

## **Visit to Jamaica and St. Lucia by Mr. TAKEI Shunsuke, State Minister for Foreign Affairs (Summary)**

State Minister for Foreign Affairs TAKEI Shunsuke visited Jamaica and St. Lucia from May 15-19 to attend the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Council on Foreign Relations and Community Relations (COFCOR) meeting and to meet with dignitaries from each country. A summary of the visit is as follows.

(※) 14 member countries of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM):

Antigua and Barbuda, Guyana, Grenada, Jamaica, Suriname, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saint Lucia, Dominica, Trinidad and Tobago, Haiti, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize

### 1. Jamaica (May 15-17)

(1) State Minister TAKEI visited Jamaica to attend the 26th CARICOM Foreign Ministers' Meeting (COFCOR) held on May 16 and 17 as a non-regional country and delivered a speech at the COFCOR Foreign Sessions on May 17. In his speech, State Minister TAKEI indicated that Japan has been cooperating with small island states to overcome their vulnerabilities based on the CARICOM Policy announced in 2014, which holds a perspective beyond per capita income level. He additionally expressed that 2024 would be the "Japan-CARICOM Friendship Year 2024" to further strengthen exchanges between Japan and CARICOM countries, and unveiled the logo for the Japan-CARICOM Friendship Year 2024. Furthermore, State Minister TAKEI stated that Japan, as G7 Presidency, will work with CARICOM countries to address global issues such as climate change, to strengthen the functions of the United Nations, including Security Council reform, and to maintain and strengthen a free and open international order based on the rule of law. The participating foreign ministers welcomed Japan's participation in the session as the G7 presidency, and expressed their gratitude for Japan's support to overcome the vulnerabilities peculiar to small island states.



(2) On the 17<sup>th</sup>, State Minister TAKEI met with Senator The Hon. Kamina Johnson Smith, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade of Jamaica, the chair of COFCOR. Minister Johnson-Smith welcomed State Minister Takei's visit to Jamaica and appreciated his attendance at COFCOR which signified the importance Japan places on CARICOM, and expressed her gratitude for Japan's support to the small island states considering their vulnerability. State Minister TAKEI stated that the two countries, which will celebrate the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations in 2024, will strengthen bilateral relations in various fields based on the "J-J (Japan-Jamaica) Partnership", and confirmed that the two countries will strengthen cooperation in the international arena. Both parties also exchanged views on the situation in Ukraine and East Asia, and agreed to continue to work closely together.



(3) In addition, on the occasion of his attendance at COFCOR, State Minister TAKEI met individually with the Foreign Ministers for 9 out of the 14 CARICOM member countries (Jamaica, Belize, St. Lucia, St. Kitts and Nevis, Haiti, Dominica, St. Vincent,

Grenada, and Suriname), including the above-mentioned Jamaica, as well as with the CARICOM Secretary-General. Summaries of the meetings are as follows. State Minister TAKEI also met with the Foreign Ministers for Trinidad and Tobago and Barbados at a luncheon.

### **Saint Lucia**

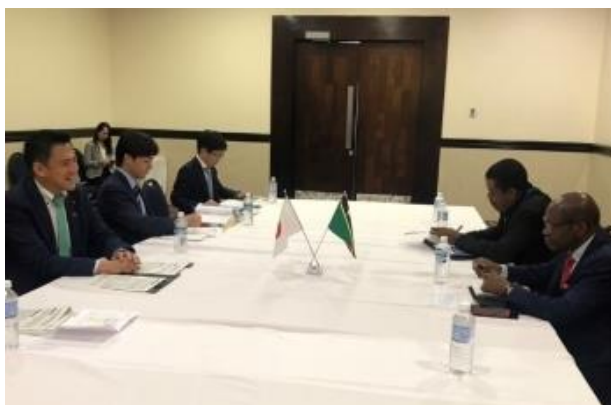
On the 16<sup>th</sup>, State Minister TAKEI met with The Hon. Alva Romanus BAPTISTE, Minister for External Affairs, International Trade, Civil Aviation and Diaspora Affairs of Saint Lucia. State Minister TAKEI stated that St. Lucia is an important partner that shares values and principles with Japan, and that he hopes to work together to maintain and strengthen a free and open international order based on the rule of law. He also explained that Japan is cooperating with Caribbean countries toward sustainable development from the perspective of overcoming the vulnerabilities peculiar to small island nations. Minister BAPTISTE expressed his gratitude for Japan's support for overcoming the vulnerabilities of small island countries, including St. Lucia, and requested continued cooperation. He also expressed his welcome to State Minister TAKEI's visit to St. Lucia, which was scheduled in the coming days. Both parties also exchanged views on the situation in Ukraine and East Asia, and confirmed their continued cooperation bilaterally and through the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS).



### **Saint Kitts and Nevis**

On the 16<sup>th</sup>, State Minister TAKEI held a bilateral meeting with The Right Hon. Dr. Denzil Llewellyn DOUGLAS, Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Trade, Industry, Commerce and Consumer Affairs, Economic Development and Investment of the Federation of Saints Christopher and Nevis. State Minister TAKEI stated that Saint Kitts

and Nevis is an important partner that shares values and principles with Japan, and that he hopes to work together to maintain and strengthen a free and open international order based on the rule of law. He also explained that Japan is cooperating with Caribbean countries for sustainable development from the perspective of overcoming the vulnerabilities unique to small island nations. Minister DOUGLAS expressed his gratitude for Japan's support for overcoming the vulnerabilities of small island states, including St. Kitts and Nevis, and expressed his wish to receive Japan's cooperation in promoting discussions of the issue in the international community. Both parties also exchanged views on the situation in Ukraine and East Asia, including North Korea, and agreed to continue close cooperation.



### **Dominica**

On the 17<sup>th</sup>, State Minister TAKEI met with Hon. Dr. Vince HENDERSON, Minister for Foreign Affairs, International Business, Trade and Energy of the Commonwealth of Dominica. As Dominica will hold the chair of CARICOM later this year, State Minister TAKEI expressed his desire to deepen cooperation not only bilaterally but also with CARICOM in areas such as disaster prevention, climate change, and fisheries. He also explained that Japan is cooperating with Caribbean countries for sustainable development from the perspective of overcoming the vulnerabilities peculiar to small island nations. Minister HENDERSON extended his gratitude for Japan's assistance to the Caribbean small island states in overcoming their vulnerabilities, and expressed his hope that the assistance would continue, with an explanation on the importance of the fisheries industry in the region. Both parties exchanged views on the situation in Ukraine and East Asia, and confirmed that they will continue to cooperate bilaterally as well as through CARICOM and the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS).



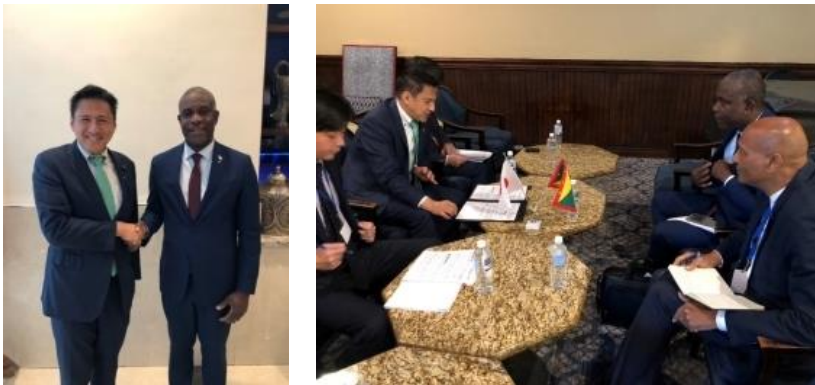
### **Saint Vincent and the Grenadines**

On the 17<sup>th</sup>, State Minister TAKEI held a meeting with Senator The Hon. Keisal M. Peters, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. State Minister TAKEI stated that St. Vincent is a maritime nation like Japan and is an important partner that shares values and principles. He expressed that he wishes to continue to work with St. Vincent, which currently holds the presidency of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), to maintain and strengthen a free and open international order based on the rule of law. He also explained that Japan is cooperating with the Caribbean countries toward sustainable development from the perspective of overcoming the vulnerabilities peculiar to small island nations. Minister PETERS expressed her gratitude for Japan's support for overcoming the vulnerabilities of small island states, including St. Vincent, referring to the emergency assistance provided at the time of the eruption of the Soufriere volcano, and expressed her wish to continue strengthening bilateral relations, including interactions at the grassroots level. Both parties also exchanged views on the situation in Ukraine and East Asia, and agreed to continue close cooperation.



## **Grenada**

On the 17<sup>th</sup>, State Minister TAKEI held a meeting with The Hon. Joseph ANDALL, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Trade & Export Development of Grenada. State Minister TAKEI stated that Grenada is an important partner that shares values and principles with Japan, and that he wishes to deepen cooperation not only bilaterally but also with CARICOM in areas such as disaster prevention, climate change, and fisheries. He also explained that Japan is cooperating with the Caribbean countries for sustainable development from the perspective of overcoming the vulnerabilities unique to small island nations. Minister ANDALL expressed his gratitude for Japan's support for overcoming the vulnerabilities of Small Island countries, including Grenada, and requested continued cooperation in the areas of climate change, disaster prevention, and fisheries. Both parties exchanged views on the situation in Ukraine and East Asia, and agreed to continue close cooperation.



## **Suriname**

On the 17<sup>th</sup>, State Minister TAKEI met with His Excellency Albert R. RAMDIN, Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Business and International Cooperation of Suriname. State Minister TAKEI welcomed the bilateral meeting, following the Japan-Suriname Foreign Ministers' meeting last September on the occasion of the UN General Assembly, and expressed his wish to deepen cooperation bilaterally with Suriname who is an important partner that shares values and principles, as well as with CARICOM, in areas such as disaster management, climate change, and fisheries. Both parties also exchanged views on the situation in Ukraine and East Asia, and agreed to continue to work closely together.



### **CARICOM Secretariat**

On the 17<sup>th</sup>, State Minister TAKEI met with Dr. Carla Natalie BARNETT, Secretary-General of the Caribbean Community, and exchanged views on Japan-CARICOM relations, economic cooperation, and cooperation in the international arena. State Minister TAKEI stated that CARICOM countries, which share fundamental values with Japan, are important partners, and expressed his wish to further deepen Japan-CARICOM relations in preparation for the Japan-CARICOM Friendship Year 2024, along with the cooperation of the CARICOM Secretariat. Dr. BARNETT, referring to the long history of cooperation between Japan and CARICOM, spoke highly of Japan's support for small island developing countries considering their vulnerability, and expressed her desire to cooperate in discussions in the international community based on such an approach. Both parties agreed to take the opportunity of the Year of Exchange to further promote cooperation and personnel exchange in the international arena.



## 2. Saint Lucia (May 18-19)

On the 19<sup>th</sup>, State Minister TAKEI met with Dr. Alfred PROSPER, Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries, Food Security and Rural Development of St. Lucia. They exchanged views on economic cooperation relations, including those related to fisheries, which play a crucial role in the assistance to St. Lucia. Minister PROSPER welcomed Mr. TAKEI's visit to St. Lucia and expressed his gratitude for Japan's support to the fisheries sector.



### (2) Site Visits to Economic Cooperation Projects

On the 19<sup>th</sup>, State Minister TAKEI, accompanied by The Hon. Stephenson KING, Senior Minister and Minister for Infrastructure, Ports, Transport, Physical Development and Urban Renewal of Saint Lucia, visited a bridge replacement site in Cul-De-Sac Basin, one of the economic cooperation projects. State Minister TAKEI and Minister KING exchanged views on economic cooperation, including infrastructure-related projects, based on the vulnerability of small island countries to climate change and natural disasters.



(3) On the 19<sup>th</sup>, State Minister TAKEI met with the Hon. Guibion Ferdinand,



Parliamentary Secretary for Tourism, Investment, Creative Industries, Culture and Information of Saint Lucia to share views on strengthening exchanges and developing tourism in preparation for the Japan-CARICOM Friendship Year 2024.



#### (4) Site Visits and Discussions

On the 18<sup>th</sup>, State Minister TAKEI inspected the condition of damage by Sargassum seaweed, with which Japan has commenced cooperation to mitigate the damage. He also visited JICA St. Lucia Office, which plays an important role in supporting Caribbean countries, and had discussions with JICA experts as well as Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteer members.



