

## Pillars of Aid **Human Resources Development for Economic Self-reliance and Sustainable Development of Small Island Countries**

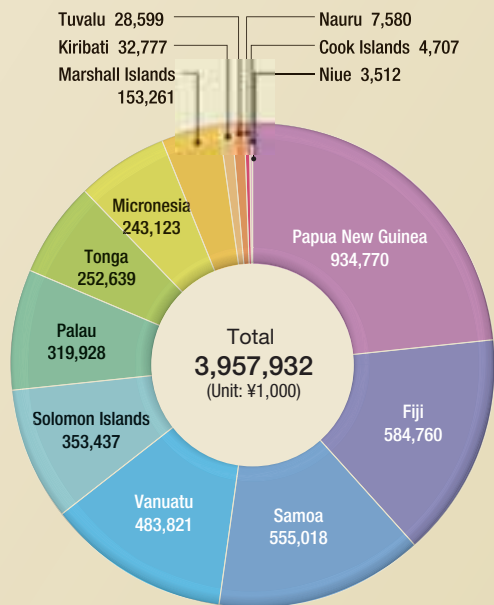
The primary issue in Oceania is to develop societies capable of sustainable development. This region faces many development challenges, including a vulnerable economic structure that depends on primary industries, the impact of environmental problems such as climate change, and limiting factors specific to island countries such as small size and remoteness. Therefore, JICA's cooperation is focused on: (1) economic self-reliance, and (2) the sustainable development of Oceania. Also, JICA works to identify and formulate projects that have a large impact throughout the region, and promotes collaboration with other aid agencies and local and international organizations with knowledge of island countries.

With regard to support for economic self-reliance in line with the efforts of individual countries for achieving economic growth, JICA dispatches volunteers and receives training participants as the core of assistance for promoting tourism, agriculture, and fishery industries.

With regard to sustainable development, JICA extends cooperation to maintain the environment, in addition to the expansion of basic social services, including education and healthcare.

In the education sector, JICA works to enhance basic education and vocational training with an emphasis on the areas of mathematics, science, and IT education. In order to expand education to remote islands, JICA also promotes distance learning using ICT and various media. In the health sector, in addition to efforts for improving basic health services in individual countries, JICA promotes region-wide human resources development in the sector in cooperation with international organizations including the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), taking infectious disease control as an issue common to the entire region. In the environment sector, in addition to cooperation for eco-friendly societies and waste treatment that directly aid environmental conservation, JICA's efforts aimed at sustainable environmental maintenance include cooperation for the management of coastal resources to enable proper management and utilization of resources.

● Cooperation Results by Country in Oceania (FY2007)



\* This is the total amount of bilateral cooperation. The amount of cooperation provided to Oceania including cooperation that covers a group of countries is 4,217,294 thousand yen.

## Current State of Development

### Vulnerable Economic Structure

Developing countries in Oceania have small national territories, populations, and economies on the whole. The total population of the 14 countries and regions JICA provides cooperation for in Oceania is approximately 8 million, and most of those countries and regions are small island countries with populations of less than 200,000. Due to strong dependency on primary industries, these 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 self-reliance. 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. In addition to Japan, Australia, New

Zealand, the US, and others have become the major aid donors to developing countries in Oceania. Cooperation from new donor countries such as China has recently been on the increase. Following achievement of independence from the US, Palau, Micronesia, and the Marshall Islands have been receiving financial aid in the form of “compact money” based on the Compact of Free Association with the US. However, affected by the outflow of human resources overseas and conflicts in some areas, assistance from those countries has not fully led to economic growth region-wide, and reliance on aid and financial assistance from overseas continues.

### 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 climate change; human resources development; and the development of inter-island transportation and communication. It is therefore essential to adopt a comprehensive approach to the region.

Each country is taking steps to reduce its public sector, to encourage private investment to promote primary industries, namely agriculture, fishery, and tourism, and to promote region-wide cooperation to collectively deal with issues common to the region. The Pacific Islands Forum (PIF), a framework for regional cooperation among the island countries, adopted a regional development plan called the Pacific Plan in October 2005, which actively addressed identified priority issues common to the region. Self-help efforts of the respective countries in the region and support from many aid agencies are expected for the concrete implementation of this plan.

## Addressing Priority Issues in JICA Programs

### Regional Cooperation Policy of the Japan-PIF Summit Meeting

The summit meeting has been held among Japan and Pacific Island countries once every three years starting in 1997. In May 2006, the fourth such meeting, called the Japan-PIF Summit Meeting (PALM), was held in Okinawa with the participation of national leaders and ministers from 16 PIF member countries and regions. The declaration adopted at the meeting, the Okinawa Initiative: Regional Development Strategy for a More Prosperous and Safer Pacific, sets the five priority policy targets of economic growth, sustainable development, good governance, security, and human interaction, based on common regional issues specified in the Pacific Plan, and clarifies specific joint action plans per issue 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 in line with the priority policy targets adopted at the summit.

### Directions of Cooperation toward Oceania

Every country in Oceania differs in respect to its national and economic size, ethnic composition, population, the availability of natural resources, traditional social foundations, way of life, and the capacity of government to formulate and administer development plans. Therefore, finely-tailored aid in line with development levels and specific development needs of each country is therefore required. However, since all these countries gained independence relatively recently and are dependent on primary industries, it is important to provide support that enables these countries to overcome the limiting factors that distinguish island countries (i.e., remoteness, small size, and vulnerability) while keeping in mind the idea that developing human resources who will lead national development is urgently needed.

Based on the above, as well as the priority policy targets in the region, JICA works on cooperation for (1) economic self-reliance and (2) the sustainable development of Oceania, and strives to identify and formulate cooperation projects that can have positive effects throughout the region while implementing grass-root cooperation activities that directly benefit local communities, mainly by dispatching volunteers such as Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCV). Coordination and collaboration with other donors and

regional international organizations that possess knowledge of island countries is also promoted.

### Assistance Aimed at Economic Self-reliance

In order to assist each country's efforts for achieving economic growth, cooperation for the promotion of tourism, agriculture, and fisheries is primarily being provided through the dispatch of volunteers and the acceptance of training participants. One example is human development training targeting the core human resources in Oceania for diversification of the fisheries industry. Also, in order to develop infrastructure for industrial development, infrastructure in response to the needs of island countries, including for communication and broadcasting, transportation, and power supply, is being built with grant aid in combination with technical cooperation for improving maintenance and operation capacity.

### Assistance to Support Sustainable Development

In addition to cooperation in the education and health sectors leading to the enrichment of basic social services, JICA implements cooperation for sustainable environmental conservation. In the sector of education, basic education and vocational training are enhanced with an emphasis on areas such as mathematics and science education and IT education, and distance learning using ICT technology and various media (such as TV and radio)



Arithmetic class taught by an elementary school teacher (Palau)

is promoted in order to expand education in remote rural areas where education cannot be adequately provided. The Project for Enhancing Quality in Teaching through TV Program in Papua New Guinea is one example of ongoing support to expand basic education utilizing various media. In the health sector, in addition to the improvement of basic health services in each country, development of human resources in health is promoted in cooperation with international organizations including WHO and UNICEF, taking infectious disease control as an issue common to the region. In the sector of the environment, cooperation for coastal resources management is implemented in addition to cooperation for coral reef conservation, an environmental impact study, and waste disposal. One example of such cooperation is the Project for Promotion of the Grace of the Sea in Coastal Villages in Vanuatu, a project that aims for improved livelihood of coastal fishermen through community participatory coastal resources management.

### Promotion of Regional Cooperation Programs

In Oceania, JICA promotes regional cooperation targeting a set of countries in the region in collaboration with other aid agencies and international organizations. One example is Infectious Diseases Control Program (Regionwide) targeting 14 Oceanian countries. With the Project for Strengthening EPI in the Pacific Region targeting 13 countries in the region, which aims to improve policies and planning related to the Expanded Program on Immunization (EPI) in each country with the nurturing of EPI field workers as the pillar, JICA provides medicine and examination kits in collaboration with WHO's Pacific Programme to Eliminate Lymphatic Filariasis (PacELF) and dispatches volunteers to support HIV/AIDS control. These cooperation projects are done in collaboration and coordination with Australia and



An expert delivering a presentation at a regional workshop of the Food and Nutrition Policy Project (Fiji, short-term expert (nutrition policy assistance))

New Zealand as well as WHO and UNICEF.

In the Regional Program for Proper Management of Solid Waste, which aims to formulate and plan national policies for waste management, construction of disposal sites and waste reduction cooperation activities are ongoing in collaboration with a regional international organization called the Secretariat of Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP). In addition to the project in Samoa, where a waste disposal site is present as a cooperation model, waste management projects are also being implemented in Vanuatu and Palau, making this program an example of regional cooperation through international cooperation benefiting the region as a whole.

Other priority issues that should be addressed through region-wide cooperation include disaster prevention in Oceania, which is vulnerable to natural disasters such as earthquakes, tsunami, cyclones, and floods. Another priority is ICT education and distance learning centered on the main campus of the University of the South Pacific (USP) in Fiji.

## Front Line

Solomon Islands

### The M8.2 Earthquake and Tsunami Struck the Solomon Islands in April 2007

#### Educational Campaign on Earthquakes and Tsunami in Open-air Classrooms in the Disaster-hit Area

On the morning of April 2, 2007, an earthquake of magnitude 8.2 and a consequent tsunami struck the western region of the Solomon Islands.

In the area which suffered the most damage, many school building collapsed and classes could not be resumed. A request for cooperation volunteers was issued from the Gizo Education Office in Western Province in the affected area. Their request was to encourage young people in the disaster-hit area through instruction in sports and games. It was also requested that education be given to them regarding earthquakes and tsunami, which were likely to strike again in the future.

In response, we issued an urgent request for short-term volunteer, and were able to receive here in Solomon an ex-volunteer who had just returned from Africa as a JOCV member. He developed a plan for educational activities, while performing the education office's duties of distributing aid supplies and engaging in sports activities with young people. Thanks to the relationship of trust built through these efforts, the people welcomed the opportunity to learn about earthquakes and tsunami, and workshops at more than 20 locations were conducted successfully. Since some people died searching for their families during the disaster, a proposal to specify a place where families could meet at the time of disasters was favorably received.

This dispatch of a short-term volunteer for a period of six months proved effective. We would like to continue assistance on a long-term basis for the reconstruction of the region.

(JICA Solomon Overseas Representative Office)



Along with local staff and a UNICEF staff member, a JICA volunteer chartered a transport ship and distributed tents to outlying islands to serve as temporary school buildings.