

4 Latin America and the Caribbean

As a major force in the international arena, Latin America and the Caribbean region share values and principles with Japan, such as freedom, democracy, and the rule of law. In addition, it has an enormous emerging market with a population of approximately 660 million ¹⁶ and a regional GDP of approximately \$7.3 trillion, ¹⁷ that is strategically important from diplomatic and economic perspectives. Moreover, as a supplier of minerals, energy, and food, and particularly given the current circumstances where the stability of global food and energy supplies is a major challenge, it has become increasingly important in terms of strengthening supply chains and economic security in the international community including Japan. In addition, this region has the world's largest Nikkei community (Japanese immigrants and their descendants) with a population of approximately 3.1 million, and there are also descendants who crossed the ocean to come to Japan and support Japanese industry. Through the personal and historic bond, Japan has maintained a stable and friendly relationship with the region for a long time.

On the other hand, the Latin American and the Caribbean region still has major developmental needs to be addressed as common challenges facing the international community, including climate change, disaster risk reduction, vulnerabilities in the areas of health and medical care, and poverty, etc. There are also many countries in this region having vulnerabilities particular to small island states. In addition, the region is confronted by challenges, such as migrants who aim to immigrate to North America to flee from poverty and insecurity in their countries, Venezuelan refugees fleeing to neighboring countries due to the worsening political, economic, and social situations, and the situation in Haiti where the domestic political, economic, and security environments have continued to deteriorate since the murder of the president in July 2021.

Japan has deepened trust and friendship as partners with Latin American and Caribbean countries, under the keyword “juntos” (meaning “together” in both Spanish and Portuguese). As part of such foreign policy, Japan provides assistance unique to Japan (such as “quality infrastructure,” disaster risk reduction and mitigation utilizing Japan’s experiences, clean energy technology, “Visible Japanese Development Cooperation” through technical cooperation by volunteers and others) in ways that consider each country’s income level, situations, and needs. Through such assistance, Japan strives to help the region realize resilient and sustainable development.

Japan also supports and leverages the Nikkei people and their communities that form the foundation of strong ties with Japan, and is further strengthening its multi-layered network of human resources based on trust (see also Part V, Section 1 (6) on page 153 regarding support for Nikkei communities in Latin America and the Caribbean).

Japan's Efforts

The “Diplomatic Initiative toward Latin America and the Caribbean,” announced in February 2024, seeks to strengthen cooperation in areas of increasing importance in international arenas, including oceans, gender, and disarmament and non-proliferation, while pursuing “diplomacy through diverse networking” as an approach to complement and strengthen historically strong relationships. In 2025, various efforts were also implemented in development cooperation to materialize the “Diplomatic Initiative toward Latin America and the Caribbean.”

In 2025, marking the 130th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Japan and Brazil, and designated as the “Japan-Brazil Friendship Exchange Year,” Japan and Brazil, on the occasion of President Lula’s state visit to Japan, announced a series of cooperation documents, including the “Strategic and Global Partnership Action Plan Japan-Brazil (2025–2030).” The two sides also confirmed their intention to further cooperate in addressing urgent issues facing the international community and in global governance reforms, including the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) reform. In addition, with Paraguay and Guatemala, leaders of the respective countries who visited Japan as guests of honor during the Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan, the two sides concurred with then Prime Minister Ishiba to upgrade their bilateral relationships to “strategic partners.”

The year 2025 marks the 90th anniversary of Japan’s establishment of diplomatic relations with five Central American countries (Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica). To commemorate this occasion, Japan and the Central American Integration System (SICA) designated 2025 as the “Japan-SICA Friendship Year 2025” and held commemorative events in Japan and SICA member states aimed at deepening exchanges in various fields including politics, economics, and culture.

Through these efforts, Japan continues to deepen its engagement with the Latin American and the Caribbean region.

¹⁶ World Bank website (as of December 2025) <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL?end=2024&locations=ZJ&start=1989>

¹⁷ World Bank website (as of December 2025) <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.CD?end=2024&locations=ZJ&start=1989>

■ 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, drawing on its expertise and experience in disaster risk reduction.

Japan provides assistance utilizing its expertise in disaster risk reduction to the Latin American countries facing the Pacific Ocean, such as Ecuador, Mexico, Nicaragua, and Peru, where earthquakes frequently strike, as well as to Brazil, which faces a high risk of landslides caused by heavy rainfall. In April 2025, Japan provided emergency relief goods through JICA to Bolivia, which suffered from flooding. For Caribbean countries, Japan delivers various assistance and helps them overcome the particular vulnerability of small island states to natural disasters. In recent years, Japan has been contributing financially to the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA), dispatching an expert in disaster risk reduction, and helping to enhance the capacity for formulating disaster risk reduction policies in the region.



A pump system and water storage tanks utilizing a new water source developed in a rural area of Costa Rica through the Grant Assistance for Grass-Roots Human Security Projects

Moreover, Japan is engaged in a wide range of cooperation in the efforts to address environmental issues in the region, including scientific and technological research on climate phenomena, the conservation of biodiversity, and the protection of the Amazon rainforest using remote sensing. As part of the “Japan-Brazil Green Partnership Initiative (GPI),” launched in May 2024 to promote cooperation on the environment, climate change, and sustainable development, at the Japan-Brazil Summit Meeting in March 2025, Japan decided to advance cooperation utilizing Co-creation for common agenda initiative centered on the two pillars of degraded pastureland recovery and countermeasures against illegal deforestation in the Amazon (see Part V, Section 2 (2) on

page 160 regarding the Co-creation for common agenda initiative). Specifically, Japan will conduct demonstration surveys aimed at simultaneously improving productivity and ensuring sustainability through the recovery of degraded pastureland without additional deforestation while mobilizing private capital, and will also strengthen countermeasures and management capabilities related to illegal logging through the detection and prediction of deforestation using radar satellites and AI technology. This supports Brazil’s sustainable and productive growth and contributes to the stabilization of the world’s food supply, including for Japan. Furthermore, under the GPI, Japan has contributed to the Amazon Fund as the first Asian country, with the aim of preventing deforestation in the Amazon; and conducts cooperation in disaster risk reduction and promotion of triangular cooperation, as well as in agroforestry,¹⁸ a sustainable agriculture and forestry method that restores forests and maintains forest ecosystems by planting a wide variety of plants together.

■ 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 and sewerage infrastructure in metropolitan regions and the countryside. In 2025, Japan invited trainees from Antigua and Barbuda, Saint Lucia, the Commonwealth of Dominica, and Barbados to Japan and conducted training programs on water purification and water supply technologies. Japan is also providing support for water resource management, the reduction of leakage in water supply systems, and the development of water treatment facilities in Cuba, Nicaragua, and Paraguay.

In Panama, Japan is supporting the development of urban transportation Line 3 to address the worsening traffic congestion between the city center and peripheral residential areas, as well as global warming caused by carbon dioxide emitted by vehicles and air pollution from vehicle exhaust.

In July 2025, the Government of Japan launched the “Public-Private Partnership Platform of Latin American and the Caribbean Infrastructure Development Alliance (PLACIDA)” and held its inaugural plenary meeting, with the aim of supporting Japanese companies in expanding into the Latin American and the Caribbean region. This initiative aims to collect, analyze, and build momentum for the promotion of infrastructure development overseas, while enhancing Japan’s presence through strengthened collaboration between the public and private sectors. It emphasizes the collection, analysis, and dissemination of information on local conditions and various policies in the region through public-private

¹⁸ Agroforestry: a form of agriculture and forestry that involves planting trees and raising livestock and growing crops in the spaces between the trees.

collaboration, with the objective of building momentum for infrastructure expansion in Latin America and the Caribbean and increasing Japan's presence there.

In addition, Japan works on spreading its terrestrial digital broadcasting system (ISDB-T)¹⁹ through public-private collaboration. As of October 2025, 14 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean adopted the Japanese system. For these countries, Japan supports technical transfer and human resources development to achieve smooth introduction of the system.

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

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 for the Latin American and the Caribbean region. Therefore, establishing a system enabling rapid and accurate diagnosis and treatment is needed.

In Bolivia, improving medical equipment was a particularly urgent issue. In February 2025, Japan decided to provide Bolivia's public medical facilities, which had previously been constructed with Japan's support, with medical equipment manufactured by Japanese companies. In Honduras, which has a high cancer mortality rate, in September 2024, the signing procedure of a letter of intent on trilateral cooperation in medicine (radiotherapy) by the Government of Japan, Honduras and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) was completed and Japan, with the aim to improve access to radiotherapy for the people of Honduras, is also providing cancer treatment equipment to the Honduran government.

Japan makes continuous efforts for the 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 JOCVs.

Assistance in the sector of education is extremely important for Latin American and the Caribbean countries, where poverty still persists and education is under-budgeted. Based on the idea that education is crucial as an "investment in people," Japan has been providing El Salvador with technical cooperation in mathematics and arithmetic education for more than 15 years. Additionally, since the spread of COVID-19, Japan has provided El Salvador, which prioritizes the promotion of digitalization in the education sector from the perspective of improving the quality of education and ensuring access to learning opportunities regardless of location, with equipment to promote the production of digital teaching materials. Japan has also been

providing technical cooperation to Nicaragua since 2023 in the revision of textbooks and teachers' guides to enable children to become familiar with arithmetic in the country's primary education.



A JOCV conducting environmental education at a primary school in Belize (Photo: JICA)

■ Assistance for Central American Migrants and Venezuelan Refugees and Migrants

The Central American region faces the problem of migrants who seek to immigrate to the United States and Mexico, fleeing poverty and insecurity in their country. Japan provides support for the measures to address the root causes of their migration such as poverty, insecurity, and disasters. Moreover, in cooperation with the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the World Food Programme (WFP), and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Japan provides El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Mexico with assistance for the promotion of voluntary repatriation of migrants, prevention of outflow of migrants, and social reintegration of returnees.

Due to the deterioration of the economic and social conditions in Venezuela, approximately 7.77 million refugees and migrants have fled mainly to neighboring countries as of May 2024. The lack of adequate response has been a challenge, causing deterioration of the living conditions for the host community residents and regional instability. Therefore, since 2024, Japan has provided assistance through the UNHCR to Ecuador, Colombia, Brazil, and Peru, which have been hosting displaced persons from Venezuela. This assistance is aimed at providing humanitarian assistance and promoting economic and social inclusion of refugees and migrants by strengthening their protection and supporting the establishment of their livelihoods. In addition, in March 2025, Japan decided to provide assistance through UNHCR for Venezuelan refugee and migrant women

¹⁹ See 19 on page 39.

in Brazil, including vocational training, job placement assistance, and entrepreneurship support through training in microfinance and marketing.

■ Support for Haiti in Response to its Worsening Security Situation

In Haiti, especially since 2021, there have been frequent occurrences of violence and kidnappings against civilians by armed groups, which have become more influential. Nevertheless, the Haitian National Police (HNP), which should play a central role in improving security in the country, is short of both personnel and equipment. In view of this situation, a resolution was adopted at the United Nations Security Council in September 2025 authorizing the transition of the Multinational Security Support (MSS) mission in Haiti to the Gang Suppression Force (GSF).

In Haiti, the influx of weapons and illegal drugs, human trafficking, and the emergence of irregular migrants have combined to make the deterioration of security and humanitarian situations recognized not only as a domestic problem but also as a serious international concern. Japan has been assisting in improving the security and humanitarian situation in Haiti, in cooperation with the United States and other G7 countries, the Organization of American States (OAS), and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). In addition, since October 2024, Japan has been supporting the promotion of gender equality in the country by protecting and supporting women who have suffered gender-based violence, taking preventive measures, and promoting the empowerment of women.

■ South-South Cooperation / Triangular Cooperation

There are countries in Latin America and the Caribbean which have built a strong track record in South-South cooperation.* Japan has developed partnership programs on triangular cooperation* with Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Mexico. Under the “Diplomatic Initiative toward Latin America and the Caribbean,” Japan places emphasis on “diplomacy through diverse networking” by triangular cooperation. Japan collaborated with Argentina in 2024, for example, to provide assistance to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Latin America and the

Caribbean. In addition, Japan cooperated with Mexico in introducing production systems for non-traditional tropical fruits in northern countries of Central America. In Chile, the KIZUNA Project (Disaster Risk Reduction Training Program) was implemented through 2020. This project aims to develop Chile as a hub for disaster risk reduction training in the Latin American and Caribbean region, building on Japan-Chile disaster risk reduction cooperation that has continued since 1960. Over five years, from 2015 to 2020, more than 5,000 people from 27 countries participated in training programs with experts dispatched from Japan. A successor project, the Project for Building Resilience and Sustainable Societies for Disasters in Latin America and the Caribbean (KIZUNA II), is currently underway. In Brazil, many years of cooperation from Japan resulted in the widespread use of the Japanese-style community police system. Building on this experience and the framework of triangular cooperation, Brazilian experts are currently dispatched to Central American countries to pass on their know-how in the field of community policing. Furthermore, Japan and Brazil are collaborating to conduct training programs, including vocational training, for Portuguese-speaking African countries.

In order to provide more effective and efficient assistance, Japan works with regional organizations such as SICA and the CARICOM to formulate projects at the regional level related to common development issues in the Latin American and the Caribbean region.

Through such cooperation, Japan will continue to work together with the Latin American and the Caribbean region toward a resilient and sustainable future.



State Minister for Foreign Affairs Horii (second from right), who visited Mexico in January 2026, exchanging views with Executive Director Del Moral of the Mexican Agency for International Development Cooperation (third from right)



Glossary

South-South Cooperation / Triangular cooperation

South-South cooperation refers to cooperation implemented among developing countries, utilizing knowledge, skills, resources, technology, and other assets. When such South-South cooperation is supported by developed countries, donors, or international organizations, it is referred to as triangular cooperation.

MASTER TECHNIQUES 4

from
Japan to
the World

ODA Using Japan's Space Technology Opens Up Paraguay's Future – Strengthening Capacity in Disaster Risk Reduction and Agriculture and Livestock through the Utilization of Satellite Data –



Paraguay, a landlocked country in Latin America, has agriculture and livestock as its principal industries, but forest fires caused by slash-and-burn farming and flood damage due to the effects of climate change have been growing increasingly serious.

Against this backdrop, responding to a cooperation request from the Government of Paraguay, JICA implemented the “Project for Management of Space Programs Applied to Socioeconomic Development,” the first technical cooperation project targeting a space agency in the Latin American and the Caribbean region, launched in 2023. The purpose of the project is to strengthen the capacity of the Paraguayan Space Agency (AEP)^{*1} and to contribute to socioeconomic development, including the strengthening of disaster risk reduction capacity and improvement of agricultural productivity through the utilization of satellite data. The initiative was led by Japan Space Systems (J-spacesystems), a general incorporated foundation with expertise in space technology, in collaboration with Paraguayan counterparts, as well as with technical support from PASCO CORPORATION and the Japan Space Forum. Dr. NAKAMURA Shinsaku of J-spacesystems explains: “At the time, AEP had a certain level of analytical capacity for satellite data, but the challenge was that even when satellite data was obtained after a disaster, such as a flood, the organization was in a lacking position to practically utilize the analysis results. Practical utilization required not only satellite data but also ground-truth information obtainable at observation sites, making it necessary to carefully train staff in field survey methods.”

Recognizing that a further challenge impeding the practical application of satellite data analysis results was a low level of coordination among relevant ministries and agencies, the project also established working groups between AEP and related ministries and agencies, covering the disaster risk reduction and agriculture and livestock sectors, which are priority areas for Paraguay. These groups worked to identify issues in each sector and develop applications and user manuals for satellite data utilization based on those issues.

As a pilot initiative in the disaster risk reduction sector, flood damage simulations utilizing satellite data were conducted in areas that frequently suffer inundation from river flooding, and disaster countermeasures such as disaster risk analysis and hazard mapping were carried out. Paraguay's National Emergency Secretariat requested that these measures be extended to other regions as well, and discussions are currently underway in the working group in parallel with the formulation of evacuation plans.

In the agriculture and livestock sector as well, while there is



Reviewing satellite data analyzed prior to the field survey practicum (Photo: J-spacesystems)

demand for improving the production efficiency of soybeans, a key export crop for Paraguay, and for countermeasures against disaster risks such as droughts and floods, there is also a need to diversify agricultural products to avoid excessive dependence on soybeans, and technical support for smallholder farmers, who account for approximately 90% of all farmers, had been a persistent challenge. In response, training sessions on the use of satellite and meteorological data were conducted, and by remotely monitoring the growth stages of soybean crops, a basis was established for determining optimal fertilization and irrigation timing, and for improving the accuracy of yield forecasts and cultivated land area assessments, paving the way forward for sustainable agricultural development. From the perspective of agricultural diversification, application to other crops, such as tomato cultivation, is also progressing and plans are under way to provide smallholder farmers with cultivation guidance based on satellite data analysis to help improve yields and quality.

The project also devoted significant effort to the development of Paraguayan small satellites and the cultivation of human resources in space-related fields. Exchanges between Japanese companies and public and private sector stakeholders in Paraguay have fostered even deeper collaboration toward the development of the space industry in both countries. Dr. Nakamura looks forward with high hopes to the contributions of young engineers: “It is important to increase the number of professionals who can apply satellite data across multiple fields by drawing on the technologies and knowledge gained in Japan. This will enrich the lives of citizens and lead to solutions for a variety of challenges.” He adds with conviction: “I hope Paraguay will become a hub for small satellite development and operation in Latin America and the Caribbean.”

Building on the outcomes of this project, in May 2024, during then Prime Minister Kishida's visit to Paraguay, the launch of the “Japan-Paraguay Space Cooperation Program” was announced, with the aim of advancing space sector cooperation by mobilizing both nations' industry, academia, and government through a combination of Japan's various forms of cooperation. To promote this program, a memorandum of understanding on cooperation in space development was signed by JICA, JAXA, and AEP. Going forward, Japan is expected to continue “co-creation” to address challenges using its space technologies through collaboration among industry, academia, and government, while expanding international networks with other countries.



Comparing crop growth conditions with satellite data analysis results during a field survey practicum (Photo: J-spacesystems)

^{*1} Abbreviation of Agencia Espacial del Paraguay.