

**Address by Mr. TAKEI Shunsuke, State Minister for
Foreign Affairs of Japan,
At the Thirty-ninth Session of Economic Commission for Latin
America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)
(October 26th, 2022, Buenos Aires)**

(Introduction)

Honorable ministers,

Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates and colleagues,

At the outset, I would like to express my congratulations to Mr. Salazar-Xirinachs on your appointment to the Executive Secretary of ECLAC this October. I would also like to convey my sincere gratitude to the government of Argentina and ECLAC Secretariat for their efforts in hosting this 39th session of ECLAC.

(Japan-LAC: Partners Who Grow Together)

I came all the way from Japan to Argentina to reiterate Japan's determination to work together and discuss the way forward with Latin America and the Caribbean countries, as a partner to drive the sustainable growth in the LAC region.

Currently, the world is facing major economic and political challenges. Global inflation, unstable energy supplies, an increasingly severe global security, including Russia's aggression against Ukraine, and the deepening climate crisis -- these issues hinder us from sustainable economic growth but foster economic inequality.

LAC is no exception to these challenges. Yet, especially now that we recognize the importance of a resilient and reliable supply chain more than ever, LAC is increasingly drawing attention as a stable region with shared values and rich potential.

To promote inclusive and sustainable development and realize better recovery together with LAC countries, Japan is focused on the following three key aspects.

(Cooperation to Reinforce Resilience)

First, cooperation to reinforce social resilience. It is critical to strengthen response capacity to infectious diseases and natural disaster as well as social infrastructure.

Japan has been contributing to the region through various sectors, including infectious disease control and capacity building for disaster risk reduction, and will continue cooperating in these areas.

Also, the COVID-19 pandemic hit LAC particularly hard. From the early stage of the outbreak to this day, Japan has provided medical equipment and assistance to establish vaccination systems as well as highly concessional loans and cooperation through the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), providing support in accordance with the needs of each country and going beyond the usual response in light of income levels. Japan will continue to cooperate in strengthening health systems in the region.

The gravity of challenges each country faces should not be defined solely by GDP per capita. In light of the vulnerabilities particular to small island-states such as CARICOM countries and the economic and social situations of LAC countries, Japan will continue its support based on individual needs, not merely on GDP per capita, including those graduated from the OECD DAC's list.

(Cooperation for Growth)

The second pillar is the cooperation for growth. Our Prime Minister KISHIDA advocates “New Form of Capitalism” as an initiative to achieve both economic growth and sustainable development, and emphasizes digital transformation (DX) and green transformation (GX) as concrete means to achieve this goal.

(DX)

Digitalization is a pivotal key for inclusive growth in addressing educational and medical inequalities and increasing production efficiency.

In Latin America, a region with a high level of digital maturity, Japan has been already cooperating to conduct pilot projects for disaster risk reduction such as tsunami forecast as well as smart medicine and smart agriculture, with the participation of Japanese companies.

While digitalization brings many opportunities, we must pay much attention to the protection of privacy and trade secrets, and to build reliable and safe system. To this end, we will advance concrete cooperation with the LAC countries.

(GX)

Furthermore, Green Transformation, a measure to combat climate change which fosters inequality, is critical for building resilient society, as mentioned earlier, and the sustainable future of the planet.

To accelerate decarbonization, LAC is an important region as many countries have the necessary resources indispensable for electrification, abundant renewable energy for a hydrogen society.

At the same time, Japan has been cooperating for those in need in power generation projects utilizing geothermal, solar and hydraulic power to bolster stable energy supply and to promote use of renewable energy.

Japan places climate change at the forefront as the biggest issue to be overcome through “New Form of Capitalism” and will speed up its efforts to reach the greenhouse gas emissions reduction target for 2030, which aligns with carbon neutrality by 2050, and will lead the global decarbonization. To that end, Japan will steadily implement the financial commitments of up to 70 billion dollars from both the public and private sectors for a 5-year-period from 2021, announced last year.

Also, to conserve the Amazon rainforest, the lungs of the planet, Japan is committed to fight forest fires and monitor illegal logging with the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA), using cutting-age technology including satellites and AI, in collaboration with the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO).

(Strengthening of Industries)

The Japanese government will also encourage Japanese companies to invest in the region as a partner for growth with Latin America. To increase productivity, Japan will continue support in industrial policy making, strengthening competitiveness of small medium-sized enterprises and women’s entrepreneurship.

(ECLAC)

The pivotal basis in addressing all these issues is solid research and analysis of situations based on regional statistics. In this regard, ECLAC plays an important role in policymaking and international cooperation for the development of the LAC region. Japan has cooperated through research activities and sending experts and will seek further collaboration with ECLAC.

(Cooperation to Strengthen Free and Open International Order)

Third, there are no sustainable and inclusive growth and prosperity without international peace and order. The international community must unite in response to the violations of sovereignty and territorial integrity, as well as unilateral changes to the status quo by force and economic coercion.

LAC is our partner who has a history of winning freedom and democracy and acknowledges the values of the United Nations Charter.

LAC countries have increased trade and investment with countries bordering the Indo-Pacific Ocean, and, with Japan, sharing the fundamental value of “free and open

international order based on the rule of law”, and are our important partners in realizing the “Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)”.

(Conclusion)

Japan and LAC countries have maintained long-standing friendships. We will never forget, for instance, the support by LAC countries in joining the United Nations in 1956. Japan has been cooperating in various fields with this region. However, in addition to the traditional cooperation, Japan would like to confront together with LAC the challenges we face by promoting new cooperation, including those in innovative areas which I have mentioned today.

Thank you very much.