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

In the area of human resources development, volunteers are dispatched mainly in the sectors of primary and secondary education, vocational training, and health; and many administrative officials are accepted as training participants. Distance learning using information and communication technology (ICT) is employed in providing cooperation in higher education. In the area of health, JICA supports the expansion of immunization and promotes cooperation that addresses infectious diseases such as malaria and filaria.

With respect to the development of socio-economic infrastructure, such as roads, ports, airports, and power and water supply, financial assistance for the construction of facilities and technical cooperation for the maintenance and operation of those facilities are combined.

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

Children in a coconut plantation settlement village (Vanuatu) Photo by Hiroshi Inoue

Building on the Results of the Third Japan-PF Summit Meeting

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 a whole: solid 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 essential to adopt a comprehensive approach to the region. Every country in the region places emphasis on promotion of regional cooperation to jointly address common issues, including reduction of the public sector and promotion of private investment leading to development in the main industries of agriculture, fishery, and tourism.

In May 2003, the third Japan-Pacific Islands Forum
Support for Self-reliance and Environmental Conservation

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 development levels and specific development needs 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 island countries (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 benefit the region as a whole. At the same time, it is necessary to work closely with other donors that possess knowledge of island countries and international organizations active in the region.

Support for Social and Economic Self-reliance

With regards to support for social and economic self-reliance, human resources development for nation-building must be combined effectively with improvements in infrastructure for the development of basic industries.

Cooperation for human resources development is being provided through the dispatch of volunteers and the acceptance of technical training participants with a view to creating a body of qualified people who will lead economic management, development planning and other leading industrial fields.

From the standpoint of upgrading the bases for key industrial development, in addition to infrastructure improvement in response to the needs of island countries, including communication and broadcasting, transportation, power, and roads, cooperation is taking place with emphasis on fishery, marine transportation, and marine resource development, such as aquaculture, promotion of small-scale fisheries, compilation of marine charts, shipping inspections, and exploitation of seabed mineral resources.

Environmental Conservation and Proper Management of Resources

In part of the region, destruction of seashore ecosystems, the indiscriminate catching of certain types of fish, the felling of tropical forests, and improper handling of solid wastes take place. In terms of environmental conservation and proper management of resources to enable sustainable development, JICA provides cooperation directly aimed at environmental conservation measures, such as conservation of coral reefs and solid waste management. One example of cooperation in this area is the Palau International Coral Reef Center (cooperation based on a Japan-US Common Agenda). The center, constructed with Japanese grant aid, is expected to become an international base for coral reef conservation and
research, and diverse technical cooperation, including monitoring of coral reefs and improving the aquarium built on the premises, and education and enlightenment activities are under way.

**Cooperation Beneficial Regionwide**

In Oceania, coordination 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 technical cooperation project in distance learning and information and communication technology based on the establishment of network facilities for distance learning that makes use of satellite communication for neighboring countries (a project in collaboration with New Zealand and Australia) at the University of the South Pacific (USP), which is a base for higher education for the 12 countries and areas in Oceania.

Other examples of 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 regionwide technical cooperation for the proper management of solid waste.

**In the area of health, policies and planning for the implementation of the Expanded Program on Immunization (EPI) are being improved in 13 countries and areas and regionwide technical cooperation is provided to nurture EPI field workers. As a partner in the Pacific Programme to Eliminate Lymphatic Filariasis (Pac ELF), which is implemented by WHO targeting 22 countries and areas in the region, since 2000 JICA has provided medicine and examination kits and has dispatched JOCVs under a five-year plan.**

**Front Line Fiji**

**Capacity Strengthening for Environmental Impact Assessment Officers**

**Seeking Coexistence of Development and Environment**

![Coral reef damaged by wastewater from resort](image)

Tourism is the number one key industry in Fiji at present, and many resort facilities are being planned and constructed across the country thanks to active support from the government and the Ministry of Tourism. However, an NGO called Greenpeace pointed out that the coral reef in the surrounding beautiful sea was damaged by contaminated wastewater from resort facilities several years ago. To protect and maintain the coral reef, which is a valuable tourism resource itself, needs for an environmental impact assessment have become great; however, implementation of an environmental impact assessment requires human development on the side of the administration as well as the development of legislation.

The Fiji government has instructed a development company to install a reliable wastewater treatment system as a condition for approving new resort development by the environmental impact assessment. On the other hand, with regards to existing resort facilities, it was preconditioned that the current situation of equipment related to contaminated wastewater be obtained first and then water quality investigation be implemented based on scientific data.

**Creating a manual to improve environmental management**

First, the Fiji government and JICA implemented an investigation into water quality and the current situation of the contaminated wastewater treatment facilities of about 40 comparatively large-scale facilities on Yasawa and Mamanuca Islands, as well as the Coral Coast where resort facilities are concentrated, using JICA’s study fund. This study was entrusted to the Institute of Applied Science of the University of the South Pacific, and the result of the study showed that more than half of the facilities need improvement.

In response to the study, a workshop was held for the responsible persons at all of the resorts and related personnel of the government in order to emphasize the necessity of improving the facilities. In cooperation with the University of the South Pacific, “Improving Wastewater Management in Fiji’s Tourism Industry: A Booklet for Resort Operators” was created and distributed to the resort hotel association and related organizations such as the World Health Organization (WHO). The process to create this booklet reinforced a trusting relationship among the concerned personnel in government related organizations. In March 2005, the Environment Management Act was enacted and an environment that allows improvement instruction for the contaminated wastewater treatment facilities of existing resorts in a more efficient and enforceable manner was in place.

(JICA Fiji Office)