

WAVE OF PACIFIKA



Special Feature and Interviews

— “Follow up on PALM 2000...”

“Japan should contribute to the self-help efforts for economic development of the island nations.”

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“Pacific Common Frontiers Initiative means joining hands with the people of the Pacific to open up new frontiers.”

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A Report on the Human Resources Development Symposium held in Fiji — PALM 2000 Follow-up Program

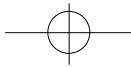
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SPINF Project Description

FY2000 12
FY2001 14

PALM 2000 (The Second Japan-South Pacific Forum Summit Meeting) held under the sponsorship of the Japanese Government in April 2000, brought together 16 national leaders in the Pacific region. The meeting was also the Mori government's debut on the international stage. PALM 2000 was clearly a success because even those people who were not interested in the Pacific Islands started to think seriously about the problems of the region as a result of the discussions.

The participants in this interview are the Acting Director of the Japan Institute of International Affairs, Toshiro Ozawa, the Special Coordinator of Planning and Coordination Department of JETRO, Tomoharu Washio, and Akio Miyajima of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Mr. Miyajima was the Director of the Oceania Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that sponsored and led this meeting. The interviews talk about the significance of PALM 2000 and its future development. [Interviewer, Rieko Hayakawa]



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“Japan should contribute to the self-help efforts for economic development of the island nations.”

*An interview with Toshiro Ozawa, Acting Director
The Japan Institute of International Affairs*



SPINF: Mr. Ozawa, you came to The Japan Institute of International Affairs from the Japanese Foreign Ministry. Up until now, what have been your main interests in regard to the Pacific?

Ozawa: Ever since my school days, I wanted to work on matters relating to the Pacific, and from the time I entered the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, I had hoped someday to be appointed Director of the Ministry's Oceania Division. This wish was not fulfilled, partly because the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is a very large organization with a wide range of departments and agencies. My previous areas of responsibility were more related with the United States. Also my overseas assignments included posts in Washington D.C., Russia and Malaysia.

In February 1999, I was appointed Executive Director of the Japan National Committee for Pacific Economic Cooperation (JANCPEC). At that time, the Pacific Island Nations Task Force (PIN) was being reactivated, which gave me an opportunity to become directly involved with the islands of the Pacific. My predecessor at JANCPEC told me that PIN had become dormant as a body within the framework of JANCPEC. I asked myself, “Well, what can we do?” Fortunately, since then I have gained the support of my associates for the idea that PIN should engage in concrete activities, and we have managed to make arrangements that have resulted in an environment conducive to such activity both in Japan and internationally. I am very happy to report that, as a result of spirited discussion at the Pacific Economic Cooperation Council (PECC) meeting held in Kyoto in April 2001, a consensus has been reached on plans for concrete activities.

“... a special feeling, among the Japanese that enables heart-to-heart communication with the peoples of the Pacific.”

SPINF: How do you view the results of PALM 2000? What follow-up activities are on the horizon?

Ozawa: I have always felt that there is a reservoir of affection, a special feeling, among the Japanese that enables heart-to-heart communication with the peoples of the Pacific. This special empathy was quite apparent to those who saw former Prime Minister Mori interact with the leaders of Pacific island countries at PALM 2000. The local media mentioned this in their reports, and I think the participants from the islands also perceived it. I think this establishment of a common bond was the true significance of PALM 2000. We should build upon this as we plan for future activities.

Japan itself is an island nation. The difference between it and other Pacific islands is a matter of scale. To help develop a proper perspective on the problems faced by Pacific islands, Japan should make a greater effort to understand and develop proper responses to the

problems faced by remote Japanese islands offshore from its main four islands.

SPINF: What are your basic views on Japan's relations with Pacific island nations?

Ozawa: From an historical perspective, I feel that Japan bears certain responsibilities to help the Pacific island nations. With this fundamental view, I think we have to become aware of the actual conditions the peoples of the Pacific face, and work together with them to find ways to bring about indigenous economic development. This view is based on the fact that most islands face the problems of remoteness and sparse population. This makes indigenous economic development extremely difficult.

SPINF: What is PIN's most important task within the PECC?

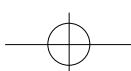
Ozawa: As the leading statesman Saburo Ohkita said more than 20 years ago, when the guiding principles for PECC were being drawn up, our basic perception must be that economic cooperation is absolutely essential as the means through which a single Asia-Pacific community can be built in a region with such a diversity of nations and cultures as the Asian-Pacific region. Bearing this in mind, I believe that the only realistic approach to working together to create such a cooperative structure is one that views economic cooperation between all Asia-Pacific nations as essential. We cannot think in terms of leaving Pacific islands out of any program for economic cooperation.

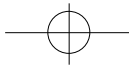
Within PECC, PIN is the only task force dedicated to a specific region. The assignments of the other task forces are issue-oriented, not region-oriented. The problems the Pacific island nations are directly facing are viewed within PECC as problems unique to the Pacific island nations. As for JANCPEC, we feel that PIN should interact with those task forces which do not deal with PIN today. And we expect the other task forces to make positive contributions to tackling the problems faced by the Pacific island nations.

“The indigenous development of the island nations depends on creating a system for cooperation within an Asia-Pacific framework.”

SPINF: Contrary to their image of being a paradise, the Pacific island nations face very grave problems that are global in scale such as fishing rights, and the dumping of nuclear materials in their territories. What areas seem to present the greatest difficulties when it comes to settling these issues with the other countries involved?

Ozawa: I haven't faced any difficult problem so far. One thing to keep in mind regarding the PECC member countries is that although the populations of island nations are small, they each have one vote in the United





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Nations, and, in this regard, realistic political calculations can be made.

I think that nothing is more important for PECC member countries than to collectively think about the interests of the Pacific island nations. At times, Japan will have to take the lead in this. The indigenous development of the island nations depends on creating a system for cooperation within an Asia-Pacific framework. To achieve this, education is the most important thing of all.

SPINF: The Sasakawa Pacific Island Nations Fund was asked to make concrete suggestions and give advice in the reactivation of PIN within the PECC. What is your evaluation of our activities, and what do you expect of us in the future?

Ozawa: SPINF has shown great enthusiasm in its activities, and we truly appreciate its efforts. People-to-people interchange is one of the main factors in both building and sustaining positive relations with the island nations. SPINF has been successful in the area of building ties with key people in the region. Among the Japanese entities involved with the Pacific island nations, you have, on the one hand, the government, which extends tens of billions of yen in ODA every year, and on the other, you have small NGOs with small budgets. SPINF is positioned exactly midway between these two types of organizations. In view of its unique position, we would like SPINF to freely put forth its views on the issues that must be addressed. In this regard, we urge you to use PECC venues as much as possible. We have received your support in the effort to reactivate PIN within the PECC, and we would very much appreciate receiving any concrete advice you may have in the area of policy. I think that by consistently expressing your opinions you will enhance the overall value of SPINF itself.

IT Revolution a Double-Edged Sword for Island Nations

SPINF: Over the past ten years, SPINF has put a great deal of effort into the information and communications field — particularly in the area of distance education. PIN at PECC has also taken up this task. As exemplified by the Okinawa Charter on Global Information Society (IT Charter), the Japanese government is also making significant moves in the area of information and communications technologies. What do you think are the best prospects for the island nations in this area?

“We should develop a posture in which the people of the Pacific islands view Japan as responding to their needs as part of a nationwide effort, rather than a JETRO or a JICA effort.”

An interview with Tomoharu Washio, Special Coordinator, Planning and Coordination Department, Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO)

SPINF: Mr. Washio, up until now, what has your involvement with Pacific island nations been?

Washio: My JETRO assignments have mostly been connected to trade with the United States. I have been assigned to posts in New York twice. When I was

Ozawa: As seen from the island nations’ perspective, the IT revolution is like a double-edged sword. It represents a great chance for progress, yet at the same time, it carries with it the danger that the gap in development will expand if the islands are slow about moving ahead in this area.

I think everyone will have to think of how we can make the IT revolution truly an opportunity for the island nations. In saying this, I am by no means thinking of giant infrastructure building projects. We must not lose sight of the fact that what we are after is the best way to move toward indigenous economic development in the Pacific island nations. The point is that, to do this, we must search for common goals as we try to make use of the potential of the IT revolution. Japan can play a role here by thinking of this problem together with the people of the Pacific, and by offering assistance in some of the work that will have to be done. Japan should never think that its role is to “take care of everything.” Together with the people of the Pacific island nations, we should ascertain the results of efforts made up until now, and as we do so cooperate closely in helping them decide which technologies and plans to apply and provide support for in the development of IT policies and what types of systems would be most effective.

SPINF: As a career diplomat, in your future activities, how do plan to use the experience you have gained in your involvement with the island nations?

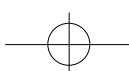
Ozawa: At the Japan Institute of International Affairs as well as elsewhere, I have worked on many issues, including those related to the Pacific island nations. I have some wonderful memories about many of the tasks I have had. I will try my best to use the various experiences I have gained if I am appointed to a different position in the future.

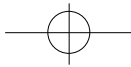
Particularly in regard to the Pacific island nations, I have gained a stronger appreciation than ever before of the important role that small countries have to play in the international community and of the importance they have for Japanese diplomacy. I intend to keep this in mind in any future diplomatic assignment I may have.

(The above interview was conducted at The Japan Institute of International Affairs in Tokyo on August 7, 2001. Mr. Ozawa was appointed Consul-General of the Japanese Consulate-General office in Vancouver, Canada on September 10, 2001.)



assigned to the Institute for International Policy Studies, I was also responsible for relations with the United States. My first real responsibility involving Pacific island nations was at PALM 2000 where, along with interaction with the U.S., I was also asked to lead our work involving Oceania. So I





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could say that before PALM 2000 I had virtually no involvement with island countries.

Like most people I suppose, my only vision of the Pacific was that it was the closest place on earth to paradise. It would be an ideal place for a honeymoon, unfortunately, my honeymoon took place many years ago. [Laughs.]

Even though my current position places me in charge of work related to Oceania, prior to PALM 2000, I truly did not have a chance to visit any of the islands. There were two reasons for this. One is related to the limits of JETRO activity. If a prospective counterpart country has not reached a certain stage of economic development, the various JETRO activities will not be undertaken. For example, exhibitions will not be held, trade specialists will not be dispatched, and workshops will not be held. This is entirely related to the special character of JETRO's function, a function that made it seem quite difficult to start any activity in relation to the Pacific islands.

The second reason I hadn't visited any of the islands was a very simple one. A trip to one of the islands would have meant that I wouldn't have been able to return to Japan for about two weeks. I actually had so much organizational work to do at JETRO, that it was impossible to convince anyone of the need for a trip. I couldn't get permission to go. That's really the way it was.

SPINF: What has been your impression of people in Japan doing work related to the Pacific islands?

Washio: This spring we held a symposium for people on the front lines of business. In the typical workshops that JETRO conducts, if the subject is not developed in an interesting way, we usually do not attract much of an audience, but this time the rate of attendance by people involved in work with the Pacific islands was quite high. This made quite an impression on me. A bit before this event, I noticed the same thing at a Foreign Ministry symposium I had been invited to participate in.

One thing I noticed about people doing work related to the Pacific islands was their strong feeling of involvement, their deep individual interest and concern. Along with this, I had the impression that rather than the region as a whole, these people were particularly involved with a specific region or island nation. Comparing this with my impression of people I encountered in my work related to Asia or North America, I felt this was rather unique.

“I want to give a more universal character of Japanese people who are interested in Pacific islands.”

SPINF: You have consciously tried to broaden the scope of symposiums to include panelists other than specialists in work related to the Pacific islands, haven't you?

Washio: What I have been trying to do is bring general business to the forefront rather than specialists in island work itself. We have made a conscious effort to invite specialists in a specific type of business, and have them examine products from island nations. I want to give a

more universal character of Japanese people who are interested in the Pacific islands. If the Japanese market does not have a certain universal aspect, we will not be able to reach a broad range of potential customers or business partners for the Pacific Islands.

SPINF: Among other events, you have conducted an interview with a cabinet minister from The Kingdom of Tonga that was recorded for use in a TV program, and you invited the Secretary General of the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) to Japan. What have been your impressions of the people you have encountered from Pacific island nations?

Washio: First of all, all of the people I have met have impressed me with their fine character and personal qualities. Secondly, I have come to recognize that

Japan has an important responsibility in regard to the Pacific island nations. On the other hand, there has been a tendency on the part of the islands to simply throw requests for assistance out there and see what happens. Often, “nothing to lose anyway,” seems to be the attitude. Rather than help, this approach could give rise to problems as we begin building relationships between Japan and the Pacific island nations that are based on trust.

“... we recognized the importance of sincerely following up on the initiative taken and commitment made by Prime Minister Mori at PALM 2000.”

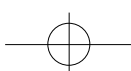
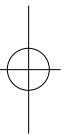
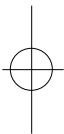
SPINF: How do you think JETRO should proceed in its response to the needs of the Pacific island nations?

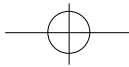
Washio: It is very important that Japan makes a serious nationwide effort to meet the commitments and keep the promises it made at PALM 2000, which was hosted by the Japanese government. JETRO's role is included in the declaration adopted by PALM 2000. Our position is that we fully intend to work in accordance with the plan that was proposed.

Secondly, I would like to say that JETRO's role is to ensure that Japan's efforts produce lasting results. The symposium to be held in Fiji in September will be jointly hosted by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and PIF with the support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry. We should develop a posture in which the people of the Pacific islands view Japan as responding to their needs as part of a nation-wide effort, rather than a JETRO or a JICA effort.

It was necessary to win support for this position within JETRO. Some people in JETRO said that the amount of money we were budgeting for the Pacific islands would be better spent on relations with neighbouring countries in Asia. Despite this type of disagreement, the reason why we have been able to step up our activities directed toward the islands is that we recognized the importance of sincerely following up on the initiative taken and commitment made by Prime Minister Mori at PALM 2000.

SPINF: The Sasakawa Pacific Island Nations Fund will participate in the symposium in Fiji as a sponsoring organization, and lead the session on information and





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communications technologies. We are very happy to have been able to collaborate with JETRO the way we do. How do you view the role of SPINF, and what are your expectations of us in the future?

Washio: Before I was appointed to my current position, I didn't know what kinds of activities you undertook. When I was asked to lead our work in preparation for the Pacific island nations, I was seeking information on the Pacific region as a whole. I was truly relieved when I saw that, as opposed to many other parties involved with Pacific island nations that focus their concern on specific islands or island regions, SPINF has adopted a Pacific-wide approach to its work, has grasped the overall situation, and has built a base of contacts with key persons throughout the region. At the same time, it is very important that you have also helped form a network of specialists on island issues and related organizations in Japan. To put it another way, I hope you will continue to expand your general approach, addressing issues and organizing activities from the viewpoint of the region as a whole. I think that SPINF is the only organization that can do this.

“Japan has to clarify where it positions its policy toward the Pacific island nations as part of an overall foreign policy plan.”

SPINF: How should Japan interact economically with the Pacific island nations in the future?

Washio: This is a difficult problem. If you are talking about independent economic development, I don't think Japan can effectively respond to the needs of each island individually. Frankly speaking, this is because the scale of the market on each island is too small. Economically speaking this is self-evident. You also have the global environmental problem of the rising level of the ocean surface, a very critical problem for coral islands.

You can consider developing industries, such as tourism to earn foreign exchange, and you see how Australia and New Zealand have responded in appropriate ways. As for Japan, although there have been such efforts as helping with the development of eco-tourism, to put it bluntly I would say that we simply have not stepped forward with business activity that would help them

earn foreign exchange and serve as a step toward building an economic relationship.

Still, the question remains: How should we respond? Although it would be getting into psychological theory, one might say that perhaps we shouldn't simply give assistance — that, instead, we should reach out to those who truly intend to become independent. However, having said that, I agree that assistance, assistance in conformity with carefully developed policies and principles, should be extended in areas in which independent activity isn't possible. Of course, I am speaking as one who has yet to have real contacts with any of the islands. I am still in the learning stage, studying possibilities for concrete solutions.

JETRO has engaged in activity such as holding exhibitions of products from Pacific islands. The range of products has not expanded. I know what the basic reason for this is. JETRO's activities must be strengthened. However, the fact is we are not in a position to sustain the type of expenditure that this would require. This is especially true at a time when we are being called on to carry out administrative reform. JETRO now has to reduce its financial assistance expenditures. In such a situation, it is important that JETRO develop a plan for extending cooperation to islands that do not offer much hope of cost-effective use of funds.

These are the reasons I think we have to expand the framework of our approach a bit more. Japan has to clarify where it positions its policy toward the Pacific island nations as part of an overall foreign policy plan. The importance of the islands must be one of the criteria for our foreign policy. We have to develop a theory that accounts for the importance of the Pacific as part of our foreign policy aims. Once national strategic considerations have been clarified, JETRO can, as required, easily be mobilized as an organization that can carry out government policy. This type of consensus is required for JETRO to be able to make a sustainable commitment to the Pacific island nations.

(The above interview was conducted at JETRO Headquarters in Tokyo on August 7, 2001. Mr. Washio was appointed Chief Executive Director of JETRO Chicago in January, 2002.)

“Pacific Common Frontiers Initiative means joining hands with the people of the Pacific to open up new frontiers.”

*An interview with Akio Miyajima, Director, Oceania Division
Ministry of Foreign Affairs*

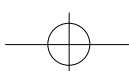
SPINF: Mr. Miyajima, you were appointed Director of the Oceania Division at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs two years ago. What was your involvement with the Pacific islands prior to that.

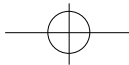
Miyajima: The extent of my experience was merely a work-related trip to Hawaii. I hadn't even been to Australia or New Zealand before my appointment. No matter how much we talk about the Pacific, I think you can safely say that very, very few foreign ministry employees have ever set foot on one of the islands.

I have always loved the ocean, but I never thought that this would lead to any involvement with the Pacific. I read most of the novels with an island setting written by

Natsuki Ikezawa, and after taking up my current post I began more serious reading the writing of Atsushi Nakajima who wrote about the South Pacific after he began working in Palau in the 1940's. This made me realize that I lacked experience and knowledge. In the two years since that time when I didn't know a thing, I hope I have learned enough to talk intelligently about a variety of subjects thanks to the kind help of the people I have encountered.

SPINF: Compared to former directors of the Oceania Division, you have been able to visit quite a number of islands, haven't you? What kinds of impressions have you gained of the islands?





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Miyajima: My first trip to one of the islands was two years ago, in August 1999, when I went to Fiji. Our Division is in charge of 14 islands. I have been able to visit eight. My first impression was of how friendly and broadminded the people were — and what wonderful smiles! The Pacific island nations can be broadly divided into three cultural regions, Micronesia, Polynesia and Melanesia. There are significant differences between each region, and the more you learn, the more you realize how culturally different each of the island nations is. I have also visited the French territories, Tahiti and New Caledonia. There too you will find unique cultures. My image of the Pacific is now one of great diversity throughout the islands.

Nevertheless, although the Pacific has a very bright image, a focus of my work for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs’ economic cooperation, on this front the realities are not so bright. We are faced with the problem of why the smaller nations have great difficulty with economic development, such as economic independence and human resource development. The islands are also faced with the grave effects of global warming, and the task of not being left behind by the IT revolution.

SPINF: What can be done to close the gap between the image of the Pacific islands and the realities they face?

Miyajima: Currently visitors from Japan are limited to mainly senior citizens who come to pray for the war dead; young people who come to enjoy scuba diving and people working with JICA, Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCV) or similar organizations. Businessmen almost never come, and generally, families do not think of vacation trips to the region. I would like ordinary Japanese to become more familiar with this region.

I have many opportunities to talk to young people about the Pacific. Their typical comment is that how pretty the ocean is. The stars are beautiful too, especially when they all come out. I would like young Japanese people to learn not only that the ocean, the stars and the natural setting are beautiful, but also that the people of the islands have a wisdom handed down from generation to generation about how to live in harmony with nature, and that modernization has been accompanied by many problems. They should also be aware that such places as Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands and Palau were turned into battlefields in World War II. Until I went there, I didn’t know myself that the remains of zero fighters and tanks were left behind on Palau. All these places have friendly feelings about Japan. The people there have learned from their elders about how things were during the war, and they understand a great deal.

I would like the Japanese people to learn about actual conditions in the Pacific island nations. It will be worthwhile if even one more person is inspired to do everything he or she can to contribute to solu-

tions to Pacific problems. I would very much like to see Japanese people develop a broader and deeper understanding of, and concern about the islands of the Pacific. Of course, we in the Oceania Division have to continue to study. We have a lot more to learn. We have to read more books and learn from people outside the Ministry. It is particularly helpful to talk with people from JICA and other agencies who have worked in the Pacific. In this sense, we are calling on people to teach us more.

“Japan and the Pacific island nations have a special affinity.”

SPINF: What is the common ground shared between Japan and the Pacific island nations?

Miyajima: Japan is also an island nation. We often refer to ourselves as Pacific island people and I often use an expression “an island nation friend.” I think this kind of statement is probably half true and half false. In the early part of August when the President of Palau visited Japan and met Prime Minister Koizumi, the Prime Minister said, “Japan is an island country like yours.” When we have common concerns we have acted as partners. An example was the stance adopted toward the Kyoto Protocol and we have talked about economic cooperation. However, although we are an island nation just like the Pacific island nations are, the gap in the scale of our economies is vast. Also, even though some of our people make their living from the sea by fishing, the majority of the Japanese come from mountain areas and an agricultural background.

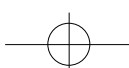
However, it is true that much of our culture originally came from other islands. Before we hosted PALM 2000, I had once remarked, “Japan and the Pacific island nations have a special affinity.” Our relationship is not merely economic. My two years of encounters with the peoples of the Pacific have convinced me that we also have ties that come from the heart.

SPINF: You had to take the lead in organizing PALM 2000 right after you were appointed to your current position...

Miyajima: From the point of view of Japanese diplomacy, the Pacific is a very important region. Because of such issues as the transportation of nuclear materials, those related to the fishing industry and



Leaders from 16 countries and regions participated in PALM 2000 held at Seagaia in Miyazaki Japan. The Summit convened on April 22, 2000. (Photo courtesy of The Yomiuri Shimbun)



Pacific island nations are important partners at the United Nations. At the same time, as I said earlier, on the cultural level there seems to be an almost family-like relationship between Japan and the Pacific.

The year I assumed my post was also the year Japan hosted the G8 Kyushu-Okinawa Summit, so I was beginning to get a clear picture of issues in the Pacific. In organizing PALM 2000, we wanted to create a link with Okinawa, and we came up with the idea of the title for that meeting as “Pacific-Islands Summit.” We abbreviate “Pacific Leaders Meeting” to PALM in order to use the image of palm trees. The meeting provided a venue for discussions of such issues as IT, the spread of infectious diseases, global warming and cultural diversity. These issues were also raised at the G8 Kyushu-Okinawa Summit. PALM 2000 was also the diplomatic debut for Prime Minister Mori. Having met with leaders of Pacific island nations at PALM 2000, the Prime Minister was able to bring particular issues that island leaders were concerned about to the attention of the national leaders at the G8 Summit. I am sure this effort on the part of the Japanese Prime Minister was greatly appreciated. This was an example of the partnership between Japan and the Pacific island nations.

When Japan invited such a large number of leaders to PALM 2000, the acceptance was completely positive. The interchange that took place showed no signs of ill will or discord. I think that the Pacific is one of the few or even the only area in the world where this type of regional conference can be held in such a free and friendly atmosphere. In this sense, the region is very special to Japan. Of course a great deal of hard work will be required to maintain this type of warm relationship. Prime Minister Mori expressed the opinion that Pacific Islands Summits should be held every two or three years. One of our major tasks will be to ensure that the next Summit will be one of heart-to-heart talks conducive to building a partnership.

The number of leaders of Pacific island nations that came to Japan was truly impressive. I very much want to see the Japanese Prime Minister reciprocate by visiting Pacific Island countries in the not too distant future. It has been over 15 years since then Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone visited some of the core countries of the region. Such a visit is necessary because we want the people of the Pacific island nations to know that Japan regards its relationship with them as very important, and at the same time it would be an opportunity to help the Japanese people gain a deeper understanding of Pacific affairs.

SPINF: Why did you choose Miyazaki as the venue for the Summit?

Miyajima: The city of Miyazaki promised to cooperate in every way they could. They were very helpful, and the warmth and hospitality of the local people was an important factor in the Summit’s success. The charm of Miyazaki is unparalleled anywhere in Japan. The schedule was tight, but the Pacific leaders were able to do a little sightseeing — see the many palm trees of Miyazaki and learn that Japan too has places with a very warm climate and warm-hearted people. Perhaps

nothing was better than this. It was also important to ensure that the visitors and the Japanese people became more aware of settings in Japan other than Tokyo. We want to continue to pursue this goal in future meetings.

Accent at PALM 2000 was on Youth, Ocean and Future

SPINF: What were the basic ideas you wanted to deliver at PALM 2000?

Miyajima: Youth, the Ocean, and the Future were the three themes we tried to develop at PALM 2000 to foster meaningful discussions. “Youth” was meant to convey the idea of ongoing development. “Ocean” conveyed the idea that countries of the region face common problems such as climate change. And “Future” was meant to convey the goal of long-lasting friendly ties. I think these themes will continue to be useful at future island leaders summit meetings. We must study and learn from the past, but it is best to look ahead, focus on the future, as we decide what type of partnership we want to forge between Japan and the Pacific island nations. I feel that a productive partnership is indeed possible.



Prime Minister Mori’s opening address was entitled “Pacific Common Frontiers Initiative.” I think this title conveyed the idea that our diplomacy for the Pacific will involve a period of rediscovery of the region.

A while ago, specialists on the region, at Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) meetings and on other occasions, were referring to the Pacific region as taking on the shape of a doughnut. Rather than a pan-Pacific structure, the region was taking the form of a structure built around or surrounding the Pacific. I think that it will be Japan’s role to expand its foreign policy to include efforts to fill out what appears to be the hollow part of the Asia-Pacific region. We refer to our energetic foreign policy for Central Asian countries as “Silk Road Diplomacy.” We think we can pursue a forward-looking policy toward the Pacific at the same time. “Pacific Common Frontiers Initiative” the name we have given this foreign policy, suggests a greater degree of closeness. We say “Pacific Common Frontiers Initiative” rather than “Pacific Frontier Diplomacy” because we want to avoid having people misunderstand and think our intention is to be the single or dominant country interacting diplomatically with the Pacific island nations. We want to join hands with the people of the Pacific to pursue common dreams and open up new frontiers. This is the meaning of the name.

SPINF: In January of this year the Ministry of Foreign Affairs shifted its Oceania Division from the Ministry’s European and Oceanian Affairs Bureau to the Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau. What was the thinking behind this move?

Miyajima: We did this to enhance our ability to help strengthen solidarity and cooperative relations among Asian and Pacific countries. Of course we also attach great importance to smoothly maintaining our partnership with Australia and New Zealand. This also comes under the Division’s scope of responsibility.

Special Feature and Interviews – “Follow up on PALM 2000...”

The Oceania Division was in the European and Oceanian Affairs Bureau primarily because so many of the Pacific island nations were part of the British Commonwealth. However, having the Division there led to bottlenecks in such areas as rotation of personnel. From now on the Pacific island nations will be given more importance by Japan. If they are going to be considered together with Asian nations within the context of our overall diplomatic strategy, the new organizational set-up will be more conducive to planning the professional development of staff.

Okinawa is another important partner. In July of this year, we co-hosted the second Pacific Islands Academic Summit, which was held at the University of the Ryukyus. Okinawa has a great deal of experience with many of the problems particular to tropical islands such as protection of coral reefs and extermination of fruit flies (mibae). The discussions led by Mr. Moshin Morita, President of the University of the Ryukyus, inspired all of us to work together to solve problems Pacific islanders face in common. Of course Hawaii is also part of the Pacific, and the efforts of the East-West Center at the University of Hawaii and close cooperation with other U.S. institutions will also be a key. In this way, if we function within a broader framework, a more dynamic, productive foreign policy will be possible not only for the benefit of relations between Japan and the Pacific island nations, but for more effective, multi-faceted interaction with the countries around the Pacific.

SPINF: Couldn't it be said that the Pacific Ocean is a territory of Great Britain, the U.S. and France? If we are going to interact with the Pacific island nations, it seems to me that we will also have to interact with those three countries.

Miyajima: That's quite true. Recently I have been talking to British people with experience in the region, and I was deeply impressed by their knowledge and wisdom. When it comes to information, the countries you mentioned show a great deal of concern. They watch events very closely. The Anglo-Saxons, including those in Australia and New Zealand, exchange a great deal of diverse information with Pacific island nations. If you look at many of the national flags of countries in the region, you cannot help but notice how they resemble the Union Jack. We must remember that many of the countries are members of the British Commonwealth of Nations.

France's cultural policy bears watching. The important question in Japan's policies toward Pacific island nations is deciding what type of relationships do we want to build with the countries we have already been involved with and with countries we want to become involved with. There have recently been talks that it should be possible for Japan to cooperate with Britain in Pacific matters.

SPINF: The late Prime Minister Obuchi called on Mr. Sasakawa, President of The Nippon Foundation, to cooperate in the organizing of PALM 2000. In response, the Sasakawa Pacific Island Nations Fund invited eight journalists from Pacific islands to Japan, and we coop-



The gathering of national leaders at the Pacific Island Summit was chaired by Prime Minister Mori. To his left is Mr. Nakamura, former President of the Republic of Palau. The meeting was held on April 22, 2000 at Seagaia in Miyazaki City. (Photo courtesy of The Yomiuri Shimbun)

erated in the area of publicity and for the meeting. What is your opinion of SPINF? What do you expect of us?

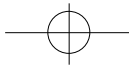
Miyajima: Right after I was appointed to my current position, I was able to consult with and benefit from the general advice of SPINF. The Fund has had an ongoing involvement in the area, and it has played a central role in the regional network. This is very valuable, particularly for a newcomer in his position like me. Moreover, SPINF has connections with key people in the Pacific and with people in Japan that are involved in Pacific affairs. The type of help we have received from SPINF has been something like an orientation. We are very appreciative of the assistance received in forming ties between Pacific islanders and Japanese people involved in Pacific affairs.

SPINF has contributed in several areas in the effort to discover solutions to the problems Pacific island nations face: help has been given in Japanese language educational programs; assistance has been provided for both IT-related activities centered around distance education and other educational programs over the past ten years and for efforts to deal with the problem of protecting cultural and historical heritage; and cooperation has been extended in the area of human resource development. The Fund has indeed helped in a sustained and detailed way. We in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs can learn a great deal from these efforts. In addition, your introduction to various experts and people with experience in Pacific affairs has been very helpful in helping us expand our network of contacts.

The Pacific Island Nations Conference organized by the Sasakawa Peace Foundation in 1988 served as a model for us as we organized PALM 2000. It seems to me that the underlying concepts were essentially the same for the two events. It was truly very valuable to us to have been able to learn from how you developed your ambitious idea of bringing Pacific leaders together in a conference and then how you actually carried out the work, encouraging NGOs and experts to get involved in a very positive way.

“Rather than specialists on Pacific island nations, we want Japanese who are well known in various other fields to go to the islands...”

SPINF: How do you view the difference in the roles of the government and NGOs?



Special Feature and Interviews – “Follow up on PALM 2000...”

Miyajima: We are faced with the fact that the island populations are generally small. Therefore, selecting people to acquire experience in various fields is an important process. Recently when I was in Fiji, I had a chance to talk with a junior high school principal who had visited Japan under the auspices of the Japan Foundation. He had set up a panel near the entrance to his school introducing various aspects of Japanese society, and he had created and distributed to his students educational materials about Japan. We say that training people who can teach IT-related skills is a key task. Here, it is important to select and carefully train people who will be able to teach well and who are willing to share what they have learned with large numbers of people. What the government can do in this area is limited. That is why we would like to see NGOs carry out sustained and carefully developed programs.

People say that it is difficult to conduct research on Pacific island nations in Japan because there is very little demand for it. We have made requests for support from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology in setting up educational and research programs — programs for Japanese researchers on the Pacific as well as for Pacific islanders who come to Japan to learn more about Japanese technology or culture. I think that such programs are very important, and they need to be expanded. Also, rather than specialists on Pacific island nations, we want Japanese who are well known in various other fields to go to the islands, and when they return home, to tell as many people as possible about how beautiful the islands are and how warmly they look upon Japan. I think this is very important.

The message the Ministry of Foreign Affairs tries to convey in its public relations activity does not reach as many people as we would like. If more people from Japan were to go to the islands, it is certain that they would make friends with many people. This would have a very important effect in terms of people-to-people communication and promoting a better understanding between Japan and Pacific islands.

SPINF: Having been to the islands, what impression did you obtain about them?

Miyajima: In the 20 years since I entered the Foreign Ministry I have never directly had to deal with a war situation as part of my job, but when I went to Peleliu in Palau and Tarawa in Kiribati, I visited sites where, for the first time, I saw how a great many soldiers and inhabitants had sacrificed their lives. I saw the remains of destroyed Zero fighters and tanks and sunken warships. Until I went there, I had absolutely no idea that these remains of war were left behind on remote islands in the South Pacific. I was shocked and moved when I saw those things and thought of the great tragedy that had occurred.

The story of the lives that were lost all over the South Pacific during the war, the story of the people who worked in the South Seas Government, the story of the people who strived to develop industries in the South Pacific — none of these have been properly told. Another interesting fact is that a large number of elderly Pacific islanders can speak Japanese. The last names of some of the presidents are Japanese. Many people have Japanese first names as their family names. I had no idea

that such a place existed anywhere in the world — particularly a place so close to Japan.

As I thought of Japanese history when I visited Micronesia, I also strongly felt we must do something to contribute to the future of these islands. This is what I am recommending to young people in Japan. This is a very interesting and important subject. If one thinks about economic development in the islands and the need to protect the environment, the question of how Japan should best cooperate arises. We have to think carefully about how to proceed.

How should we respond to the “Look North” policies being adopted by Pacific nations?

SPINF: Serious incidents occurred in Fiji and in the Solomon Islands right after the conclusion of PALM 2000.

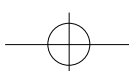
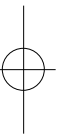
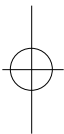
Miyajima: The trouble in the Solomons occurred right after the latest crisis in Fiji began. This dramatically brought home to us how little we really know about regional problems. I say this despite the fact that we had studied a great deal of material about various issues, including reports from our embassies.

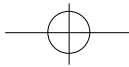
The Fijian Prime Minister and cabinet ministers that attended PALM 2000 were taken hostage. And the turmoil in the Solomons forced the foreign overseas cooperation organizations to evacuate their personnel. It was a very sad period. It made us realize that tribal warfare and ethnic conflict in this era of globalization and modernization are indeed a very difficult challenge for the diplomatic community.

We plan to extend financial assistance and send personnel to help with the carrying out of a national election in Fiji in August.

During his visit to Japan in July, the Fijian Foreign Minister told us that, from now on his country would be carrying out a “Look North” policy. He was saying that his country could no longer leave things up to Australia and New Zealand. Island countries such as Fiji had to look north to Japan and Asian countries for cooperation. I think we should take this message to heart and carefully plan how we will respond. In one sense, I think this represents an opportunity for us. Our past efforts were mainly focused on providing economic cooperation, and we should build on those efforts. Now is the time to take a step forward and work together with the island nations to build for the future. I think our assistance with the Fijian national election in August is a concrete example of the shape such an effort can take.

It is also important that we tell the other countries involved in the Pacific island region, countries such as Australia, New Zealand, the United States, France, and Britain, about our stance — that Japan will energetically participate in the discussions on regional issues and provide significant assistance. There is a comparatively high level of concern in Japan about the problems in East Timor, but nowhere near that level of concern about the problems faced by Pacific Island nations. Japan is making a positive effort to help with the general election in Fiji. We want to ensure that this example of our Frontier Diplomacy is successful. Although we did not envision this type of challenge in our discussions at





Special Feature and Interviews – “Follow up on PALM 2000...”

the Pacific Leaders Meeting, many of the island nations face very grave problems. We should look upon these problems as problems of our own. I think we should no longer be observers on the sidelines. We have to develop concrete measures and actually go to the trouble spots. If we adopt this type of posture, the Pacific island nations will raise their evaluation of us as an ally.

[Editor's note: Japan contributed 370,000 dollars worth of material and equipment to Fiji through the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and sent ten persons as United Nations volunteers for the Fijian election.]

SPINF: How do you think the Foreign Ministry will position the Pacific island nations in the future?

Miyajima: I think the answer to that question depends on whether or not the Pacific Common Frontiers Initiative really takes root as part of Japan's foreign policy. From this point on, we will probably have to work slowly and steadily. We should follow up on PALM 2000 and move on from there. As Professor Heita Kawakatsu once said, “Keep your eye on longitudinal axes.” If we can increase the number of our people capable of helping structure a foreign policy around the axis extending north and south at 135 degrees east longitude, you will see a steady change in Japan's diplomacy. We will have a more vigorous and rewarding diplomacy.

SPINF: Are there examples of Japanese diplomats involved in the Pacific islands who became officials and significantly contributed to the development of Japanese diplomacy in the Pacific?

Miyajima: Beyond a doubt, the background efforts made by Mr. Togo, former Director-General in the Ministry's European and Oceanian Affairs Bureau, were indispensable to the success of PALM 2000. In 1987, as Secretary for the late Foreign Minister, Tadashi Kuranari, he visited Fiji, Vanuatu, and Papua New Guinea. The Kuranari Doctrine was announced in Fiji. As we prepared for PALM 2000, he said time and again that as a person who has actually visited Pacific island nations, he wanted us to ensure that it would be a good summit. He kept reminding us that the event would have great significance for Japanese foreign policy. Mr. Makita, current Director-General of the Ministry's Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau, once served as head of the Oceania Division. I heard that he visited Micronesia when he was working at the North American Affairs Bureau.

Before, I would say my map of the world only showed the Pacific region as a vast ocean. Now I see a region with many islands and I think of the people living there and their warm smiles. I now have a special feeling for the existence of the Pacific island nations. I think my map of the world has truly expanded, and I am sure that my own life has been enriched by my experiences in the islands. I will treasure this feeling as I continue my involvement with the Pacific region.

(The above interview was conducted at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Tokyo on August 7, 2001. Mr. Miyajima was assigned to serve as Director of the Foreign Ministry's First North America Division in the North American Affairs Bureau on December 1, 2001.)

A Report on the Human Resources Development Symposium held in Fiji — PALM 2000 Follow-up Program

Akio Watanabe, Chair, Steering Committee, Sasakawa Pacific Island Nations Fund (SPINF)

As part of the follow-up activity to PALM 2000, which was held at Seagaia in Miyazaki City in April 2000, a symposium was held on the subject “Human Resources Development Policies for Sustainable Development in the Pacific Islands Region.” The event, which was co-hosted by JETRO, JICA and the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) and supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

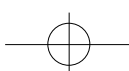


Former Japanese Prime Minister Mori, Hon. Kabua, Chief Secretary, Marshall Islands, and Hon. Nakamura, former president of Palau were among the national leaders attending the Fiji Symposium.

and the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, was held from September 23 and 24, 2001 in Nadi, the Republic of Fiji Islands. The Sasakawa Pacific Island Nations Fund, the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), and the South Pacific Project Facility (SPPF) participated as supporting organizations. The Symposium also received the full support of the government of Fiji.

Among the participants from Japan were former Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori; Mr. Minoru Hatakeyama, JETRO Chairman; and Mr. Kimio Fujita, former President of JICA, a Senior Overseas Volunteer currently serving as advisor to the Prime Minister of the Independent State of Samoa.

The four sessions at the symposium were: the promotion of tourism and investment, environmental protection (particularly the subject of disposal of waste materials), promotion of exports and market development, and information communications. Several experts from Japan in each subject participated. Participants from the Pacific area included two cabinet ministers from each of the Pacific island nations, and as a special guest, Hon.



Kuniwo Nakamura, former President of the Republic of Palau. Hon. Nakamura, who also served as Chairman of PIF at the time of PALM 2000, made an official visit to Japan in November 2000.

Significance of Japan Handling Pacific Island Nations Issues at the Highest Level

There is great significance in the fact that, at PALM 2000, Japan was treating issues confronting the Pacific island nations at the highest level. The participation of former Prime Minister Mori at the symposium was another sign that Japan is now making cooperation with the Pacific island nations a priority. This was the second time a political leader at the prime ministerial level had visited a Pacific country — the second since then Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone visited several countries in the region in 1985. People in Japan with a strong interest in Pacific island nation affairs (I include myself among them), had been working diligently for many years to generate a deeper level of concern in Japan about problems in the Pacific islands. It had been very difficult to do this. For us, it was very significant that two important national leaders such as Hon. Mori and Hon. Nakamura were participating in the discussions. It was the direct initiatives taken by Hon. Mori and his predecessor, the late Prime Minister Obuchi, that had led to Japan hosting the Pacific Island Leaders' Summit (PALM 2000). This marked the beginning of Japan raising its level of concern — both domestically and internationally — about Pacific island issues.

The hosting of the symposium also served as an excellent opportunity for a diplomatic debut by the new government of Fiji, which was formed as a result of the just completed national election. The fact that Hon. Laisenia Qarase, the Fijian Prime Minister, and all members of his cabinet participated in the symposium attested to the fact that Fijian authorities had given the event the highest priority.

Developing IT, not for national benefit, but for regional benefit

I served as moderator for the session on information communications. The two presenters at the session were Professor Toshio Kosuge from the University of Electro-Communication, Japan and Mr. Paul Kimberley from ESCAP. The four commentators were Hon. Nakamura, former president of Palau; Hon. Hans Joachim Keil, Minister for Trade, Commerce and Industry, Samoa; Hon. Simione Kaitani, Assistant Minister for Works, Telecommunications, Energy, Road Transport and shipping, Fiji, and Hon. Teleke Lauti, Minister for Works, Transport and Communications, Tuvalu. Twenty persons, including Mr. Kimio Fujita, former President of JICA, served as panelists.

After presenting an overview of the digital divide, Professor Kosuge reported on recent developments to overcome it. He started by explaining the IT Charter adopted at the G8 Kyushu-Okinawa Summit, then he moved on to cover Japan's efforts to solve the problem and explain recent trends in support being given to Pacific island nations and the aims of various international organizations such as International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and Asia-Pacific Telecommunity (APT).

Mr. Kimberley began his presentation with a report on

the progress being made in a program ESCAP began this year to evaluate E-Readiness. He explained that this evaluation serves as the basis for determining what types of human resource development and training programs were most needed and best suited for a given area. The presentations were followed by reports from cabinet ministers from Fiji, Tuvalu and Samoa on their countries' IT policies. They

emphasized that a major problem was a lack of an electrical infrastructure needed as the foundation for progress in IT. They pointed out that this was particularly true in rural areas and on remote islands where the problem of a digital divide was most urgent.

Hon. Nakamura, the former president of Palau, proposed that the distance education and telehealth networks being developed in three Micronesian countries could serve as an example for progress in IT in other Pacific regions. As he outlined how the networks functioned, he emphasized that the development of IT services should be for the benefit of an entire region not simply for a single island nation. Those attending the session agreed that arranging development priorities in this way was the key to using IT as a tool to overcome the problem of geographical remoteness and opening up new possibilities for Pacific island nations.

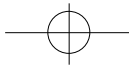
The Japanese government has offered 15 billion dollars in international IT cooperation to support IT development in countries needing assistance. The Caribbean, a region with island nations often compared to the Pacific, has actively responded to this offer with several significant program proposals. It was clear that much less was being done in the Pacific. Activity appeared to be limited to the following: In January this year the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in cooperation with UNDP, conducted an IT seminar in Okinawa. JICA was conducting an IT education program in cooperation with the University of the Ryukyus and other institutions, and there was the 130,000-dollar ESCAP evaluation program mentioned above.

The "Miyazaki Initiative" adopted at PALM 2000 included a call for IT development in the Pacific region, and various programs primarily for human resource development centered on JICA and UNDP efforts are being conducted. However, we are now at the stage where a Japanese initiative in forming a new network for the entire Pacific region is called for. We would like to see the Japanese government quickly take action on several of the programs proposed in the IT session at the Human Resources Development Symposium held in Fiji.

Special Feature and Interviews – "Follow up on PALM 2000..."



Former Prime Minister Mori gave the opening address at the Fiji symposium.



SPINF Project Description FY2000

1 Exchange Projects that Respect the Values and Cultural Identity of Each Island Society

Exchange Media Personnel among the Pacific Island Region and Japan

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|-----------------|--|
| Organizers: | Pacific Islands News Association (PINA) (Fiji) |
| Project period: | 1 st yr. of a 5-yr. project |
| Budget: | ¥5,761,840 |

Ties between Pacific island nations and Japan are growing deeper year by year as Japan's private sector continues to invest in these countries and more development assistance is extended to them. From fiscal 1991 through fiscal 1999 the Sasakawa Pacific Island Nations Fund (SPINF) implemented the project Inviting Media Personnel from the Pacific Island Region to Japan. More than 60 media personnel from Pacific island nations visited Japan through that project, which aimed to promote understanding of Japan within the region. This year, as the second phase of its efforts, SPINF launched this new project.

In conjunction with the second Japan-South Pacific Forum Summit Meeting (PALM 2000), which was organized by the Japanese government and held on April 22, SPINF invited eight journalists from the Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Palau, Papua New Guinea, and Tonga to Japan. These journalists later wrote feature articles that were carried in local newspapers and magazines, broadcast on radio, and posted on the Internet. SPINF also sent three newspaper and television reporters from Miyakojima and the Yaeyama Islands in Okinawa Prefecture to Palau in March 2001. These journalists interviewed the nation's new president and gathered material on a wide range of subjects, including environmental problems, the activities of Okinawans living in Palau, the island nation's traditional culture, and the current state of education. Upon returning to Japan, they produced features on Palau.

Coconuts College

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|-----------------|--|
| Organizers: | The Sasakawa Peace Foundation |
| Project period: | 1 st yr. of a 5-yr. project |
| Budget: | ¥4,463,973 |

Over a three-year period beginning in fiscal 1994, SPF hosted eight Shima o Kataru Kai (Island Forum in Japan) conferences for people involved in island affairs in Japan to discuss exchange and cooperation with Pacific island nations. These sessions led to SPF's establishment in fiscal 1997 of Coconuts College of the Pacific, a three-year project that disseminated information on Pacific island nations through such avenues as Open Seminars and a virtual classroom on the Internet. This year marked the start of Coconuts College's second phase, which is to cover five years.

This year, SPF hosted an open seminar in the Yaeyama Islands, Okinawa Prefecture, June 16-17. The guest speakers were Dr. Yoshihiko Sinoto, senior archaeologist at the Bishop Museum, Honolulu; Masao Salvador, ambassador of the Republic of Palau; Christina Higa of the University of Hawaii; and Takeshi Miki, managing director of the Ryukyu Shimpo newspaper company. It also cosponsored a public symposium with the Japan External Trade Organization on March 7, 2001, on the subject "Enhancing the Economic Relationship Between Japan and the Pacific Islands Countries Through Doing Business."

The virtual classroom promptly posted newly arrived materials and updates on Fiji's coup d'état. Inquiries from NGOs, the media, businesses, and other parties were numerous, indicating the growing value of this classroom as a site disseminating information on Pacific Island nations.

Regional History Project of the Council of Presidents of the Pacific History and Social Studies Teachers Association

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|-----------------|--|
| Organizers: | National University of Samoa (Samoa) |
| Project period: | 1 st yr. of a 3-yr. project |
| Budget: | ¥2,634,034 |

The history and social studies textbooks currently in use in Pacific island nations have for the most part been authored by experts from the region's former suzerain powers and are not written by the islanders themselves. In fiscal 1995 SPF launched *Teaching the Pacific Forum*, a five-year project that supported the development of teaching materials by history teachers in the region and the establishment of an association of teachers in each country. The Council of Presidents of the Pacific History and Social Science Teachers Association, a regional organization headquartered at the National University of Samoa, was formed in 1999.

This new project aims to further strengthen the network that has been established among educators and heighten awareness of the importance of teaching history. Political upheaval in Fiji and the Solomon Islands prevented the project from proceeding as originally planned this year. Nevertheless, a workshop was held in Samoa Oct. 4-6 in order to develop teaching materials and guides, promote information exchange, and boost educator quality. Ten people from American Samoa, Fiji, Kiribati, and Tonga participated in the workshop. Other activities included the publication of an issue of the association's newsletter and the compilation of *A Guide for First Year History Teachers*.

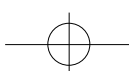
2 Micronesia-Focused Projects Aimed at Promoting Regional Harmony

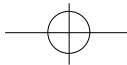
Educational Support for Better Understanding of Japan in the Micronesian Region

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|-----------------|--|
| Organizers: | Association for Japanese Language Teaching (Japan) |
| Project period: | 2 nd yr. of a 3-yr. project |
| Budget: | ¥5,000,000 |

Despite the need for Japanese-language teaching and education to introduce Japanese culture to Pacific island nations, there is still no adequate region-wide support system for this. The response to the strong demand for this kind of education is especially underdeveloped in such U.S. territories as Guam and Saipan, which are not eligible for official development assistance from Japan.

This year, Sachiko Adachi, an instructor sent from Japan in August 1999 to teach Japanese at Saipan's Marianas High School, provided guidance to local Japanese-language instructors at the high school and junior college levels, supervised the development of supplementary teaching materials, and conducted a survey of Japanese-language teaching on Tinian, an island just south of Saipan. Furthermore, in addition to planning and coordinating student visits to Japan and carrying out activities to promote understanding of Japanese culture within the local community in her capacity as the faculty advisor of the Japan Club at Marianas High School, she prepared a proposal for the provision of education for intercultural understanding and foreign-language instruction over the Internet and presented it to the State Board of Education Public School System of the Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands. She also traveled to Guam, Hawaii, Palau, and Yap to investigate the status of Japanese-language education there.





Archaeological Training Programs in Emerging Micronesian Island Nations

Organizers: University of Guam (Guam)
 Project period: 1st yr. of a 3-yr. project
 Budget: ¥824,197

From fiscal 1996 to fiscal 1998 SPF provided a grant to the Bishop Museum in Honolulu and achieved successful results through the Pilot Archaeological Training Program in the Pacific Islands initiative, a pilot project for training local archaeologists throughout the Pacific island region. Building on that experience, this new project is organizing lectures and conducting on-site training in connection with the excavation and maintenance of ruins in Micronesia.

On-site training was scheduled to take place in Pohnpei and Palau this year, but Pohnpei experienced an outbreak of cholera that lasted more than half a year, and the training there was canceled. Meanwhile, Palau faced a brief dengue outbreak, delaying training preparations there and resulting in fewer participants than initially planned. Nevertheless, five officials of the Division of Cultural Affairs of the government of Palau underwent a month-long training in which they studied basic excavation techniques and methods of archaeological investigation.

In Palau, where development is in progress, many investigations of ruins are carried out with the cooperation of experts from other countries. This project has paved the way for local experts to become more active participants in archaeological investigations.

PATS Staff Trainee Program

Organizers: Ponape Agriculture & Trade School (Micronesia)
 Project period: 1st yr. of a 3-yr. project
 Budget: ¥1,238,386

The Ponape Agriculture and Trade School (PATS), established 35 years ago, is the only vocational school in the Micronesian region. It has graduated close to 1,000 students, shaping them into human resources who contribute to the region's economic development. This project aims to increase the school's indigenous faculty by carrying out a two-year postgraduate training course for PATS alumni so that they can join the teaching staff.

Ten PATS graduates enrolled in the course this year, but four were later dismissed for poor attitude. Learning from that episode, PATS made an effort to strengthen the program by endeavoring to increase the self-reliance and self-respect of trainees and requiring them to meet periodically with faculty members to receive guidance. In a further step to improve trainee discipline, PATS revised the training guidelines. As the training moved toward the end of the term in May 2001, the six trainees remaining in the program were making smooth progress. To equip its trainees to be better qualified as teachers, PATS has enlisted the cooperation of the College of Micronesia so that trainees can earn credits by taking college classes in the mornings in such subjects as psychology, algebra, teaching methods, and advanced English.

3

Projects that Support Education and Training through the Medium of Distance Education

Transcending Borders with Education Online

Organizers: Micronesia Seminar (Micronesia)
 Project period: 2nd yr. of a 3-yr. project
 Budget: ¥2,875,214

The rapid pace of modernization in Micronesia has created a situation in which people there are not always fully aware of developmental and social problems. Meanwhile, the more than 20,000 Micronesians who have gone overseas to work or study

have had difficulty readjusting upon their return home. This project is an experiment in online education.

Project activities this year included the conversion into digital form of a catalog of 15,000 items belonging to the archives of the Micronesia Seminar, which has been carrying out research into social problems in the region for more than two decades. In addition, the project upgraded the website created during the first year and also made such improvements as identifying topics of special interest and distributing information using a mailing list. Online seminars on four topics "Why Don't Our Government Offices Work?" "The Victimization Disease," "What Should Our Schools Be Doing?" and "Education: What's the Problem?" sparked brisk discussion. Consultations were also held with relevant parties about the possibility of launching a new online forum in fiscal 2001 for educators and students affiliated with colleges in Micronesia.

Training Program for Distance Education and Learning Technologies and Applications in the Pacific Islands

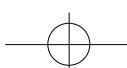
Organizers: University of Hawaii (U.S.A.)
 Project period: 3rd yr. of a 3-yr. project
 Budget: ¥4,837,641
 Total Expenditure: ¥17,425,785

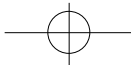
The creation of a system of distance education to encompass all the islands scattered across the vast expanse of the Pacific Ocean is a core issue in terms of the region's development of human resources. Amid the whirl of changes in policy and technologies unfolding today in the telecommunications field in the Asia-Pacific region, educators, telecommunications workers, government officials, and others on the islands are unable to obtain sufficient information and training about what is happening and where it is leading.

For this project, Pan-Pacific Education and Cultural Experiments by Satellite (PEACESAT), which is headquartered at the University of Hawaii, spearheaded the establishment of a telecommunications policy group focusing primarily on Micronesia. It also coordinated the organization of workshops and a policy conference. An appeal was made for relevant personnel from supporting organizations, including the Japanese and U.S. governments, to take part in these events, and the project endeavored to give them an understanding of the current status of telecommunications in Micronesia. More than 300 educators and telecommunications workers took part in the workshops over the project's three years.

In fiscal 1999 the project set out to help the U.S. territories of American Samoa, Guam, and Saipan receive funding from the Universal Services Fund, a U.S. fund for telecommunications infrastructure and network building in schools and other institutions in the United States. To accomplish this, the project carried out activities to raise awareness, chiefly in local educational circles, of this funding mechanism and assisted with the preparation of applications. So far, each of the three territories has secured annual funds of US\$3 million-US\$5 million from the U.S. government and has equipped all its schools and libraries with infrastructure for the utilization of Internet services at very low cost.

This year the project gathered together relevant government officials from independent countries in Micronesia, which do not qualify for the funding program (the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Palau). Within a framework of promoting regional cooperation, the project worked with these officials to formulate a proposal for a regional distance education and telemedicine network. When Federated States of Micronesia President Leo A. Falcam visited Japan in March 2001, he presented the proposal to Yoshiro Mori, Japan's prime minister at the time. Officials within the Japanese government are now considering whether budget funds should be allocated for the proposed project within the context of the comprehensive package to address the "digital divide" that Japan unveiled at the Group of Eight Kyushu-Okinawa Summit in July 2000.





Charting the Future Course of Distance Education in the Western Pacific

Organizers: University of Guam (Guam)
 Project period: A one-year project
 Budget: ¥5,522,000

Over the years the countries of Micronesia have made a variety of attempts to develop distance education. The University of Guam, which is the only university in Micronesia and has for many years played a leadership role in higher education in the region, has been at the center of these efforts. Recently, as countries in the region have ceased being trust territories and achieved full independence, they have started to establish their own institutions of higher learning. Regional cooperation is essential, though, if educational opportunities are to be provided with limited resources to people living on remote and widely scattered islands. This project organized seminars and other events in order to shape policies for regional cooperation in connection with an intra-regional distance education system utilizing appropriate telecommunications technology and to boost skills in this area. Approximately 20 people, including members of the Pacific Post-Secondary Education Council and people connected with Pacific Resources for Education and Learning, took part in the project's Regional Policy Forum, which was held Aug. 1-3 at the University of Guam. The participants clarified the current status of distance education and confirmed the needs in this area. They also agreed to move toward a regional mechanism for cooperation among relevant parties and established a platform for a system of cooperation with support organizations. In this way, the forum kept open the possibility of continued efforts to develop distance education and telemedicine in the region.

4 Projects to Promote Networking among NGOs and NPOs Operating in the Region and to Form Linkages among Pacific Island Nations and Asian Countries

The 2nd General Assembly of the Pacific Youth Council

Organizers: Secretariat of the Pacific Community (New Caledonia)
 Project period: A one-year project
 Budget: ¥5,209,844

Seeking to promote the sound development of youth amid the worldwide social upheaval that followed the end of World War II, youth organizations in democratic nations joined together to form the World Assembly of Youth in 1949. The Asia Youth Council (AYC) was subsequently established in 1972, in Malaysia as the Asian arm of this global organization. The Pacific Youth Council (PYC) was founded with the cooperation of AYC in 1996, as a hub linking NGOs for young people in Pacific island nations. Beginning in fiscal 1994, SPF extended support over four years in connection with the establishment of PYC. PYC convened the Second General Assembly of the Pacific Youth Council in Nadi, Fiji, in December 2000. With 26 participants from 22 countries, the assembly worked through an agenda that included the creation of a five-year plan for PYC activities, revision of the organization's charter, and the election of officers. Thanks to the observer-status participation of representatives from UNICEF and other groups, the gathering also gave PYC an opportunity to reinforce its cooperative ties with relevant organizations.

SPINF Project Description FY2001

1 Exchange Projects that Respect the Values and Cultural Identity of Each Island Society

Exchange Media Personnel among the Pacific Island Region and Japan

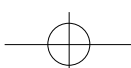
Organizers: The Sasakawa Peace Foundation
 Pacific Islands News Association (PINA)
 Project period: 2nd yr. of a 5-yr. project
 Budget: ¥5,300,000

The relationship between the island countries of the Pacific and Japan is deepening year by year due to the increase of private investment and development aid. Over the past nine years, the Sasakawa Pacific Islands Fund has invited more than 60 journalists and other people in the media to Japan for the purpose of increasing the area's understanding of Japan. Starting in the year 2000, the Fund started a new series of projects to be carried out over a five-year period. The aim of these projects is to promote cultural exchanges based on mutual respect for the special values and the cultural identity of island societies, including the cultures of coral atolls and other islands that have much in common with Okinawa. This project provides opportunities for media people from other Pacific islands to interact with journalists from Okinawa. Participants have a chance to visit each other's islands and to make journalistic reports on the social problems each of the islands face and thereby help deepen awareness of common problems and areas of possible cooperation. Their reportage should be conducive to mutual understanding of the problems unique to island societies. We can expect a strong information exchange system to grow by developing a network among journalists in the islands.

Coconuts College

Organizers: The Sasakawa Peace Foundation
 Project period: 2nd yr. of a 5-yr. project
 Budget: ¥6,000,000

As an independent activity, the Sasakawa Pacific Islands Fund held eight conferences from 1994 to 1996 at outlying Japanese islands under the theme "Let's Talk about Our Islands." These gatherings brought together island people for the purpose of a free exchange of ideas and to promote deeper mutual understanding and mutual assistance between Japan and Pacific Island countries. One proposal advanced as a result of these meetings was to establish a "Coconut College" in Japan for the purpose of promoting a higher level of knowledge of the peoples of Pacific islands. As an autonomous project, the Fund thus has been conducting "College" activities for three years since 1997. These included public lecture meetings in the Yaeyama Islands and disseminating information on Pacific island countries via the Internet nationwide in Japan. This activity drew favorable attention in many quarters. Meanwhile, a local executive committee established in the Yaeyama Islands is continuing its independent activity. As a result of the committee's ongoing efforts, in fiscal 2000, a new five-year project was launched to conduct virtual classes (as part of the Coconut College activity) and public courses in the Yaeyama Islands. There will be also special lectures conducted in cooperation with various NGOs and other organizations. The overall theme of the project was established as "Globalization and the Island Countries of the Pacific." As an additional activity in 2001, courses organized in cooperation with Guam University are being conducted in Guam.



Regional History Project of the Council of Presidents of Pacific Island History

Organizers: National University of Samoa (Samoa)
 Project period: 2nd yr. of a 3-yr. project
 Budget: ¥3,600,000

The educational curricula of island countries of the Pacific has included the teaching of history according to educational systems left over from the former colonial times. These are histories not written by local inhabitants. In a five-year project started in 1995, the Sasakawa Pacific Islands Fund has been providing support for the development of new educational materials by local history teachers, an undertaking coordinated by a specialist from Australia. The Fund has also provided support for the establishment of a teachers association. As a result, in 1999, participants in the project helped establish the Pacific History and Social Sciences Teachers Association. With an office in the National University of Samoa, it has grown to the point at which local leaders are taking initiatives in the development of educational activities for the people of the region. Starting in the fiscal year 2000, a new project has been actively contributing to the strengthening of networks among educators who can instill respect for the unique values and cultural identity of the island societies. Key purposes are to reconfirm the importance of historical education as an integral part of the overall school curricula, to plan and develop courses of study, make public presentations of theses, discover new study materials, and to improve teachers' professional knowledge as specialists in their fields.

2 Micronesia-Focused Projects Aimed at Promoting Regional Harmony

Educational Support for Better Understanding of Japan in the Micronesian Region

Organizers: Association for Japanese Language Teaching (Japan)
 Project period: 3rd yr. of a 3-yr. project
 Budget: ¥5,000,000

Despite the recognized need, support for Japanese language education and the introduction of Japanese culture in the Pacific island region is as yet insufficient. Although some regions are receiving assistance organized by the Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers as a part of ODA, such support is sorely needed in the Northern Marianas, including Guam and Saipan, which are outside the scope of ODA. Along with working closely with local educational institutions, especially in the Northern Marianas, to do research and development work that will lead to a proper system to support Japanese language education and courses introducing Japanese culture, the project is designed to establish a model system for providing assistance to other Pacific islands for such educational programs. Based on the three years of practical experience in doing this work, future project activity will continue under the direction of Professor Hiroko Chinen Quackenbush who is organizing conferences to discuss the project with local people of the region. Among the topics discussed is the possibility of dispatching graduate students from Nagoya Foreign Language University to serve as instructors.

Archaeological Training Programs in Emerging Micronesian Island Nations

Organizers: University of Guam (Guam)
 Project period: 2nd yr. of a 3-yr. project
 Budget: ¥3,600,000

For three years from 1996 to 1998, the Sasakawa Pacific Islands Fund provided support for the efforts of the Bishop

Museum in Hawaii to establish a pilot project to educate local professionals in the field of archeology throughout the islands of the Pacific. The efforts of everyone concerned made this a very successful project. There was a plan to continue this project by using a part of the budget provided by the Japanese Government to the East-West Center in Hawaii. However, due to circumstances at the East-West Center, the plan was suddenly discontinued. The Fund's second set of guidelines provides for an allotment of funds to support this type of work in the Micronesian region. The overall aim is to promote healthy economic development and the self-reliance of the people in this region by reestablishing island cultural identity. As part of this effort, ancient ruins will be excavated and cultural relics, some of which were destroyed during the long period of colonialism, will be restored. To date it has mainly been European, American and Japanese scholars who have taken the initiative in organizing excavations in the region. In this project, however, we intend to cooperate closely with local museums and local government institutions to help provide training for local professionals so that they will be able to conduct and manage archeological research themselves.

PATS Staff Trainee Program

Organizers: Ponape Agriculture and Trade School (F.S.M.)
 Project period: 2nd yr. of a 3-yr. project
 Budget: ¥1,800,000

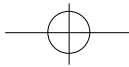
The Ponape Agriculture & Trade School (PATS), which functioned as the only vocational training center in the region for the first 35 years after World War II, has provided training for approximately 1,000 people who have actively contributed to the region's economic development. School management suffered when, with the end of the Cold War, the U.S. government sharply curtailed financial assistance for the region. However, the existence of the school as the only vocational institute in the region is very important, and it is of the utmost necessity that its educational and human resources training programs continue. For this, the PATS financial foundation must be rebuilt, and human resources must be developed. It was against this background that the instructor education project has been organized for the purpose of increasing the number of local teachers and raising the level of instruction. Graduates of PATS can become the leaders and instructors at the school after participation in a two-year course of study followed by a three-year internship program.

3 Projects that Support Education and Training through the Medium of Distance Education

Transcending Borders with Education Online

Organizers: Micronesia Seminar (F.S.M.)
 Project period: 3rd yr. of a 3-yr. project
 Budget: ¥3,200,000

In the midst of rapid modernization, the peoples of the Micronesian region have difficulty coming to terms with economic development and social problems. Consequently, there is an urgent need to analyze and develop a clear understanding of the various problems they face, and to find methods of solving them. This includes upgrading technology. In addition, more than 20,000 Micronesians are working and studying in foreign countries. When they return home, they have difficulty adapting to the current situations in their mother countries. The on-line educational system supported by this project will give Micronesians, both individually and in groups, a chance to study and develop analyses and solutions of social problems by sharing information on current conditions in Micronesia. Participants will



be able to join discussions on the Internet, and acquire technical research skills and learn how to create documents. To increase participants, research will be conducted in cooperation with related institutions on how to use the Internet for execution of projects. In the last fiscal year of this project, a forum for cooperative studies on social problems common throughout Micronesia will be organized for university and junior college professors of the region. In addition, a system where members can gain certificates based on their abilities will be established.

Internet Course Development by School of Law of USP

Organizers: University of the South Pacific (Fiji)
Project period: 1st yr. of a 3-yr. project
Budget: ¥4,700,000

The countries of the Pacific have continued to use the legal systems introduced by former colonial powers as they engaged in nation-building activity in harmony with traditional customs. Strengthening the legal system and providing for the education of citizens are high-priority tasks to create peace and stability in the new nations. The University of the South Pacific has been providing distance-learning courses to contribute to the education of the people in islands that are separated by vast distances. The Japanese government and others have provided assistance for the rebuilding of the USP Net used for this purpose. Currently, the focus is on developing new content based on the application of new technology.

In this project, video conferencing and similar technologies are used to present distance-education courses from the University of the South Pacific School of Law on the USP Net and the Internet for students on remote islands. The system gives students the opportunity to learn how to independently collect materials for their research, take interactive classes, attend video meetings, and use high-quality teaching materials. In addition, a database is being created for the use of Pacific islanders in the legal field, thus deepening interest in and understanding of the law throughout the Pacific.

Thinking Globally, Acting Locally — Forming an Alliance for Progress in the Western Pacific

Organizers: University of Guam (U.S.A.)
Project period: 1st yr. of a 5-yr. project
Budget: ¥6,000,000

In the absence of a framework for regional cooperation for

distance educational system among the island countries of the Western Pacific region, individual trial projects for distance education have been organized. An organizational structure for distance education had not been established. Currently there are colleges in Palau, the Federal States of Micronesia and the Marshal Islands, and a college and a university in Guam. As a project supported by the Sasakawa Pacific Islands Fund in fiscal 2000, a policy planning conference on distance education was held for persons in the field. A proposal was made and agreed upon by the participants to establish a Western Pacific Region Distance Education Association.

In this project a survey will be conducted to learn the present conditions related to distance education in the Western Pacific, needs and problem areas will be identified, and a network will be designed for future distance education programs and medical education programs. In addition, to promote regional cooperation, coordination work among related persons will be done to establish a Western Pacific Region Distance Education Association. High priority will be given to meeting the need on each island for the training of engineers and teacher training to upgrade professional skills.

South West Pacific Cultural Heritage Training

Organizers: Australia National University (Australia)
Project period: 1st yr. of a 3-yr. project
Budget: ¥5,700,000

Amid the extremely rapid pace of cultural and social change in Papua New Guinea and the Republic of Vanuatu located in the Southwest Pacific the cultural heritage is in danger of being destroyed due to lack of proper management of efforts to protect it. Because research on the cultural heritage in the area has been led by European academics and specialists, there is a lack of trained professionals in this field among the inhabitants. Also, post-independence history education has been delayed. So along with the need for historical research and archeological excavations, there is the need to train local scholars that will take charge of local education.

In 1995, a pilot project for heritage protection management training was started in Vanuatu with the support of the Sasakawa Pacific Islands Fund. Local human resources have been developed since the trial project was started. The project will support the effort to empower communities to protect their cultural heritage and raise consciousness of the importance of the cultural heritage as part of history education. From now on, the professional skills of local educators and managers will be upgraded. Activities will include workshops, field studies, and the development of distance education via radio, newspapers, and the Internet.

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