

Country Development Cooperation Policy for Belize

As of April 2022

1. Scope and Objectives of Development Cooperation for the Targeted Country/Region

(1) Scope and Objectives of Development Cooperation for CARICOM (the Caribbean Community¹)

The Caribbean region, where CARICOM Member States including Belize are situated, have many island countries in common with Japan in terms of frequent natural disasters such as hurricanes, earthquakes and floods, as well as the promotion of sustainable use of marine biological resources. In addition to their vulnerability to climate change and natural disasters, the countries of the Caribbean region have small populations and economies, which are heavily weighted towards agriculture, fisheries and tourism, and are easily impacted by external factors. CARICOM Member States share common values with Japan, such as democracy and the rule of law, and have understood and supported Japan's position in the international arena. While Member States often emphasize regional cooperation and take common positions, sharing Japan's experience and knowledge of climate change and natural disasters, and providing Japan's support to overcome common challenges in the region are meaningful from the perspective of further strengthening relations with CARICOM Member States and realizing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

(2) Scope and Objectives of Development Cooperation for Belize

While Belize is a Member State of CARICOM in the Central American region, it also belongs to SICA (Central American Integration System), and has developed multi-layered diplomacy, and the relationship with Belize is important for Japan from the perspective of cooperation with these

¹ CARICOM (Caribbean Community) was established in 1973 as a developmental dissolution of CARIFTA (Caribbean Free Trade Association) with the objective of economic integration of the Caribbean countries, coordination of diplomatic policy and promotion of cooperation in healthcare and educational fields. The Secretariat is located in Georgetown, Guyana, and has 14 Member States and 1 Region.

regional and multilateral organizations. Although Belize is a growing middle-income country, its economy is particularly dependent on tourism and agriculture (sugar, citrus, and bananas) and like other Caribbean countries, is susceptible to external factors, as well as large public debts and budget deficits. The country continues to face problems such as low growth of economy with the tourism industry that was severely affected due to the COVID-19 pandemic, high unemployment, wealth disparity and public safety issues. Under these circumstances, the government is striving for economic recovery by proposing a medium-term recovery plan while implementing austerity measures. Providing support for Belize's economic and social development efforts will develop further bilateral development and strengthen the foundation for future economic relation and exchanges of people, as well as strengthen the relations with CARICOM Member States.

2. Japan's Basic Policy for ODA: Overcoming Vulnerability

In the Japan's Official Development Assistance Charter, the necessary assistance will be extended to countries with special vulnerabilities, such as small island countries, despite having attained a certain level of per capita income, based on their actual development needs and affordability. For CARICOM member countries, based on the first pillar "Cooperation towards sustainable development including overcoming vulnerabilities particular to Small Island Developing States" of the Ministerial Joint Statement between Japan and CARICOM at the Fourth Japan-CARICOM Ministerial-Level Conference held in November 2014, Japan will continue to extend its cooperation utilizing Japanese technologies and expertise. Such cooperation is expected to boost the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Belize.

3. Priority Area

(1) Building a resilient society

Since Belize is prone to damage from hurricanes and floods, countermeasures against climate change and overcoming vulnerability to natural disasters are important issues. In this regard, measures for both prevention and mitigation will be promoted. In addition, support for the sustainable development of urban environments, including human

resource development that focuses on waste management and the establishment of recycling systems. Furthermore, Japan will cooperate to reduce social disparities in education, healthcare, social welfare, and other areas, as well as to support the development of the basis to provide social services in order to improve the quality and foundation of the people's lives. In this regard, special consideration should be given to the socially vulnerable and gender issues.

(2) Sustainable Economic Development

The obstacle of Belize to achieve stable economic growth has been mainly due to widening income inequality and rising rates of unemployment and poverty, which have become urgent issues. In that background, there are economic disparities. Japan will support economic development (agriculture, tourism, private sector, etc.), particularly in regions with lagging development, in an attempt to develop human resources and expand systems to reduce such disparities.

4. Points to note

(1) Note that the digitization and the use of ICTs is a common regional issue in the CARICOM region through the development of a single information and communication technology (ICT) space and the establishment of the CARICOM Digital Agenda 2025.

(2) In the Caribbean region, since efforts are being made mainly by regional organizations such as CARICOM, Japan will promote regional cooperation in comprehensive economic and social development in the CARICOM region, while keeping in mind the possibility of cooperation with regional organizations.

Annex: Rolling plan