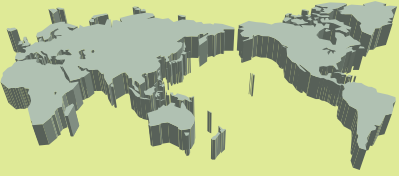
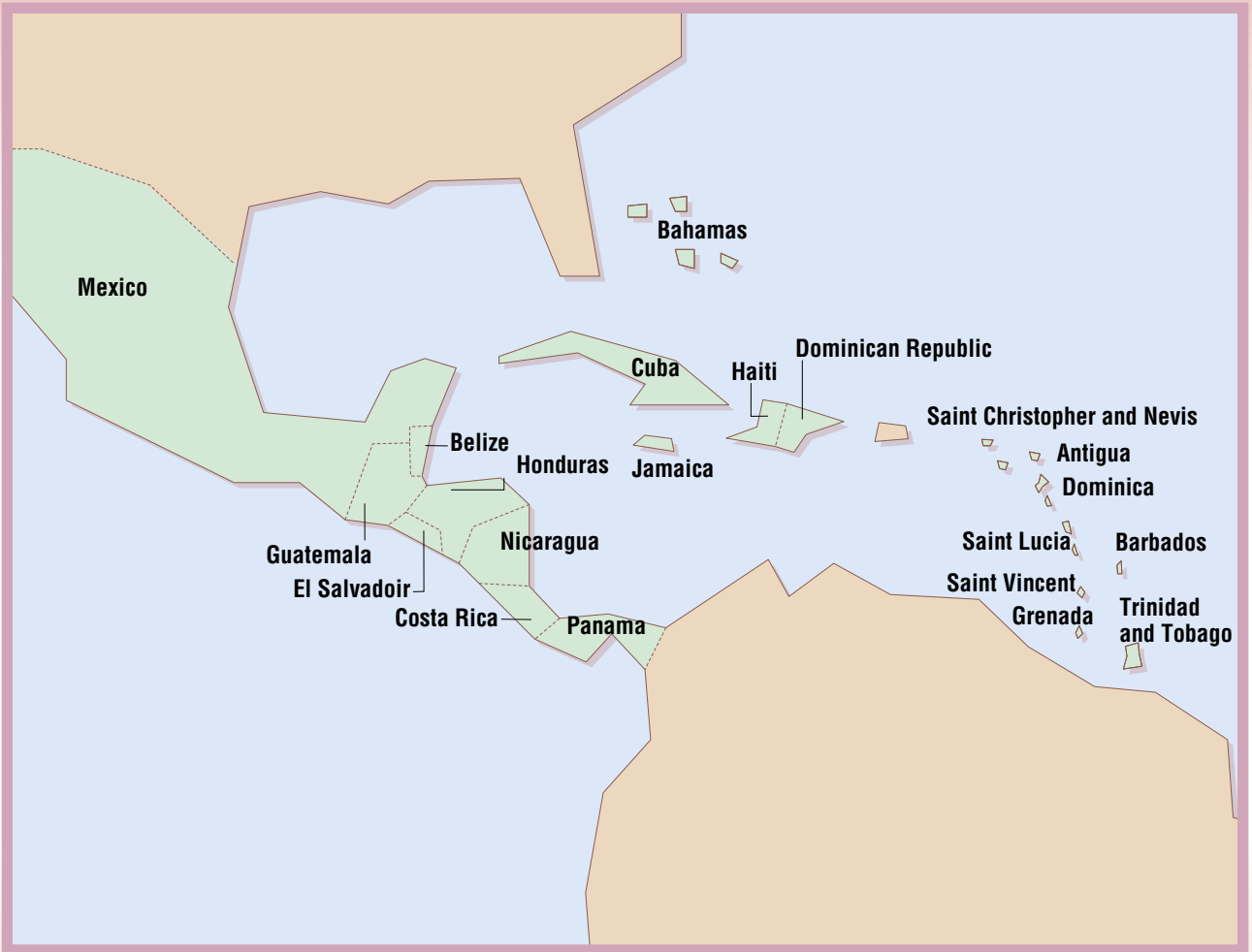


# Chapter 4

## Latin America



# 1. Central America and the Caribbean



# Current State of Development



Workshop held with local residents' participation as part of the JICA Partnership Program (Development of Agriculture and Local Community in South Baja California State) project design study (Mexico).

## Aiming for Small but Fundamentally Strong Countries

The Central American and Caribbean region comprises 21 countries, 8 in Central America and 13 in the Caribbean. It occupies an area of 2.96 million square kilometers, or 2.2% of the world's surface, and is home to 163 million people, or 3% of the world's population. The region has many small countries, of which 8 have land areas of less than 10,000 square kilometers and 9 (or about half the total) have populations of less than 1 million people.

The economies of most of the countries in this region are based on agriculture and are reliant on exports of primary produce. Although tourism is thriving in much of the region, with the exception of Mexico and a few other countries, manufacturing and other industries remain relatively underdeveloped. For

many countries in the region, remittances sent from citizens working abroad are compensating for balance of payments deficits. In addition, many countries are burdened with debts and are still in a process of restoration, even though their situation has improved in recent years, helped by the long economic boom in the United States. Domestic social and economic infrastructure\* must be strengthened in order to realize stable development into the future.

## Need to Firm Up the Bases for Peaceful and Safe Society

The civil conflicts that began in the late 1970s and racked Central America for more than a decade played havoc on the territories and economies of the countries involved. Neighboring countries felt repercussions in the form of inflows of refugees. A process of transition to

### Basic Principles of JICA Aid for Central America and the Caribbean

JICA will continue to provide cooperation in the fields of human resources development and nation-building to countries in Central America and the Caribbean, taking account of the following priority issues and self-help on the part of the recipient countries:

1. Promotion of regional cooperation utilizing South-South cooperation\*

In this region, relatively developed countries and those in difficult conditions are bonded by common languages such as Spanish and English, and there are increasing calls for the promotion of mutual cooperation. In addition, the necessity to improve the efficiency of aid in the world as a whole is intensifying, making support for South-South cooperation in this region an important priority. The countries of the region share many common issues; therefore, JICA will promote models of effective and efficient

regional cooperation projects that can be adapted and utilized by several countries.

2. Post-hurricane development

In October 1998, the Central American and Caribbean region was struck by a hurricane of unprecedented size, and in January 2001, a devastating earthquake hit El Salvador, both of which caused enormous damage. JICA will support the recovery and reconstruction plans of countries that fell victim to these disasters as well as strengthen disaster prevention capacities in this region in which many disasters occur.

3. Environment

Industrial and economic modernization and development, and concentration of population in metropolitan districts have been accompanied in this region by environmental problems such as air and water pollution and the generation of harmful waste products. Dealing with

these problems has become an urgent issue. The region is blessed with forest areas of rich biological diversity\* and beautiful ocean, the preservation of which amounts to the safeguarding of natural assets for humankind.

4. Development after civil conflict

The civil conflicts that racked Central America for several decades severely damaged the region's social and economic infrastructure. Sectors particularly affected or in need of support include water supply and drainage, health and medical care, basic education and other areas bearing on people's everyday lives. Also needed are measures for the development of agriculture to produce a stable supply of food and economic infrastructure improvement in connection with roads, bridges, etc. The establishment of solid democratic institutions and the alleviation of poverty are also important issues that must be tackled.

civilian governments at last began to emerge in the early 1980s, and all the countries of the region, with the sole exception of Cuba, now have democratically elected governments. Furthermore, all the countries of Central America have now achieved peace following the signing of the Guatemalan peace accords in December 1996. However, the damage to the social and economic infrastructure of these countries is still being felt today: many countries have inadequate water supply facilities and are yet to attain adequate health and medical care and basic education. Donor\* assistance is essential if

these countries are to solve these and other problems, including that of accumulated debt.

In addition, in fall 1998, Hurricane Mitch struck the Central American and Caribbean region, wreaking havoc on an unprecedented scale. Furthermore, in January and February 2001, devastating earthquakes struck El Salvador that resulted in massive damage. As demonstrated by these events, the region is highly prone to natural disasters, and cooperation for disaster prevention and reconstruction is strongly called for to overcome the threats posed by such events.

## Tackling Priority Issues in JICA Programs

### Support for South-South Cooperation for Countries Leading the Region

Mexico, the country with the largest land area and population in Central America, has seen solid improvement in its status within the international community since the conclusion of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and its entry into the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in 1994. The nation has already begun its own cooperation, albeit on a small scale, with other countries in Central America and the Caribbean, and it has incorporated South-South cooperation into its policy. Mexico's new president, Mr. Vicente Fox, is making this policy clearer through his proposal for cooperation with the countries of Central America outlined in his "Pueblo-Panama Plan."

Therefore, with emphasis on Mexico, JICA is supporting cooperation with the countries of this region to further the implementation of effective cooperation in Central America and the Caribbean. Since 1998, JICA has been sending experts on South-South cooperation to



Counterparts showing the blood-sucking triatominae, which transmits Chagas' disease, to a resident while stressing the need for its eradication (Guatemala).

Mexico, and since July 2000 it has dispatched a team of experts that is assisting in efforts to strengthen the organization of the Mexican Institute for International Cooperation (IMEXCI), which could be considered as Mexico's equivalent to JICA. JICA is also implementing various third-country training\* programs in Mexico, among which is a training program on "mechanics" that commenced in 2000 to foster technicians for countries in the region. In addition, JICA has



A town affected by the earthquake (El Salvador).

dispatched third-country experts\* on as many as 36 occasions.

The priority aid fields for Mexico (as provided for in agreements reached between Japan and Mexico) include South-South cooperation in addition to the environment, health care, industrial and regional development and education in occupational skills. In March 2001, in cooperation with the United States, a project formulation study\* team was dispatched to Mexico, and the mission later recommended the promotion of cooperation in the environmental field such as programs for biodiversity preservation on the Yucatan Peninsula and the reduction of urban pollution.

### Promoting Intra-regional Cooperation

The priority areas for aid to El Salvador are stimulation of the production sector, social development, the environment, democratization and economic stabilization.

Cooperation is being stepped up annually to support the reconstruction of countries in the region, now that peace has returned. In addition, given the necessity of promoting regional cooperation for effective development, JICA is carrying out cooperation (Dispatch of Technical Cooperation Experts) with Sistema de la Integración Centroamericana (SICA), which is expected to play a central role.

In January and February 2001, huge earthquakes hit El Salvador, causing unprecedented damage. JICA promptly dispatched Japan Disaster Relief Teams to the affected areas and conducted studies and seminars for cooperation aimed at recovery and reconstruction.

### Sure Steps Towards the Reconstruction of the Poorest Country in Central America

Nicaragua has the lowest per capita income in Central America, and a large proportion of its population

## Front Line

Sexual Health Program for Street Children

Mexico

Community Empowerment Program

### Protecting Children from AIDS

#### ◆ Children Involved in Prostitution and Narcotics Trading

In Mexico City, a metropolis with a population of 20 million, extreme economic disparities can be observed. Within walking distance of affluent city neighborhoods replete with theaters and mansions, barefooted parents and children dressed in ragged clothes approach cars waiting at traffic lights to beg for change.

It is thought that over 15,000 children are living on the streets of Mexico City, having left their families due to extreme poverty and the collapse of the family unit. In reality, many of these children are earning their living by polishing cars parked on the street, or through prostitution or the narcotics trade.

#### ◆ Building a Relationship of Confidence with Children

Casa Alianza, an NGO working on the problem of street children in Mexico, has a shelter to accommodate children aged between 8 and 15 years old. The shelter provides the children with medical care, sex education and vocational training before ultimately sending them back home.

The JICA Mexico Office embarked upon a Community Empowerment Program\* that focuses on the AIDS problem of street children in December 2000. The project, which has been entrusted to Casa Alianza, is set to run for a period of three years. In the first stage, counselors specializing in areas such as nursing and psychology visit the dwellings of street children every day, checking their situation and health conditions, spending time with them, listening to their stories and building relationships of trust. After this, a survey is implemented to analyze the reasons why these children came to live on the streets, and to gain an understanding of their daily activities and needs for support. Some children come to the shelter voluntarily after talking to the counselors; indeed, it is the policy of Casa Alianza to wait for the children to present themselves.



Street children living with dogs on the street.

In the second stage, a workshop on sex education that provides information concerning AIDS as well as knowledge necessary for protection against the disease will be held for those children that come to the shelter. And in the third stage, in order to deal with the individual conditions facing each child, the children are provided with advice through continuous counselling as well as necessary medical and mental care. Through such support, it is expected that the children will not return to the poor living environment of the streets.

Although the project has just begun, children have already started to visit the shelter, and preparations are currently underway to hold the workshop on sex education.

(JICA Mexico Office)

is living in poverty. Like other heavily indebted countries, Nicaragua is trying to gain further cooperation from the international community by formulating, with the participation of the country's population, a "Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper\*." The priority areas for aid to Nicaragua are agricultural and rural development, health and medical care, education, roads and transportation infrastructure, support for democratization and disaster prevention. In the year 2000, with the objective of disaster recovery and strengthening of disaster prevention capability, the Master Plan Study on Forest Management for Disaster Prevention in the Northern Pacific Region (Development Study) and the Project for Strengthening of the Local System of

Integral Health Care (SILAIS) of Granada (Project-type Technical Cooperation) were commenced.

## Providing Sufficient Administrative Services to Areas with Large Indigenous Populations

In Guatemala, since the signing of the peace accords between the Guatemalan government and the Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca in December 1996, efforts have been made for the recovery and development of democratic politics. In March 2001, JICA implemented a project confirmation study based on policy discussions, and it consequently confirmed the importance of agriculture, in addition to five priority

### Front Line

Vocational Training

Guatemala

#### Aiming to Increase Employment Opportunities for Workers

Dispatch of Technical Cooperation Experts and JOCV

##### ◆ Increasing Unemployment is a Social Problem

In Guatemala, where development of secondary industry was limited due to the long-lasting civil conflict, it was impossible to change the industrial structure to absorb the labor force. In addition, towns are flooded with the unemployed as the country has been unable to cope with rapid population increases in recent years and a rapid influx of ex-soldiers and indigenous population after the peace accords. This has become a social problem.

The government is promoting many measures to deal with this issue, with the central role being played by the Technical Institute of Training and Productivity.

##### ◆ Regular Visits to Enterprises

The Technical Institute of Training and Productivity is made up of the headquarters, 15 local offices, and 19 vocational training centers. The total number of staff is about 1,900 and the institute receives its funding through contributions (1% of the monthly salary of workers) from private companies. More than 150,000 people receive training every year. The institute's main operations are: (1) implementation of vocational training; (2) support for companies and organizations; and (3) provision of technical information. Vocational training is conducted using the "Module Training Dual System."

The institute operates an introductory training course and a skills-improvement course for those who are working, which last between one and six months. On the other hand, a training course for young people aged over 14 years who have graduated from elementary school runs for between one and three years. In addition, as part of support efforts aimed at companies and local communities, short courses and mobile training are carried out for domestic industries all over the nation.

The Technical Institute of Training and Productivity is working to increase opportunities for workers to receive vocational training through the construction of a new training system, and JICA is putting emphasis on cooperation for the development of training programs and teaching materials as well as the provision of technical information. Specifically, JICA is providing Technical Cooperation for the



Graduation ceremony at one of the Vocational Training Center's facilities for culinary training.

establishment of the "Guatemalan Vocational Training System," which is modeled on "human resources development based on systems for fostering lifelong vocational abilities," developed in Japan. Experts are visiting companies at least twice a week with local counterparts, carrying out consultations on human resources development, providing support and holding seminars.

##### ◆ Working to become a leader in vocational training in Central America

Among the objectives set by the Technical Institute of Training and Productivity for the 21<sup>st</sup> century is one that aims "to construct the best vocational training center in Central America and to become a regional leader in vocational training by the year 2002." Japan's cooperation in the field of vocational training is proceeding steadily through Dispatch of Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCV), short-term Experts, and long-term Experts as well as provision of equipment through Grant Aid cooperation.

JICA is promoting active cooperation toward the realization of the Technical Institute of Training and Productivity's goals.

(JICA/JOCV Guatemala Office)

areas for aid, namely, education, health and hygiene, infrastructure development, security, and administrative and legal systems. Regarding education, JICA is assisting with the training of administrators in local education through the Dispatch of Technical Cooperation Experts, country-focused training, and the Dispatch of JOCV to support the “Dissemination of Elementary Education among Girls from the Indigenous Population,” a field of the U.S.-Japan Common Agenda\*. In health care, experts and JOCV have been sent to promote measures for the prevention of infectious diseases such as Chagas’ disease. And in the agricultural field, JICA is implementing the “Study on Integrated Rural Development for the Reduction of Poverty in the Central Highland Region” (Development Study).

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### Aiming for Effective Cooperation

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After Nicaragua and Haiti, Honduras is one of the least developed countries in the region. It has extensive development needs, partly due to massive damage sustained as a result of recent hurricanes. Japan is providing aid in many forms. The priority areas for Japanese aid are upgrading of infrastructure, improving basic living standards, encouraging key industries such as agriculture and fishing, and human resources development. As development indicators have been at low levels until recently, despite relatively large inflows of aid from individual countries and international organizations, a keen awareness has developed of the need to put emphasis on more fundamental human resources development. Honduras is one of the countries that is attracting attention concerning whether or not a “Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper” can really serve the interests of a country’s people.

In the year 2000, JICA started the “Reproductive Health\* Project in the Health Region No. 7” (Project-type Technical Cooperation), the “Integrated Development Project for Subsistence Level Women” (Community Empowerment Program) and the “Development of Nursing Personnel” (Dispatch of Technical Cooperation Experts). JICA also carried out a project formulation study on future cooperation in elementary education. In addition, JICA is providing continuous support for disaster prevention, one example

being the Study on Flood Control and Landslide Prevention in the Metropolitan Area (Development Study), which is an area especially prone to disasters.

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### Unique Efforts Leading the Region

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Costa Rica has high educational levels and a well-organized social security system. It is recognized as one of Central America’s most stable democracies. The technical capabilities of the “Technical Instructor and Personnel Training Center for Industrial Development of Central America” were strengthened through Grant Aid cooperation, Project-type Technical Cooperation and third-country training implemented by JICA. The “Project on Productivity Improvement for Enterprises” (Project-type Technical Cooperation) commenced in January 2001, with the aim of improving the Center’s company consulting capabilities in order to increase its value within the region. In addition, through the “Prison Living Conditions and Project for the Correction of Criminal Offenders” (third-country training), Costa Rica is building on its unique status as a leading provider of cooperation in the region, as well as being a recipient of Japanese cooperation.

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### Wide-ranging Development Centering on the Panama Canal

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The year 1999 was a momentous one for Panama, with a change in regime and the return of the Panama Canal by the United States. In the course of a project confirmation study that was conducted by JICA for the new regime, it was confirmed that emphasis would be placed on rectification of regional and wealth disparities, sustainable economic development, environmental conservation and support for the canal and its environs. In Panama, environmental conservation including forests that leads to the preservation of the water sources of the canal is an important issue, and in response JICA has implemented the “Forest Conservation Technical Development Project” (Project-type Technical Cooperation) as well as the “Panama Canal Watershed Conservation Project” (Project-type Technical Cooperation), which commenced in 2000. In addition, JICA is working in priority fields through such projects

as “Investment Promotion Planning,” “Environmental Mining Engineering” and “Empowerment of Agricultural Education for Local Producers” (Dispatch of Technical Cooperation Experts).

## Various Projects in the Caribbean

The countries of the Caribbean are mostly small in size and population, and many have gained their independence in relatively recent years. However, Japan does not have a strong record of cooperation in these countries because of their relatively high per capita income and the small scale of their economies. Cooperation with the Caribbean region, with its large number of small nations that are highly similar, needs to involve support on a regional basis in connection with common development issues, employing the resources of local organizations such as the Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM). A typical example involves JICA’s response to destruction caused by recent hurricanes. Experts were dispatched to Caribbean disaster prevention organizations and a fact-finding study on expansion of cooperation was implemented in 2000. In the same year, in the field of fisheries, which has high potential for development, JICA dispatched a project formulation advisor\* to the region who was charged with searching for possibilities for cooperation that could have region-wide benefits, such as the “Fishery Training Project” (Project-type Technical Cooperation), and provide country-specific guidance.

Jamaica is the largest of the English-speaking Caribbean countries, and relations between Japan and Jamaica have been growing closer every year. Cooperation is currently occurring in both the loan assistance\* and Technical Cooperation spheres. JICA is pouring its efforts into the “Project for Strengthening Health Care in the Southern Region,” the “Technical and Vocational Educational and Training Improvement Project at Technical High School” (Project-type Technical Cooperation) and the Dispatch of JOCV.

The Dominican Republic is home to many immigrants from Japan and ethnic Japanese. Wishing to realize wide-ranging development with the active participation of immigrants and ethnic Japanese, JICA is providing cooperation, particularly in the fields of agriculture, education, and health and medical care. It was confirmed that priority issues would be improvement of infrastructure, health and medical care, promotion of agriculture, livestock farming and fisheries, education and the environment. From the year 2000, a start was made in agriculture, a field that has traditionally had priority, with the “Study on the Integrated Rural Development of Former Sugarcane Plantation Area and the Pilot Project of La Luisa, Monte Plata Province” (Development Study) and the “Technology Project for Irrigated Agriculture” (Project-type Technical Cooperation). Regarding the environment, cooperation is expanding, as seen in the “Master Plan Study on Watershed Management in the Upper Area of the Sabana Yegua Dam” and the “Improvement of Sewage System and Environment in the City of Santiago” (Development Study).



Children in Haiti. Following efforts in medical care and agriculture, experts in the field of development planning have been helping with nation-building since 1999.