



# Oceania

## **Pillars of Aid** Human Resources Development and Environmental Conservation Required for Sustainability of Small Island Countries

The priority issue in Oceania is to develop societies that are independent from the former suzerain states. Developing human resources and building socioeconomic infrastructure\* are important for self-reliant administrative and social services, as well as for economic growth. In addition, in order to pursue sustainable development\* for these goals, emphasis is placed on proper resource development and environmental conservation in development.

In the area of human resources development, volunteers are dispatched mainly in the

sectors of primary and secondary education, vocational training, and health and medical care; and many administrative officials are accepted as training participants. Distance learning using information technologies (IT) is employed in providing cooperation in higher education. In the area of health and medical care, we promote cooperation that addresses infectious diseases such as polio, malaria, tuberculosis, and filariasis.

With respect to the development of socioeconomic infrastructure, such as roads, har-

bors, airports, and power and water supply, financial assistance for the construction of facilities. Associated technical cooperation for the maintenance and operation of those facilities is extended.

Environmental problems represented by coral reef destruction and solid waste disposal have become serious. Region-wide cooperation crossing national borders is promoted to address environmental conservation, which is a global issue\*, as a common issue in Oceania.

## Current State of Development

### Societies and Economies Reliant on Former Suzerain States

The individual island countries of Oceania have small national territories, populations, and economies on the whole. The main feature of their economic structure is a strong dependency on primary industries. This structure is a fragile one that is easily upset by weather conditions and fluctuations in international prices. Many problems remain to be tackled if these countries are to achieve any degree of economic autonomy. These problems are related to the fact that the countries themselves often consist of large numbers of islands, their domestic markets are small, they are far from international markets, and transportation and communication links to compensate for these disadvantages are inadequate.

Relations between these countries with their former suzerain states are generally close, but in recent years, growth in bilateral aid\* and multilateral aid\* to developing countries in Oceania has remained stagnant. Following achievement of independence from the United States, the three nations of Micronesia (Palau, Micronesia, and Marshall Islands) have been receiving financial aid in the form of “compact money” based on the Compact of Free Association with the United States. However, financial aid has recently started shifting to project-type aid.

Against this backdrop, establishing societies and economies that are no longer reliant on aid is an urgent issue for the small island countries in this region. There are many issues that affect Oceania as whole: waste control; environmental problems, including climatic change and rising sea levels; human resources development; and the development of inter-island transportation and communication. It is therefore



A project to support rice cultivation in Papua New Guinea

essential to adopt a comprehensive approach to the region. Every country in the region places emphasis on the reduction of public sectors, promotion of private investment leading to development in the main industries of agriculture, fishery, tourism, and promotion of regional cooperation which jointly addresses common issues.

In May 2003, the Third Japan-South Pacific Forum (currently known as the Pacific-Islands Summit) was held in Okinawa. At the summit, regional development strategies and joint action plans (Okinawa Initiatives) were adopted, designating the priority areas of strengthened security in Oceania, a safer and more sustainable environment, improvement of education and human resources development, improvement of health care and hygiene, and more active and sustainable trade and economic development. These issues should be addressed on a mid- or long-term basis in the framework of bilateral or multilateral cooperation. JICA is planning to implement cooperation that fully reflects the results of the summit.

## Addressing Priority Issues in JICA Programs

### Two Priority Issues in Common

Every country in Oceania differs in respect of its national and economic size, ethnic composition, population, availability of natural resources, traditional social foundations, way of life, and the capacity of government to formulate and administer development plans. Finely tailored aid in line with the specific development needs and development levels of

each country is therefore required. However, since all these countries gained their independence relatively recently and are dependent on primary industries, human resources development is the most important. In addition, it is important to provide support that enables these countries to overcome the limiting factors that distinguish insular nations (i.e., isolation, small size, and vulnerability).

There are two priority issues that affect virtually all the countries in this region, the first of which is support for social and economic self-reliance, and the second is environmental conservation and the proper management of resources for sustainable development. Efforts are needed to identify and formulate effective cooperation projects that will bring benefits to the region as a whole. At the same time, it is necessary to work closely with other donors\* that possess knowledge of island nations and international organizations active in the region.

### ■ Support for Social and Economic Autonomy

As regards support for social and economic autonomy,

personnel training for nation-building must be combined effectively with upgrading infrastructure for the development of basic industries.

Cooperation with personnel training is being regularly provided through the dispatch of Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCV) and the acceptance of technical training participants with a view to creating a body of qualified people to work in economic management, development planning and other leading industrial fields. Grant aid is also going toward improvements and expansion at the Papua New Guinea University of Technology and the National University of Samoa in combination with technical cooperation linked with the grant aid projects.

## Front Line

### ● Papua New Guinea Special Equipment for Infectious Disease Control

#### Eradication of Diseases Preventable by Vaccination

##### Provision of Equipment

#### Outbreak of measles

The government of Papua New Guinea has implemented the Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI) planned by WHO since 1977, and has provided vaccinations against six major diseases (polio, diphtheria, whooping cough, tetanus, tuberculosis, and measles). In relation to EPI, JICA has continuously provided vaccines, syringes, and cold chain materials through the special equipment project for infectious disease control.

However, against a backdrop of financial difficulties in the health and medical care sector in recent years, the immunization rate has stagnated and that of measles remains as low as about 50%. Under such circumstances, there was a nationwide outbreak of measles in 2002, and group infections were confirmed in 15 out of 19 provinces. More than 32,000 cases of infections and about 170 deaths were reported.

#### Prevent the outbreak of measles

Amid the crisis, the Ministry of Health

of Papua New Guinea established an EPI Technical Management Committee, including EPI officers, staff from relevant international organizations, and donors such as JICA, WHO, UNICEF, and AusAID (Australian Government Overseas AID) to discuss measures to fight a nationwide outbreak of measles, which is predicted to occur in 2004.

As a result, a nationwide immunization campaign was approved with the aim of providing vaccinations against measles and polio and supplying Vitamin A capsules for one year starting in October 2003.

Japan has been requested to provide necessary materials and equipment, such as vaccines, vitamin A capsules, syringes, and safety boxes for syringes, as well as the dispatch of short-term experts to offer technical guidance on the road. As far as the provision of materials and equipment is concerned, the Japanese government has decided to provide emergency assistance worth about 80 million yen in



Vaccine control in Papua New Guinea

response to a request from WHO's Western Pacific Office.

Papua New Guinea continues to collect information through the dispatch of relevant officers to the EPI Technical Management Committee and coordinates aid programs with other donors. At the same time, they work earnestly to prepare for the prompt transportation of the right amount of materials and equipment, including vaccines provided by Japan on a timely basis, to destinations in different areas.

(JICA Papua New Guinea Office)

From the standpoint of upgrading the bases for key industrial development, infrastructure improvement is occurring in the fields of information technology (IT), communications and broadcasting, transportation, and electric power and roads, so as to reflect the needs of island countries. Cooperation is

also taking place with emphasis on fishing, marine transportation, and marine resource development in connection with fish breeding, promotion of the small-scale fishing industry, compilation of marine charts, shipping inspections, and exploration of seabed mineral resources.

## Front Line

### ● Samoa Environmentally-friendly Approach to Waste Treatment Problems

#### Adoption of Fukuoka-style Hygienic Landfill Method

Dispatch of Technical Cooperation Experts and others

#### Waste problems on islands

On small islands in the Pacific Ocean, traditional lifestyles based on nature are dramatically changing into lifestyles that are greatly dependent on imports from developed countries. In the process, the type and volume of waste generated in the region have rapidly increased, and the region now faces various issues related to waste disposal.

The Tafaigata waste disposal site (landfill) in Samoa was a simple and typical open dump where refuse had been dumped without any sort of overseeing management for about ten years. The dump not only generated bad smell, flies, and harmful insects, but also contaminated groundwater that in turn seriously damaged plantations in the area downstream of the disposal site. Furthermore, human scavengers, dogs, and pigs wandered the landfill looking for something to eat. Sometimes arson occurred and the resulting fires could take a few weeks to extinguish.

#### The initiative of a former training participant

The Samoan government, taking the impact of the dump on the residents of the neighborhood and on the environment seriously, formulated an improvement plan under the initiative of a former training participant, who had attended a course in waste management and was working in the Ministry of Environment, with the help of senior volunteers and

experts who were dispatched to the South-Pacific Region Environment Programme (SPREP). The government then requested assistance from JICA and SPREP.

Renovation, which was conducted with financial aid from Japan and technical assistance from SPREP, adopted a hygienic landfill method called the Fukuoka style for the first time in the South-Pacific Region. Using this method, work starts with a clear division of the landfill into earth-fill dams, and pipelines are laid in the landfill in order to drain contaminated water and gas generated by the waste. Then, by supplying air under the ground, it is designed to expedite the natural decomposition of the waste materials.

The construction work continued while waste was transported into the site every day. Other difficulties included heavy rain during the rainy season. Nevertheless, the concerted effort of the former training participant, experts, senior volunteers, and construction workers made it possible to complete the work successfully.

#### Reborn waste disposal site

On the first day of Waste Week, an annual event held by the government of Samoa, at the end of January 2003, an



The Tafaigata waste disposal site in Samoa

opening ceremony combined with the provisional hand-over of the Tafaigata waste disposal site was carried out. It was attended by the Prime Minister and government ministers, as well as by many citizens. After the ceremony, everyone walked to the reconstructed waste disposal site, and many compliments were made about the dramatic change.

The former training participant, who had been involved in the renovation project, was invited to the Waste Management Training Course for Oceania held in Okinawa as a lecturer. He gave a presentation to training participants from other countries in Oceania, thus contributing to mutual cooperation within the region. This case is expected to become a model and spread to other countries in the region.

(JICA Samoa Office)

## **Environmental Conservation and Proper Management of Resources**

In terms of environmental conservation and proper management of resources to enable sustainable development, JICA aims cooperation directly at environmental conservation measures, such as preservation of coral reefs and waste management, to deal with such issues as the decay of seashore ecosystems, the indiscriminate catching of certain types of fish, the felling of tropical forests, and improper handling of wastes. One example of cooperation in this area is the Palau International Coral Reef Center (a Japan-U.S. Common Agenda\* project). The center, constructed with Japanese grant aid, is expected to become an international base for coral reef preservation and research, and diverse technical cooperation activities are under way, including coral reef monitoring, maintenance and management of an aquarium established next to the center, and implementation of educational activities.

In Oceania, coordinated and collaborative cooperation with other aid agencies and international organizations take place. An example of cooperation that has benefited the region

as a whole is a project for distance learning and strengthened information technology based on the establishment of the University of the South Pacific (USP), which is a base for higher education for the 12 countries and areas in Oceania, as well as network facilities for distance learning that makes use of satellite communication for neighboring countries (a joint project with New Zealand and Australia).

Other examples of such cooperation conducted through international organizations active in the region include grant aid to the educational and training center of the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme's (SPREP) headquarters and region-wide technical cooperation for the proper management of wastes.

As a partner of the Pacific Programme to Eliminate Lymphatic Filariasis (Pac ELF), which is implemented by WHO in 22 countries and areas in the region, since 2000 JICA has provided the medicines and examination kits and has dispatched Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers under a five-year plan. In Papua New Guinea, JICA has started aid coordination on a sector-wide approach in the health care sector.