

# Section 4

## Efforts to Promote Understanding and Trust in Japan

### Overview

#### (Strategic Communication in 2017)

In 2017, in light of pressing issues of the increasing severity of the North Korea situation, and challenges to the international order through unilateral attempts to change the status quo, Japan expressed the importance of freedom, democracy, human rights, the rule of law and other fundamental values, as well as its intention to continue contributing greatly to the peace and development of the Asia-Pacific region and the world. In regard to the “Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy” advocated by Prime Minister Abe (See Special Feature “Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy”), Japan also placed great emphasis on communicating it at various opportunities including the visit by U.S. President Trump to Japan in November, the APEC Economic Leaders’ Meeting, and the ASEAN Summit. By taking advantage of various opportunities and utilizing various tools, Japan is also engaged in efforts to information about matters on the recognition of history, including the issue of the so-called “comfort women” and various issues on maintaining Japan’s territorial

integrity.

#### (Initiatives in Strategic Communications)

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) is implementing strategic communications based on the three-pillar approach of (1) working to convey Japan’s views, policies and initiatives, (2) sharing Japan’s rich and varied attractiveness, and (3) cultivating understanding and support for Japan while strengthening the system of the diplomatic missions overseas. Initiatives in communications have continued to be bolstered, with focuses on increasing the understanding of Japan’s contributions towards the peace, stability and prosperity of the international community, maintenance and strengthening of the international order based on the rule of law, and on promoting understanding of issues regarding history.

To convey Japan’s views, policies and initiatives, in addition to direct diplomatic communication from the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister at various opportunities and proactive communication from the heads of the diplomatic missions overseas, MOFA took advantage of the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister’s official overseas visits to disseminate information

to foreign media through the Press Secretary and other officials. In those occasions, MOFA promptly provided information to the media, offered assistance for press coverage and was actively engaged in communicating with the public through the invitation of experts and media personnel, frequently in collaboration with think tanks. In cases where erroneous reports based on misunderstandings or biases about Japan were found, MOFA took corrective measures, including sending rebuttal pieces by the head of the diplomatic mission overseas or the Press Secretary.

To share Japan's rich and varied attractiveness, MOFA has been moving forward on the development of "Japan House," which are overseas hubs aimed at expanding the base of deeper understanding of and affinity for Japan in London (UK), Los Angeles (U.S.), and São Paulo (Brazil). Also, diplomatic missions around the world have implemented cultural projects, while the Japan Foundation (JF) has taken initiatives such as the "WA Project." Among these cultural projects was the 11th Japan International MANGA Award. Moreover, initiatives were implemented in cooperation with people in Japan and overseas to preserve tangible and intangible cultural heritage throughout the world, and promote inscription of Japan's cultural heritage on the World Heritage List and the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. To cultivate understanding and support for Japan, MOFA promoted the exchange of young people with Asia, the U.S., Europe, and Latin America, held a U.S.-Japan Conference on Cultural and Educational Interchange (CULCON), and provided support for Japanese studies at universities

in major countries, in an effort to promote personal and intellectual exchanges and Japanese language education. Moreover, to ensure the success of the 2020 Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games, "Sport for Tomorrow (SFT)" was launched as a sports-based international contribution project. To continue implementing these initiatives strategically and effectively, MOFA will continue to enhance Japan's strategic communication based on the three-pillar approach described above, through the effective use of its budget for strategic communication.

## 1 Strategic Communications

### (1) Overview

The Government of Japan has been actively communicating Japan's stance and way of thinking on the occasions of daily press conferences, interviews, contributions to the media, and speeches at official visits to foreign countries and international conferences by the Prime Minister, the Foreign Minister, and Government officials. The diplomatic missions overseas have actively communicated to the government of the appointed countries, their citizens, and the media on Japan's fundamental stance and views on a range of issues including the recognition of history or maintenance of territorial integrity. When the media publish reports that include factual errors, the diplomatic missions overseas, especially ambassadors and consuls general, or Press Secretary, explain by sending rebuttal pieces based on objective facts. MOFA also actively engages in communications with the public via social media and websites, in addition to creating publicity materials including videos on Japan's foreign policy.

In order to make Japan's fundamental

stance on policy issues understood, it is also important to enhance coordinated efforts with experts and think tanks. Based on this recognition, MOFA has invited influential experts and media personnel from around the world, providing them with opportunities to exchange views with Government officials and others, and to visit various places around Japan. Furthermore, Japan has dispatched Japanese experts abroad while extending its support for holding Japan-related seminars.

Moreover, in order to expand the base of deeper understanding and affinity for Japan, including among those who have not had a strong interest in Japan, the following actions are important: (1) providing information on the diverse attractiveness of Japan through “All-Japan” efforts by the Government, private sectors and local governments; (2) promoting outreach that reflects the needs of local communities, utilizing the expertise of experts from both inside and outside Japan; and (3) providing a “one-stop-service” where all information related to Japan can be obtained. With this in mind, “Japan Houses” have been successively established since 2017 in São Paulo (Brazil), Los Angeles (U.S.), and London (UK) as communication hubs to bring about the realization of these actions. (See Column “Japan House -From a Highly Rated Japan, to an Influential Japan-”)

## (2) Reports by Foreign Media on Japan and Communications through Foreign Media

In 2017, when Japan continued to serve as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council from 2016, the foreign media paid much attention to Japan’s foreign policy including its response to



Foreign policy video “Japan’s Efforts toward Connecting and Prospering the World for Free and Open Indo-Pacific” (Released on November 9, and broadcast on CNN from November 11 onward. It is viewed at MOFA’s YouTube channel.)



Japan House São Paulo (Photo: Japan House São Paulo Secretariat/Rogério Cassimiro)

issue of North Korea, security, economics and society, as well as its international cooperation. Moreover, active foreign visits by the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister, in line with “Japan’s foreign policy that takes a panoramic perspective of the world map,” captured the attention of the local media of destination and other international media.

Amidst increasing interest in Japan, MOFA actively provides timely information and offers assistance with press coverage to foreign media in order to gain understanding and support from the international community about Japan’s positions and its activities. MOFA makes efforts to achieve strategic and effective communications by providing information to relevant media outlets at the appropriate times.

In terms of communications through foreign media, MOFA conducts press conferences, such as those held by Foreign

Minister Kono, and provides information to correspondents in Japan via press releases and other materials. MOFA arranges interviews, press conferences, and op-ed article contributions to foreign media during overseas visits by Prime Minister Abe and Foreign Minister Kono, and their participation in international conferences such as the G7 Taormina Summit, the G20 Hamburg Summit, the TICAD Ministerial Meeting, and the UN General Assembly. In 2017, Prime Minister Abe gave a total of 12 interviews and article contributions, while Foreign Ministers Kishida and Kono gave a total of 21 interviews and article contributions. Prime Minister Abe also conducted four independent press conferences during his visits overseas, and Foreign Minister Kono conducted two press conferences to the foreign press during his visits overseas.

For example, taking the opportunity of his visit to Southeast Asia in January, Prime Minister Abe communicated his messages about the enhancement of bilateral relations with each country, expansion of trade and investment and cooperation in the field of maritime security of the Philippines, Indonesia, and Viet Nam. Prior to his visit to Russia in September, Prime Minister Abe appeared in an interview conducted by a Russian TV station, and spoke about the Joint economic activities on the Four Northern Islands and Japan's resolve to conclude a peace treaty. When attending the UN General Assembly during the same month, he contributed an article to the New York Times (U.S.) about the issues of North Korea. During the visit of U.S. President Trump to Japan in November, Prime Minister Abe accepted an interview with Fox News (U.S.), where he communicated

information about cooperation with the U.S. regarding the issues of North Korea, and strengthening Japan-U.S. relations. In August, Foreign Minister Kono took the opportunity of his visit to the U.S. to appeal for further strengthening of the Japan-U.S. Alliance by accepting an interview with the Washington Post. On the occasion of the TICAD Ministerial Meeting the same month, he also accepted an interview with Euronews and Africanews in Mozambique, and introduced Japan's efforts to support Africa. In addition, he appeared in an interview with CNN (U.S.) in November, and spoke about Japan's response to North Korea and the strengthening of the Japan-U.S. relations.

Active efforts were also made by the Press Secretary and others to provide information to the foreign media during overseas visits by the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister. For example, a total of about 130 people attended the press briefings held during the APEC and ASEAN Summits in November.

In addition, MOFA invited 78 journalists and six TV teams from abroad, with a focus on media outlets with no correspondents in Japan, to provide opportunities for them to enhance their understanding of Japan's priority policies and positions. For example, taking the opportunity of Foreign Minister Kishida's visit to Kumamoto in March for the project of "Local to Global," a total of 11 journalists from five countries in Asia and six countries in Central and Eastern Europe were invited to Japan, and MOFA provided with the opportunities to cover the current situation of recovery and reconstruction of Kumamoto from the earthquake. As a result, numerous articles were published in various countries about

reconstruction efforts made by the local government. In April and November, five journalists from Asia, Europe, and Central and South America visited Iwaki and Soma cities in Fukushima prefecture, given the situation that incorrect information was still widespread in the aftermath of the Great East Japan Earthquake in some countries. Opportunities were also provided for journalists to cover Japan's energy diplomacy and energy-related technologies in October. Five journalists from five countries in Asia, the Middle East, and Africa were invited to cover facilities

related to the Fukushima Plan for a New Energy Society, and this was subsequently reported in each country. In December, five journalists were invited from the Arab states and given the opportunities to cover Japan's Middle East policies as well as its cooperative relation with the Middle East.

In some cases where reports on Japan by the foreign media included factual errors, MOFA promptly delivered explanations to the media or sent letters to the editor in order to promote reports based on accurate facts and understanding.

## Column

### Japan House

#### - From a Highly Rated Japan, to an Influential Japan -

The establishment of Japan House ([www.japanhouse.jp/](http://www.japanhouse.jp/)) is proceeding in the three cities of London (UK), Los Angeles (U.S.) and São Paulo (Brazil). This is a new hub that aims to spread Japan's diverse points of appeal to the world, based on the concepts of "a surprising, insightful encounter with the authentic stories of Japan" and "a place that opens people's eyes to Japan."

Japan has an incomparably rich and diverse range of cultures, including cultures and customs rooted in profound spirituality, traditions, and Japan's rich nature and climate, arts that convey a sense of Japan's sensitive and delicate aesthetic, innovative cutting-edge technology, and extreme and penetrating fashion and pop culture. These cultures can carry diplomatic value that can enhance Japan's presence in the international community as well as maintain and strengthen its influence. Japan House offers the opportunity for visitors to "encounter" and experience Japanese culture and arts that touch their hearts and stir their emotions, with the aim of expanding the base of people who take an interest in, and feel affinity and resonate with, Japan and the Japanese people who are producing such culture and arts. Furthermore, it aims to spread the recognition of Japan's value as a global partner that has positive influence on the world.

The Japan House in São Paulo, which opened in April, attracted more than 550,000 visitors from within and outside the country in the eight-month period until the end of December, and has become a new place of interest in São Paulo. In addition to organizing exhibitions at the gallery, this Japan House also operates a restaurant, shop, and café



that actively harness the vitality of the private sector and the appeal of the local region. There is also a library where visitors can obtain various information about Japan. Participatory workshops and lectures that are tied in with the exhibitions, as well as campaigns and events organized by the local governments and Japanese companies, are being held in the seminar room.

Japan House aims to support not only artists with an established reputation, but also to serve as a foothold for talented and passionate people such as young artists, local governments, and companies, who express Japan and promote their expression to the world. After São Paulo, the Japan House in Los Angeles, U.S., was also opened partially (gallery and shop) in December. Currently, preparations are underway towards the full opening of the Japan House in Los Angeles, and the opening of the Japan House in London, UK.



Visitors forming a long queue to enter the Japan House in São Paulo (São Paulo, Brazil)



Visitors viewing the exhibition (São Paulo, Brazil)



MOFA's official website

### (3) Dissemination of Information through the Internet

MOFA has been actively engaged in disseminating information through the internet, including its website and

social media, with the aim of gaining the understanding and support of people in and outside Japan on Japan's foreign policy.

MOFA considers its English website an important tool of public diplomacy, and has been enhancing the distribution of information in English on Japan's foreign policy (including territorial issues, historical issues and security), Japan's position on international affairs and Japan's rich and varied attractiveness. Furthermore, MOFA has been making efforts to disseminate information in local languages through the websites of Japan's embassies and consulates-general overseas.

MOFA speedily distributes a wide range of information to the international community speedily through social media

platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube.

## **2 Cultural and Sports Diplomacy**

### **(1) Overview**

MOFA and the Japan Foundation (JF) implement various projects, through introducing Japanese culture and sports overseas, to create positive images of Japan in foreign countries, boost the value of brands in Japan while encouraging deeper understanding of Japan, and foster individuals and groups knowledgeable about Japan for the future. For example, the “Cultural Projects of the Diplomatic Missions Overseas” introduce a wide range of Japanese culture, from traditional culture such as the way of tea and flower arrangement (Ikebana), to contemporary culture such as animation, manga, and fashion. Under the “Japan Brand Program,” MOFA has dispatched experts of various fields overseas to share Japan’s outstanding cultural assets, experience and wisdom with other countries, as well as to establish Japan’s national brand with stronger presence in the world. MOFA holds seminars, workshops and demonstrations reflecting each event’s characteristics, and share values and experiences with the audience, paving the way for international exchanges. Currently, “All-Japan” efforts are also being made to boost the number of inbound foreign visitors through various overseas PR projects through communication via social networking services (SNS) and other means: promoting the regional diverse attractiveness.

Towards the success of the Olympic and Paralympic Games Tokyo 2020, it is also important to enhance Japan’s presence in the field of sports. As part of

the “Sport for Tomorrow (SFT)” program, MOFA is engaged in various initiatives including sports exchanges and sports promotion support projects overseas, the dispatch of sports instructors through the JICA volunteer program or the JF, and the provision of sporting equipment and development of facilities by utilizing the Cultural Grant Assistance. It also supports the Host Town Initiative that promotes mutual exchanges with the countries and regions participating in the Olympic and Paralympic Games Tokyo 2020.

In addition, in order to promote understanding and support for Japan and better understanding of Japan through Japanese studies, MOFA implements the following activities: provision of information on studying in Japan through Japan’s diplomatic missions overseas; building alumni networks of the foreign nationals who have studied in Japan; cooperation for the JET Programme which invites young people from abroad to the local governments in Japan; exchange programs for youth and adults from Asia and North America; sending visiting professors to universities and research institutions overseas; and grant program for research activities.

Promoting Japanese language education overseas helps foster future leaders who will build a bridge between Japan and overseas, deepen understanding towards Japan, and lay a foundation for friendship with other countries. Therefore, MOFA engages in sending Japanese language specialists overseas, providing training for foreign Japanese language teachers in Japan, and developing Japanese language teaching materials through the JF.

In addition, by utilizing the budget



Ikebana demonstration/workshop (October 17 and 18, Riga, Latvia)



Japanese Culture/Pop Culture Festival (August 12, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia)



"The Harmonious Sound of Koto," an anniversary concert for the 150th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Japan and Denmark (June 15 and 16, Copenhagen, Denmark)

allocated to the strategic communications, MOFA intends to continuously strengthen its support for Japan studies, expand the scope of people-to-people exchanges and sports exchange programs, and promote Japanese language education.

In cooperation with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Japan has made

earnest efforts to preserve the world's tangible and intangible cultural heritage. Moreover, Japan is actively taking part in promoting the international framework for safeguarding heritage through the World Heritage Convention, the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, etc. (see 3-4-2 (7) "Cooperation with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)" for details).

By promoting such cultural and sports diplomacy, MOFA contributes to introducing Japan's attractiveness overseas, and to increasing the number of foreign visitors to Japan.

## (2) Culture Programs

It is important for Japan's diplomatic policies to be smoothly implemented in the international community to boost understanding towards Japan among individual foreign nationals who form the foundation of public opinion and policy making, as well as to make Japan's image even more positive. Based on this recognition, MOFA engages in promoting the diverse attractiveness of Japan through diplomatic missions overseas and the JF. As part of diplomatic activities to promote a better understanding of Japan and to cultivate pro-Japanese groups, the diplomatic missions overseas organize diverse cultural activities. For example, they plan and implement workshops on tea ceremony, flower arrangement, and origami, screening of Japanese films, Japanese music performances, martial arts demonstrations, exhibitions of traditional crafts, as well as Japanese speech contests. Moreover, Japanese pop culture such as anime and manga, as well as Japan's food



culture, are being actively promoted in recent years.

Furthermore, MOFA conducts large-scale and comprehensive programs in commemorative years celebrating diplomatic events in cooperation with government and private organizations through mutual visits of dignitaries, various conferences, and public relations/cultural projects, with the aim of effectively promoting understanding about Japan. For example, a Japanese music performance, with the *koto* Japanese zither and *shakuhachi* flute, took place in 2017 to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Japan and Denmark.

In collaboration with MOFA and the diplomatic missions overseas, the JF runs interactive arts and cultural exchange projects to promote Japanese culture and arts in a variety of forms throughout the world. The JF also promotes and provides support for Japanese language education and research on Japan. During the Year of Japan-India Friendly Exchanges, the diversity of Japanese culture in a wide range of fields was showcased in India at the Japan Festival in autumn, including Japanese music, jazz, traditional Japanese dance, and a Japanese film festival. The events deepened the bonds of friendship between Japan and India through the medium of culture.

Furthermore, the Japan Foundation Asia Center is steadily implementing the “WA Project: Toward Interactive Asia through Fusion and Harmony” announced by Prime Minister Abe in December 2013, with main pillars of support for Japanese language education and interactive arts and cultural exchange projects. Through the

“NIHONGO (Japanese language) Partners” program, which is the core project to support Japanese language education, 994 teaching assistants in total were dispatched to mainly secondary education institutions in ten countries in Southeast Asia, as well as China and Taiwan, and implemented the exchange program through the introduction of Japanese culture as well as Japanese language education by the end of 2017. As a result, many school officials who received the “NIHONGO Partners” highly evaluated the program, saying its activities contributed to increased motivation for students to learn.

In the interactive arts and cultural exchange program implemented by the Japan Foundation Asia Center, the largest Southeast Asia contemporary art exhibition ever held in Japan to date, entitled “SUNSHOWER: Contemporary Art from Southeast Asia 1980s to Now,” was held for the area of arts. In the area of film, efforts were made to promote film exchange through collaboration with the Tokyo International Film Festival, and through the Japanese Film Festival (JFF): Asia-Pacific Gateway Initiative. In the area of sports, a soccer exchange program was held in collaboration with the Japan Football Association (JFA) and J-League, among other initiatives.

The Japan International MANGA Award was launched by MOFA in 2007 with the aim of rewarding manga creators who have contributed to the spread of manga culture overseas. The 11th International MANGA Award of 2017 received 326 entries from 60 countries and regions, and the Gold Award went to a work from Colombia. Moreover, applications were received for the first time from the Netherlands, Kenya,



Activities of the NIHONGO Partners at their host institutions (January, Cambodia; Photo: Japan Foundation)



"SUNSHOWER: Contemporary Art from Southeast Asia 1980s to Now" Exhibition, Japan's largest exhibition of Southeast Asian contemporary art to date, mobilizing 350,000 people (July to October, Tokyo Venues: The National Art Center, Tokyo, and Mori Art Museum Photo taken by Kioku Keizo; Photo: Mori Art Museum)

Pakistan, and Belarus, making for a record number of countries and regions from which applications were received.

### (3) People-to-People Exchange and Exchanges in the Area of Education and Sports

MOFA carries out a number of invitation projects to build personal connections and promote understanding of Japan by inviting foreign nationals who have a great influence on shaping public opinion and policy making process, and who are expected to play a leading role in various fields. Also, in the area of education and sports, MOFA carries out various activities to promote exchanges among a wide range of people. These projects not only promote mutual understanding and friendships but also enhance Japan's presence in

the international community, which considerably benefits the national interest of Japan.

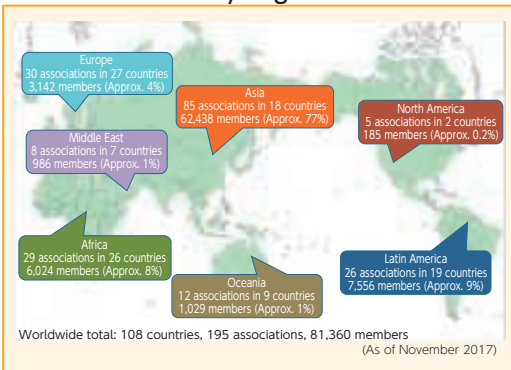
#### A Student Exchange Programs

MOFA actively introduces the attractiveness and opportunities of studying in Japan to foreign students through diplomatic missions overseas. It also implements application and selection procedures to accept competent students from around the world as the Japanese Government (MEXT) Scholarship students. Furthermore, it is making efforts to maintain relations with former foreign students who have returned to their home countries through Japan Alumni Associations and to foster pro-Japan individuals and groups.

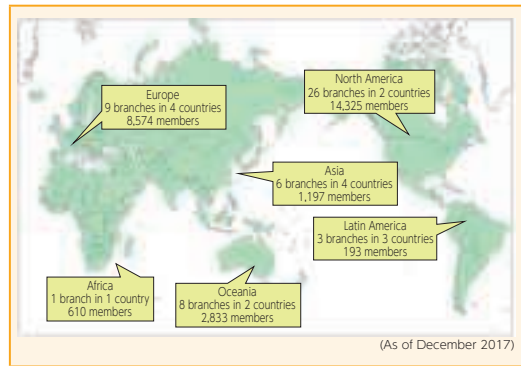
#### B JET Programme (The Japan Exchange and Teaching Programme)

The JET Programme was launched in 1987 to improve foreign language education and promote international exchanges in local areas. In FY2017, a total of 5,163 people, including 1,906 new participants from 44 different countries, took part in the program and were dispatched all over Japan. This program is administered by local authorities, in cooperation with the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (MIC), MOFA, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT), and the Council of Local Authorities for International Relations (CLAIR). They invite young foreign nationals to Japan and appoint them to posts in local governments and schools. MOFA is responsible for the application and selection process, pre-departure orientation, and support for the activities of the JET Alumni Association in 16 countries (JETAA has about 27,000

### ▶ Number of Japan Alumni Associations and Their Members by Region



### ▶ Number of Branches of JET Alumni Association and Their Members



ASEAN Festival ASEAN 50 (organized by ASJA International) (December 17, National Olympics Memorial Youth Center, Tokyo; Photo: ASJA International)



JET participants prior to departure for Japan (July 7, Embassy of Japan in Singapore, Singapore)

members). JETAA engages in activities to introduce Japan in various countries, and many former JET participants engage actively in various fields as pro-Japanese in different parts of the world. Former JET participants are valuable human/diplomatic assets for Japan.

### C Sport Exchange

Sports enable communication beyond languages and can be an effective tool for promoting friendly relations and understanding of Japan. While Japan draws more attention from the world as the host country of the Olympic and Paralympic Games Tokyo 2020, the Government of Japan has been implementing the “Sport for Tomorrow (SFT)” program as

an international cooperation initiative through sports since January 2014. This program offers various sports exchanges, promotional support, and human development projects in different countries with the aim of spreading the value of sports among over 10 million people in more than 100 countries by 2020. Starting in FY2015, MOFA has been implementing “Projects for Sports Diplomacy Enhancement” to dispatch and invite athletes and instructors, provide equipment, and hold receptions at diplomatic missions overseas, among other initiatives. It also contributes to developing bilateral relations by implementing the programs more promptly and closely in response to requests from the foreign governments and sports associations. These

## Column

## Diplomacy Through Sports

MOFA, in cooperation with organizations and individuals in the sports sector, is engaged in various projects that are related to sports. 2018 marks the year when FIFA holds the World Cup in Russia, which is held once every four years. This Column features an example of MOFA's international contributions in cooperation with the Japan Football Association, and an article by Tsuneyasu Miyamoto, the former captain of the Japanese national football team.

### Cooperation with Sports Associations - Football Exchanges between Japan and Nepal -

Occasionally, sports are described as a universal language shared across the world. In the field of sports, we often see people around the world engaged in exchange activities that transcend differences in nationality and language. Sports are commonly associated with victory or defeat, but this is possible only when there are people one can compete with.

Many of the Japan's sports associations not only provide support to help Japanese athletes improve their performance; but also actively contribute to the international community, from the perspective of boosting games and improving performance in the world. In this article, we will introduce an episode of contributions made through football, as an example of an initiative implemented jointly by a sports association and MOFA.

The Japan Football Association (JFA) provides active support to Asian countries with the vision of "giving children a bright future through football and contributing to the promotion and the development of Asian football." One of its initiatives is the dispatch of coaches. From February 2017 to January 2018, JFA dispatched two Japanese coaches to Nepal. Although it was no easy task to organize external matches or conduct training overseas due to financial reasons and other factors, the two coaches strived every day to improve the football skills in Nepal.

As a part of this endeavor, MOFA invited five football



Exchange match with Kwansai Gakuin University (August, Hyogo Prefecture, Photo: Japan Football Association)



Disaster relief friendly match with Vissel Kobe U-18 (August, Hyogo Prefecture, Photo: Japan Football Association)



Courtesy call on MOFA from Nepalese football coaches (June, MOFA, Tokyo)

coaches from Nepal to Japan in June 2017 under the Project for Sports Diplomacy Enhancement, which is a framework for promoting diplomacy by utilizing sports. This framework is realized through cooperation of MOFA, the sports associations and others that wish to implement international exchange programs. Launched in 2015, it is now in its third year in 2017. The five coaches who visited Japan commented in their report, “It was an invaluable experience to visit Japan which was ahead of putting an effort into training coaches in Asia, to observe coaches of the J. League clubs train athletes, and to try our hands at training Japanese athletes to receive feedback from JFA instructors on our coaching methods.”

Furthermore, in August, the Nepalese national team was invited to Japan as a part of the Japan-China Afforestation and Tree-Planting International Solidarity project. This project aims to raise awareness of the environment and disaster readiness for both Nepal, which experienced a major earthquake in 2015, and for Japan, which is also an earthquake-prone country. It also aims to promote mutual understanding through sports exchanges. During their stay, in addition to participating in football exchanges, the team visited disaster prevention facilities in Osaka and Hyogo Prefectures, where the Great Hanshin Earthquake had struck, and partook in tree-planting activities to commemorate the earthquake reconstruction exchange in Hyogo Prefecture. The Nepalese national team that visited Japan was grateful for the opportunity to improve football standards of Nepal through football exchanges, and expressed that they had learnt much with regards to knowledge about disaster readiness. Hence, the program was a meaningful bilateral exchange.

In the run-up to the Olympic and Paralympic Games Tokyo 2020, MOFA will continue to work through effective diplomatic measures that bring together different fields and sectors.

### **Building a Bridge Through Sports in the History of Ethnic Conflict**

#### **-Reconciliation Through Sports-**

Tsuneyasu Miyamoto, former captain of the Japanese national football team

#### **■ A desire to nurture children who will become leaders of their towns, instead of nurturing professional athletes**

“Is it feasible to create a youth sports academy for peaceful coexistence and intercultural living in Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina?”

This was the theme of the Master’s thesis that I worked on in the FIFA Master course (a Master’s degree conducted by FIFA), which I undertook after I retired as a professional football player. We proposed various themes in our group, and finally decided on this theme partly because there was a female student from Bosnia and Herzegovina in my group.

The armed conflict among different ethnic groups in Bosnia and Herzegovina ended in



1995 by the signing of the Dayton Accords. However, a sense of distrust remains deeply rooted among the ethnic groups even today, and it affects various aspects of daily life such as different educational curriculums among them.

Our activity places the focus on the acquisition of social values, by encouraging children to work together in teams through sports instead of dividing them by their different ethnic groups, and to respect others and understand diversity. The aim is for the children who have gone through this learning program to become future leaders of their towns.

#### ■ Realization of the project through the cooperation of MOFA and JICA

After I wrote about this research project in a newspaper column, I was contacted by staff from MOFA and JICA who suggested taking action to bring about the project. This gave our research project a chance of becoming a reality, which had only been a hypothetical plan.

When we first visited Mostar, the project site for our activities, the local people were skeptical; however, our repeated visits eventually convinced them and we were able to win their cooperation. I believe that it was also because the town of Mostar had already been a recipient of Japan's assistance through Japan's ODA program. With the help from the Grant Assistance for Cultural Grassroots Projects provided by the Government of Japan, facilities in the central part of the town were converted into a football ground laid with artificial turf and a club house, which would serve as an activity space for the academy.

In the summer of 2017, ten children from the academy visited Japan on a study tour, and joined a football exchange program with Japanese children of the same age group. I believe the interaction with those who speak a different language left an impression on the hearts of these children. There are still many challenges for the management of the academy, but we aim to further expand the scope of our activities.



Coaching children in Mostar  
(January, Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina,  
Photo: Little Bridge)



Football exchange between Japanese  
children and children from Mostar visiting  
Japan  
(August, Sakai City, Photo: Little Bridge)

SFT projects have enhanced the presence of those engaged in sports in Japan in the international sports community.

#### **(4) Exchange in the Intellectual Realm**

##### **A Japanese Studies**

MOFA comprehensively supports a range of overseas research activities related to Japan's politics, economics, society and culture. In FY2017, MOFA sent visiting scholars, enhanced the collection of books on Japan, provided research grants, and provided support for organizing seminars and symposiums, to 70 institutions of Japanese studies in 34 countries and regions. Fellowship status was also granted to 143 researchers in Japanese studies from 39 countries and regions, including those who were granted in the previous year. This helped the researchers conduct research and study activities in Japan (including those scheduled in the 4th quarter of FY2017). MOFA also helps academic societies to promote network building among researchers and research institutions on Japan in different countries and regions.

##### **B Intellectual Exchanges**

MOFA implements intellectual exchange projects, putting emphasis on cooperative work and exchange with other countries. Specifically, MOFA implemented seminars and symposia on common international agendas, and programs to deepen the understanding of modern Japan at major universities overseas through the Japan Foundation. MOFA plans and supports exchange programs to strengthen relationships and deepen mutual understanding through holding conventions in various fields and at various

levels in cooperation with NPOs and other institutions.

##### **C U.S.-Japan Conference on Cultural and Educational Interchange (CULCON)**

CULCON is a public-private binational advisory panel comprised of experts from Japan and the U.S. to discuss issues on educational and cultural exchanges between the two countries. Based on a proposal put forth at the 27th Plenary Session held in 2016, a new "Next Generation Task Force" was established in addition to the existing Arts Dialogue Committee, Education Review Committee, and Japanese Language Education Committee, with the aim of placing the focus on nurturing leaders who can play a key role in Japan-U.S. relations in the next generation. In October, a forum was held as a project under the Next Generation Task Force. External experts who are active in both Japan and the U.S. were invited to attend this forum in Tokyo. On the U.S. side, in response to a proposal raised by the Arts Dialogue Committee in 2016, an official website to publicize events related to Japanese art in the U.S., entitled "Arts Japan 2020," was launched in June as a project under the Japan-United States Friendship Commission. In addition, the Education Review Committee has continued with initiatives towards achieving the goal of "doubling two-way student exchanges by the year 2020," which was also mentioned in the Joint Statement at the Japan-U.S. Summit Meeting in 2014. All the working groups of CULCON are actively engaged in dialogue and activities.

### **□ Cooperation with the United Nations University (UNU)**

The Government of Japan recognizes the importance of the establishment of UNU, which contributes to the international community through study and research on global issues and human resources development. Japan invited UNU to set up its headquarters in Japan (Tokyo) and has provided various cooperation and support for 40 years. UNU, in collaboration with Japanese universities and research institutions, is engaged in international issues such as peace, development, and the environment on which Japan focuses and contributes to the dissemination of the policies of the Government of Japan. UNU established Master's and Doctoral Programmes in 2010 and 2012 respectively, and has made efforts to improve the quality of its global human resources development programs.

### **(5) Promotion of Japanese Language Education**

There has been growing interest in the Japanese language among foreigners, especially the youth, as Japanese companies have been expanding their operations overseas along with the globalization of Japanese economic structure, and Japanese pop culture is prevailing worldwide. Further promotion of the Japanese language overseas leads to the creation of a favorable international environment for Japanese people and companies. Based on a survey conducted in FY2015, the JF has found that about 3.66 million people in 137 countries and regions overseas are currently learning the Japanese language. In 2017, the Japanese Language Proficiency Test offered by the JF

was conducted in 286 cities of 81 countries and regions worldwide, and the number of applicants reached over 1 million for the first time (includes applicants taking the test in Japan). On the other hand, a shortage of Japanese education specialists to meet the interests and needs for the study of the Japanese language in many of these countries and regions is clearly becoming a significant challenge.

MOFA engages in accommodating the diverse needs of Japanese-language educational institutions overseas through the JF. Specifically, it dispatches Japanese language specialists overseas, provides training in Japan for Japanese teachers and foreign diplomats overseas, conducts preparatory Japanese courses for potential nurses and care workers before they come to Japan, which is based on the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) with Indonesia and the Philippines, encourages educational institutions and other organizations in each country and region to introduce Japanese language education, develops teaching materials, and promotes the "JF Japanese Language Education Standard" that corresponds with international standards for foreign language education. In addition to these efforts, the JF is also engaged in the promotion of Japanese language education overseas, through the utilization of IT such as learning support websites that use anime and manga as well as smartphone apps, and support for the activities of Japanese language educational institutions including the Japanese language teachers' associations in each country or region. As a result of these efforts, countries that are newly introducing Japanese language education as a part of the school curriculum

have been emerging in recent years. For example, Japanese language education has been introduced as a part of secondary education in Laos in 2015, and primary education in Vietnam in 2016. At the Japan-India Summit Meeting held in September 2017, the leaders agreed to cooperate on expanding Japanese language education at universities and other institutions.

### **(6) Cultural Grant Assistance**

The Government of Japan provides Cultural Grant Assistance, as part of Official Development Assistance (ODA) to promote culture and higher education in developing countries, thereby enhancing mutual understanding and friendly relations between Japan and such countries. The activities implemented in 2017 included four General Cultural Grant Assistance projects (total of around 470 million Japanese yen) and 21 Grant Assistance for Cultural Grassroots Projects (total of around 180 million Japanese yen). In 2017, General Cultural Grant Assistance put emphasis on the preservation of the cultural heritage and the broadcasting sector, while Grant Assistance for Cultural Grassroots Projects put emphasis on the fields of sports and the Japanese language.

### **(7) Cooperation through United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)**

Japan is actively involved in various projects of UNESCO in the fields of education, science, and culture. UNESCO is the international organization of which post-war Japan first became a Member State in 1951. Since then, UNESCO has been cooperating with Japan in support of education, science, culture, etc., in



Completion ceremony for the Botswana judo hall (Sensei Itsubo Memorial Dojo) built through the Grant Assistance for Cultural Grassroots Projects. Judo gold medalist in the Rio Olympics Haruka Tachimoto attended the ceremony carrying a photograph of Mr. Itsubo, who had been teaching judo in Botswana but died in an accident (February 28, Botswana).

developing countries.

In the field of culture, Japan offers active cooperation for the prevention and promotion of tangible and intangible cultural heritages of the world and support in the field of human resources development. At the same time, Japan actively participates in the international framework for safeguarding cultural heritage. As a part of such activities, Japan provides voluntary contributions to UNESCO aimed at the protection of tangible and intangible cultural heritages. With a part of these contributions, and with Japanese experts playing a leading role, Japan supports many projects for conservation and restoration of sites, such as Angkor in Cambodia, Kasubi Tombs in Uganda, and the restoration of cultural heritage in Nepal after the earthquake, while contributing to human resources development so that local people can protect their cultural heritage by themselves in the future. In particular, Japan provides continuous support for the preservation and restoration work of the ancient ruins of Angkor in Cambodia, which started in 1994. With regard to the safeguarding of

intangible cultural heritage as well, the following projects have been implemented: the handing down of traditional performing arts such as music and dance, and traditional crafts in developing countries to the next generation; development of domestic institutions and capacity building of relevant parties to enhance the ability of countries to protect intangible cultural heritage by themselves.

In the field of education, Japan provides voluntary contributions with the aim of fostering human resources in developing countries. It also provides support for human resources development, mainly in the area of education, through promoting, for example, “Education for All (EFA)” led by UNESCO. As for the Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), Japan provided various support for the Aichi Nagoya Declaration adopted at the UNESCO World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), co-hosted by UNESCO in Okayama City, Okayama Prefecture, and Nagoya City, Aichi Prefecture in November 2014. Moreover, in September 2016, the “Okayama ESD Project” nominated to UNESCO by Japan was awarded second UNESCO-Japan Prize on Education for Sustainable Development. In September 2017, three organizations from Jordan, UK, and Zimbabwe were awarded the third UNESCO-Japan Prize on Education for Sustainable Development.

Gender equality is another field that UNESCO is investing effort into. In addition to implementing a project for maintaining schooling rates among female students and improving learning effectiveness in Ethiopia (concluded in March 2017), a project to promote STEAM (science, technology

engineering, art, and mathematics) education, with a focus on gender, is also being implemented in Sub-Saharan Africa through teacher education.

UNESCO is promoting organizational reform, decentralization and program reform, and Japan has continued providing support to UNESCO in these reform initiatives. The new Director-General of UNESCO Azoulay assumed office in November, and held a meeting with Foreign Minister Kono in December.

### **A** World Heritage Convention

The World Heritage Convention aims to protect cultural heritages and natural heritages internationally as heritages to all of mankind. Japan became a party to the Convention in 1992 (as of December 2017, the number of parties to the Convention is 193). The sites listed on the “World Heritage List” are so-called “World Heritage” sites. They are classified into “Cultural Heritage” (monuments and remains), “Natural Heritage” (natural areas) and “Mixed Heritage” (having both cultural and natural elements). As of December 2017, a total of 1,073 World Heritage sites are inscribed on the World Heritage List. At the 41st session of the World Heritage Committee held in Krakow, Poland, in 2017, it was decided to inscribe the Sacred Island of Okinoshima and Associated Sites in the Munakata Region (Fukuoka), upon nomination by Japan, on the World Heritage List. This has raised the number of World Heritage sites in Japan to 21: 17 cultural heritage sites and four natural heritage sites.

### **B** Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage

The Convention for the Safeguarding





Okinoshima, one of the heritage sites that make up the Sacred Island of Okinoshima and Associated Sites in the Munakata Region (Photo: World Heritage Promotion Committee of the Sacred Island of Okinoshima and Associated Sites in the Munakata Region)



Okitsu-miya Yohaisho, Munakata Taisha (one of the heritage sites that make up the Sacred Island of Okinoshima and Associated Sites in the Munakata Region) (Photo: World Heritage Promotion Committee of the Sacred Island of Okinoshima and Associated Sites in the Munakata Region)

of the Intangible Cultural Heritage aims to develop an international system for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage, such as traditional performing arts and traditional craftsmanship techniques (as of December 2017, the number of parties to the convention is 175). Japan, which has a wealth of experience in safeguarding domestic intangible cultural properties, has contributed actively by taking on a leading role in developing the Convention, laying down the main sections of the operational directives for the implementation of the Convention. As of December 2017, a total of 21 elements of intangible cultural

heritage in Japan are inscribed on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity established in accordance with the Convention. These include: Nogaku Theatre, Ningyo Johruri Bunraku Puppet Theatre and Kabuki Theatre, which have been proclaimed by UNESCO as “Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity.” Japan is currently nominating “Raiho-shin: ritual visits of deities in masks and costumes,” as a candidate for inscription on the list of intangible cultural heritage of Japan.

### **C** UNESCO Memory of the World Programme

The UNESCO Memory of the World Programme was established in 1992 to preserve and promote valuable historical documents. As of December 2017, 427 items have been inscribed. “Kozuke Sanpi” (the Three Cherished Stelae of Ancient Kozuke), as well as the “Joseon Tongsinsha/Chosen Tsushinshi: The History of Peace Building and Cultural Exchanges between Korea and Japan from the 17th to 19th Century,” submitted as a joint nomination by a joint organization of Japan and the ROK, were inscribed to the “Memory of the World” in October.

Moreover, as seen in the submission and inscription of the documents related to the Nanjing Massacre<sup>1</sup> by organizations in China in October 2015, the emergence of political conflict due to unilateral submission and inscription based only on the assertions of one country, despite there being clear discrepancies between the views of the countries involved, is in violation of the founding principle of UNESCO

<sup>1</sup> The UNESCO Memory of the World Programme calls for access to the documents in question as the criteria for inscription. However, the browsing of documents related to the Nanjing Massacre is not permitted.

of promoting friendly ties and mutual understanding among member countries. As such, Japan is continuing efforts to advance the review process. At a meeting of the Executive Board of UNESCO held in October 2017, a resolution was adopted to avoid the political tensions and improve the review process. At the inscription

review held thereafter, the inscription of documents related to wartime “comfort women” was shelved in a bid to encourage dialogue between the relevant parties. In December, the secretariat announced that it will not be accepting new applications for the inscription to the “Memory of the World” in the immediate future.

## Column

### Buddhist Remains of Bamiyan

#### - Ensuring that Cultural Heritage is Passed on to Future Generations -

Two majestic large Buddha statues stand quietly in the Bamiyan Valley, located in the central part of Afghanistan. For more than a thousand years, they have continued to fascinate many people. Even the Buddhist monk Xuanzhang, who once visited this land, had once lifted his eyes to these great Buddhas. Yet, they were destroyed in an instant by the Taliban in March 2001.

During the same year, the prolonged Afghanistan conflict came to an end, and Japan came quickly to the support of the Afghanistan people as they worked towards peace and recovery. In January 2002, Japan hosted the International Conference on Reconstruction Assistance to Afghanistan in Tokyo, which triggered the start of the recovery and reconstruction process thereafter. At the International Seminar on the Rehabilitation of Afghanistan's Cultural Heritage held in Kabul in May 2002, Japan announced that it will provide assistance for the conservation and repair of the Bamiyan cultural heritage through the UNESCO Japanese Funds-in-Trust for the Preservation of the World Cultural Heritage. The late Ikuro Hirayama, UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador (then President of Tokyo University of the Arts) who attended this seminar as a representative of Japan, suggested that it is important to preserve the damaged great Buddhas in their current state as a form of “negative heritage,” and at the same time, expressed that the rebuilding of the heritage should be a decision made by the Afghanistan people themselves in the future.

The Japanese experts who entered Kabul soon after the war ceased, in order to make preparations to launch Japan's assistance, first saw the National Museum of Afghanistan that had been destroyed and completely robbed of all traces of its former glory as the home to collections of the essence of Eastern and Western civilizations. However, a banner



Landscape of Bamiyan

with the words “A nation stays alive when its culture stays alive,” written by hand, had been put up above the ruined entrance.

Taking courage from these words, Japan launched its conservation and repair work on the Bamiyan heritage through UNESCO in 2003. Until today, it has provided financial assistance of approximately 700 million yen, as well as dispatched Japanese experts armed with an advanced level of expertise in fields such as archaeology and the conservation of valuable murals that remain on the caves surrounding the great Buddhas. These Japanese experts worked together with the people of Afghanistan on the site to conserve and repair the heritage. The project is now ongoing, facilitated by the collective capabilities of highly-skilled international experts not only from Japan, but also including Germany and Italy.



Restoring wall murals in the cave

Based on these results, an international conference was held at the Tokyo University of the Arts in the fall of 2017 to discuss the future direction of the Bamiyan heritage. The focus was placed on the rebuilding of the Buddha in the eastern temple, which Afghanistan has expressed its wishes for. Experts from various countries as well as the relevant persons involved from Afghanistan exchanged views on the principles for the rebuilding of this cultural heritage, which is also a world heritage, as well as the methods that would be applied in the event that rebuilding actually takes place. Several concrete proposals were put forth at this conference, including Japan’s suggestion to conserve the ruined site as it is while erecting a great Buddha statue on a separate site as a monument alongside with an integrated museum that exhibits and stores other artifacts discovered on the Bamiyan site, as well as the proposal from Germany to combine the individual fragments of the great Buddha and restoring it at its original location. A decision was made to review the respective proposals with the Government of Afghanistan takes the lead.

Japan offers its cooperation based on the approach that cultural heritage should be protected by the people of the country in the future. However, in light of the current security conditions in Afghanistan, it is becoming increasingly difficult for Japanese experts to cooperate with the local people at the site on repair and conservation work. Japan will continue to provide support with a view to the future, so that Afghanistan’s culture will bloom once again on the foundations of peace and stability in the country.