

The Kingdom of Tonga Country Development Cooperation Policy

1 Aims of Development Cooperation for the country.

Pacific island countries, including Tonga, face development challenges such as their lands being scattered over a vast area, small domestic markets, and geographical remoteness from international markets. Tonga, in particular, faces structural constraints in achieving self-sustained economic development and social progress, due to a lack of natural resources, a small population, heavy dependence on imports of most daily commodities while relying on remittances from abroad and aid for the necessary foreign currency income. In particular, the risk of natural disasters such as cyclones, earthquakes, and tsunamis is high, and overcoming vulnerability through effective disaster management is essential for the country's social and economic development. Moreover, the negative impact of urbanization on water resources has become apparent, requiring the development of environmentally friendly social infrastructure.

In this context, the Tongan government developed the Tonga Strategic Development Framework II (TSDF II) (2015-2025) in 2015. In this framework, to achieve inclusive and sustainable growth and development that will progressively support better lives for the Tongan people, pillars are set forth such as "knowledge-based economy," "equitable development including outer islands," "promoting gender equality and human development," "realizing good governance," "developing and maintaining infrastructure and technology," "effective land and environmental management, and enhancing resilience to climate risks," and "promoting foreign interests and national security."

On the political front, after the anti-government protests in November 2006, Tonga transitioned to a more democratic political system through a constitutional reform in 2010, and the 2014 general election saw the first elected commoner prime minister. Going forward, sustainable and harmonious economic growth will be essential for the gradual democratization under the monarchy.

Tonga is the only remaining kingdom in the South Pacific, and its royal family enjoys a close relationship with the Japanese Imperial Family. Cultural and sports exchanges, such as the soroban, the Japanese language, and rugby, are also flourishing. Furthermore, Tonga has consistently supported Japan's positions and candidates in election for international organizations, and has established good bilateral relations. However, with the increasing influence of other donors in recent years and the consequent rise in external debt, the risks to self-sustained growth have also increased. It is therefore important for Japan to continue to provide support through frameworks such as the Pacific Islands Leaders Meeting (PALM) to support Tonga's self-reliant and sustainable development as well as to strengthen bilateral relations.

2 Basic policy of Japan's ODA (Overall goal): Achieving self-sustained sustainable economic growth and improving people's living standards with environmental consideration.

Based on Tonga's Strategic Development Framework (TSDF II: 2015-2025), the direction of

Japan's overall policy toward Pacific island countries frameworks such as the Pacific Islands Leaders Meeting (PALM), Japan will provide assistance to strengthen the foundation for sustainable economic growth, including improving basic social services and developing infrastructure, as well as support for environmental protection and climate change response, in a way that does not undermine Tonga's fiscal sustainability.

3 Priority Area (Sub-Goals)

(1) Environment and Climate Change

To mitigate the risk of natural disasters, assistance will be provided with the utilization of Japan's experience, technology, and knowledge in disaster prevention in mind, based on the "Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030" and the "Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific" formulated by the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF).

Additionally, to develop environmentally friendly social infrastructure, assistance will be provided to facilitate the introduction of renewable energy through the promotion of the dissemination and utilization of solar and wind power, contributing to the realization of the "Tonga Energy Road Map 2010-2020." Assistance will also be provided for establishing a waste management system that contributes to measures against marine plastic waste, as well as for the conservation of water resources to secure access to clean water for people living in Tonga.

(2) Overcoming Vulnerability

To improve health and medical standards, support will be provided for initiatives that contribute to raising public health awareness, such as improving access to health and medical facilities and measures against non-communicable diseases (NCDs).

In the education sector, support will be provided through training and JICA Overseas Cooperation Volunteers to improve the quality of and access to basic education and vocational training.

Furthermore, to improve the environment for industrial development in key industries such as tourism, agriculture, forestry, and fisheries, support will be provided for the development and maintenance of social infrastructure as well as human resource development for these industries.

Moreover, considering the importance of the ocean for social, economic, and cultural aspects as an island nation, support will be provided to contribute to a free, open, and sustainable ocean, while paying attention to SDG 14 "Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development."

4 Points to Note

Japan will actively exchange views with other donor countries, such as the major donors Australia and New Zealand, as well as international organizations like the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank (ADB), to avoid duplication of aid and strive to implement effective and efficient assistance that generates synergies.