

## CHAPTER 4

# Japanese Citizens Active in the International Community and Roles of Diplomacy

## 1. Japanese Citizens Active in the International Community

### (a) Japanese Citizens Working at International Organizations

It is increasingly important for the international community to respond to various challenges regarding not only terrorism and conflicts, which threaten political and security frameworks, but also global issues such as violations of human rights, poverty, infectious diseases, and worsening environmental degradation resulting from rapid globalization.

In this context, the roles played by international organizations are intensifying and accordingly the duties and responsibilities of international civil servants working at international organizations have been tak-

ing on still greater significance.

Japan intends to play a role in the United Nations and other international organizations befitting its position as a responsible member of the international community. As steps towards that end, Japan seeks to augment the number of Japanese personnel in the United Nations and other international organizations by making efforts to identify qualified candidates while urging international organizations to hire and to promote Japanese staff.

### (b) Activities of Non-governmental Organizations

As interest in international cooperation increases among Japanese citizens, the importance of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) as actors in international cooperation is growing. NGOs vary in the size of their organizations. Domestically, Japan has a large number of small-sized organizations operated by a few full-time staff members and volunteers, while some NGOs undertake large-scale projects through an international network of associate organizations around the world. In addition, Japanese NGOs are engaged in an extensive range of activities, including not only implementing development assistance and emergency humanitarian aid in developing countries, but also making policy recommendations through networks of high degrees of expertise in various fields such as human rights, education, the environment, disarmament, and international organized crime.

Taking into account the importance of such roles of NGOs, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is working to consolidate cooperation with them as vital partners in its promotion of "all Japan" diplomacy, by providing

funds for development cooperation projects, supporting the capacity building of NGOs, and promoting dialogue in major diplomatic fields, among other endeavors.



*Sanitary aid project in Adrar region, the Islamic Republic of Mauritania. (The Grant Assistance for Japanese NGO Projects / photo: SAVE AFRICA)*

### (c) Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers and Senior Volunteers

Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCVs) and Senior Volunteers (SVs) work towards the resolution of problems that foreign countries face by striving together with local people. Their activities are visible representation of Japanese ODA in foreign countries

and are widely appreciated around the world, playing a significant role in fostering mutual understanding and friendship between Japan and developing countries.



*Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCV) of infection control teaching how to wash hands with soap in a correct way (Papua New Guinea, photo: Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA))*

## 2. Assisting Japanese Citizens Overseas

With the total number of Japanese nationals who travel overseas exceeding 17 million annually and that of those living abroad also rising year by year (estimated at approximately 1.08 million as of October 1, 2007), Japanese are playing active roles in a variety of regions and fields. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is actively engaged in assistance attuned to the needs of overseas Japanese nationals, understanding that it is of significant importance to ensure their smooth activities and safety and sense of security.

The Ministry works to raise awareness of each Japanese national on the need of “self-help” in staying overseas, while also providing information, in a swift and timely fashion, on a variety of risks and threats overseas: those of incidents and accidents, natural disasters, and new and newly emerging infectious diseases such as avian and pandemic influenza, as well as those of terrorism and kidnappings, which are both occurring over an ever-wider area and becoming in-

creasingly complex. At the same time, the Ministry continues to enhance its assistance to Japanese victims of overseas events, while regularly strengthening relevant organizations and infrastructures in order to make such assistance more effective. In addition, as fundamental services to support the daily lives of Japanese citizens overseas and the basis for their activities, the Ministry issues passports and certificates, assists Japanese schools and supplementary schools, provides medical and healthcare-related information, and supports atomic bomb survivors living overseas. Furthermore, in order to improve the level of those services, the Ministry is strengthening its system for providing information utilizing information technology and is improving electronic procedures for registrations while also reinforcing and upgrading crisis management systems in its embassies and consulates-general around the world.

### 3. Assisting Japanese Companies Overseas

In recent years with increasing globalization, it has become extremely important for Japanese companies and individuals in undertaking economic activities to cultivate their competitiveness in overseas markets and proactively enter such markets. Particularly amidst a worsening global economy, a major task for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is to provide assistance that facilitates dynamic overseas activities by Japanese companies. The Ministry seeks out a broad range of views from Japanese companies regarding problems that they face. It responds to inquiries and requests from Japanese companies and conducts dialogues and consultations with other countries on regulatory reform and improvements in the business environment, calling for concrete improvements. In

addition, as a country committed to becoming an “intellectual property-based nation,” the Ministry actively takes countermeasures against counterfeit and pirated goods by reaching out to other countries through both bilateral and multilateral consultations, in an effort to protect the intellectual property rights of Japanese companies. Furthermore, Japan is working to develop legal and institutional foundations through the conclusion of conventions for the avoidance of double taxation, investment agreements, and social security agreements, for the purpose of improving the investing environment and lightening the economic burden of Japanese companies and individuals engaged in overseas activities.

### 4. Responding to the Internationalization of Japanese Society

In recent years, the importance of visa services and efforts for foreign residents in Japan has been increasing as the numbers of foreign visitors and residents in Japan have been on the rise. In order to promote people-to-people exchanges, Japan has introduced waivers of the visa requirements for short-term stays with Hong Kong, the Republic of Korea, and Taiwan since 2004, and has been facilitating the issuance of visas for group tourists from China. On the other hand, Japan has been implementing stricter examination of visa applications where illegal residency employment, exploitation, or human trafficking is suspected, from the standpoint of ensuring domestic security and protecting the human rights of applicants.

As Japanese society is facing an aging and shrinking population, there are various opinions being expressed regarding ways in which it accepts foreigners, while it is not uncommon for long-term foreign residents in Japan to encounter difficulties in finding employment, in education and in other areas. The Minis-

try of Foreign Affairs provides opportunities for discussion on Japan’s policy for accepting foreign nationals by holding symposia on the current situation and issues concerning the acceptance of foreign nationals as well as on practices and challenges faced in the integration process of foreign residents as community members. It is also actively engaged in these issues by strengthening its collaboration with local authorities in regions in which many foreign nationals reside by providing information about efforts made by various nations regarding the acceptance of foreigners.

In addition, the Ministry regularly holds bilateral consultations with the consular authorities of countries with which Japan has extensive people-to-people exchanges. In 2008, consultations were held with Thailand and the Republic of Korea regarding the issues of immigration as well as of visitors from those countries to Japan and of Japanese nationals living in those countries.