

# CHAPTER 4

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## JAPAN'S DIPLOMATIC ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

## A

## REFORM OF THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

**(a) Overview**

Following the revelation of scandals at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) in early 2001, MOFA made positive efforts toward reform. Even following January 2001, however, problems continued to occur in connection with the issue of the relationship between politicians and government officials, including a case in which a non-governmental organization (NGO) was denied permission to attend the International Conference on Reconstruction Assistance to Afghanistan, bringing about the resignations of the minister for foreign affairs and the vice-minister for foreign affairs. Another problem concerning the involvement of a certain lawmaker in the process of assistance to the residents of the Four Northern Islands came to light in March. In view of this situation, measures were taken following the appointment of Minister for Foreign Affairs Yoriko Kawaguchi under a policy of doing what can be done immediately, which included the recruitment of senior officials from the private sector to work at the ministry headquarters as well as overseas diplomatic establishments, the holding of MOFA Town Meetings and a review of the operation of the Cooperation Committee, an international organization in charge of assistance to residents

of the Four Northern Islands. Based on the recommendations of the Reform Advisory Board made up of external eminent persons, MOFA's internal voluntary group, and in light of other incidents including the one at the Japanese Consulate General in Shenyang, MOFA has been continuing its efforts to reform the whole ministry and to regain public confidence.

**(b) Acceleration of MOFA Reform under Foreign Minister Kawaguchi**

Deeply regretting the series of scandals revealed since the beginning of 2001, MOFA has made significant alterations in the accounting and budgeting procedures that allowed for the misuse and diversion of public funds, including reform of the procedure for the disbursement of the remuneration fund. In order to take thorough measures to prevent a recurrence and to enhance internal checks, MOFA strengthened its auditing of overseas diplomatic establishments with the participation of certified public accountants and other outside experts, while introducing a new in-house monitoring system in September 2001.

Reform of MOFA has been enhanced further under Foreign Minister Kawaguchi, who took office in



Minister for Foreign Affairs Yoriko Kawaguchi receiving the final report from Chairman of the Reform Advisory Board Yoshihiko Miyauchi (July)

February 2002. Soon after her appointment, Foreign Minister Kawaguchi announced the “Ten Reform Principles to Ensure an Open Foreign Ministry.” This document, with transparency, speed and effectiveness as its keywords, declares a policy under which MOFA is to “reform that which needs to be reformed, thoroughly remind MOFA officials of their role as the servants of the people of Japan as a whole and develop a system in which we can execute robust diplomacy able to protect the national interest in order to recover Japanese citizens’ confidence in us that has been lost due to the series of scandals, as soon as possible” (“Ten Reform Principles to Ensure an Open Foreign Ministry;” quote from preamble). Based on this, the Reform Advisory Board, a panel of external eminent persons chaired by Orix Corporation Chairman and CEO Yoshihiko Miyauchi, was inaugurated in March 2002 and released its interim report on May 9, with the result of its deliberations being the ten themes of the “Ten Reform Principles to Ensure an Open Foreign Ministry.” In light of an incident in which five North Korean citizens ran onto the territory of the Japanese Consulate General in Shenyang, China one day before the announcement of the interim report, the board added the themes of establishing a crisis management system and strengthening the ability to develop policies, and submitted the final report with the additional themes to Foreign Minister Kawaguchi on July 22. Ruling and opposition parties also presented MOFA reform proposals, including organizational reform. In addition, the voluntary group “Kaeyou! Kawarou! Gaimushou (Let’s Change the Ministry of Foreign Affairs!),” which aims at implementing MOFA reform through volunteers from within the ministry, started its activities in March, presenting its Report and Recommendations on July 12.

Based on these developments, MOFA began work on formulating its own plan for reform straight after the presentation of the Final Report of the Reform Advisory Board, announcing the Action Plan for the Reform of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on August 21. At the same time, the MOFA Reform Headquarters and its secretariat was established, with its members including Foreign Minister Kawaguchi as chief, the senior vice-ministers for foreign affairs, the parliamentary secretaries for foreign affairs and the ministry’s directors-general. Based on the Action Plan, the headquarters began its work toward reform.

The Action Plan was established on the principle that Japan, in a drastically changing international environment nowadays, must develop an independent, national interest-oriented diplomacy to ensure peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region and to tackle the various issues facing the international community like terrorism, disarmament, the global environment and trade, and that for Japan to achieve this it must sharpen its ability to develop policies and boldly display diplomatic initiative. The Action Plan covers reforms spanning a wide range of areas including Official Development Assistance (ODA). The four major aims are as follows:

- (1) Enhance MOFA’s organizational ability of policy planning and crisis management in order to actively develop Japanese diplomacy to face the new international environment of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.
- (2) Promote changes in the consciousness of MOFA staff and seek the complete introduction of the competition principle.
- (3) Ensure the transparency and efficiency of diplomatic policies.
- (4) Enhance consular services with the purpose of improving MOFA’s administrative services to the public.

Since the announcement of the “Ten Reform Principles to Ensure an Open Foreign Ministry” in February, MOFA is, in line with the principle of doing what can be done immediately, making efforts to proactively recruit capable human resources on the basis of the competition principle. Since the appointment of Foreign Minister Kawaguchi, 16 external experts have been appointed as senior officials, including executives in MOFA itself, ambassadors and consuls general of overseas establishments (as of the end of January 2003). Since April, Foreign Minister Kawaguchi has also personally participated in MOFA Town Meetings across Japan to engage in dialogue with citizens. From the perspective of conducting diplomacy in close partnership with NGOs, whose importance in the international community continue to grow, the permanent post of Ambassador for Civil Society (NGO Assistance) was created. Also, in the “Fifteen Specific Measures for ODA Reform” announced on July 9, based on the three pillars of transparency, efficiency and public participation, partnership with NGOs is featured along with auditing, evaluation, exploring, fostering and utilizing human

resources, information disclosure and publicity.

In regard to strengthening consular services, MOFA is taking concrete measures centered on the four major pillars of: (1) promotion of changes in the consciousness of MOFA staff regarding consular services and improved training; (2) improvement of consular and administrative services; (3) strengthening of safety measures and crisis management for Japanese nationals overseas; and (4) utilization of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) in consular services.

After February 2002, a number of problems were raised regarding the administration of the Cooperation Committee, an international organization in charge of assistance to residents of the Four Northern Islands, and other assistance activities. As a result, the Expert Meeting for Reform of the Cooperation Committee, composed of external well-informed persons, was established on the initiative of Foreign Minister Kawaguchi, and MOFA viewed very seriously its recommendations. With an aim to dissolve the Cooperation Committee, MOFA started consultations with the other concluding parties of the Agreement on the Establishment of the Cooperation Committee. Following the dissolution of the Cooperation Committee, MOFA plans to undertake a drastic revision of assistance to Russia and residents of the Four Northern Islands and to resume the assistance under a new framework after taking measures such as improved transparency to prevent recurrences of the kinds of problems raised.

The Reform Advisory Board continued its activities after September, holding regular meetings to observe the implementation of the Action Plan. Taking the advice of the board, all MOFA staff intend to push ahead with reform to regain public trust as soon as possible through the steady implementation of the ministry's Action Plan.<sup>1</sup>

MOFA also published its interim report on organizational reform of the ministry on December 20, with the aim of enhancing the organization of MOFA so as to provide a powerful boost to the development of Japan's diplomacy. MOFA carries out a study on the modality of its internal organization so that it will best

facilitate diplomacy that meets the expectations of the public, and plans to release the final report on structural reform by the end of March 2003.

### (c) Promotion of ODA Reform

MOFA announced and implemented a series of concrete ODA reform measures in 2002. Specifically, in accordance with the "Fifteen Specific Measures for ODA Reform" issued in July and the Action Plan of August, ODA reform centered on transparency, efficiency and public participation is progressing steadily. MOFA also announced in December "ODA Reform: Implementation of Three Measures," consisting of "Review of the ODA Charter," "Establishment of the Committee for Grant Aid" and "Changes in Debt Relief Method." The major initiatives<sup>2</sup> in ODA reform are as follows:

#### Strengthening ODA Strategy

The ODA Charter (approved by the Cabinet in June 1992) is being revised to reflect the changes in the domestic and international situations in the ten years since its formulation. This revision is scheduled to conclude by the middle of 2003.

#### Steps to Ensure Transparency

- (1) Enhanced auditing
  - Auditing by external experts is introduced wherever possible.
  - Audits without prior notice are due to be introduced progressively from FY2003.
- (2) Improved evaluation
  - A third-party perspective is introduced in all ex-post evaluations.
  - Evaluation committees made up of external intellectuals are established in MOFA as well as implementing agencies (Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC)).
- (3) Information disclosure and publicity
  - ODA Town Meetings are held regularly throughout Japan.
  - The ODA Mail Magazine is issued regularly

<sup>1</sup> To see the current situation of MOFA reform, please access the MOFA website ([http://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/annai/honsho/kai\\_genjo/index.html](http://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/annai/honsho/kai_genjo/index.html)) (Japanese only).

<sup>2</sup> For details on each specific measure, please see the ODA web page (<http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/oda/index.html>).

(twice monthly in principle).

- (4) The Committee for Grant Aid was launched to ensure the proper implementation of grant aid and to enhance its transparency. The committee was held for the first time in February 2002.

### Measures for Efficient and Effective Implementation

- (1) In listening to a wide range of opinions, work on revisions to JICA's environmental guidelines is being implemented.
- (2) Regarding grant aid for increase of food production, fundamental revisions were implemented in December 2002, including the termination of the provision of agricultural chemicals in principle.
- (3) As the method of implementing debt relief based on international agreement, it was decided that Japan will cancel ODA debts owed to JBIC from FY2003, instead of providing grant aid for debt relief.
- (4) In order to serve as the hub of the Government as a whole in coordinating its efforts on ODA, including the formulation of the overall ODA plan, MOFA is strengthening its partnerships with related ministries and agencies through the Inter-Ministerial Meeting on ODA and its Bureau Meeting, the Experts Meeting of Financial Cooperation, the Experts Meeting of Technical Cooperation and the Experts Meeting of ODA Evaluation.

### Measures to Promote Public Participation

- (1) Collaboration with NGOs
- The NGO-MOFA Committee was established to consult on issues including measures to support NGOs and ODA policy. It was convened on November 11 and December 5, 2002.
  - Regular consultation meetings between overseas diplomatic establishments and NGOs (ODA-embassy) were convened in 11 countries by the end of 2002, and MOFA plans to continue with these meetings.
- (2) Exploring, fostering and utilizing human resources
- MOFA plans to establish the Human Resource Development Center for International Cooperation (provisional name) within JICA in FY2003.
  - Development education programs are scheduled

to be carried out in all of JICA's domestic organizations throughout Japan in FY2002.

### (d) Reform of Consular Services

Consular services, through which MOFA directly has contact with the people and are deeply related to people's lives, are one of the major duties of the ministry, along with development of diplomacy. As the number of Japanese who travel overseas and live abroad is increasing, expectations of detailed service and demands for a level of welfare and rights equal to those they would enjoy in Japan are also growing. Moreover, with the heightened probability today of becoming caught up in serious incidents or accidents such as terrorist acts, it is becoming vital to create an environment in which Japanese nationals abroad can go about their activities in peace, and to support and cooperate with them. Reflecting the importance of consular services, and based on the recommendations submitted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Reform Council, the Outline of Reform Programs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced in June 2001 pointed the way to drastic reform of consular services.

After that, in light of the Final Report of the Reform Advisory Board announced in July 2002, the Action Plan was announced in August, and deliberations were continued on the four pillars below after the announcement. The results to date of the reforms are as follows.

#### Promoting Changes in the Consciousness of MOFA Staff regarding Consular Services and Improving Training

Concerning the promotion of changes in the consciousness of ministry staff and the improvement of their training, young staff members comprising higher diplomatic service officers and specialists have been serving at consular sections following their overseas training since the summer of 2002. MOFA has also introduced new and improved training for staff at the ministry headquarters and overseas. This has brought about achievements such as positive feedback that the service provided at overseas diplomatic establishments has improved.

### **Improvements of Consular and Administrative Services**

In regard to consular and administrative services, for user convenience longer opening hours at consular service windows and improved after-hours telephone services have been implemented. In addition, visiting consular services provided by overseas diplomatic and consular establishments have also been upgraded.

### **Strengthened Safety Measures and Crisis Management for Japanese Overseas**

As part of strengthening safety measures and crisis management for Japanese nationals, MOFA is looking to upgrade its protection for Japanese abroad by harnessing government-private sector cooperation and using specialists in psychological care. MOFA has also begun to deploy the Japanese Nationals Protection System (JANPS), using the Global Positioning System

(GPS) and communication equipment.

### **Utilization of ICT in Consular Services**

It is MOFA's policy to improve user convenience and the efficiency of consular services by using ICT in order to enable Japanese nationals to apply for a passport or submit overseas residential registration via the Internet. The wide-area network for visa information (VISA WAN) system, which enables more detailed and efficient scrutiny at the visa issuance stage with respect to terrorists and other unwelcome foreigners attempting to enter the country, also went into service.

MOFA intends to implement "diplomacy with the people" in recognition of national interests in ensuring national security and prosperity and equally, ensuring the safety of each individual citizen and advancing their individual interests.

## Action Plan for Reform of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

### Specific goals of the Action Plan

- To enhance MOFA's organizational ability of policy planning and crisis management in order to actively develop Japanese diplomacy to face the new international environment of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.
- To promote changes in the consciousness of MOFA staff and to seek the complete introduction of the competition principle.
- To ensure the transparency and efficiency of diplomatic policies.
- To enhance consular services with the purpose of improving MOFA's administrative services to the public.

### Major items of the Action Plan

- (1) Based on the agreement at the Informal Cabinet Meeting, clearly document the modalities of the relationship between politicians and bureaucrats, and establish a Parliamentary Affairs Headquarters.
- (2) Set a code of conduct for MOFA staff, thoroughly reform staff consciousness.
- (3) Seek to rebuild the personnel system so that it is thoroughly rooted in the principle of competition.
  - ▶ Dismantle the existing promotion system for higher-class officers, rigorously apply competitive principles and select employees stringently.
  - ▶ Set career paths for specialist officers and junior-class officers and create a motivating work environment.
  - ▶ Take the following measures in regard to the appointment of ambassadors:
    - Stimulate competition for appointments within the ministry under the principle of the right person for the right place.
    - In principle, do not appoint ambassadors from among higher-class officers who lack experience as directors within the ministry headquarters.
    - Actively appoint specialist officers as ambassadors with a target of filling about 20% of ambassadorial posts with these officers.
    - Recruit non-career diplomats more actively than before with a goal of filling 20% of ambassadorial posts with such people, including major country posts. Establish a related Committee for the Appointments of Ambassadors.
    - Assign a possible three-year limit for appointments of ambassadors.
  - ▶ Aim for increased temporary transfer to international organizations and more exchange of personnel with outside organizations.
  - ▶ In light of the importance of reform, set a three-year limit for the duration of a vice-minister for foreign affairs, at least for the time being. In regard to the appointment of a retired vice-minister to an ambassadorial post, the decision should always be made fairly and stringently from the perspective of selecting the right person for the right place.
  - ▶ Seek to expand open recruiting and to improve the evaluation system.
  - ▶ Seek to fundamentally enhance the training system.
- (4) Seek a sweeping overhaul of the secrecy protection system.
- (5) Take measures including the expansion of external audits and implementation of evaluation from a third-party viewpoint to improve further the efficiency and transparency of ODA.
- (6) Seek to revise procurement methods and introduce more stringent auditing in order to ensure transparency and the efficient use of budgets.
- (7) Appoint an Ambassador for Civil Society (NGO Assistance) and dispatch MOFA staff to various NGOs to further enhance the new relationship with NGOs.
- (8) Make further efforts to upgrade the function of the press secretary/director-general for press and public relations to improve the public relations system. In addition, establish the Office for Comment and Opinion and hold a MOFA Town Meeting on a monthly basis to enhance public hearings.
- (9) Review the placement of overseas diplomatic establishments, leading to the first full-scale merger and consolidation of diplomatic establishments.
- (10) Double visiting consular services and introduce a "Senior volunteer for consul" system in order to achieve large-scale improvements in consular services.
- (11) Actively work with the information disclosure system and establish an Advisory Council on the Disclosure of Diplomatic Records and Documents to speed up the disclosure of diplomatic records and documents.
- (12) Further develop crisis management systems at MOFA itself and at overseas diplomatic establishments.
- (13) Set strategic goals for diplomacy, create a panel to evaluate foreign policy, and strengthen the functions of the Foreign Policy Bureau and the Intelligence and Analysis Bureau to enhance the ability to develop policies.
- (14) Formulate a MOFA IT Three-Year Plan toward full-fledged promotion of digitalization and the rationalization of work.