

SGI OFFERS RELIEF AID TO VENEZUELA

On Dec. 20, 1999, the Soka Gakkai donated approximately \$30,000 to Charge d'Affaires Jose A. Clavijo of the Venezuelan Embassy in Tokyo as initial emergency relief aid for the victims of the floods and mudslides that became the worst natural disaster to hit Venezuela in the 20th century.

The death toll was feared to be as high as 10,000, with many people missing and more than 150,000 homeless. The region of Vargas, located just north of the capital Caracas, was the hardest hit, where many bodies remained buried under rubble and mud, amid a growing fear of epidemics. Much of the affected population was without potable water and basic necessities.

The SGI has also sent \$20,000 in emergency relief to its representatives in Venezuela to support the local relief effort. In addition, SGI Venezuela volunteers worked together with Amnesty International staff to transport medicine and clothes to the victims.