

April 10, 2019

I would like to express my great pleasure that the 20th Pan American Nikkei Convention (COPANI) will be held in San Francisco in the United States of America. When we consider that Japanese Americans number approximately 1.3 million people—second in the world after Brazil—and that a third of them live in the state of California, it is truly significant that this event to be held in the United States for the first time in eighteen years, will take place in San Francisco.

The history of overseas migration from Japan began in 1868 with the first migrants to Hawaii, called the “Gannenmono.” The Association of Nikkei and Japanese Abroad (Kaigai Nikkeijin Kyokai) hosts a convention in Tokyo every year. However, the 59th Convention of Nikkei and Japanese Abroad was held in Hawaii last year, to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the arrival of the first Japanese immigrants. At that convention, we declared June 20th, the day that the first Japanese immigrants arrived in Hawaii, to be the International Nikkei Day. The idea to have an International Nikkei Day was first proposed in 2017 at the 19th Pan American Nikkei Convention held in Lima, Peru. In this way, the Pan American Nikkei Convention and the Convention of Nikkei and Japanese Abroad mutually support each other, often complementing one another, deepening our cooperation and relationship.

I am sure that COPANI will present opportunities for participants who will be joining from all over the world to reaffirm their own roots and the Nikkei legacy, and to further strengthen the ties among Nikkei people. I look forward to seeing all of you at the convention.

Katsuyuki Tanaka

President

The Association of Nikkei and Japanese Abroad (Kaigai Nikkeijin Kyokai)

English Translation by Akiyo Horiguchi & Asuka Nagase