas and a compost consultant (ex-Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteer) carrying out training on composting for residents involved in the tourism industry in Uyuni City (Photo: JICA)

cooperation, and tourism strategy proposals for environmental improvements, we try to establish an appropriate support framework through exchanges of views with local residents. As one of our environmental education initiatives, we have also worked with Japanese and Nikkei companies, local public entities, and ECO-TOMODACHI to develop a mobile phone app to learn composting methods. We hope to continue cooperation schemes with Japanese and Nikkei companies while listening to the voices of people in various locations."

Furthermore, the Bolivian Mountain Guides Association and the Socorro Andino Boliviano rescue team work in cooperation with ECO-TOMODACHI and JICA to improve waste disposal and toilet conditions on tourist routes, in response to the increased numbers of mountain-climbers from within and outside Bolivia. Through environmental education to mountaineering guides and residents at the foot of mountains, the Association and the rescue team aim to recycle human waste by composting it to use it for agricultural purposes. There is also a high awareness among the residents of the highland areas that are becoming tourist destinations. "People are proactively cooperating with activities, towards post-COVID-19 tourism development," said Daniel Zaconeta, director of Academia Aventura, a tourism school, expressing his hopes for the program. As a member of ECO-TOMODACHI, Mr. Zaconeta works with JICA to improve the environment in tourism areas.

Mr. Patrick Prieto, Chair of the Bolivian JICA alumni association and also of the JICA alumni association in Latin America and the Caribbean, said about the future outlook as follows: "The number of the JICA returnees in Bolivia is around 6,000. They are sharing their knowledge and experiences acquired in Japan with people around the country. Following the efforts to improve waste management and sanitary conditions together with local public entities, we will utilize our experience in realizing environmental improvements in the tourist destinations as well. We also hope to share our experiences of ECO-TOMODACHI in Bolivia with other parts of Latin America and the Caribbean, which has around 70,000 JICA returnees, and carry out activities similar to ECO-TOMODACHI in other countries." The continued success of ECO-TOMODACHI, which aims to utilize Japanese technologies to create a recycling-based society together with JICA is highly expected.



Sharing composting techniques among ECO-TOMODACHI members specialized in waste disposal (Photo: JICA)

\*1 Composting means to produce useful compost by using the effects of microorganisms to ferment and break down organic matter such as food waste, fallen leaves, and sewage sludge.