

# Oceania



## Providing Assistance for Small Island Nations to Overcome Their Fragile, Weak and Vulnerable Nature

In recent years, Oceania has faced wide-ranging challenges including an increase in the amount of waste, inadequate health, medical and educational services, a decline in fishery resources, an under-developed infrastructure and climate change. Contributing factors include the unique geographic nature of island nations throughout the region, encompassing widely dispersed national territories, small-scale domestic markets and limited access to international markets. In overcoming these challenges, assistance from the international community represents a key solution. Until now, JICA, while considering the unique characteristics of the Oceania region, has designated waste management, health and medical services, education, fishery resource management and infrastructure development as focus areas when implementing assistance programs. JICA has also begun to introduce active cooperation programs that address climate change measures in the region.

### Pillars of Aid Confronting Challenges through Region-Wide Cooperation and Consideration of the Uniqueness of Each Country

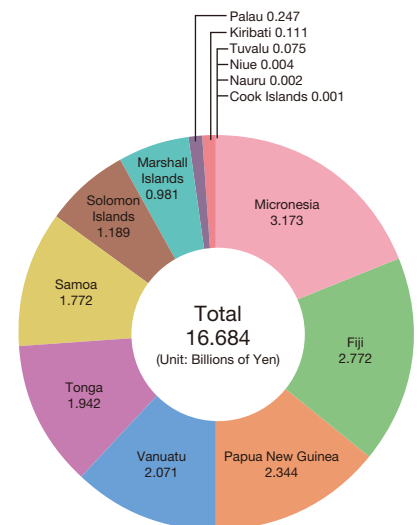
JICA provides assistance to the following members of the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF): Fiji, Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, the Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu as well as the Cook Islands and Niue, which are in free association with New Zealand. As mentioned previously, the island nations of Oceania face many difficulties with regard to development due to their vulnerable nature, including a territory spread out over vast stretches of ocean, small domestic markets and geographic isolation from international markets. Recently, experts have also pointed out their vulnerable nature in the face of climate change. Population sizes of these island nations are also quite diverse, ranging anywhere from 10,000 in Tuvalu and Nauru to six million in Papua New Guinea.

From a geographic and cultural standpoint, Oceania is largely separated into the three sub-regions of Polynesia, Melanesia, and Micronesia, with each sub-region completely unique from one another both culturally and economically. While considering the uniqueness of each of these regions, and in light of the fact that scale merits are difficult to achieve because of the small size of each country, JICA has collaborated with the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United

Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in conducting innovative regional programs. These organizations have a strong record of accomplishment in the region, and collaboration with their human resource networks has proven to be an indispensable method in addressing the shared regional needs for waste management, infectious disease measures and education. In its region-wide cooperation initiatives, JICA dispatches specialists to countries where it maintains a presence to conduct training and educational programs in order to create a shared regional model for development, and in turn spread this knowledge to neighboring countries. Human resources cultivated through third-country training in countries with a JICA presence return to their home country where they apply their training in practical situations based on an action plan created in line with unique local conditions. Thus far, through its training programs, JICA has fostered region-wide cooperation as it relates to vaccinations, waste management, and distance education. In addition, JICA is currently in the planning stages for the implementation of future programs for improving disaster reduction competencies, expanding human resources in the health and medical care sector and promoting more effective usage and management of fishery resources.

### Scale of JICA Projects by Country in Oceania (Fiscal 2008)

Composition of JICA projects for each country based on total Technical Cooperation project expenses, ODA loans (disbursed amounts) and Grant Aid (concluded Grant Aid including activities expedited).



\* Excluding Technical Cooperation with multiple countries and international organizations.

# Priority Issues and Efforts

## Health and Medical Services

JICA is addressing the challenge represented by the fields of health and medical services through assistance programs focused on expanding human resources in Oceania. Combined with the continued development of infrastructure, such as medical and research facilities, JICA is attempting to realize synergistic effects by means of assistance involving both structural and non-structural support. Many aid organizations in Oceania have achieved great success by promoting the use of vaccinations to prevent the spread of infectious diseases, with poliomyelitis having been completely eradicated from the region. Yet, many countries in the region do not have the cold chain logistic competencies needed to transport vaccinations safely at a low temperature, with many children today still unable to receive safe attention. In order to resolve this, in 2003, Japan, Australia, WHO and UNICEF adopted a proclamation to collaborate jointly in meeting the common goal of increasing the number of vaccinations accessible to the region.

Under the framework of Pacific Immunization Programme Strengthening (PIPS), which is a partnership formed by development partners to support the 22 countries of Oceania and vaccination programs in the region, JICA, with Fiji as a center of operations, has taken on a leading role in PIPS, with a program horizon of five years from 2005. The infectious diseases prevention program, forming the core of the project, targets 13 countries in the Oceania region. The program provides support for the management of vaccination programs, maintenance and upkeep of refrigerated vehicles for vaccination transport and the expansion of human resources. The cooperation realized through local dialogue of project specialists has received highly positive evaluations, and going forward the program has high expectations. JICA also works together with the Institute of Tropical Medicine Nagasaki University to implement programs that foster the development of technical competencies for vaccine management and safe disposal of medical waste.

## Climate Change Countermeasures

JICA is actively involved in assistance efforts to help protect the beautiful seas and islands of the Pacific from the impact of climate change. Countries with low elevations, such as Tuvalu, remain fragile, weak and vulnerable to climate change and rising sea levels, and so strengthening these countries' capacity to adapt is an urgent issue. Specifically, JICA is assisting countries in Oceania to improve their forecasting abilities for tropical cyclones by constructing weather observation facilities and providing other equipment, which greatly mitigates frequently occurring cyclone-related damage. In addition, other JICA-led long-term efforts include third-country training with the purpose of improving weather forecasting competencies and building human resource networks in the region, as well as research on ways to address rising sea levels and to understand better the mechanisms of island development.

## The Environment

The issue of waste disposal is a common challenge shared by the many island nations of Oceania. After an assistance program for landfill structures, specifically semi-aerobic landfills, to decompose waste in the Independent State of Samoa was implemented in 2000, similar types of programs were established in other neighboring countries, as one single program eventually helped to improve waste disposal practices in the entire region. JICA has supported plans to draft waste management proposals in each country together with the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), an international organization with a local presence in Samoa. JICA is also making efforts to spread the development of human resources and development models in the region. In May 2009, JICA hosted the Oceania Waste Management Workshop, inviting waste management officials from

### Pacific Islands Summit and JICA: Addressing the Challenges of Oceania as an Equal Partner

At the Pacific Islands Leaders Meeting (PALM) (commonly referred to as the Pacific Islands Summit in Japan) representatives from 14 countries and two regions from Oceania, including Australia and New Zealand, as well as Japan's Prime Minister and other Japanese government officials were brought together at a summit-level meeting to discuss the many issues facing Oceania. Held every three years starting in 1997, the first Pacific Islands Summit meeting was held in Tokyo, the second in Miyazaki, and the third and fourth in Okinawa. At the third summit meeting held in 2003, participants adopted the Okinawa Initiative as an action plan and specific strategy to be implemented together between Japan and Oceania countries and regions, while the fourth meeting adopted the Okinawa Partnership for a more robust and prosperous Pacific Region as a new cooperation framework for the Japan and Pacific Islands Forum. Additionally at the fourth summit, Japan pledged to provide ¥45 billion in assistance for the three years following 2006. Japan also announced an assistance policy centered on the goals of expanding human resources in the public sector by 4,000 and providing human resource interaction for 1,000 youth. All of the goals announced at the fourth summit meeting have been achieved to date.

The fifth summit meeting was held in Hokkaido in May 2009 and welcomed active discussions from participants primarily centered on 1) addressing environment and climate change issues, 2) overcoming the fragile, weak and vulnerable nature of Oceania from the standpoint of human security, and 3) strengthening interaction of human resources. Japan also announced that it would commit ¥50 billion in assistance over the next three years, while participating countries adopted the Islanders' Hokkaido Declaration which centers on active collaborative assistance efforts in the above three focus areas.

In light of Japan's assistance policy announced at the fifth Pacific Islands Summit, JICA will continue to provide assistance programs in the focus areas of waste management, health, medical and education services, fishery resource management and infrastructure development, while also increasing financial cooperation as well as Technical Assistance for climate change measures.

In addition, JICA plans to continue conducting training programs and dispatching volunteers to promote the expansion of human resources in each of these focus areas.

governments in the region to join one another in discussing common needs of both the region and in each individual country and to form a plan of cooperation framework going forward.

Moreover, along with support for final-disposal sites, JICA is assisting Fiji and Palau with steps to reduce waste and introduce recycling schemes. Based on the successful domestic example of recycling and waste reduction from the city of Shibushi in Kagoshima Prefecture, Japan, JICA helped to create a 3R model—reducing, reusing and recycling—in Fiji. JICA expects the experiences from this model to be applied to neighboring countries in the near future.

### Education: Expanding Educational Opportunities and Improving Educational Quality in Island Nations

JICA has been providing assistance aimed at improving the quality of education and developing distance education programs utilizing correspondence education, short-wave radio and satellite communication networks in order to expand educational opportunities in the island nations of Oceania, and as a means to overcome the sometimes-remote nature and difficult accessibility due to the geography and topography of the region.

The University of the South Pacific, headquartered in Fiji, is a regional university founded by 12 countries in Oceania in 1968. With Japanese support, the university constructed a satellite

communications network, allowing branch campuses located throughout the region to connect to the home campus to provide distance education programs, and achieving bilateral communications between schools and students.

In Papua New Guinea, where many locations are difficult to access due to mountainous terrain or the outlying nature of some islands, Japanese Grant Aid was used to construct a national media center where educational programming content is produced and broadcast from classes of the main campus to satellite schools by television. Television-based classes have helped to raise awareness among local residents about the importance of education and have improved the grades of local students.

#### Example

### Palau International Coral Reef Center

#### Protecting the Shared Heritage of the World

Palau, surrounded by one of the largest and most abundant coral reefs in the world, has made it a top priority to develop tourism opportunities in the country, such as diving and other marine sports. In recent years, however, coastal development and rising seawater temperatures have devastated some sections of the country's coral reef. As a result, there has been an ongoing need to study the marine ecosystem of this coral reef as well as work to preserve and use it in a sustainable manner.

Accordingly, the Government of Palau planned to establish a research hub aimed at coral reef preservation and management in the Pacific Region. In response to this, Japan provided Grant Aid for the construction of the Palau International Coral Reef Research Center (PICRC) on Koror, which was completed in 2002. From 2002 to 2006, JICA dispatched a total of 20 experts and researchers, who provided training programs for staff of the center in the following areas: 1) organizational management of the Center; 2) operational and exhibition management of the attached aquarium; 3) establishment of coral reef research and monitoring; and 4) technical training provided for conducting environmental education programs for local residents.

Having received specialized training, staff from Palau were in turn able to conduct research on the ecosystem of the country's coral reef, with the research results widely recognized by international researchers. JICA experts also worked together with local researchers to write and edit theses, research papers and picture reference books, which played an integral role in boosting the recognition of the center.

In January 2006, the countries of the Micro-

nesia sub-region including Palau announced the Micronesia Challenge, which aims to preserve the natural environment in the entire region by pledging to preserve 30% of coastal waters and 20% of rainforest by 2020. JICA resumed assistance to the center from July 2009 in order to contribute to the realization of these goals. Going forward, JICA plans to implement assistance programs aimed at fostering technical competencies for coral reef monitoring.



Aquatic lab at the Palau International Coral Reef Research Center (PICRC)

Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers and Senior Volunteers have been dispatched to work on improving the quality of mathematics education in the primary education sector in Micronesia, the Marshall Islands and Palau. In addition, workshops have been hosted for the preparation of a teachers' arithmetic association underway in Vanuatu. All of these efforts contribute to the basic framework of cooperation between the JICA volunteer program and local educators in elementary school arithmetic. Moreover, in enhancing the education level in Samoa, JICA has started a volunteer program-led project for the improvement of basic education in science and arithmetic and is now providing training for teachers in the area.



Improvement seen in Tafaigata landfill treatment facilities in Samoa after adopting the Fukuoka method. After a garbage truck arrives, scavengers pick up valuables from the collection before the machinery sweeps the garbage away for crushing and compacting.

### Example

#### Samoa Samoa Power Sector Expansion Project

##### Promoting the Use of Renewable Energy and Underground Power Lines in Support of a Stable Electricity Supplies in All-Weather Conditions Regardless of Climate Change

Diesel thermal plants are the main source of power generation in many countries in Oceania. However, this type of power plant is costly in terms of people's lifestyle and the environment as the cost of crude oil soars and environmental burdens increase. Moreover, frequent occurrence of natural disasters in the region, such as cyclones, can often cause power outages as well as create bottlenecks for investment because of unstable power supplies.

In Samoa, while stable electricity supplies only reach two-thirds of installed capacity due to facility aging and deterioration, strong economic growth seen in recent years calls for a 4% increase in electrical power demand annually,

making a stable power supply a critical issue for immediate attention. In light of such circumstances, JICA began its support of the Electric Power Corporations Investment Plan (2008–2015) of the Electric Power Corporation of Samoa (EPC), which included the construction and refurbishing of power plants as well as power cable development and repair. In addition, ODA loans are provided to Samoa in order to achieve steady supplies of electricity throughout the country in promoting further economic growth. This project entails the promotion of renewable energy use through the building of new and high-efficiency diesel

thermal plants as well as the development of hydro power plants that provide low-cost and eco-friendly energy resources that can be secured within the nation. This is in addition to contingency planning through the promotion of underground power cables and use of high-voltage power cables. This project marks the first provision of ODA loans to Samoa, and at the same time is a cooperative effort between JICA and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) based on a joint initiative launched by the Japanese government and ADB known as Enhanced Sustainable Development for Asia (ESDA).



An aging thermal power plant in Apia, Samoa where new construction is scheduled thanks to JICA ODA loans