

Latin America covers 21 MILLION SQUARE KILOMETERS or 14.1% of the earth's surface. It is home to magnificent ANCIENT CIVILIZATIONS, and 600 MILLION people. The AMAZON River basin is the world's MOST IMPORTANT eco-system with around half of the world's remaining FLORA AND FAUNA. Japanese EMIGRATION began more than 100 years ago and today there are some 1.7 MILLION ethnic Japanese or NIKKEI there. Japan's assistance reflects the DIVERSE CHALLENGES facing the region. JICA projects help to tackle POVERTY, wealth disparity, health, education, agriculture, infrastructure, industry, climate and environmental change. Programs are helping UNLOCK THE SECRETS of the Amazon rain forests, probe the world's OZONE HOLE and chart the retreat of glaciers in the ANDES MOUNTAINS. The deadly Chagas disease or KISSING BUG is in retreat in Central America and other regions. INFRASTRUCTURE projects have helped build roads, bridges, ports, schools, hospitals, water and sewage systems. SOUTH-SOUTH and TRIANGULAR COOPERATION are increasingly important components of JICA's ongoing operations.

