

Chapter 4

Japan's Diplomacy Open to the Public

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Section 1

Japanese Society and People Deepening Their Ties with the World

Overview

(Tapping the Power of Foreign Nationals for the Growth of Japan)

Increasing the number of people traveling between Japan and other countries stimulates the economy and promotes mutual understanding among different cultures. Based on this view, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) takes steps to facilitate the entry of foreign nationals into Japan and also their stay in the country.

The Government of Japan attaches importance to promoting Japan as a tourism-oriented country and to regional revitalization inside Japan, and MOFA has engaged in efforts to relax visa requirements. With the continuous trend of yen depreciation and various other factors, the number of foreign visitors to Japan reached around 19.74 million in 2015. The target of 20 million in 2020 may be achieved earlier than anticipated. MOFA strives to contribute to the increase of foreign visitors while continuing to ensure that “Japan remains the safest country in the world,” and to a tourism-oriented country both in quantity and quality by attracting the wealthy class, repeaters, and the young generation.

In order to further vitalize the Japanese economy and increase Japan's competitiveness, it is critical to secure capable human resources irrespective of their nationality. In the “Japan Revitalization Strategy (revised

in 2015),” a policy is set forth whereby the government promotes further participation of foreign human resources. To reach such target, MOFA works with relevant ministries and agencies to ensure the system and measures for accepting foreign human resources to be effective and in line with the principle of human rights. Moreover, MOFA encourages national debate on the challenges arising from the acceptance of foreign nationals and their integration into Japanese society, as well as appropriate measures to be taken.

(International Organizations and Japanese Nationals)

At international organizations, staff from all over the world capitalizes on their respective skills and traits to carry out activities for addressing global issues.

Japan has been providing personnel contributions as well as financial and intellectual contributions to international organizations. If more Japanese nationals play active roles in international organizations, Japan's presence in the international community will be enhanced and the human resources of Japan will also be enriched.

MOFA carries out programs to recruit, train, support, and provide information to competent Japanese nationals who can play active roles in international organizations and contribute to them. The year 2016 marks the 60th anniversary of Japan's accession to the UN. Seizing this opportunity, MOFA will

strengthen its efforts to create an environment where outstanding Japanese nationals can play active roles on the global stage.

(NGOs and Volunteers)

The Government of Japan has promoted All-Japan diplomacy which draws on the strengths of non-governmental actors. In this context, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have become even more important in recent years as implementers of support activities in developing countries and as channels for offering policy proposals. Japanese NGOs play a significant role in fields that Japan excels in and can make international contributions to, such as health, water and sanitation, education, disaster risk reduction, environment and climate change, and emergency humanitarian assistance for refugees and disaster victims. MOFA regards NGOs as important partners in development cooperation, and strives to strengthen partnerships with NGOs through financial assistance, improving their operational environment, and policy dialogue.

Participants in the volunteer programs of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), including the Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCV) and Senior Volunteers (SV), are crucial actors in international cooperation. In the countries and regions where they are dispatched, JICA volunteers see the development challenges from the same perspective as local people and work hard together to tackle them. Such programs are highly appreciated by local people including government officials in various countries and earn their gratitude, as symbols of the “Visibility of Japanese Aid.” In addition, the programs play a substantial role not only in local economic and social development, but also in fostering mutual understanding, friendship, and goodwill

between Japan and these countries and regions. Furthermore, these programs are also significant from the viewpoint that JICA volunteers bring back their volunteer experiences to help contribute to Japanese society in the end. The volunteers use their volunteer experience and stay active at home and abroad upon their return.

(Cooperation with Local Governments)

Regional revitalization is one of top priority tasks for the cabinet. MOFA is implementing all-ministry initiatives to promote regional revitalization in collaboration with local governments. At home, MOFA, jointly with municipalities, carried out “Regional Promotion Seminars,” “Diplomats’ Study Tours,” etc., to showcase regions’ attractiveness for the diplomatic corps in Tokyo and started a new project to support regional revitalization, using Iikura Guest House, the Ministry’s facility. As measures to support Japan’s local governments in promoting their attractiveness and in developing local industries and regional economies, “Regional Promotion Projects” have been conducted, using Japan’s diplomatic facilities overseas. Moreover, MOFA conducted promotional activities with local governments through local promotion projects in Asia, which were launched in 2015 to assist in recovering reputational damages caused by the Great East Japan Earthquake. In addition, MOFA actively promoted alcohol beverages produced in various regions of Japan at its overseas missions and supported overseas operations of local governments and local SMEs (small and medium-sized enterprises) by making use of ODA.

1 Linking the Energy of Foreign Nationals to the Growth of Japan

(1) Growth Strategy and Relaxation of Visa Requirements

In 2015, the number of foreign visitors to Japan reached around 19.74 million, almost doubling the score after having reached 10 million two years ago. The target of 20 million by 2020 may be achieved earlier than anticipated. In such prospect, MOFA introduced further relaxation of visa requirements in 2015 for countries from which Japan expects many visitors, following the visa relaxation measures realized in 2013 and 2014 for ASEAN countries, in order to promote Japan as a tourism-oriented country and support regional revitalization, as well as to contribute to further promoting people-to-people exchange. Specifically, MOFA relaxed the requirements for the multiple visas for visitors from China on January 19, and introduced multiple visas for Brazil on June 15 and for Mongolia on August 10. Furthermore, Prime Minister Abe announced, during his visit to India in December, that Japan would substantially relax from January 11 2016, the requirements for the multiple visa for visitors

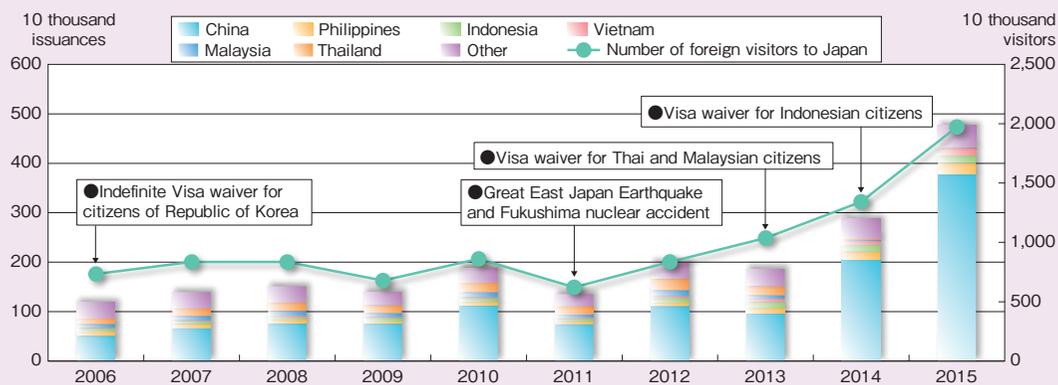
from India introduced in 2014.

As such, further expansion of visa requirement relaxation is expected due to the effect it has on promoting people-to-people exchange and Japan's economic growth. At the same time, the Government intensifies visa control as a part of border measures to prevent the entry of criminals and foreign visitors with intension of illegal labor, as well as those who could become victims of human trafficking. MOFA is determined to continue working on the relaxation of visa requirements, aiming at increasing the number of visitors to Japan while ensuring that "Japan remains the safest country in the world," and contributing to achieve a tourism-oriented country both in quantity and quality by attracting the wealthy class, repeaters, and the young generation. MOFA intends to conduct such relaxation after taking into account all the factors such as the bilateral relations and their diplomatic significance.

(2) Acceptance of Foreign Nationals and their Social Integration

Since the Lehman Shock in 2008, the number of long-term foreign residents in Japan kept decreasing until 2012 when the trend turned

Changes in The Number of Visa Issuances and Foreign Visitors to Japan



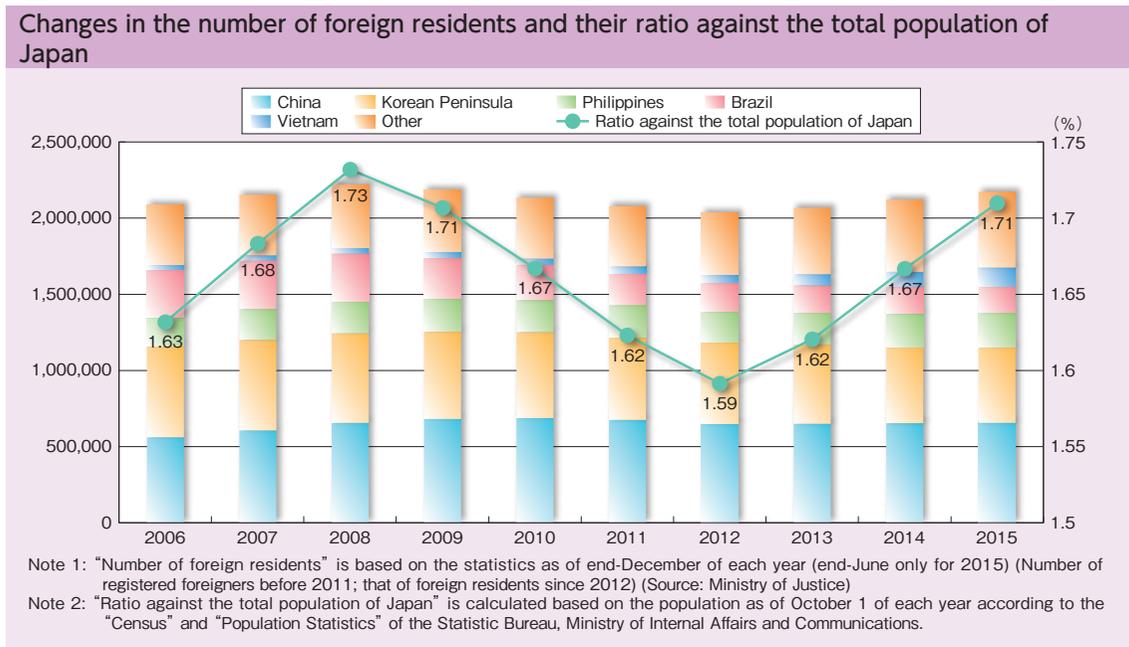
Note 1: The number of foreign visitors to Japan is based on Japan National Tourist Organization (JNTO) statistics
 Note 2: The number of visa issuances in 2015 is provisional value

upward. While the aging of the population continues with low birth rate resulting in the decrease of the population, it is important for Japan to secure capable human resources, irrespective of their nationality, in order to further vitalize Japan's economy and improve its competitiveness. The "2015 Revised Japan Revitalization Strategy" specifically aims at promoting active participation of foreign human resources and the number of competent foreign nationals living in Japan is expected to further increase in the future.

MOFA cooperates with the relevant ministries and agencies to assure the series of measures to be coherent with the principle of human rights of the foreign nationals. MOFA also hosts international workshops on the acceptance of foreign nationals and their integration into Japan, aiming to encourage debate among the people by providing opportunities to discuss concrete challenges and measures. In February, MOFA co-hosted a workshop with Katsushika City, and the International Organization for Migration

(IOM), under the theme of "Foreign Nationals and Foreign Human Resources in the Field of Medical Care: Beyond Language and Cultural Barriers." The participants mainly discussed the way of desirable medical care in an era of globalization in terms of medical interpreters and further participation of foreign human resources in the medical sector.

During Disaster Prevention Week in September, MOFA organized "Seminar on Disaster Prevention Measures for the Diplomatic Corps," based on the lessons learned from the Great East Japan Earthquake. With the participation of local governments, their relevant organizations and private institutions, as well as the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (MIC) and the Japan Tourist Agency, the seminar introduced the efforts using IT of the relevant organizations such as on the development of a smartphone application for the safety confirmation of missing foreign nationals in Japan and information provision.



2 Japanese Taking Active Roles in the International Community

(1) Japanese Taking Active Roles in International Organizations

International organizations are founded to solve a variety of global issues; for instance, poverty reduction, climate change, human rights and humanitarian affairs, food, energy, refugee protection, conflict prevention / peace-building, health, education, employment and women empowerment. People of various nationalities join these international organizations and draw on their skills and traits to create an environment where people of the world can enjoy peace, security and prosperity.

Competent individuals with specialized knowledge, passion and capabilities to contribute to the world beyond the framework of nation states are needed so that international organizations can competently perform their duties and fully fulfill the roles expected of them. In addition to financial contributions for international organizations to deal with their tasks through regular budget and voluntary contributions, Japan also makes contributions in terms of intellectual and human resources through the active roles of Japanese staff.

However, the number of Japanese staff working in international organizations is still low compared to other major countries. Taking the UN Secretariat as an example, the number of Japanese employees remains at around one-third of the “desirable number of employees” set by the UN according to each country’s population and share of the body’s budget.

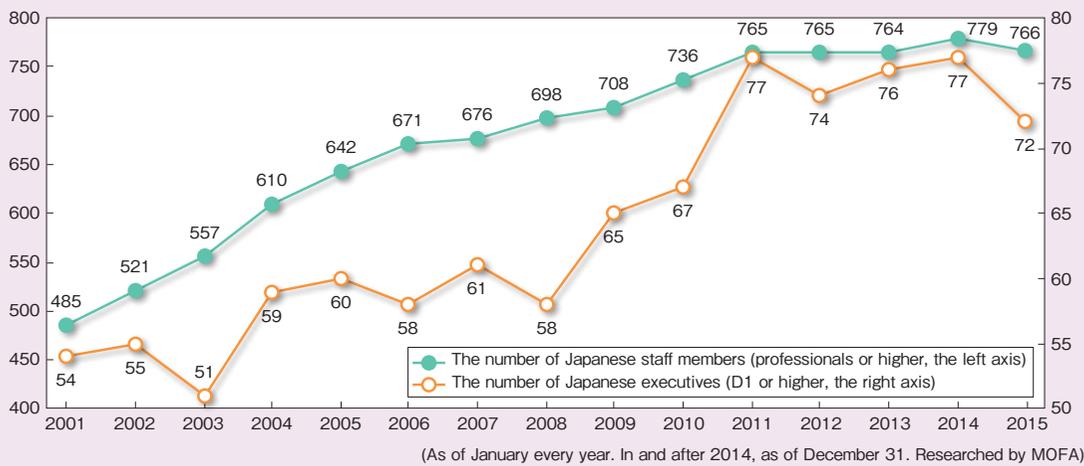
More Japanese people taking active roles in international organizations are expected to lead to the enhanced presence of Japan as one of Japan’s contributions in the

international community. It will also show the world that Japan is truly committed to the promotion of peace and prosperity of the world and actively working for it. In addition, Japanese staff of international organizations is expected to play the role of a “bridge” between the international organization and their home country. For example, Japan and the UN Development Programme (UNDP) co-host the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) led by Japan. Japanese UN staff members, who are able to understand the work process of both Japan and partner organizations and differences in the way of thinking between them, prove essential in advancing projects and policy issues in a smooth, prompt and efficient manner and their roles are highly appreciated by the international organizations. The presence of Japanese staff in international organization has vital significance also from the perspective of promotion of Japan’s diplomatic priorities.

Moreover, increase in the number of Japanese people with various international experiences will in turn lead to enrichment of human resources of Japan, contributing to the development of Japan as a whole.

Based on this position, MOFA actively recruits, trains, supports, and provides information to human resources competent of working and contributing in the international arena, with the aim of increasing the number of Japanese nationals working in international organizations. In 2015, it organized 74 guidance sessions to provide information on the process of recruitment by international organizations. It also hosted Outreach Missions by human resource staff from international organizations at five universities in the Kanto area, which were attended by a total of about 800 participants.

Changes in the number of Japanese staff members at UN-related agencies (professionals or higher)



Preferred Number of UN Secretariat Staff Members by Nationality

(As of June 30, 2015)

Ranking	Country	Number of staff (Female staff)	Range of preferred number of staff members			Ratio (%)
			Lower limit	(Mean)	Upper limit	
1	United States	366 (199)	373 ~	(439) ~	504	12.20
2	United Kingdom	151 (60)	92 ~	(109) ~	125	5.03
3	France	146 (71)	99 ~	(117) ~	134	4.87
4	Italy	133 (65)	80 ~	(94) ~	108	4.43
5	Germany	132 (73)	125 ~	(147) ~	169	4.40
6	Canada	89 (39)	56 ~	(66) ~	75	2.97
7	Japan	81 (51)	186 ~	(219) ~	252	2.70
8	China	77 (38)	119 ~	(140) ~	161	2.57
13	Russia	50 (11)	49 ~	(58) ~	66	1.67
14	ROK	46 (24)	40 ~	(47) ~	54	1.53
	Other	Other (729)				
	Total	Total (1,360)				

Note: "Staff members" in the table are those holding posts to which the principle of geographic distribution applies and not all staff members (a portion of the entire staff)

Source: UN material (A/70/605)

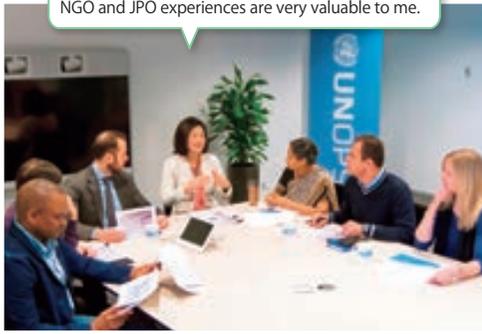
Furthermore, MOFA also supports young people dispatched to international organizations under the Junior Professional Officer Program (a system of sending young Japanese nationals who aspire to work in international organizations as regular employees for two years in principle to give them opportunities to gain necessary knowledge and experience in international organizations and to aim for regular

employment after their dispatch). MOFA is also committed to coordination with human resource sections of major international organizations, gathering information, providing vacancy information, and supporting application procedures, etc. for the promotion and employment of Japanese staff.

The year 2016 is a "milestone year" of the 60th anniversary of Japan's accession

Japanese Working on a Global Scale

I hold discussions with my colleagues with a strong commitment and belief in resolving global issues such as peace building and poverty reduction. My NGO and JPO experiences are very valuable to me.



Discussing with colleagues to support the reconstruction in Iraq.

Ms. Azusa Chiba

Partnerships Officer: UN Office for Project Services (UNOPS), Denmark (headquarters)

One of the attractive points of my job is contributing through the coordination of organizations such as various national governments and NGOs under a common target of supporting victims.



Establishing a Reception Departure Centre at an airport to respond to the earthquake in Nepal.

Mr. Yosuke Okita

Humanitarian Affairs Officer: UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Geneva (headquarters)

to the UN. Japan assumed non-permanent membership on the UN Security Council for a record-high 11th time among UN member state, and will serve a two-year term starting from January 1, 2016. For 60 years, Japan has consistently followed the path of a peace-loving nation and contributed to the international community in terms of finance, policy initiatives and human resources. MOFA, with its knowledge and experience, will continue to work actively so that excellent Japanese nationals, who understand the roles and responsibility of international organizations and have high aspiration and passion to contribute to solving the issues faced by the international community, can take part in international organizations.

(2) Activities of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)

A Development Assistance

It is estimated that in Japan there are over 400 non-governmental organizations (NGOs) engaged in international cooperation activities. Most of them are familiar with local

needs at the grassroots level and provide flexible and detailed support in developing countries / regions with various challenges such as poverty, natural disaster, and conflicts and their importance in development cooperation is increasing.

MOFA provides financial cooperation in the form of grant assistance for economic and social development projects implemented by Japanese NGOs in developing countries/regions (the Grant Assistance for Japanese NGO Projects) and actively provides Official Development Assistance (ODA) through NGOs. In the FY 2015 (as of end-December), 30 Japanese NGOs implemented 41 Grant Assistance for Japanese NGO Projects in 19 countries and one region in Asia, Africa, and the Middle East, etc. The projects cover a wide range of assistance, including, health/medical/hygienic care (maternal and child health, countermeasures for tuberculosis/HIV/AIDS, water/hygiene, etc.), rural development (environmental development/technological improvement for agriculture), support for the people with disabilities

Column

The Voices of Those Who Have Supported the United Nations

Diverse Role of UN Staff

Former Regional Director for Asia, World Food Programme ● Kenro Oshidari

When I entered the United Nations system 35 years ago, our profession “International Civil Service” was not so known in Japan. When I mentioned that I work for the UN back then, people often asked me if I was a translator for those big UN conferences.

Certainly, the UN continues to host numerous meetings seeking political solution to the conflicts of the world that still lingers in the 21st century. However, my UN career was quite different from the scenes in New York as I spent most of my professional life in developing countries, and places requiring urgent humanitarian assistance either because of conflicts or natural disasters. I worked in countries like Bosnia-Herzegovina, Cambodia, Kosovo, Sudan and North Korea providing food assistance through the World Food Programme-WFP. At times, I worked in dangerous environments, but it was always truly rewarding to work with colleagues who share the same passion but coming from variety of countries and regions.

Just in the development and humanitarian field, UN agencies are seeking specialists in areas like health, sanitation, environment, education and disaster preparedness. Furthermore, as in any public or private sector, UN also requires people who have skills in IT, finance, human resource management, procurement and logistics to administratively run the various agencies. There are many opportunities in the UN for people to use their different skills to collectively tackle the global challenges and also to seek their own adventure in the international world.



“Deep-rooted terrorism” and “value of the United Nations”

Senior Legal Officer, UN Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED) ● Sue Takasu

Terrorism continues to remain a huge threat to international peace and security. More than one and a half years have passed since the declaration of the establishment of Islamic State in Syria and Levant (ISIL) in June 2014. It was reported that more than 30,000 foreign terrorist fighters, mostly youth, have been fighting with ISIL in 2015. What makes youth to fight with ISIL which conducts appalling atrocities, and what are mechanisms to cause terrorism? There are so many complicated social factors involved in fermenting conditions conducive to terrorism, and it is not simple to find effective solutions. However, at least, we came to understand that conventional approach such as taken by law enforcement agencies is not enough to suppress terrorism, and we have to pay due attention to holistic and preventive approach such as: promoting understanding and respect of civilization and diversity; enhancing tolerance; securing a chance of self-realization in society; taking appropriate measures against unemployment and poverty; eliminating corruptions; and implementing fair treatment.

Such needs have been affecting the stance of the United Nations. Generally speaking, each UN agency is highly specialized in specific areas with its own mandate and expertise, and works very independently. However, recent terrorism phenomenon requires a holistic approach by almost all UN agencies to bring together all relevant expertise in close coordination and cooperation. This must be an added value of the United Nations, and I believe that dynamism is a beauty of working with the United Nations.



(vocational training/employment assistance, provision of wheelchairs for children, etc.), education (building schools, etc.), disaster risk reduction, and the clearance of landmines and unexploded ordnances (UXO), etc.

The Japan Platform (JPF) was established in 2000, with the aim of conducting emergency humanitarian assistance effectively and promptly through cooperation and partnership among the government, NGOs and business communities at the time of refugee crises/large-scale natural disasters. As of end-December, 47 NGOs are members of JPF. In 2015, besides launches of aid to central Nepal earthquake victims and the program for humanitarian crisis in Yemen, JPF continuously provided assistance to refugees and internally displaced persons in Syria, Iraq, and their neighboring nations. Humanitarian assistance was also provided



A program to strengthen the ability of disaster risk reduction in the community (Grant Assistance for Japanese NGO Projects: Sri Lanka) (Photo: Civic Force, registered not-for-profit organization)



The "general meeting" of NGO-MOFA Regular Consultation Meeting (FY 2015)

to Palestine/Gaza, Afghanistan, Pakistan, South Sudan, and Myanmar, etc.

Japanese NGOs conduct a number of activities using contributions from supporters and the income earned from their own business. In recent years, with growing public interest in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), an increasing number of companies with technologies and funds implement CSR projects in developing countries in partnership with NGOs with much knowledge on development cooperation.

As seen thus far, NGOs assume important roles in the area of development cooperation. Identifying such NGOs as partners in development cooperation, MOFA and JICA provide indirect support for NGO activities through various policy measures with the aim of enhancing their capacity, enhancing their expertise and developing human resources so that NGOs can strengthen the foundation for their activities and perform further tasks. In 2015, MOFA implemented four projects, namely "NGO Study Group," "NGO Overseas Study Program," "NGO Intern Program" and "NGO Consultant Scheme."

Moreover, the general meeting of the "NGO-MOFA Regular Consultation Meeting" was held in June in order to promote dialogue/coordination with NGOs. Also the ODA Policy Council to discuss overall ODA and the Partnership Promotion Committee to discuss support for NGOs and cooperation measures were held. In addition, MOFA has been working on global-scale issues in the development and humanitarian areas, including the process to adopt the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, exchanging opinions with NGOs.

B Partnership in Other Major Diplomatic Areas

MOFA also cooperates with NGOs in areas other than development cooperation. For instance, at the 59th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) held in March 2015, Ms. Hiroko Hashimoto (professor emeritus of Jumonji University and principal of Jumonji Junior/Senior High School) represented Japan, and NGO representatives actively participated in discussions as members of the Japanese delegation. At the 70th UN General Assembly, Ms. Arino Yaguchi (professor of Tokyo Women's Medical University) attended the Third Committee, which deals with a range of social and human rights issues, as an advisor to the representatives of the Government of Japan. In addition, the Government of Japan has initiated dialogues with civil society including NGO representatives and experts on matters related to government reports to be submitted based on various conventions on human rights, third country resettlement projects, and the Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security based on the UN Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 1325 and related resolutions.

Japanese NGOs are also increasing their presence in the area of disarmament and MOFA actively promotes cooperation with NGOs. MOFA officials participated in seminars on conventional weapons hosted by NGOs. Cooperation with NGOs is also taken place in the areas of clearance of mines and unexploded ordnances and risk reduction education projects in Afghanistan and other countries.

Furthermore, in the area of nuclear disarmament, MOFA has been conducting dialogues with various NGOs and experts. The Government supports NGOs' activities

to convey atomic bomb survivors' testimonies on the devastation caused by the use of nuclear weapons to the international community through the commissioned projects called "the Special Communicator for a World without Nuclear Weapons" and "the Youth Communicator for a World without Nuclear Weapons." As of December 2015, a total of 252 Special Communicators and a total of 107 Youth Communicators have been dispatched to the world through this commission programs.

As for the measures against transnational organized crime, especially in the area of trafficking in persons, coordination with civil society including NGOs is essential. With this in mind, the government actively exchanges opinions with NGOs and other stakeholders to identify recent trends of trafficking in persons and to consult appropriate measures to address them.

(3) Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCV) Celebrating its 50th Anniversary and Senior Volunteers (SV)

The Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCV) is a Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) program aimed at cooperation/assistance for the economic and social development at the communities of the developing countries while young skilled people aged 20 to 39 live and work together with local people in these countries and fostering mutual understanding. As of end-November 2015, 40,977 JOCVs had been dispatched to 88 countries in total. Dispatched members have been engaged in about 200 types of work in nine areas: planning administration, commercial/tourism, public utility works, human resources, agriculture, forestry and fisheries, health/medical care, mining, social welfare and energy.

On November 17, 2015, JICA held a ceremony to mark the 50th anniversary of JOCV, which was established in 1965. The ceremony was attended by Their Majesties the Emperor and Empress. The ceremony included a video message from Prime Minister Thongsing Thammavong of the Lao people's Democratic Republic and a congratulatory message from His Majesty Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck, the King of Bhutan. Related events were held in recipient countries. The JOCV program is highly evaluated by developing countries as the "Visibility of Japanese Aid." Moreover, from October 4 to 7, 2015, JICA hosted the Conference of International Volunteer Cooperation Organization, which was attended by international organizations, volunteer groups, NGOs, universities and companies involved in volunteers from all around the world.

In 2015, in addition to countries where JOCVs had been dispatched, Japan concluded with Swaziland an agreement concerning the dispatch of volunteers under the JOCV program and resumed the dispatch of JOCVs to Madagascar.

The Senior Volunteers (SV) program is a program to dispatch middle aged persons from 40 to 69 years of age who have



A volunteer from the Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOVC) giving a lecture on environmental education in Costa Rica (Photo: Kenshiro Imamura/JICA)

wide-ranging skills and rich experiences to developing countries. The program has been expanding every year since its foundation in 1990 and by the end of November 2014, a total of 5,833 volunteers had been dispatched to 73 countries, and cooperation in nine areas, the same as the JOCV program, had been implemented. The SV program has drawn increasing interest in recent years from the perspective of supporting to start a new life after retirement and utilizing the rich experiences and expertise of retired senior citizens.

JOVC and SV programs are supported by the high aspirations of people who are keen to provide cooperation for the sake of economic and social development and reconstruction of developing countries. MOFA actively promotes these programs, considering them as a core of participatory international cooperation by citizens. As of end-November 2015, 2,114 JOCVs and 442 SVs are working around the world (71 countries and 59 countries, respectively). The volunteer participants who have returned to Japan contribute their experience to Japanese society by sharing their experiences in educational and local activity settings and private companies. These unique participatory activities of Japan are highly



A member from the Senior Volunteers (SV) working as nurses at a maternal and child health center in Zambia (Photo: Atsushi Shibuya/ JICA)

appreciated and expected both domestically and internationally, including in recipient countries.

Experiences gained from JOCV/SV programs can lead to personal development of their participants as human resources who will make a positive impact on the global arena. Thus, the government is working with companies, municipal governments and universities which need such opportunities to develop human resources, in order to expand the participants through the dispatch of their employees, teachers and students to developing countries. For instance, as a program responding to the needs of private companies, such as small-and medium-sized enterprises, aiming for international development of their businesses, the government launched the “Private-Sector Partnership Volunteer” program in FY2012. Furthermore, the government is committed to developing an environment for the feedback of the experience of the returned JOCVs and SVs to society, for example, by providing career support to them. Returned volunteers are active in many fields inside and outside Japan. Some have been hired by the Reconstruction Agency to work as additional personnel for disaster-stricken local governments, utilizing their own specialties and experience gained in JOCV/SV programs. Others keep supporting the countries they were dispatched with other returned volunteers, or work for international organizations.

3 Cooperation with Local Governments

Regional revitalization is one of the priority issues of the Cabinet. The Minister for Foreign Affairs is a member of the Headquarters

for Overcoming Population Decline and Vitalizing Local Economy in Japan. MOFA implements all-ministry initiatives to promote regional revitalization. In addition, MOFA, through the efforts of the entire nation to enhance diplomatic capacity of Japan as a whole, engages in various collaborative activities with local governments.

Within the country, a new scheme to support regional revitalization started in 2015, using Iikura Guest House, the Ministry’s facility, with the initiative of Foreign Minister Kishida. This is a measure to promote various attractions of Japanese local areas, reaching out to embassies in Tokyo and Japanese and foreign media by inviting ambassadors residing in Japan to seminars and receptions at the Iikura Guest House, co-hosted by the Foreign Minister and chiefs of local municipalities. The first project was jointly implemented with Kyoto City (February), the second with Fukushima Prefecture (March), the third with Hiroshima Prefecture and Hiroshima City (July), the fourth with Mie Prefecture (October) and the fifth with Aomori Prefecture (November). Chiefs of local governments held seminars to directly introduce sightseeing spots and local products and showed local performing arts. The projects had news coverages both nationally and internationally. Participating local governments and municipalities highly evaluate the public relations effects of the projects as those municipal organizations can promote their attractiveness to many ambassadors posted to Tokyo at one time by co-hosting the events with Foreign Minister. Furthermore, to support the international initiatives of cities and special wards (of Tokyo), a “Reception Hosted by Foreign Minister on the Occasion of the General Meeting of the Japan Association of City

Mayors” was held in June.

Besides, “Regional Promotion Seminars” and “Diplomats’ Study Tours” were also organized for the diplomatic corps in Tokyo. In July, MOFA co-hosted the 18th “Regional Promotion Seminar” together with Matsudo City and Chiba Prefecture, Sagami-hara City and Kanagawa Prefecture, Saitama City, Toyota City (Aichi Prefecture), and Mitake Town (Gifu Prefecture) to promote their respective attractions and invited 75 people from diplomatic corps in Tokyo and other organizations. At the seminars, participating local governmental units introduced their latest information and products to the diplomatic corps, exchanged opinions and interacted with one another, over food and



Kagami-Biraki, opening a cask of Japanese sake
(Reception co-hosted with Governor of Hiroshima Prefecture and Mayor of Hiroshima, July 23)



Diplomats’ Study Tour (Matsudo City): in the Pear Garden

drinks produced in each area. “Diplomats’ Study Tours” (Matsudo City in September, Kanagawa Prefecture in October, Saitama City, Toyota City and Mitake Town in November) also took place with about 20-50 participants per each tour from diplomatic corps in Tokyo. The diplomatic corps inspected facilities in local municipalities as well as exchanged opinions with local administrative chiefs, and conducted exchanges with various local organizations and students.

Furthermore, MOFA actively provides local governments with opportunities to explain things such as Japan’s current diplomatic policies, etc., and exchange views. As a part of such activities, a “Local Partnership



Booths at the reception venue
(Reception co-hosted with Governor of Mie Prefecture, October 27)



Diplomats’ Study Tour (Kanagawa Prefecture): at Shonan Robocare Center

Cooperation Forum” was held in January. Part 1 of the forum was the foreign policy briefing session, where MOFA explained how to transmit information strategically outside the country. In Part 2 of the forum, participants exchanged views in four sectional meetings titled “information transmission to the world by municipalities making use of foreign media”, “regional vitalization and showcasing local attractions by attracting foreign tourists, in particular, from ASEAN and Muslim nations,” “promoting cultural exchanges,” and “assistance for overseas business expansion of Japanese companies and local public entities through public-private partnerships.” About 130 people, mainly local government officials, attended the forum.



Diplomats' Study Tour (Saitama City): at the Omiya Bonsai Art Museum, Saitama

Outside Japan, a new scheme was launched in 2015 to assist in recovering reputational damages. This is a comprehensive PR project to support the recovery and regional revitalization of disaster-stricken areas by countering unfounded rumors circulated worldwide following the Great East Japan Earthquake and by showcasing regional attractions as well as providing accurate information on food safety and other concerns through the cooperation and participation of local governments, plagued by unfounded rumors and import restrictions imposed on food produced in certain prefectures in Japan. First of all, in August in Hong Kong, the Japanese Booth “Delicacies of Eastern Japan” exhibition was set up at Hong Kong Food Expo



Study Tour (Toyota City, Aichi Prefecture and Mitake Town, Gifu Prefecture): Trial cooking class of a regional cuisine, Mitake Hana Sushi



The local promotion project in Hong Kong, launched to recover reputational damages



The local promotion project in Shanghai, launched to recover reputational damages

2015. With the participation of Iwate, Miyagi, Fukushima, Ibaraki, Tochigi, Gunma, Chiba, and Niigata Prefectures, MOFA promoted Eastern Japan's foods and tourism by offering food and drink tastings at booths of each prefecture, and by doing stage performances. About 470,000 people visited the Expo. Mr. Yoshimasa Hayashi, Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, participated in the Japanese Booth. Support Ambassadors of the project, AKB48 Team 8, an idol girl unit, and Funassy, a mascot character, appeared at the opening event, and enlivened the venue, providing excellent publicity. Subsequently, in November in Shanghai, "Visit Eastern Japan and Experience All of Its Charms!" projects were deployed in cooperation with Aomori, Miyagi, Fukushima, Yamagata, Ibaraki, Tochigi, Gunma, and Niigata Prefectures and MOFA showcased the attraction of cuisine and tourist spots of each prefecture through booths and stage performances, etc. Prior to the on-site events, bloggers, food and drink connoisseurs and people from tourism industry in Shanghai and other areas were invited to Aomori, Iwate, Miyagi, Fukushima, Akita, Yamagata, Ibaraki, Tochigi, Gunma, Chiba, and Niigata Prefectures from mid-September to mid-October. They were divided into five groups and made a travel along each themed itinerary such as tourism/meal attraction and food safety. These invited bloggers and others promoted the charms of Eastern Japan in their own media like blogs and directly talked about their experiences at talk shows in promotion events in Shanghai. At the opening ceremony, Vice President of Shanghai People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries and members of SNH48, an idol girl group based in Shanghai, attended as guests. In total, about 15,000 people came to the three-day event and those

residents living in the vicinity of Shanghai had a chance to know firsthand the charms of Eastern Japan.

In addition, 15 "Regional Promotion Projects" were conducted in Asia, North America, and Europe as measures to support local governments in promoting the attractiveness of each region and in developing local industries and regional economies by making use of Japan's diplomatic facilities overseas. For example, in July, Abashiri City (Hokkaido) and the Consulate-General of Japan in Vancouver co-hosted a promotional event aimed at importers at the official residence of Consul-General in order to promote the expansion of sales channels for such local specialty products as Japanese yam. After the event the City side conducted business negotiations with business operators who were highly interested in the yam produced in Abashiri.

In addition, MOFA supports sister-city exchanges between Japanese local bodies and their counterparts abroad through various initiatives. Specifically, to support the international initiatives of local governments and communities, Japanese diplomats visit sister cities of Japanese municipalities and share each other's opinions with officials responsible for international/economic exchanges. Also, heads of the diplomatic missions overseas visit local cities in Japan to have dialogues and deliver lectures on sister-city exchanges prior to leaving for new posts or when they temporarily return to Japan. In addition, if a foreign local governmental body wants to establish a sister-city relationship with a Japanese one, MOFA indirectly supports such a move by providing prefectures and 20 major cities with relevant information and posting it on the "'Glocal" (global and local) Diplomatic Network" on the website

of MOFA.¹ As part of efforts to promote diverse Japan's local attractions overseas, the diplomatic missions overseas actively promote alcoholic beverages (Japanese sake and wine, etc.) produced in various parts of Japan. Specifically, the diplomatic missions overseas create opportunities to introduce Japanese alcoholic beverages, by way of offering them at lunch/dinner with government leaders of the assigned countries or diplomatic corps of other countries, and making a toast with Japanese sake at grand-scale events such as the Emperor's birthday receptions. As a result, participants in these wining and dining or receptions organized around the world have given positive feedback and evaluations on Japanese alcoholic beverages. The opportunities have increased their understanding and initiated their interest in Japanese alcoholic drinks.

MOFA also works on supporting local companies. With the rapid economic development, the demand for water treatment, waste disposal, urban transportation, and anti-pollution measures, etc., have sharply increased in developing countries. In cooperation with Japanese local authorities and by making use of ODA, MOFA supports the overseas business expansion of local small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), which have accumulated knowledge on countermeasures against such problems, and increases development cooperation. This contributes not only to the global outreach of local companies, development of globally competent human resources, and Japanese style of infrastructure export but also to vitalizing the economy of whole Japan as well as some local areas.

¹ Currently (as of February 29, 2016), the countries with large number of Japan's sister and partnership cities (including municipalities such as prefectures, wards and towns) are, in descending order, U.S. (446), China (362), ROK (160), Australia (108), and Canada (70). (Calculated by the Council of Local Authorities for Internal Relations; See its website: <http://www.clair.or.jp/j/exchange/>)

People responsible for cooperation with local governments

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The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) is implementing ministry-wide initiatives to realize regional revitalization, which is one of the priority issues addressed by the Abe Cabinet. In this Column, we focus on “people” responsible for cooperation with local governments at MOFA, and introduce their efforts.

In August 2006, the Local Partnership Cooperation Division was established within MOFA. Currently, about 14 people, including some local officials dispatched to MOFA, receive enquiries and consultation from local governments as a point of contact for the cooperation, and carry out a variety of local revitalization support programs in cooperation with such municipal organizations.

Under the “personnel support system for regional revitalization (FY2015)” intended to dispatch personnel such as national public officials to municipalities eager to actively address regional revitalization, as the mayors’ assistants, Mr. Naoki Sasahara is sent from the MOFA to Iki City, Nagasaki and currently serving as deputy mayor. Mr. Sasahara, immediately after returning home in late August 2015 from Cuba, his former post, went to Iki City for his new post with his family members – five in all. Taking advantage of his work experience overseas as well as at MOFA, he is working hard for revitalization of Iki City, right in the very forefront.

Furthermore, MOFA accepts municipal employees as seconded staff, as part of a staff exchange with municipalities. The scheme is expected to help municipalities to develop globally competent human resources, through 2-year work experience at MOFA headquarters, followed by serving at diplomatic missions overseas for another 2 years. After being posted overseas, they return to their municipalities, and continue to play active roles in the international relations and other departments. As of December 2015, 57 seconded staff from local authorities are working at MOFA headquarters and diplomatic missions overseas. We have a track record of accepting approximately 400 such trainees so far. MOFA also dispatches its personnel, mainly senior officials, to municipalities. Currently, five such officials in total are sent out to Tokyo Metropolitan Government, Yokohama City, etc.

In addition to the above, there is an Osaka Liaison Office set up in Kansai (Osaka) as a major domestic base for MOFA. The resident ambassador in charge of Kansai is posted to serve as a contact for facilitating cooperation with the region.

Furthermore, local partnership cooperation officers are assigned, in all diplomatic missions overseas, to serve as a direct point of contact for enquiries from foreigners, and to gather information about interests and needs for Japanese local areas.



Deputy Mayor of Iki City, Sasahara, participating in the Nagasaki Destination Campaign. Together with a so-called *Yuruchara* (costumed mascot character), *jinmenishi-kun* (stone face character) who came to promote Iki City (November, Hotel New Nagasaki)



The author greeting at the closing ceremony of Local Promotion project for recovering reputational damages overseas (Shanghai)