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## Diplomacy with the Support of the Public

## 1 Proactive Communications to the Public

## (1) Overview

Public understanding and support are indispensable for the smooth implementation of Japan's foreign policy. As such, providing prompt and clear explanations on the policy details and on the role of the government is crucial. Accordingly, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) is making efforts in timely and effective public relations, using various forms of media, lectures, publications, and others.

## (2) Providing Information Through Domestic Media

MOFA has committed itself to promptly and accurately providing information through various media, such as newspapers, television, and the Internet, in order to gain the understanding and support of Japanese nationals for Japan's foreign policy. To provide information effectively, regular press conferences are conducted by the Foreign Minister and the Press Secretary, while extraordinary press conferences are held as necessary. Press conferences by the Foreign Minister with simultaneous English interpretations are open to various media including Internet media, and the records and videos of the press conferences are posted on MOFA's website. During foreign visits by the Prime Minister or the Foreign Minister, MOFA provides information from visiting countries/regions via multiple means, including the Internet, so that people can promptly follow and understand the purposes and the outcomes of the visits. MOFA also regularly releases statements by the Minister for Foreign Affairs or Press Secretary on individual international issues, expressing the position of the Government of Japan. Similarly, MOFA frequently provides press releases on its daily diplomatic activities. Additionally, the



Press Conference by Foreign Minister Kamikawa (September 14, Tokyo)

Minister and State Ministers for Foreign Affairs explain the Government's foreign policies directly to the public through appearances on various media and interviews.

## Dissemination of Information through Press Conferences

Minister for Foreign Affairs	117 times
Press Secretary	32 times
<b>Total</b>	<b>149 times</b>

(From January 1 to December 31, 2023)

## Dissemination of Information through Documents

Statements by the Minister for Foreign Affairs	21 times
Statements by the Press Secretary	28 times
Press releases by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs	2,328 times
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,377 times</b>

(From January 1 to December 31, 2023)

### (3) Information Provision to the Public Through the Internet

MOFA's website (in Japanese and English) promptly provides information on the diplomatic activities of the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister as well as on Japan's foreign policy including territory/sovereignty, recognition of history, and security, along with the latest international relations and other basic relevant information.

MOFA's website in the Japanese language provides a variety of contents for Japanese nationals across a wide range of age groups, including the "Anything Report from Around the World," "MOFA for Kids," and so on. In particular, "MOFA for Kids" publishes contents

for children such as videos and quizzes to explain MOFA's activities in an easy-to-understand way, and Q&A corners explaining vocabulary and international issues that are covered frequently in the news and newspapers. In May, the content for children regarding the G7 Hiroshima Summit was created and published in "MOFA for Kids."

In addition to the above, MOFA provides a variety of information through various social media platforms. In 2023, MOFA actively provided information about topics such as the G7 Hiroshima Summit and related meetings, the situation in Ukraine, the situation in the Gaza Strip, and ALPS treated water.



MOFA's official website: <https://www.mofa.go.jp/index.html>



MOFA for Kids



MOFA's official X account: [https://x.com/Mofajapan\\_en](https://x.com/Mofajapan_en)

MOFA's official website



MOFA's official X account



MOFA's official Facebook account



MOFA's official Instagram account



#### (4) Dialogue with Japanese Nationals

With the notion of “Public Relations through Dialogue with the People,” MOFA promotes direct dialogue between the people and the Foreign Minister, the State Ministers for Foreign Affairs, the Parliamentary Vice-Ministers for Foreign Affairs and MOFA officials.

Foreign Minister Hayashi, along with State Minister for Foreign Affairs TAKEI Shunsuke, held roundtable dialogues in February with people active in Okayama, in Akita in June, and in Nagano in August. These lively exchanges of opinions about Japan’s diplomatic policies and the appeal of each region were undertaken as a part of the “Local to Global” Project that aims to promote the attractiveness of regional areas of Japan worldwide.

A MOFA seminar, “Dialogue with Students,” was held for university students in February. At the event, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs YOSHIKAWA Yuumi gave an opening address, and Foreign Ministry’s officials were engaged in discussions with a large number of participating students during the lectures on topics such as the G7 Hiroshima Summit. In addition, MOFA held another seminar

at Osaka University in November, at which Foreign Ministry’s officials were engaged in lively discussions with many participating students (particularly from the Kansai region) during the lectures on topics such as Japan and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). In May, MOFA held an open class about the G7 Hiroshima Summit at Sophia University, at which around 500 university students and others participated. The participants provided a wide range of questions, sparking lively discussions with the speakers. At the “Children’s Kasumigaseki Tour Day” held in August, MOFA ran a variety of programs including talks and workshops to deepen understanding about MOFA’s work and countries around the world.

Various programs in which MOFA sends its officials to venues such as local government offices, international exchange organizations, universities and high schools throughout Japan were conducted both online and in person at the request of the participating organizations. These included “Lectures on the International Situations,” “Diplomatic Talks,” “Talks for High School,” and “Visits by elementary, junior and senior high school



“Open class: Turbulent Times and the G7 Hiroshima Summit” (May 13, Sophia University)



“Dialogue with Students” breakout discussion group (November 6, Osaka University)



Kids listening intently during “Children’s Kasumigaseki Tour Day” (August 2, MOFA)



“International Issues Presentation Contest” (November 11, MOFA)





Periodical journal "Diplomacy"

students to MOFA." In addition, MOFA hosted the 2023 "International Issues Presentation Contest" on the theme of future relations between Japan and ASEAN. Open not only to Japanese university students, but also to students from ASEAN nations, it was held in person as well as broadcast online. Through these programs, MOFA promotes better understanding of foreign policy and international affairs among young people, who will bear the future of Japan on their shoulders.

MOFA officials also give "ODA Delivery Lectures" on Japan's ODA policies and specific measures to numerous schools via online. Additionally, MOFA publishes the periodical journal "Diplomacy," widely sharing information on international affairs relevant to Japan and discussions on diplomacy taking place in various areas at various levels. In 2023, the journal took up a range of diplomatic challenges as themes that offered an overview of the current international situation. In addition to discussion related to the G7 Hiroshima Summit, it examined Russia's aggression against Ukraine as well as the conflict between Israel and Palestinian militants and their impact on the region and the world from multifaceted viewpoints. The journal featured a large number of essays and other articles from renowned experts both inside and outside Japan.

Moreover, MOFA also produced various pamphlets and videos aimed at a broad readership in order to promote a deeper understanding on the organizations of MOFA and Japan's diplomacy, such as the G7 Hiroshima Summit. In addition to the above, MOFA hears comments and opinions from the public through its website. Comments and opinions from the public are accordingly shared within MOFA and used as a reference in policy making and planning.

## (5) Promotion of the Declassification of Diplomatic Records and Access to Information

To further enhance the public understanding of and confidence in Japan's foreign policy, MOFA is actively engaging in the declassification of diplomatic records and in efforts to facilitate greater convenience in the public use of diplomatic documents.

MOFA preserves more than 120,000 historical materials, including 40,000 prewar historical documents in its Diplomatic Archives, and has declassified its postwar diplomatic records since 1976 as a voluntary initiative. The Rules on the Declassification of Diplomatic Records, which were established in 2010, stipulate: (a) the declassification of diplomatic documents created or obtained more than 30 years ago in principle, and (b) the establishment of the "Committee for the Promotion of the Declassification of the Diplomatic Records," which is chaired by the State Minister for Foreign Affairs or the Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs as well as attended by external experts, to further promote the declassification of diplomatic records and improve its transparency. The number of files that have been transferred to the Diplomatic Archives and made public since then reached approximately 38,000 by the end of 2023.

Furthermore, MOFA discloses information pursuant to the Act on Access to Information Held by Administrative Organs, while giving consideration to national security, the relationship of mutual trust with other countries, the impact on diplomatic negotiations, and the protection of personal information. In 2023, MOFA received 826 requests for disclosure, and documents totaling 121,057 pages were disclosed.

## 2 Strengthening the Foreign Policy Implementation Structure

Japan is facing the most severe and complex security environment in the post-war era. To promote diplomatic power for maintaining and developing an international order based on universal values, it is vital to fundamentally strengthen the foreign policy implementation structure. To that end, MOFA is working on strengthening its diplomatic missions overseas in both

the aspects of quantity and quality, as well as advancing efforts to improve the organizational and personnel systems at MOFA itself.

Diplomatic missions overseas, such as embassies and consulates-general, not only represent Japan and engage in diplomatic activities, but also play a key role in areas such as information-gathering and strategic external communication at the frontline of diplomacy. At the same time, diplomatic missions also carry out operations directly related to enhancing the interests of Japanese nationals, such as protecting their lives and safety, providing support for Japanese companies, promoting investment and tourism, and securing energy and other resources.

Given this environment, in January 2024 Japan established an embassy in Seychelles as well as a Permanent Mission of Japan to the International Organizations in Rome, Italy (independent office).

Seychelles is located along sea lanes that are important to the security and economy of the Indo-Pacific region, making it an important country for the realization of a “Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP).” Furthermore, it is positioned along a maritime route that connects Mombasa Port in Kenya, East Africa’s largest commercial port, which Japan is helping to develop, the Port of Nacala in Mozambique, and Toamasina Port in Madagascar with Japan, and has rich fishery resources. Seychelles also supports Japan in areas such as important international elections. Hence, establishing an embassy in Seychelles is important not only for continuing to maintain and strengthen the friendly bilateral relations between the two countries, but also for strengthening systems to further enhance effectiveness in collecting various types of information, such as in the maritime security field, and providing various forms of support in emergencies.

Rome is the base of international organizations working in the areas of food and agriculture, such as the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP), and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). These three international organizations work in close cooperation with one another to secure global food security and reduce the number

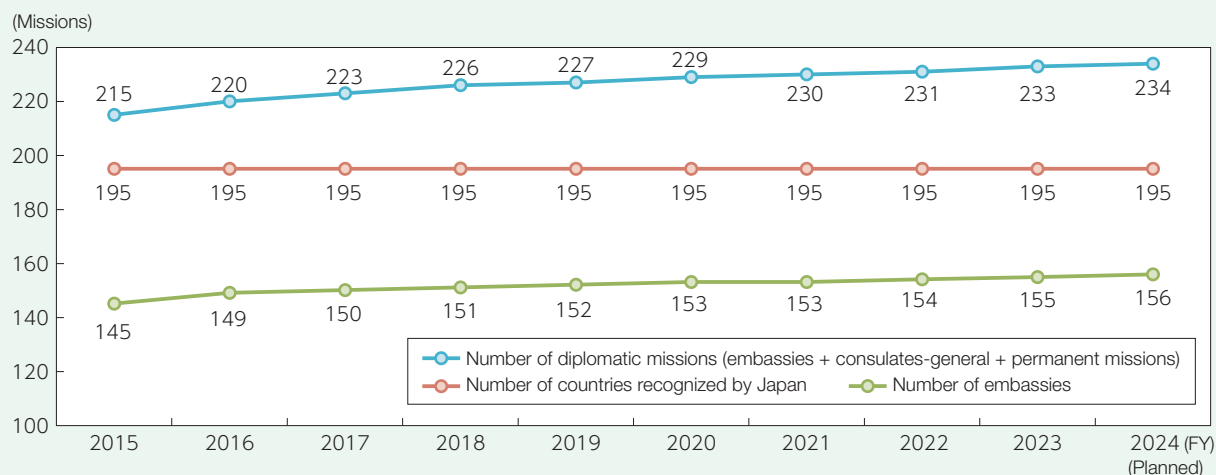
of hungry people, through initiatives to stabilize the global food markets and particularly by providing food support to countries vulnerable to factors that destabilize the food market and improving the production and distribution of agricultural produce. Amidst rising food prices due to the impact of disruptions in the food supply chain as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, destabilization of grain supply due to Russia’s aggression against Ukraine, and other factors, it is vital for Japan, in advancing its diplomacy, to secure Japan’s food security and help to stabilize the global food market, including facilitating access to food by countries that are particularly vulnerable to the impact of such factors. It is becoming increasingly important to cooperate with the three organizations in Rome that work to address food and agriculture issues, and establishing a Permanent Mission of Japan is important in contributing toward strengthening Japan’s presence and to the development of systems for cooperation and forming close networks with the three organizations.

In addition to establishing more diplomatic missions overseas, it is important to secure and increase the number of staff members to support diplomacy at the MOFA headquarters and diplomatic missions overseas. In the context of the current severe budget and staff situation for the Government overall, the number of staff members at MOFA was increased in FY2023 by 100 to 6,604 from FY2022 in order to address bilateral relations and regional situations, promote economic security, contribute to addressing global issues, and implement protection and safety measures for Japanese nationals abroad. The number of staff members, however, remains insufficient in comparison with other major countries. MOFA continues its efforts to build a structure that is commensurate with Japan’s national power and diplomatic policy. In the meantime, based on the belief that enhancing the diplomatic and consular implementation structure remains essential in FY2024, MOFA will increase its workforce by 70<sup>1</sup> staff.

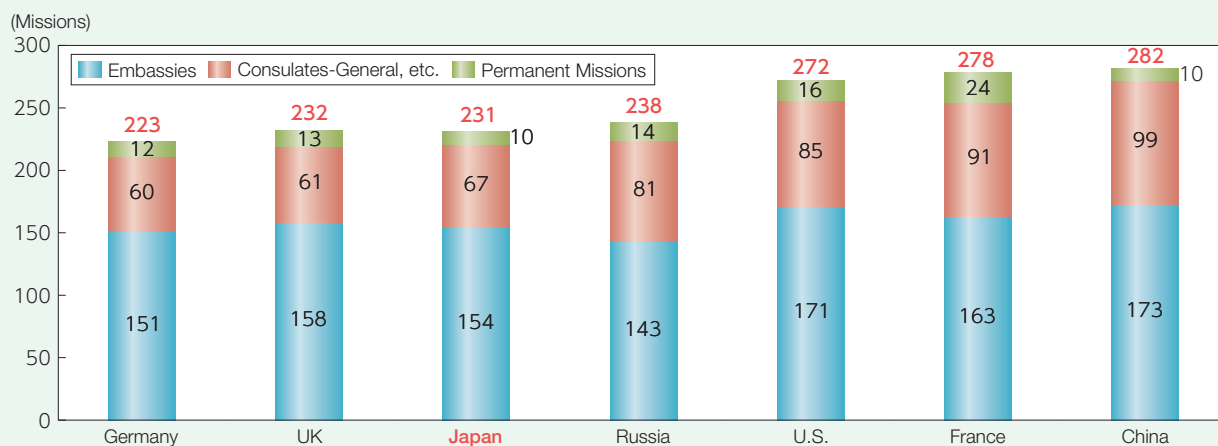
In order to maintain and strengthen an international order based on universal values in an era of competition among nations, MOFA appropriated 756.0 billion yen in the budget for FY2023 (including costs for holding the G7 Hiroshima Summit, of which 12.5

<sup>1</sup> Includes special provision (for one year only) for six additional new recruits in accordance with the increase in the compulsory retirement age.

### Changes in the Number of Diplomatic Missions



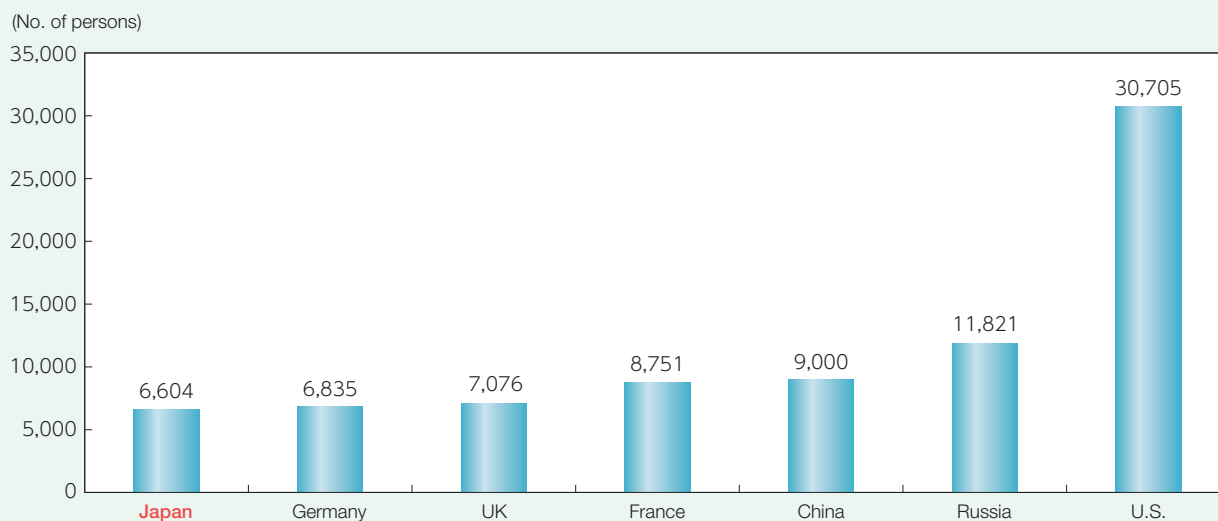
### Comparison of the Number of Diplomatic Missions of Japan with Major Countries (P5 + Germany)



Note: As of January 2023

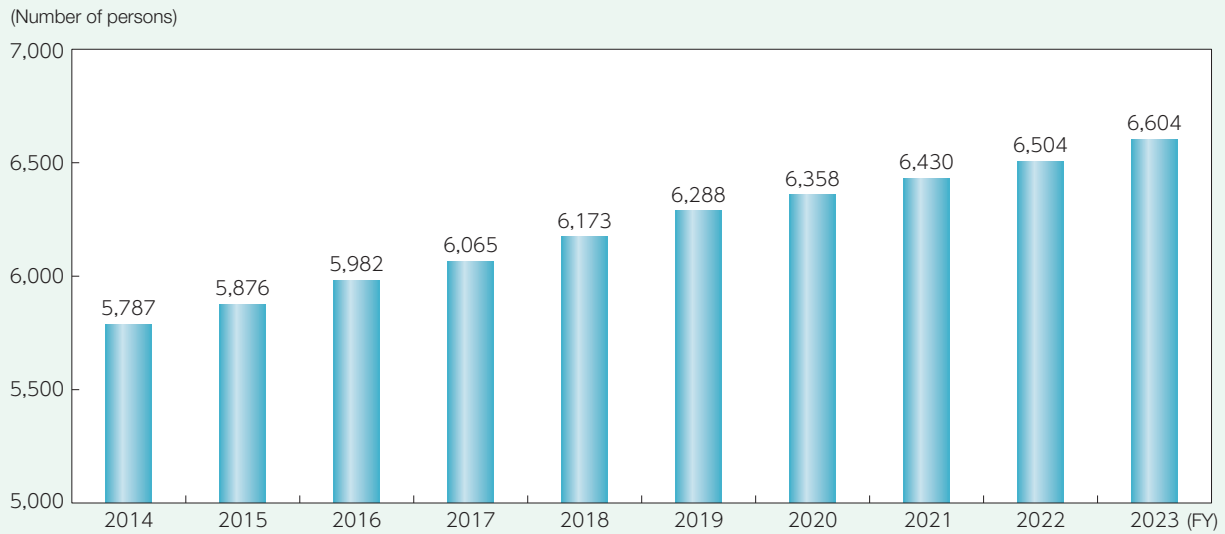
Average number of diplomatic missions among these seven countries: Approximately 251

### Comparison of the Number of Staff Members at Ministries of Foreign Affairs in Major Countries



Note: based on the FY2023 survey result, etc.

Number of Staff Members at MOFA



billion yen is appropriated in the budget of the Digital Agency). Furthermore, MOFA appropriated 270.1 billion yen in the supplementary budget for FY2023 (of which 4.36 billion yen is appropriated in the Digital Agency budget). The funding appropriated in the supplementary budget was, in order to achieve a peaceful and stable international community that ensures that human dignity is preserved, for measures engaging in flexible and firm diplomacy, principally for pressing issues such as support for Ukraine, support for the Global South (emerging and developing countries) and for initiatives to realize FOIP. Funding was also appropriated for measures to respond to high prices.

MOFA's FY2024 initial government budget proposal appropriated 741.7 billion yen (of which 16.0 billion yen is appropriated in the Digital Agency budget) based on the following priorities: (a) implementing the National Security Strategy, (b) strengthening the framework for protection of and risk management for Japanese nationals overseas, and (c) promoting Japan's economic growth. This includes budgets to work with allies and like-minded countries, to implement new plans for FOIP, to strengthen support for Ukraine and countries affected by the situation in Ukraine, to respond to the situation in Israel and Palestine, for Official Security Assistance (OSA), to fundamentally reinforce MOFA's information capabilities including countering disinformation, to enhance the resilience of Japan's diplomatic missions overseas, and to strengthen support for overseas expansion of Japanese companies.

In order to promote Japan's national interests, Japan will continue to proceed strategically to develop the foreign policy implementation structure and enhance it further, while making efforts to streamline operations.

### 3 The Roles of Think Tanks and Experts in Diplomacy

The roles of think tanks and experts in diplomacy include promoting public understanding of diplomatic and security issues in a way that is not constrained by official government views, making intellectual contributions that produce ideas for diplomatic and security policies, building global intellectual networks, and communicating Japan's perspectives to other countries. Seminars and news commentaries for the general public by think tanks and experts are essential for improving public understanding of diplomatic and security issues as well as the government's standpoint, and gaining public understanding can further enhance the effectiveness of the government's diplomatic activities. Moreover, gathering information, conducting analyses, and making policy recommendations by leveraging expertise and viewpoints that are different from the ones of the government also enrich discussions on diplomatic policies within the government. Global intellectual exchanges are also important in the sense that they promote understanding of Japan among various countries and regions, and contribute to shaping public opinions in the international community. With

the growing complexity and uncertainty in the international community, the roles of think tanks and experts in diplomacy are becoming increasingly important.

Against this backdrop, MOFA provides subsidies to support Japanese think tanks' research activities in the field of foreign and security policy, in order to strengthen their capabilities to collect, analyze and disseminate information, to make policy proposals, and to further promote Japan's comprehensive diplomacy. In FY2023, the scheme provided support to 13 projects under seven organizations, and it is effectively promoting policy proposals to policymakers that are in line with the ever-changing diplomatic and security environment, exchanges of opinions with overseas think tanks and experts, the publication of papers and dissertations activities by experts, and communications with the media. Furthermore, MOFA launched a new subsidy scheme in FY2017 that aims at supporting research and information dissemination activities

of Japanese think tanks in the areas of territory, sovereignty and history. Under the scheme, the Japan Institute of International Affairs (JIIA)<sup>2</sup> conducts such activities as the collection, organization, and public release of materials found in Japan and overseas, as well as the convention of open symposiums in Japan and in other countries in cooperation with overseas think tanks. Through this scheme, webinars were conducted in 2023, using old maps and archival materials to explain the historical grounds relating to Japan's territorial sovereignty over the Senkaku Islands. In addition, old maps which appear to denote "Takeshima" on official maps for the first time after their incorporation into Shimane Prefecture were discovered and made available to the public. It is expected that the scheme will support Japanese think tanks in accumulating historical records and knowledge pertaining to Japan's territory, sovereignty and history, and enhancing their information dissemination domestically and abroad.

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<sup>2</sup> Refer to the website of The Japan Institute of International Affairs:  
<https://www.jiia.or.jp/en/>





## Executive Chefs for Ambassadors/Consuls-General of Japan: at the Forefront of Diplomacy

Executive Chefs for Ambassadors/Consuls-general of Japan are licensed cooks or persons with considerable experience working as chefs, who have been recognized by the Minister for Foreign Affairs to engage in official catering work at official residences and other venues for the head of a diplomatic mission overseas (Ambassador/Consul-general). Diplomatic missions overseas are the center for diplomatic activities such as negotiations with governments, information gathering, and the development of personal networks. One of the most effective means of diplomacy is to create opportunities for meals at the official residence of the Ambassador/Consul-general, with guests such as influential politicians, businessmen and government officials from the country of assignment, as well as the diplomatic corps from various countries. For this reason, the head of the diplomatic mission is usually accompanied by the Executive Chef for the Ambassador/Consul-general, an exclusively appointed chef whose aim is to provide high-quality meals.

### ● IURA Aimi, Executive Chef for the Ambassador at the Permanent Mission of Japan to the United Nations

My first executive chef role was at the Embassy of Japan in Iceland, and then the Consulate-General of Japan in Denver, before taking up my current position at the Permanent Mission of Japan to the UN in New York in December 2022.

Embassies typically focus their work on bilateral relations, and consulates-general are frequently engaged in relations with Japanese nationals and private-sector businesses. However, the Permanent Mission of Japan to the UN works with people from countries all over the world, which means our lunch or dinner guests are also very diverse. In addition, the official residence is within sight of the UN Headquarters, granting me unique opportunities that I would be unlikely to experience while living in Japan. For example, during the UN General Assembly in September, cars carrying presidents and other global heads of state were driving right past the official residence.

The Permanent Mission of Japan hosts many dinners and large-scale receptions. However, other countries' missions actively do the same, and New York also offers a wide variety of restaurants. Under such circumstances, I am always conscious of providing Japanese cuisine which will create unforgettable memories for our guests. Many of them were already interested in Japan but had never tried distinctive regional specialties such as *"dobinmushi,"* a dish where ingredients are steam-boiled in an earthenware teapot, and *"hobayaki,"* a dish where ingredients are grilled on magnolia leaves with miso. I also pay careful attention to the presentation of my dishes. In addition, I create menus so that dishes I have served before do not become repetitive. I put a lot of thought in so that our guests will make new discoveries and become further interested in Japan.

In drawing up a menu, I need to take into account guests' dietary restrictions (such as vegetarians and vegans) and religious practices. When each guest has different needs, putting it all together is like a complex puzzle, but managing to create a menu concept which satisfies all the guests is also very enjoyable and motivating.

Unlike restaurant work, one of the attractions of executive chef work is doing all the ingredient management, menu creation, ingredient sourcing, preparation, cooking, and plating up by yourself. As inflation drives prices higher, I am continuously finding new and innovative ways to present the best possible cuisine within budget. New York is a cutting-edge food city, which fortunately means you can get ingredients from all over the world and make any arrangement that comes to mind. I am glad to say that doing so brings happiness to our guests.



Providing cooking demonstrations at a reception while serving meals (the author is on the left)

Executive chefs can only succeed at their work with the support of everyone around them. I am very grateful to the staff of the Permanent Mission of Japan to the UN, to everyone who helped and gave me advice, and also to my family.

I am so grateful for the valuable opportunities I can experience by living in such an environment, and with this in mind, I am honored to continue my work at the forefront of Japanese diplomacy.



Paying careful attention to the coloring and arrangement of seasonal autumn appetizers



Handmade desserts with just the right amount of sweetness to suit guests' tastes

You can also read more about the activities of Executive Chefs for Ambassadors/Consuls-general of Japan through the “MOFA Japan Chef” social media accounts (Facebook and X).

Facebook:  
<https://www.facebook.com/MofaJapanChef>



X:  
[https://twitter.com/mofa\\_japan\\_chef](https://twitter.com/mofa_japan_chef)



## Reviving Official Residences for Japanese Ambassador, Key Platforms for Diplomacy: the Work of Technical Officials of the Building and Property Management Section

Were you aware of the roles at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs known as “technical officials?” As the “face of Japan,” overseas establishments such as Japanese embassies abroad provide the bases and settings for Japan’s diplomatic activities, and they serve as the last strongholds for protecting Japanese nationals during emergencies. Technical officials manage, design, construct, operate and maintain these facilities. It can be said that they support diplomatic activities behind the scenes, while partly shouldering the huge responsibility of protecting the lives of Japanese nationals. Here, we feature KUWABARA Izumi, a technical official of the building and property management section, who was responsible for refurbishment work at the official residence for Japanese Ambassador to the Republic of Korea (ROK). She describes the work that technical officials do.

### ● First large-scale refurbishment work since construction

The official residence for Japanese Ambassador to the ROK, designed by a Japanese architect, was built in the early 1970s. As 50 years passed, much of the electrical and mechanical equipment used since the construction had reached the expected lifetime, and a complete replacement was necessary. Therefore, we fully refurbished the equipment and fittings, and made other upgrades such as remodeling the interior and enhancing the building’s accessibility, which took around one year.

As the first large-scale refurbishment since the construction, we started by stripping the building back to its frame, keeping only the base structure and removing almost all interior and exterior linings, finishing, and equipment. The wall, ceiling panels and fittings were removed, and the original concrete frame was exposed. Even though it used techniques over half a century old, I was stunned at how beautifully the concrete had been poured. The construction team at the time must have worked so carefully together to create this building, and we must treasure it and pass it on to future generations. That was encouraging and made us straighten up.



Exterior of the revived official residence

### ● An official residence which embodies and expresses a distinctively Japanese aesthetic

This refurbishment work aimed to deliver an official residence – key platforms for Japan’s diplomatic activities - which embodies and expresses a distinctively Japanese aesthetic throughout. It therefore features Japanese products including woven carpets and wall coverings of woven fabric, with some of the finishing timber being Japanese zelkova. Furthermore, we used the Oya stone, mined in Tochigi Prefecture, in places to make spatial accents. In addition, the building’s design before the refurbishment incorporated *shoji* (sliding paper screens), which we retained as a traditional Japanese element, even reusing some of the screens. I found it difficult to embrace the distinctively Japanese aspects in building work overseas, in terms of design and construction, but doing so is in fact the true essence and fascination of a technical official’s work.

### ● Work at construction sites and a technical official’s motivations

During the year of the construction work, I spent almost every day at the site office to help bring the building we aimed for to reality. I was involved in most aspects of the project, including discussions and managing the process with the construction team, checking the drawings, contract procedures, and design changes. This was my first time actually being involved in on-site work, but thanks to the advice and support of highly knowledgeable and experienced veteran technical officials, I was able to appreciate the freshness and joy of this role. It provided a lot of motivation to fully engage in my work. I also felt that the experience of working together with the Embassy’s local staff, as well as Korean architects and construction companies, became a major asset for me. Throughout the refurbishment, we encountered unexpected issues that led to intense discussions. However, despite differences in culture and customs, we all shared the same passions and goals: to complete a better building. This shared commitment was truly heartening and made the joy of finishing it even more significant.

For the first large-scale reception after the refurbishment, we invited people involved from many countries to the official residence. Being personally present with it in use as a key platform for Japan's diplomacy gave me a renewed sense of achievement, and I was filled with the joy of having worked on it as a technical official. I hope to continue working on this job involving buildings that are platforms for Japan's diplomacy.



Official residence entrance hall (Left: during refurbishment Right: after refurbishment)

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs recruits technical officials from candidates who have passed the National Civil Service Examination for General Service (University Graduate Level), Technical Categories (Examination Categories: Architecture, Digital/Electrical/Electronics, Machinery). If you are interested, please visit the technical staff recruitment website at the following web address.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "National Civil Service Examination for General Service (University Graduates, Technical): Technical Official Work"

[https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/ms/prs/page23\\_003447.html](https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/ms/prs/page23_003447.html)

