Many difficulties persist in Oceania in realizing sustainable development, including: 1) a vulnerable economic structure that depends on primary industries; 2) impacts from environmental problems such as climatic change; and 3) limiting factors specific to island countries, such as isolation and small size. The primary issue in such a region is to develop sustainable, socially and economically self-reliant societies. In order to realize social and economic independence, JICA supports the expansion of basic social services and the promotion of economic growth. At the same time, in order to realize a sustainable environment, JICA provides assistance with an emphasis on environmental conservation and the proper management of resources.

In terms of the expansion of basic social services, volunteers are dispatched and many administrative officials are accepted as training participants primarily in the sectors of primary and secondary education, vocational training, and health. In the sector of health, JICA supports the expansion of immunization and promotes cooperation that addresses infectious diseases such as filariasis.

As support for the promotion of economic growth, dispatch of volunteers and receiving training participants are the core of the assistance for promoting tourism and agriculture and fishery that are the primary industries of countries in Oceania. With respect to the development of social infrastructure such as roads, ports, and power and water supply, financial assistance for the construction of facilities and technical cooperation aiming at improving the maintenance and operation skills 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.

### Vulnerable Economic Structure

The individual island countries of Oceania have small national territories, populations, and economies on the whole. Due to strong dependency on primary industries, most countries have fragile economic structures easily upset by weather conditions and fluctuations in international prices. Many problems remain to be tackled if these countries are to achieve economic autonomy. These problems are related to the fact that the countries 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 and their former suzerain states are generally close. Australia, New Zealand, EU, etc., have become the major donors for bilateral aid to developing countries in Oceania. Following achievement of independence from the US, the three countries of Micronesia have been receiving financial aid in the form of “compact money” based on the Compact of Free Association with the US. The content of the aid has recently started shifting to program/project-type aid.

### Issues Common to the Region

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; developing human resources who will lead national development; and the development of inter-island transportation and communication infrastructure. It is therefore essential to adopt a comprehensive approach to the region.

The Pacific Islands Forum (PIF), a framework for regional cooperation, adopted a regional development plan called the Pacific Plan in October 2005. The Pacific Plan clarifies four primary common goals for the region: 1) economic growth; 2) sustainable development; 3) good governance; and 4) security. JICA supports the self-help efforts of each country to achieve these goals.

### Building on the Results of the Japan-PIF Summit Meeting

In order to facilitate and expand its partnership with the...
Support for Self-reliance and Sustainable Environment

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 many countries gained their independence relatively recently and are dependent on primary industries, developing human resources who will lead national development is mostly required. 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 support 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.


With regard to support for social and economic self-reliance, cooperation is provided under the pillars of expansion of basic social services such as education and health and the support for economic growth.

In the sector of education, cooperation is being provided in primary education and vocational training through the dispatch of volunteers and the acceptance of training participants with a view to fostering human resources who will be able to lead economic management, development planning, and national development in major industries. Cooperation is also being provided in the form of distance learning in order to disseminate education in rural remote areas.

In the health sector, in addition to providing cooperation for the improvement of basic health services, JICA promotes the human resources development in each country in cooperation with various international organizations, including the World Health Organization (WHO) and UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF), regarding infectious disease control as an issue common to the region.

From the standpoint of promoting economic growth, cooperation for the promotion of tourism, agriculture and fishery is being provided through the dispatch of volunteers and the acceptance of training participants to assist each country’s own efforts for achieving national economic self-reliance. Also, in order to develop infrastructure for industrial development, infrastructure in response to the needs of island countries, including communication and broadcasting, transportation, power, and roads, are being built with grant aid in combination with cooperation for improving maintenance and operation capacity.

2. Support for Sustainable Environment

Environmental conservation and proper management of resources are vital to maintain the environment sustainable. 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 support for a sustainable environment, in addition to cooperation directly aimed at environmental conservation such as conservation of coral reefs and solid waste management, JICA provides cooperation for coastal resource control that is necessary for proper management and use of resources.

In small island countries where land is limited, solid waste management is an especially serious problem. Cooperation is being provided in collaboration with other international organizations active in the region to assist the efforts of the Pacific island countries as a whole. In addition to cooperation for human resources development provided through regionwide training that targets countries in the region and is provided in Samoa, technical cooperation for the improvement of waste disposal sites is being provided in Palau and Vanuatu. Technical cooperation for the Palau International Coral Reef Center, a base for coral reef conservation, and cooperation for regionwide human resources development through the dispatch of experts and training for the Pacific island countries, Japan has been hosting the Japan-PIF Summit Meeting (PALM) once every three years starting in 1997.

In May 2003, the third PALM was held in Okinawa. At the summit, the Okinawa Initiative: Regional Development Strategy for a More Prosperous and Safer Pacific was adopted, setting priority policy targets in security, environment, education, health, and economic growth, and clarifying joint action plans for Japan and PIF members. These issues should be addressed on medium- and long-term bases in the framework of bilateral and multilateral cooperation. JICA has implemented cooperation that reflects the results of the summit. In May 2006, three years after the third PALM, the fourth PALM was held again in Okinawa and future cooperation policies between Japan and PIF countries were discussed. JICA continues to provide cooperation under the policies adopted at PALM.
Cooperation Beneficial Regionwide

In Oceania, coordination and collaborative cooperation with other aid agencies and international organizations take place. In the sector of health, for example, regionwide technical cooperation is provided to improve policies and planning for the implementation of the Expanded Program on Immunization (EPI) and nurture EPI field workers in 13 countries and areas in collaboration with other donors (WHO, UNICEF, Australia, etc.) who support strengthening EPI.

As a partner in the Pacific Programme to Eliminate Lymphatic Filariasis (PacELF), which is implemented by WHO targeting 22 countries and areas in the region, JICA provides medicine and examination kits and dispatches JOCVs.

Other examples of cooperation conducted through international organizations active in the region include regionwide technical cooperation for the proper management of solid waste based on the Secretariat of Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP).

Front Line Papua New Guinea

Project for Enhancing Quality in Teaching through TV Program

Enhance Teaching Quality in Remote Areas Using Educational TV Programs

Challenges for educational reform in remote islands and mountains

Papua New Guinea (hereinafter called PNG) is an island country consisting of thousands of islands. PNG is a distinct country in that there are no roads connecting cities even on the main island, and travel and transportation between cities in the country depend solely on airplanes. In PNG, many schools stand on remote islands and among precipitous mountains.

The government of PNG, positioning education as a primary sector for the national development, implemented a bold educational reform. As a result, teachers who used to teach fifth and sixth graders now need to teach up to junior high school level. They also teach more subjects and need to change the teaching technique from the conventional blackboard writing style to a more student-focused style. However, it is extremely difficult to gather in-service teachers from remote islands in the capital for training for the new educational system.

Educational TV programs that gained understanding of the public

In order to address this problem, in fiscal 2005, JICA started producing and broadcasting educational TV programs at the Education Media Center built with Japan’s grant aid.

Initial investment costs to purchase necessary equipment such as TV sets are a huge burden for local residents. However, the advantage of broadcasting is that once the necessary equipment is in place, educational programs in response to the needs of the moment can be provided continuously even on remote islands and among precipitous mountains. Two types of educational TV programs are currently being broadcast. One is intended for children and explains in an easy-to-understand manner the main points of each unit aiming at knowledge acquisition. The other is for teachers and shows model class teaching styles aiming at teaching technique acquisition.

Educational TV programs have gained the understanding of PNG citizens, and there are now examples of self-help efforts such as schools and communities cooperating in unison to finance the maintenance and operation of equipment.

The key players in a class are teachers and students. The educational TV programs that support these key players increase expectations from schools and communities.

(JICA Papua New Guinea Office)