

# The Opinion

—The Ideal Form of a Harmonious Coexistence Society  
and its Medium- to Long-term Issues—

November 2021

Advisory Panel of Experts for the Realization of a Society  
of Harmonious Coexistence with Foreign Nationals

## Table of Contents

<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>Chapter 1 Ideal Society of Harmonious Coexistence with Foreign Nationals (Three Visions)</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>1 A society where all foreign nationals are included as members of Japanese future society, and where all people can live safely and comfortably</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>2 A diverse and vibrant society in which all people, including foreign nationals, from various backgrounds can participate and demonstrate their abilities to their fullest.</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>3 A society in which all people, including foreign nationals, respect each other’s individual dignity and human rights and can live without discrimination or prejudice</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>Chapter 2 Changes in the Situation of Foreign Residents in Japan</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>1 General Remarks</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>2 Particulars</b> .....	<b>9</b>
(1) Changes in the number of foreign residents by status of residence .....	9
(2) Changes in the number of foreign residents by nationality and region .....	10
(3) Changes in the number of foreign residents by age (by age group of five years) .....	11
(4) Changes in the number of foreign residents by gender .....	11
(5) Changes in the foreign population by local government.....	12
<b>Chapter 3 Direction of the Initiatives to Realize a Society of Harmonious Coexistence with Foreign Nationals</b> .....	<b>13</b>
<b>1 Initiatives Such as Japanese Language Education for Smooth Communication and Participation in Society</b> .....	<b>13</b>
(1) Current situation and issues .....	13
a. Provide opportunities for Japanese language education.....	13
b. Structured Japanese language learning at each life stage.....	14
c. Improvement of the quality of Japanese language education.....	14
(2) Direction of the initiatives.....	14
a. Establishment of an environment that enables foreign nationals to acquire the Japanese language skills necessary for daily life .....	15
b. Establishment of an environment that enables foreign nationals to learn Japanese	

language in a structured manner for each life stage .....	16
c. Promotion of initiatives that contribute to improving the quality of Japanese language education and securing professionals .....	16
d. Promotion of initiatives to make it easier to learn Japanese language .....	17
<b>2 Disseminating Information to Foreign Nationals/Strengthening Consultation Systems for Foreign Nationals .....</b>	<b>18</b>
(1) Current situation and issues .....	18
a. Information dissemination to foreign nationals.....	18
b. Consultation systems for foreign nationals .....	18
(2) Direction of the initiatives.....	19
a. Enhancement of information dissemination from the perspective of foreign nationals...	19
b. Strengthening the consultation system to help foreign nationals with their problems .....	20
c. Providing information and consultation services in multiple languages and further promoting the use of plain Japanese .....	21
<b>3 Support for Each Life Stage and Life Cycle.....</b>	<b>22</b>
(1) Current situation and issues .....	22
(2) Direction of the initiatives.....	22
a. Support for foreign nationals mainly during infancy, school age, and the early stage of adolescence and adulthood (e.g., support for pregnancy, childbirth, child rearing, schooling, and higher education) .....	23
b. Support for foreign nationals, especially those in adolescence and adulthood (e.g., support for employment).....	27
c. Support for foreign nationals, especially those in old age (e.g., support for long-term care).....	29
<b>4 Initiatives to Establish the Foundation of Society of Harmonious Coexistence .....</b>	<b>30</b>
(1) Current situation and issues .....	31
a. Raising awareness to realize a society of harmonious coexistence.....	31
b. Creating systems to acquire knowledge of social systems .....	31
c. Grasping the actual living conditions of foreign nationals.....	31
d. Collection of information and cooperation among relevant organizations for the support and residence management of foreign nationals .....	32
e. Social participation of foreign nationals .....	32
(2) Direction of the initiatives.....	33
a. Raising awareness to realize a society of harmonious coexistence.....	33

b. Creating a system to acquire knowledge of social systems.....	35
c. Improvement of government statistics to investigate on the actual living conditions of foreign nationals.....	35
d. Enhancement of information collections and strengthening of cooperation among relevant organizations for the development of infrastructure for realizing the society of harmonious coexistence.....	37
e. Creating a system where foreign nationals also play an active role in a society of harmonious coexistence .....	41
<b>Closing Remarks .....</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>List of the Members of the Advisory Panel of Experts for the Realization of Society of Harmonious Coexistence with Foreign Nationals.....</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>Past Meetings of the Advisory Panel of Experts for the Realization of Society of Harmonious Coexistence with Foreign Nationals .....</b>	<b>47</b>

## Introduction

The number of foreign nationals living in Japan was about 2.89 million at the end of 2020, decreasing from the record high set at the end of 2019. However, the population increased significantly from 1.08 million 30 years ago (at the end of 1990), 1.69 million 20 years ago (at the end of 2000), and 2.13 million 10 years ago (at the end of 2010)<sup>1</sup>.

Under these circumstances, promoting initiatives to realize a society of harmonious coexistence with foreign nationals is obviously a matter of urgency. The revised Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act enforced in 1990 created a new status of residence called “Long-Term Resident,” which attracted Japanese descendants mainly from South American countries. The increased migration of Japanese descendants has led communities to recognize the importance of harmonious coexistence with them and prompted local governments, particularly those with a large community of foreign nationals, to take necessary action. On March 27, 2006, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications formulated the Plan for the Promotion of Multicultural Coexistence in Local Communities, and using this as a model, local governments have begun to formulate their own multicultural coexistence guidelines and plans<sup>2</sup>.

Amid the emergence of educational, employment, and other issues, on December 25, 2006, the government compiled the Comprehensive Measures for “Foreign Nationals as Residents”<sup>3</sup> to enable foreign nationals to live in Japan as members of society while using the same public services as Japanese people.

The global financial crisis that occurred in September 2008 made it difficult for many foreign residents, particularly those of Japanese descent, to keep their jobs and earn a living. As represented by the Action Plan on Measures for Foreign Residents of Japanese Descent<sup>4</sup> formulated on March 31, 2011, the government’s measures to develop an

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<sup>1</sup> The numbers until 2011 are those of registered foreign nationals while the numbers from 2012 are those of residing foreign nationals.

<sup>2</sup> The Plan for the Promotion of Multicultural Coexistence was revised in September 2020 to reflect socioeconomic changes, such as the increasing foreign resident population and its diversification of nationalities, the creation of a new status of residence called “Specified Skilled Worker,” moves to bring diversity and inclusiveness into society, the progress of digitization, and increasing devastating weather disasters.

<sup>3</sup> The Comprehensive Measures were compiled by the Inter-ministerial Liaison Council for Foreign Worker Issues on December 25, 2006. They include (1) making communities more livable for foreign nationals, (2) improving the education of foreign children, (3) improving the working environment for foreign nationals and promoting their enrollment in social insurance, and (4) reviewing the residency management system for foreign nationals.

<sup>4</sup> The action plan was determined by the Council for the Promotion of Measures for Foreign Residents of Japanese Descent on March 31, 2011. The action plan aims to specify measures for foreign residents in five fields: (1) Japanese language education, (2) childcare and education, (3) job security, (4) social security, and (5) respect for cultural diversity.

environment to accept foreign nationals had been focused on foreign residents of Japanese descent until around 2010. To promote the acceptance of foreign nationals, the government has taken various measures, including formulating the 300,000 International Student Plan<sup>5</sup> in 2008, starting a points-based system for highly-skilled foreign professionals in 2012, and introducing a new Technical Intern Training Program in 2017. In order to solve the serious labor shortage in small- to medium-sized businesses, the government decided to create new statuses of residence in the Basic Policy on Economic and Fiscal Management and Reform 2018 on June 15, 2018. The national government also showed its commitment to realizing a society of harmonious coexistence with foreign nationals as the population of foreign nationals is expected to continue to rise.

In line with these moves, the Cabinet approved “the Basic Policy on Operations for the Development of an Environment for Acceptance of Foreign Nationals” on July 24, 2018. This policy requires relevant ministries and agencies to work more closely to develop an environment to accept foreign nationals effectively and efficiently in cooperation with local governments under the leadership of the Ministry of Justice.

On the same day, the Ministerial Conference on Acceptance and Coexistence of Foreign Nationals (hereinafter referred to as “Ministerial Conference”) was established to make government-wide efforts based on the close cooperation between relevant administrative agencies in order to discuss what is needed to realize a society of harmonious coexistence with foreign nationals. On December 25, 2018, the Ministerial Conference compiled the Comprehensive Measures for Acceptance and Coexistence of Foreign Nationals (hereinafter referred to as “Comprehensive Measures”) (Reference 1) to help realize a society where both Japanese and foreign nationals can live comfortably and safely.

The Comprehensive Measures, which have been refined through revisions, including the 2021 revision approved by the Ministerial Conference on June 15, 2021 (Reference 2), are taking root in Japanese society as a policy providing a direction for the realization of a society of harmonious coexistence with foreign nationals.

As discussed above, Japan’s efforts to develop an environment to accept foreign nationals have been made in accordance with the Comprehensive Measures. However, in an emergency situation of the spread of COVID-19, which started at the beginning of 2020, it became clear that they are having problems in various situations such as daily life and employment. That is because many foreign nationals do not fully understand the

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<sup>5</sup> In 2008, this plan was formulated to accept 300,000 international students by 2020 as part of the global strategy to make Japan more open to the world and expand the flow of people, goods, money, and information to and from Asia and the rest of the world.

Japanese language, Japanese customs or social systems because they have not been provided enough opportunities to learn them or do not have easy access to necessary information because they do not know where they can get it. In addition, some foreign nationals have faced discrimination based on misunderstandings and prejudice, as evidenced by news reports about shops that have refused to allow them to enter.

In the meantime, the international community recognizes the importance of the Sustainable Development Goals (the “SDGs”)<sup>6</sup> more strongly than ever as the COVID-19 has pushed vulnerable people into a corner. The SDGs echo human security principles and pledge to create a sustainable, diverse, and inclusive society that “leaves no one behind,” consisting of 17 international goals, including ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education for all and reducing inequalities within and among countries. The international community calls for all relevant parties to take action not only to overcome the difficulties caused by the COVID-19, but also to create a more sustainable and inclusive society to achieve the SDGs.

The SDGs Action Plan 2021, the government’s package of concrete measures to promote the SDGs, considers the Comprehensive Measures as part of the efforts to “promote diversity and barrier-free society,” linking them with the international goals of Good Health and Well-being, Quality Education, Decent Work and Economic Growth, Reduced Inequalities, Sustainable Cities and Communities, and Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions<sup>7</sup>.

Local governments, private support groups, and volunteer groups have long taken a leading role in making innovative efforts to achieve coexistence with foreign nationals. On the other hand, private companies, which have benefited from the acceptance of foreign nationals amid a serious labor shortage, are now required to join the efforts to develop an environment to accept foreign nationals under the National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights (formulated by the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Japan’s National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights on October 16, 2020) (Reference 3). In the Free and Fair Trade section of the Carbis Bay G7 Summit Communiqué, delivered

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<sup>6</sup> The SDGs are international goals to achieve a better and more sustainable world by 2030, which were included in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and unanimously adopted at the September 2015 UN summit as a successor to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) established in 2001. In order to create a sustainable, diverse, and inclusive society that “leaves no one behind,” the SDGs have 17 international goals, under which there are 169 targets and 231 indicators (as of March 2020).

<sup>7</sup> The SDGs Action Plan 2021, adopted at the ninth meeting of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Promotion Headquarters on December 21, 2020, considers the Comprehensive Measures as part of the efforts to create an inclusive and gender-equal society.

at the G7 Cornwall Summit held in the U.K. in June 2021<sup>8</sup>, the leaders agreed on the importance of upholding human rights and international labor standards throughout global supply chains and tackling instances of forced labor. Under this agreement, there needs to be more respect for the human rights of foreign nationals working in Japan.<sup>9</sup>

Under these circumstances, as measures to develop an environment to accept foreign nationals, the government needs not only to complete the short-term task of revising the Comprehensive Measures in consideration of the impact of the COVID-19 on foreign nationals, but also to establish visions for a society of harmonious coexistence with them, set medium- to long-term goals, and make more efforts with local governments and the private sector to achieve these visions and goals.

Since February 2021, we have met once a month and studied what a society of harmonious coexistence with foreign nationals should be like and what medium- to long-term tasks should be addressed to realize it in order to express our opinions to the Ministerial Conference. In this process, we have considered that it is necessary to present national visions for a society of harmonious coexistence with foreign nationals in order to bring it to fruition.

As a result of these meetings, we now present the following three visions for an ideal society of harmonious coexistence with foreign nationals in line with the philosophy of the SDGs, which set forth international goals for creating a sustainable, diverse, and inclusive society that “leaves no one behind” (see Chapter 1 “Ideal Society of Harmonious Coexistence with Foreign Nationals (Three Visions)”) (Reference 4).

- A society where foreign nationals are included as members of Japanese future society, and where all people can live safely and comfortably
- A diverse and vibrant society in which all people, including foreign nationals, from various backgrounds can participate and demonstrate their abilities to their fullest
- A society in which all people, including foreign nationals, respect each other’s individual dignity and human rights and can live without discrimination or prejudice

As medium- to long-term issues that must be addressed in order to realize a society of harmonious coexistence with foreign nationals, we have determined four priority areas and the direction of initiatives: (1) initiatives such as Japanese language education for

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<sup>8</sup> The G7 Summit took place in Cornwall, United Kingdom from June 11 to 13, 2021.

<sup>9</sup> The Analysis and Evaluation Report of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination to the comments by the Government of Japan regarding the Concluding Observations of the Committee (CERD/C/JPN/CO/10-11) (September 2020) (available on the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) expresses the Committee’s concern over reports that technical intern trainees are subjected to poor working conditions, abusive and exploitative practices, and bonded labor-like situations.



smooth communication and participation in society, (2) disseminating information to foreign nationals/strengthening consultation systems for foreign nationals, (3) support for each life stage and life cycle<sup>10</sup>, and (4) initiatives to establish the foundation of a society of harmonious coexistence (see Chapter 3 “Direction of the Initiatives to Realize a Society of Harmonious Coexistence with Foreign Nationals”).

We would like the government to complete all the initiatives within five years, beginning with those that can be started soon, in line with the direction of the initiatives.

When taking initiatives in line with the direction of the initiatives, the government should organize various measures taken by local governments for local residents and establish a system that enables local governments to apply such measures that fit their local needs.

We would like the Ministerial Conference to take seriously the fact that the realization of a society of harmonious coexistence with foreign nationals is an important challenge that affects the future and nature of Japan. We strongly hope that the government will accurately grasp the current situation, indicate the ideal society of harmonious coexistence with foreign nationals and their measures to be taken to achieve it, and compile them into a medium- to long-term action plan incorporated with KPIs (key performance indicators) based on our visions for a society of harmonious coexistence with foreign nationals and the direction of the initiatives presented in this report.

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<sup>10</sup> We discussed priority areas using the words “life stage” and “life cycle.” We used “life stage” to discuss whether foreign nationals are provided with sufficient support for social participation in the stages of “infancy” (ages 0 to 5), “school stage” (ages 6 to 15), “adolescence and adulthood” (ages 16 to 64), and “senior stage” (ages 65 and older). We used “life cycle” to discuss what support foreign nationals need to live in Japan as they grow older and transition from one stage of life to another according to their own choice.

## **Chapter 1 Ideal Society of Harmonious Coexistence with Foreign Nationals (Three Visions)**

### **1 A society where foreign nationals are included as members of Japanese future society, and all people can live safely and comfortably**

In order to realize an ideal society of harmonious coexistence with foreign nationals, the government needs to create a society where foreign residents, including those who stay temporarily in Japan, are included as members of society with a sufficient safety net, and all people can live in safety and security.

Some foreign nationals do not fully understand Japanese language, culture, customs, and social systems, including taxes and social security, because they have not been provided with sufficient opportunities to learn about them. Therefore, the government needs to create a system to guarantee them opportunities to learn Japanese and provide them with information on Japanese culture, customs, and social systems so that they can fully understand these aspects of Japan.

When providing support to foreign nationals, the government needs to consider the language barrier and other difficulties that they face, work closely with local governments, schools, businesses, and private support groups, and understand their circumstances and support needs as an effort to provide support from their viewpoint. Since the difficulties faced by many foreign nationals may also be faced by many “individuals who have roots in foreign countries,”<sup>11</sup> the government should also consider such people when formulating support measures.

This approach is consistent with the philosophy of the SDGs, which aims to create a society that “leaves no one behind” and is also needed to realize a stable society free from immobilized disparity or social division.

Furthermore, the national government needs to continuously help all foreign nationals have access to rights that everyone should enjoy, such as education for children, which is the foundation of life, and medical services, including maternal and child health services.

### **2 A diverse and vibrant society in which all people, including foreign nationals, from various backgrounds can participate and demonstrate their abilities to their fullest**

Since the Comprehensive Measures for “Foreign Nationals as Residents” were compiled in December 2006, Japan’s efforts to develop an environment to accept

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<sup>11</sup> “Individuals who have roots in foreign countries” refers to people whose parent or parents are of foreign origin, regardless of their nationality.

foreign nationals have centered on a social welfare approach that enables them to use the same public services as Japanese people and live safely.

However, there are growing expectations for foreign nationals as members of society because many among them are playing active roles in Japan, such as young foreign nationals who received education in Japan, foreign researchers and executives who contribute to Japan's social and economic development with their advanced knowledge and skills, and foreign residents who volunteer to interpret in times of disaster and who join a residents' association or volunteer to be in a fire brigade or on a PTA committee.

In taking a medium- to long-term perspective in promoting the efforts to realize a society of harmonious coexistence with foreign nationals, the government needs to do more than only incorporate vitality into Japanese society by accepting foreign workers in professional and technical fields; the government needs to create a society in which all people, including foreign nationals, with various backgrounds are provided with opportunities for social participation and demonstrate their abilities to their fullest. If all people, including foreign nationals, can fully demonstrate their abilities and become active members of society, Japan can achieve a virtuous cycle that leads to growth and innovation and leads to a diverse and vibrant society.

Therefore, it is necessary to understand that a society of harmonious coexistence with foreign nationals is not only for their benefit, but also for the growth of all people, businesses, and communities in Japan, and ultimately society as a whole.

### **3 A society in which all people, including foreign nationals, respect each other's individual dignity and human rights and can live without discrimination or prejudice**

In the ideal society of harmonious coexistence with foreign nationals, all people, including foreign nationals, need to consider our diversity as the wealth of society and respect each other's individual dignity and human rights in lieu of considering it as a difference that should be subject to discrimination and exclusion. This philosophy should be the foundation of such a society, where no individual dignity or human rights must be violated. In this respect, hate speech<sup>12</sup> and hate propaganda<sup>13</sup>, which hurt each other's dignity and cause discrimination, must not be

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<sup>12</sup> Hate speech refers to any one-sided speech, such as attempting to harm or ostracize someone from Japanese society solely because he or she is from a specific country or a descendant of someone from a specific country. The Hate Speech Elimination Act enforced on June 3, 2016 declares that all forms of unfair discriminatory speech and behavior against people of foreign origin should not exist.

<sup>13</sup> Hate propaganda refers to any malicious false information on a specific race or people in a specific

tolerated in order to realize an affluent, safe, and mature society where individual human rights are respected.

In addition, in order to respect each other's individual dignity and human rights, all people also need a better understanding of the necessity and significance of building a society together, and to be a member of a society that abides by the rules.

Only by maintaining such a society, safety, security, and vitality can be provided. In order to create such a society, it is essential for all people to respect and understand each other, and abide by the rules as fellow citizens who will build the Japanese future society together.

## **Chapter 2 Changes in the Situation of Foreign Residents in Japan**

### **1 General Remarks (Reference 5)**

The total population of Japan peaked at 128,083,960 in 2008 and has been on the continued decline since 2011, dropping to 126,226,568 in 2020<sup>14</sup>.

While the total population is on the decrease, the number of foreign residents<sup>15</sup> is on the rise, reaching a record high of 2,933,137 and accounting for 2.32% of the total population by the end of 2019. The number of foreign residents at the end of 2020 decreased by 46,021 year-on-year to 2,887,116, accounting for 2.29% of the total population, mainly because the number of foreign nationals entering Japan decreased significantly due to the COVID-19<sup>16</sup>.

In addition, while the working-age population (ages 15 to 64) has been consistently decreasing since its peak of 87.26 million in 1995<sup>17</sup>, the number of foreign workers reached a record high of 1,724,328 by the end of October 2020 despite the COVID-19.

### **2 Particulars**

#### **(1) Changes in the number of foreign residents by status of residence (Reference 6)**

Changes in the number and ratio of foreign residents by status of residence over the 10-year period from 2010 to 2020 show that at the end of 2010, “Permanent Resident” status was the largest group of foreign residents (565,089 or 27.1%), followed by “Special Permanent Resident” (399,106 or 19.1%), “Student” (201,511 or 9.7%), “Spouse or Child of Japanese National” (196,248 or 9.4%), and “Long-Term Resident” (194,602 or 9.3%), and that at the end of 2020, “Permanent Resident” status was the largest group of foreign residents (807,517 or 28.0%), followed by “Technical Intern Training” (378,200 or 13.1%), “Special Permanent Resident” (304,430 or 10.5%), “Engineer/Specialist in

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<sup>14</sup> The data is based on the Population Estimates (as of October 1 of each year) and the Population Census (the total population in 2020 is based on preliminary results) of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications. The total population in 2011 was 127,834,233.

<sup>15</sup> “Foreign resident” refers to mid- to long-term residents and special permanent residents.

<sup>16</sup> According to the Number of Foreign Nationals Entering Japan and the Number of Japanese Nationals Departing Japan in 2020 released by the Immigration Services Agency (on March 31, 2021), the number of foreign arrivals in 2020 was 4,307,257, a decrease of 26,879,922 (86.2%) from the previous year.

<sup>17</sup> The data is based on the Population Estimates (as of October 1 of each year) of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications.

Humanities/International Services” (283,380 or 9.8%), and “Student” (280,901 or 9.7%). Although “Permanent Residents” status continues to account for more than a quarter of the total number of foreign residents, there was a significant increase in the number of “Technical Intern Training” and “Engineer/Specialist in Humanities/International Services” status holders.

## **(2) Changes in the number of foreign residents by nationality and region (References 7 and 8)**

Changes in the number and ratio of foreign residents by nationality and region over the 10-year period from 2010 to 2020 show that at the end of 2010, residents from “China” were the largest group (678,391 or 32.5%), followed by “Korea” (560,799 or 26.9%)<sup>18</sup>, “Brazil” (228,702 or 11.0%), “Philippines” (200,208 or 9.6%), and “Peru” (52,385 or 2.5%), and at the end of 2020, residents from “China” were the largest group (778,112 or 27.0%), followed by “Vietnam” (448,053 or 15.5%), “Republic of Korea (R.O. Korea)” and “Korea” (454,122 or 15.7%)<sup>19</sup>, “Philippines” (279,660 or 9.7%), and “Brazil” (208,538 or 7.2%). The numbers of residents from “R.O. Korea,” “Korea,” and “Brazil” decreased, while the number of residents from “China” increased, although their ratio to the total population of foreign residents decreased. Meanwhile, the number of residents from “Vietnam,” which was 41,354 at the end of 2010, increased significantly to 448,053 by the end of 2020.

Changes in the number of foreign workers by nationality and region also show a significant increase in the number of foreign workers from “Vietnam,” which replaced “China” (419,431) as the largest foreign workforce (443,998) by the end of October 2020.

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<sup>18</sup> In the former Registered Alien Statistics, those with “Korea” and those with “R.O. Korea” in the nationality section of their alien registration card are recorded together as “Korea.”

<sup>19</sup> The Statistics on Foreign Residents in Japan published by the Immigration Services Agency have divided “Korea” into “R.O. Korea” and “Korea” since the end of 2012. For comparison with the number of residents from “Korea” at the end of 2010, however, this report uses the expression “‘R.O. Korea’ and ‘Korea’” and shows the total number of residents from “R.O. Korea” and “Korea.” The number of residents from “R.O. Korea” at the end of 2020 was 426,908.

### **(3) Changes in the number of foreign residents by age (by age group of five years) (References 9, 10, and 11)**

Changes in the number of foreign residents by age group of five years over the 10-year period from 2010 to 2020 show that while the number of foreign residents in all age groups increased, the number of foreign residents in their 20s in particular increased by about 300,000<sup>20</sup>. The number of elderly (referring to the age group of 65 and older; hereinafter the same) foreign residents at the end of 2020 was 190,947, accounting for 6.6% of the number of foreign residents, which is lower than the ratio of the population aged 65 and older to the total population of Japan (the population aging rate) which stands at 28.8% (as of January 1, 2021)<sup>21</sup>.

Over the 10-year period from 2010 to 2020, the number of elderly foreign residents increased by 59,677, from 131,270 at the end of 2010 to 190,947 at the end of 2020, which is expected to continue increasing as more foreign residents are settling in Japan.

In terms of statuses of residence, foreign residents in their 20s were mostly “Students,” “Technical Intern Training,” or “Engineer/Specialist in Humanities/International Services.” The ratio of “Permanent Resident” increases gradually from those in their mid-30s, and “Permanent Resident” account for a majority of those in their mid-40s to mid-60s.

### **(4) Changes in the number of foreign residents by gender (References 11 and 12)**

At the end of 2020, the ratio of female foreign residents to the total foreign population was 50.5%, slightly higher than the male ratio of 49.5%.

In terms of the age groups of male and female foreign residents, more men were in their 20s and 30s while more women were in their 40s and older. In terms of the age groups and statuses of residence, more than 60% of women in their mid-40s to mid-60s were “Permanent Residents.”

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<sup>20</sup> While the data as of the end of 2010 is based on the former Registered Alien Statistics, the data as of the end of 2020 is based on the Statistics on Foreign Residents in Japan published by the Immigration Services Agency. From the end of 2010 to the end of 2020, the “0 to 9” age group increased by 46,141, the “10 to 19” age group by 21,976, the “20 to 29” age group by 302,079, the “30 to 39” age group by 147,618, the “40 to 49” age group by 44,987, the “50 to 59” age group by 105,026, the “60 to 69” age group by 47,157, the “70 to 79” age group by 27,600, and the “80 and older” age group by 10,381.

<sup>21</sup> The Population Estimates of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications show that as of January 1, 2021, Japan had a total population of 125.63 million (an estimate based on the 2015 Population Census) and a population aged 65 and over of 36.215 million, which accounted for 28.8% of the total population (the population aging rate).

## **(5) Changes in the foreign population<sup>22</sup> by local government**

Changes in the foreign population by prefecture and municipality over the five-year period from 2015 to 2020 show that both in 2015 and 2020, local governments in three major metropolitan areas<sup>23</sup> had the largest foreign population with no noticeable changes<sup>24</sup>. The changes in the percentage of foreign nationals in municipal populations over the five-year period from 2015 to 2020 show that at the end of 2015, Ikuno Ward, Osaka City had the largest percentage (27.3%), followed by Oizumi Town, Gunma (18.5%), Shinjuku Ward (12.3%), Naka Ward, Yokohama City (11.3%), and Naniwa Ward, Osaka City (11.2%), and that at the end of 2020, Shimukappu Village, Hokkaido had the largest percentage (47.0%), followed by Ikuno Ward, Osaka City (28.4%), Oizumi Town, Gunma (23.5%), Kutchan Town, Hokkaido (17.3%), and Rusutsu Village, Hokkaido (17.0%)<sup>25</sup>.

The foreign population growth rates by municipality from 2015 to 2020 show that Kutchan Town, Hokkaido had the largest growth rate (226.0%), followed by Kato City, Hyogo (197.2%), Hakuba Village, Nagano (181.1%), Tadotsu Town, Kagawa (148.4%), and Nabari City, Mie (137.0%)<sup>26</sup>. This growth has been significant not only in urban municipalities with large populations, but also rural municipalities with small populations.

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<sup>22</sup> The foreign population refers to the population of foreign nationals eligible for the Basic Resident Registration System, or more specifically, the population of mid- to long-term residents, special permanent residents, foreign nationals granted permission for temporary refuge, foreign nationals granted permission for provisional stay, foreign nationals granted transitional stay due to birth, and foreign nationals granted transitional stay due to loss of nationality.

<sup>23</sup> “Three major metropolitan areas” refers to a generic term for the Tokyo area (Tokyo, Kanagawa, Saitama, and Chiba), the Nagoya area (Aichi, Gifu, and Mie), and the Osaka area (Osaka, Hyogo, Kyoto, and Nara).

<sup>24</sup> The data is based on “Population, Demographic Changes, and Number of Households Based on the Basic Register of Residents” published by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications. In both 2015 and 2020, Saitama, Tokyo, Kanagawa, Aichi, and Osaka were the top prefectures with the most foreign nationals, while Yokohama, Nagoya, Kyoto, Osaka, and Kobe were the top cities with the most foreign nationals.

<sup>25</sup> The data is based on “Population, Demographic Changes, and Number of Households Based on the Basic Register of Residents” published by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications.

<sup>26</sup> The data is based on “Population, Demographic Changes, and Number of Households Based on the Basic Register of Residents” published by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications. The survey targeted local governments with a foreign population of 1,000 or more as of January 1, 2020.



## **Chapter 3 Direction of the Initiatives to Realize a Society of Harmonious Coexistence with Foreign Nationals**

As a mid- to long-term task to be addressed in order to realize the vision of the ideal society of harmonious coexistence with foreign nationals as shown in Chapter 1, the government needs to first and foremost provide foreign nationals with opportunities to learn the Japanese language needed for daily life and according to their life stages. From this perspective, we will discuss the initiatives such as Japanese language education for smooth communication and participation in society as the first key point.

The government also needs to ensure that foreign nationals have quick access to necessary support in order to enable all to live safely and comfortably without being left behind not only during ordinary times, but also in emergencies such as the COVID-19. From this perspective, we will discuss disseminating information to foreign nationals and strengthening consultation systems for foreign nationals as the second key point.

In addition, it is necessary to study measures necessary for foreign nationals to live in or transition between the life stages of “infancy,” “school stage,” “adolescence and adulthood,” and “senior stage,” while considering foreign nationals from multiple perspectives by linking each life stage with life activities, such as schooling and employment. From this perspective, we will discuss support for each life stage and life cycle as the third key point.

To perform these three key points, it is important that the government plan and formulate measures that fully reflect the actual living conditions of foreign nationals. When implementing these measures, the government should ensure that all people, including foreign nationals, understand the significance of building a society together, and promote close cooperation among relevant organizations that contribute to the support of foreign nationals and adequate residency management. From this perspective, we will discuss initiatives to establish the foundation of a society of harmonious coexistence as the fourth key point.

### **1 Initiatives Such as Japanese Language Education for Smooth Communication and Participation in Society**

#### **(1) Current situation and issues**

##### **a. Provide opportunities for Japanese language education**

The government has taken various measures to provide opportunities for Japanese language education in a region, such as more support for opening Japanese language schools in municipalities where there were none before.

As of November 2020, however, as many as 580,000 foreign residents lived

in such municipalities, and it is still difficult to say that foreign residents are provided with sufficient opportunities to receive Japanese language education.

While the government provides foreign residents with information on social rules and systems, some local governments offer a daily life orientation program for new foreign residents. Regional discrepancies in the availability and range of such public support have caused differences in their understanding of Japan's customs and social systems.

**b. Structured Japanese language learning at each life stage**

Although Japanese language education for each life stage, such as Japanese language education at schools and workplaces, is independently provided by relevant ministries and agencies, foreign residents find it difficult to learn Japanese in a structured manner according to their needs and levels because there is no standard for the Japanese level required for each life stage.

**c. Improvement of the quality of Japanese language education**<sup>27</sup>

Japanese language teachers at Japanese language education institutions<sup>27</sup> vary in quality and ability and have difficulty building long-term careers mainly due to inadequate compensation. It is therefore essential to improve the quality and quantity of Japanese language teachers.

**(2) Direction of the initiatives**

It is important for all foreign nationals to understand Japanese language and customs and social systems in order to live safely and comfortably without being left behind not only during ordinary times, but also in emergencies like the COVID-19.

From this perspective, the government needs to provide them with opportunities to learn Japanese for daily life and emergencies and to understand Japanese customs and social systems.

In addition, it is important to enable them to access Japanese language education that fits their individual needs and levels from anywhere at any time so that they can learn the necessary Japanese and fully demonstrate their Japanese proficiency when entering a new life stage, such as progressing to higher-level education or getting a job.

When providing these opportunities, it is necessary to ensure that certain educational standards and enough teachers are provided in Japanese language education institutions.

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<sup>27</sup> A “Japanese language education institution” refers to the “institution providing Japanese language education” as defined in Article 7 of the Act on Promotion of Japanese Language Education.

For this purpose, the government needs to continue its current efforts to improve Japanese language education and discuss new actions described below.

**a. Establishment of an environment that enables foreign nationals to acquire the Japanese language skills necessary for daily life**

(a) Provide opportunities for Japanese language education aimed at acquiring the level of Japanese language necessary for daily life, and providing support for participating orientation programs in order to adapt themselves smoothly to society

In cooperation with local governments and companies, the government should provide foreign nationals with opportunities to learn Japanese for daily life that fit their needs and levels at Japanese language education institutions at free of charge for a certain period.

For this purpose, the government should consider providing human resources and systems that assess the Japanese learning needs and Japanese levels of households that include a foreign national soon after their arrival and help them create learning plans and learn Japanese language according to their individual learning needs and levels so that foreign nationals can learn Japanese language at a Japanese language education institution that meets their learning needs and levels (see Item d (b), Section 4 (2), Chapter 3).

In order to provide opportunities to learn Japanese language nationwide, the government should also make more efforts to increase the availability of Japanese language education through the Program to Promote the Elimination of Communities without Japanese Language Classes and other relevant programs.

Furthermore, the government needs to offer daily life orientation programs (which provide basic information necessary to live in Japan, such as social rules and manners) because foreign nationals need to understand Japanese customs and social systems as well as the language to access the information necessary for daily life, and many of them want to learn Japanese out of their interest in Japanese culture and society. Therefore, the government is responsible for helping local governments and companies offer free daily life orientation programs.

When providing the support concerned, the government should inform foreign nationals of Japanese language and daily life orientation programs at every opportunity, including through residence status applications, consultation services at the Foreign Residents Support Center (hereinafter

referred to as “FRESC”) and at local government support desks, as well as through social media.

(b) Create curricula and teaching materials for learning Japanese for daily life

When the government provides foreign nationals with support for participating in a Japanese language program that teaches Japanese for daily life or a daily life orientation program, the Agency for Cultural Affairs, the Immigration Services Agency, and other relevant ministries and agencies should work closely to create curricula and teaching materials.

(c) Provide online courses

The COVID-19 has prompted nationwide Japanese language education institutions to start online courses, which have attracted remote and overseas learners. If schools combine face-to-face classes with online courses, which have such advantages as better accessibility and less time and financial burdens, they can make learning more effective. For this reason, the government and Japanese language education institutions should consider providing online courses using their existing knowledge about ICT materials development in order to maximize learning effectiveness.

**b. Establishment of an environment that enables foreign nationals to learn Japanese language in a structured manner for each life stage**

Relevant ministries and agencies should work closely to create guidelines that help foreign nationals to learn Japanese language according to their life stages so that they can see the levels of Japanese language they can acquire systematically through continuous efforts.

In order to select and participate in a Japanese language education institution which meets their learning needs and level, the government should establish a system that can objectively assess and clearly indicate the educational standards of each institutions by utilizing the evaluation criteria for Japanese language proficiency in the report on the framework of reference for Japanese language education.

**c. Promotion of initiatives that contribute to improving the quality of Japanese language education and securing professionals**

The government should establish a qualification tentatively called “Certified Teacher of Japanese” to improve the quality of Japanese language education and establish a system to allow Japanese language teachers to build a long-term career in order to make the profession sustainable. This system will encourage the proactive recruitment of motivated people, and ensure sufficient qualified

Japanese language teachers.

The government should also classify Japanese language education institutions so that foreign nationals who want to acquire the Japanese proficiency that meets their learning needs and levels can receive necessary Japanese language education.

**d. Promotion of initiatives to make it easier to learn Japanese**

In addition to the actions described above, the government needs to consider taking the following initiatives to enhance the motivation of foreign nationals to learn Japanese language.

**(a) Provide more accessible learning opportunities**

Some foreign nationals may find it difficult to attend a Japanese language education institution for reasons such as work commitments or high tuition fees even if they want to receive Japanese language education. If they are provided with more accessible opportunities to learn Japanese language, such as Japanese language classes in their workplaces, it is thought that they will be more motivated to learn Japanese language.

For this reason, the government should urge companies to provide their foreign workers with opportunities for Japanese language education that meets their individual learning needs and levels. The government should also ask economic associations to provide their member companies with necessary support and discuss the introduction of preferential treatment linked to the results of corporate efforts to develop an environment to accept foreign nationals. In addition, the government should consider providing employers with financial assistance for the costs of their learning support.

**(b) Promote interaction in communities**

Although foreign children are expected to improve their Japanese proficiencies through school classes and interaction with Japanese children in their communities, their parents have fewer opportunities to do so. The gap in Japanese proficiency between parents and children can lead to miscommunication between the two, and may also isolate them in the community.

The government should therefore consider financial supporting social events with local foreign residents in order to provide foreign parents and children with opportunities to learn Japanese and deepen their relationship with their communities through interaction with local residents.

## **2 Disseminating Information to Foreign Nationals/Strengthening Consultation Systems for Foreign Nationals**

### **(1) Current situation and issues**

#### **a. Information dissemination to foreign nationals**

Although the Daily Life Support Portal for Foreign Nationals operated by the Immigration Services Agency provides information on measures taken by relevant ministries and agencies (including measures to support foreign residents affected by the COVID-19), there is concern that it is difficult for them to appropriately and promptly select information, such as which support suits their circumstances.

Other concerns include the lack of reader-friendliness in information provided by the government, which often consists of large amounts of text, and there is also a mismatch between the means of communication of various support information and the channels through which foreign nationals obtain it, which makes it difficult for them to receive necessary support information.

#### **b. Consultation systems for foreign nationals**

Although the government assists local governments in establishing and operating one-stop consulting counters by granting them subsidies for preparation for an environment for acceptance of foreign nationals, some local governments have difficulty securing necessary interpreters due to the increasing number of foreign nationals and the diversification of nationalities. Some local governments are calling for further assistance from the government as well as the ease of the subsidy requirements so that they can use the subsidies widely to meet their local needs<sup>28</sup>.

Since problems faced by foreign nationals are often complex and intertwined with issues of status of residence, discrimination and prejudice, economic problems, and family problems including domestic violence, relevant organizations need to cooperate closely to deal with their problems.

It was also revealed that, in response to the spread of COVID-19, the staff of municipal offices and public health centers who work at the forefront of supporting foreign residents are having difficulty communicating with foreign residents who are not proficient in Japanese, because sufficient resources for interpretation and translation are not available.

Moreover, in an emergency situation of the spread of COVID-19, it is

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<sup>28</sup> These include the Proposal to the Government for FY 2021 (August 2020) by the Greater Fukuoka Administrative Promotion Council.

necessary to quickly and accurately understand the problems faced by foreign residents and take timely support measures for them. There needs to be a system that can quickly and accurately identify their problems so that public support can be provided in a timely manner.

## **(2) Direction of the initiatives**

The government needs to improve its information dissemination and consultation systems to ensure that all foreign nationals can have prompt and reliable access to the support they need so that they can live safely and comfortably without being left behind.

When discussing the improvement of such functions, the government also needs to consider providing more information needed to encourage the social participation of foreign nationals as they are drawing public attention for their growing motivation to participate in social services and their active roles in society, such as volunteer interpreters in times of disaster.

For this reason, the government needs to continuously promote its current efforts to improve the functions and discuss the new initiatives described below.

### **a. Enhancement of information dissemination from the perspective of foreign nationals**

#### **(a) Devising the content of information (what to convey)**

It is commendable that the Daily Life Support Portal for Foreign Nationals operated by the Immigration Services Agency categorizes information on measures taken by relevant ministries and agencies, including measures to support foreign residents affected by the COVID-19, by support purpose, such as “livelihood support” and “work support,” which eliminates vertical divisions between ministries and agencies.

Some local governments have guidelines on what information should be provided in plain Japanese as well as the order of priority of such information so that foreign residents who are not proficient in Japanese language can have equal access to necessary information.

The government needs to promptly and accurately identify problems faced by foreign nationals, and promote the accurate understanding and analysis of the support and information they need by using such good practices of local governments and all available resources, such as hearings to the relevant parties conducted by the Immigration Services Agency (hereinafter referred to as “Hearings to the Relevant Parties”) (Reference 13), the Basic Survey on Foreign Residents, and regular exchanges of opinions with private support

groups. The government should also create guidelines on what information should be provided and take other measures in order to effectively communicate information needed by foreign nationals.

(b) Information conveyance (how to convey)

Information communicated by administrative agencies becomes useful only after it is read and considered necessary by foreign nationals. Therefore, “how to convey” is just as important as “what to convey.”

Since information communicated by the government often is composed of large amounts of text, the government should ensure that the information is read, recognized as necessary information at a glance, and understood by foreign nationals, such as by making visual or design improvements to the information.

(c) Devising means of conveyance

It is commendable that ministries and agencies make efforts to strengthen information dissemination to reach out to foreign nationals such as providing them with necessary support information on their websites and through their social media as well as email newsletter services.

However, there is concern about a mismatch between the means by which administrative agencies provide support information and the media through which foreign nationals obtain such information. The government therefore needs to identify the media (such as social media, word of mouth among communities, and print media) used by foreign nationals to obtain information by attribute, such as nationality, age group, gender, and area of residence. In addition, the government should use social media advertisements to target specific languages and regions or take other measures for effective communication in order to ensure that foreign nationals who need support can receive necessary information.

Mynaportal, the portal for the Individual Number System, sends tailor-made and push-type notifications on various information useful for daily life. Its information system should be modified so that the portal can also send information on stay in Japan and entry and departure procedures for foreign nationals (for the use of Mynaportal, see Item d (a), Section 4 (2), Chapter 3).

**b. Strengthening the consultation system to help foreign nationals with their problems**

(a) Strengthening the support for one-stop consulting counters

From the perspective of improving the convenience of the one-stop



consulting counters and other support sections of local governments, the government should secure interpreters on behalf of local governments and provide interpretation services for foreign residents visiting such support sections and their staff.

In addition, the government should provide one-stop consulting counters with support that meets the needs of local governments, such as creating one-stop consulting counter guidelines and establishing a database of good support practices by gathering and analyzing the previous efforts of one-stop consulting counters. The government should also consider reviewing the requirements for subsidies for preparation for an environment for the acceptance of foreign nationals in order to promote the establishment of one-stop consulting counters.

(b) Promotion of cooperation among relevant organizations and establishment of a supporters' network for foreign nationals in local communities

Since problems faced by foreign nationals are often complex and intertwined with issues of status of residence, discrimination and prejudice, economic problems, and family problems including domestic violence, relevant organizations need to work closely to deal with their problems.

In addition to the above actions in (a), the government should provide on-site support through regional cooperation among relevant organizations and consider establishing consultation services jointly operated by multiple organizations, like the FRESC, in order to enable local governments and national government organizations, including Regional Immigration Services Bureaus, to work together.

Moreover, the Immigration Services Agency should promote the building of regional support networks for foreign nationals that meet regional needs, provide information on the government's support through private support groups, and establish a system that can promptly and accurately identify problems faced by foreign nationals.

(c) Train consultation service specialists for foreign nationals

From the perspective of providing better support, including consultation services for foreign nationals, the government should discuss the creation of a system to train and certify staff to coordinate comprehensive support (for discussions on a system to train and certify personnel to coordinate comprehensive support, see Item d (b), Section 4 (2), Chapter 3).

**c. Providing information and consultation services in multiple**

## **languages and further promoting the use of plain Japanese**

Efforts should be continued to provide information and consultation services in multiple languages.

The staff of local governments who work at the forefront of supporting foreign residents should be able to provide foreign residents who are not proficient in Japanese with necessary information and consultation services in plain Japanese even if necessary interpretation and translation resources are not available. For this purpose, the government should provide plain Japanese training for local government officials, promote the development and introduction of tools for AI-based automatic translation into plain Japanese, and consider launching a plain Japanese proficiency test.

In addition, the government should promote the use of plain Japanese through those efforts so that local government officials can communicate smoothly with foreign residents even in life-threatening situations such as disasters and medical treatment.

### **3 Support for Each Life Stage and Life Cycle**

#### **(1) Current situation and issues**

The government provides support to foreign nationals in the life stage of “infancy,” “school stage,” “adolescence and adulthood,” and “senior stage.” Our study based on the Hearings to the Relevant Parties and other surveys has found that more support is necessary in each life stage. In particular, as the population of elderly foreign nationals is increasing, there is a lack of measures focused on the “senior stage” group in the Comprehensive Measures (Reference 14). Although the government needs to discuss support necessary for foreign nationals in this life stage, it has yet to understand the circumstances and challenges of elderly foreign nationals.

If a foreign national participates in Japanese society as an international student in the life stage of “adolescence and adulthood” and returns home after working in Japan for a few years, or if a foreign national continues living in Japan from their birth until they reach the life stage of “senior stage,” the foreign national lives in Japanese society, transitioning from one life stage to another according to their own choices. However, they often face challenges and need support when enrolling in compulsory schooling, progressing to higher-level education, entering the workforce, or transitioning to a new life stage.

#### **(2) Direction of the initiatives**

The government needs to continuously promote its current efforts for each life stage and discuss the new actions described below.

**a. Support for foreign nationals mainly during infancy, school stage, and the early stage of adolescence and adulthood (e.g., support for pregnancy, childbirth, child rearing, schooling, and higher education)**

Among support for foreign children, education is the foundation of life in Japanese society and very important for them in order to achieve independence and self-fulfillment in the future.

The government needs to take the support measures described in (a) to (e) below, such as promoting enrollment into compulsory schooling and employment afterwards, while being aware of support at each stage of life, including pregnancy, childbirth, child rearing, and other preschool stages, as well as career development, so that foreign children can be hopeful about their future.

From the perspective of promoting more foreign children to enroll in compulsory schooling and being discouraged from dropping out of high school, it is essential that their parents fully understand the importance of compulsory education and higher-level education. For this purpose, the government should establish a system that informs parents of future opportunities available for their children, such as by providing them with schooling information before their arrival or before their children go to preschool<sup>29</sup>.

(a) Establishment of an environment that facilitates child rearing

In order to make it easier for foreign parents to raise their children in their communities without both being isolated, the government should conduct a survey of the child rearing environment and needs of foreign nationals so as to provide support that prevents their isolation in their communities, including support for pregnancy and childbirth, and study support measures based on the survey results.

(b) Keep track of the enrollment of foreign children in compulsory schooling and support for establishing preschools

○ Keep track of the enrollment of foreign children in compulsory schooling

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<sup>29</sup> “Preschool” refers to “any place that provides foreign children below school-age and their parents with education or support to help them adapt smoothly to school life” (the Report on the Provision of Better Education to Foreign Children and Students (March 2020) published by the Advisory Panel of Experts for the Provision of Better Education to Foreign Children and Students).

The government should establish a system where local governments (including their boards of education), the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, Regional Immigration Services Bureaus, and other relevant organizations work together to manage and keep track of the regional enrollment of foreign children in compulsory schooling in an integrated manner and support their enrollment in compulsory schooling. In order to establish such a system, the government should discuss how to ensure that foreign children undergo a medical examination before entering school. The government should also establish a nationwide system where local governments provide foreign parents with guidance and support concerning enrollment in compulsory schooling as to ensure that necessary arrangements for enrollment are made for all school-age foreign children soon after their arrival.

Infancy is a critical period for forming the foundation of a lifelong personality, including feelings, motivation, attitude, and basic lifestyle habits. Since preschool education is important for children to lead a fulfilling life, the government should ascertain the preschool education of foreign children, including the attendance of foreign children at kindergartens and nursery schools.

○ Support for children who are not enrolled in compulsory schooling

The government and local governments should provide necessary support to children who, for a variety of reasons, are not enrolled in compulsory schooling, such as support for Japanese and native language instruction with the cooperation of NPOs and other organizations in order to facilitate school attendance, so that they can enter public school<sup>30</sup>.

○ Support the establishment of preschools

Although some local governments provide preschool programs for foreign children of preschool-age and their parents in accordance with local needs, they vary in their availability and services. For this reason, the government should promote the establishment of preschools and

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<sup>30</sup> A good example of support for the school attendance of foreign children is the Rainbow Bridge Class Project in the Program to Support the School Attendance of the Children of Foreign Residents. This program was conducted from FY2009 to FY2014 in order to provide opportunities to learn Japanese and develop learning habits so that foreign children who became unable to go to school due to the economic crisis in the fall of 2008 were smoothly transferred to public school. In FY2015, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology launched its successor, the Program to Promote the School Attendance of Foreign Residents.

improve their quality by creating and providing preschool manuals and curricula. In this process, the government should take into account the advanced efforts of local governments and differences in the circumstances of local governments.

Since there is concern that scholarships and other support programs that are available to foreign children are not well known or utilized, preschool programs, including other available support programs, should be made known to all foreign nationals.

- (c) Establish a Japanese language teaching system that considers the native languages and cultures of foreign children

It is important to ensure that foreign children can learn Japanese in connection with their native languages in order to develop their identity, Japanese language skills, and cognitive abilities, and work with a global mindset backed by their multiple cultural backgrounds.

For this purpose, the government needs to promote the efforts of boards of education and schools to cooperate with NPOs, international exchange associations, or other groups to promote efforts to provide all foreign children who need Japanese language instruction with opportunities to experience their native languages and cultures inside and outside of schools curricular and extracurricular activities.

- (d) Provide foreign children with total career development

In order to provide foreign children with support for career development, the government needs to further promote the current measures and consider taking the measures described below.

- Provide information on school attendance before arrival

Depending on when they arrive in Japan and where they reside in Japan, foreign children may not be able to utilize the special admission quota for foreign students when applying to public high schools or may suffer other study disadvantages. The national government and local governments should therefore provide them with necessary information on school attendance before their arrival so that they will not be left behind upon beginning their life in Japanese society.

- Provide role models to motivate foreign children to study

The government should establish a system where foreign students can be exposed to various career options through interaction with role models (older foreign residents), field trips, and other opportunities in school

education, so that they will be motivated to learn by having hopes for their own career paths (Reference 15).

○ Other Admission Support

According to the result of “FY2020 Survey on the Improvement of Student Selections for Public High School Enrollment” conducted by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, 12 prefectures do not give special consideration to foreign students in student selections for public high school enrollment.

For this reason, from the perspective of increasing their opportunities to progress to higher-level education while securing educational opportunities for Japanese students, the government and local governments should promote introduce a special admission quota for and other special considerations for foreign students in high school examinations.

Moreover, the government should identify support needs and discuss support measures that prevent foreign high school students from dropping out, help dropouts restart their studies, provide them with places to gather in their communities, and help them find employment, while keeping in mind that high school students who need Japanese language instruction are more likely to drop out than other high school students<sup>31</sup>. From the perspective of providing study opportunities to those who do not complete compulsory education for reasons such as nonattendance, the government should further promote efforts to establish a night junior high school in every prefecture and ordinance-designated city.

(e) Support considering the legal status and roles of schools for foreign students

In light of the fact that some students at schools for foreign students will be mid- to long-term residents in Japan, being enrolled in a school for foreign students should not put them at a disadvantage compared to foreign children enrolled in public schools. However, students who are enrolled in schools for foreign students face difficulties in progressing to higher-level education as they are ineligible to take public high school entrance examinations even if their schools are recognized as miscellaneous schools.

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<sup>31</sup> According to “Survey on Acceptance of Children and Students Who Require Japanese Language Education (FY2018)” conducted by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, although the dropout rate of all high school students (excluding the students of special needs high schools) was 1.3%, that of high school students who need Japanese language teaching (excluding the students of special needs high schools) was 9.6%.

In addition, amid the COVID-19, it was revealed that some schools for foreign students cannot take sufficient measures against infections because they are not provided with enough information on prevention, and other schools for foreign students cannot ensure the health of their students because they do not conduct regular medical checkups for their students.

According to the Survey on the School Attendance of Children of Foreign Nationals conducted by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology in May 2019, foreign children who may not be enrolled in compulsory schooling may include those who go to schools for foreign students instead of public schools. It is therefore important for the government to cooperate with schools for foreign students in order to understand the actual school attendance of foreign children.

The government needs to recognize the above problems and provide flexible support based on the legal status and roles of schools for foreign students.

**b. Support for foreign nationals, especially those in adolescence and adulthood (e.g., support for employment)**

In order to improve their global competitiveness, it is important that companies understand that human resources with various backgrounds can vitalize their organizations and use the diversity for innovation.

In this respect, as detailed in the Introduction section, the SDGs Action Plan 2021 shows specific measures including the need to promote diversity management, which enables diverse human resources, including foreign workers, to maximize their potential to create innovations and reach other achievements.

Tolerant workplaces in terms of personnel systems and corporate culture are essential for organizations where diverse human resources, including foreign employees, can demonstrate their abilities. The government therefore needs to urge companies, through economic associations, to change their mindset and corporate culture in order to create a better working environment for foreign workers.

The government has made various measures to lower the turnover rate of foreign workers based on the understanding that effective workplace communication is necessary for a low turnover rate.

Nevertheless, some problems have been identified, such as Japanese companies expecting foreign workers to have higher Japanese language skills

than necessary, the lack of multilingual or plain Japanese translations of work regulations and operational manuals, and even when translated to different languages, they fail to explain the Japanese working culture behind the work regulations.

Furthermore, amid the COVID-19, some Japanese companies decreased the working days of their foreign workers and dismissed those who did not understand Japanese.

Under these circumstances, the government needs to further promote its current measures and urge companies to take the following initiatives in order to encourage them to cooperate in development of an environment for the acceptance of foreign nationals.

- Some companies require foreign workers to have the N1 level of the Japanese-Language Proficiency Test<sup>32</sup> or the equivalent. However, they should use tests that are deemed adequate by fully considering the characteristics, targets, and difficulty levels of the tests published by the testing organizations, and ensure that their recruiting plans reflect the levels of Japanese language required for the expected duties of foreign workers.
- In order to achieve effective workplace communication, companies should promote the mutual understanding of their Japanese and foreign employees by helping their foreign workers learn the Japanese necessary for their work and promote the use of plain Japanese as a tool of communication with their foreign workers.
- When translating work regulations and operational manuals, companies should keep in mind that behind the communication gap between Japanese and foreign workers and the quick turnover of foreign workers, there may be a lack of understanding of Japanese working culture by foreign workers.
- Foreign workers are vulnerable to economic downturns and tend to be dismissed more often than Japanese workers in the event of downsizing. Under these circumstances, it is important for companies to provide their

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<sup>32</sup> The Japanese-Language Proficiency Test is conducted in Japan by the Japan Educational Exchanges and Services and overseas by the Japan Foundation with the cooperation of local organizations for non-native Japanese speakers to measure and certify their Japanese proficiency. The test levels are classified into five levels from N1 to N5. N1 is the highest level and requires the ability to understand logically complex and abstract Japanese used in newspaper editorials and critiques, coherent conversations, news reports, and lectures.



foreign workers with more training opportunities suitable to their Japanese language levels in order to help them acquire the skills or qualifications for job security. For this purpose, companies should provide their foreign workers with training opportunities with the aim of supporting job security and career advancement by bearing part of the training cost.

When urging companies to take the above measures, the government should ask economic associations to support their member companies as well as share with them good practices of hiring foreign nationals (Reference 16) as to secure their cooperation. Through these efforts, the government should help foreign workers have job security and more career opportunities and establish a job matching system.

The government should also consider introducing preferential treatment linked to the results of corporate efforts to develop an environment to accept foreign nationals.

**c. Support for foreign nationals, especially those in old age (e.g., support for long-term care)**

The Comprehensive Measures do not include measures focused on foreign nationals who grow old in Japan<sup>33</sup>. With the population of elderly foreign nationals increasing, issues concerning them, such as aging and long-term care, financial security after retirement, and issues surrounding death in the context of cultural and religious diversity, are going to be a challenge on an everyday life level.

Some foreign nationals are not eligible for social insurance programs, such as long-term care and pension programs, due to poor understanding of eligibility by either the employer or the foreign national. On the other hand, some foreign nationals from countries with which Japan has not concluded a social security agreement<sup>34</sup> may ultimately receive little or no pension benefits

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<sup>33</sup> Some local governments have their own welfare benefit programs for foreign residents who are ineligible for public pension benefits.

<sup>34</sup> Some old-age pension plans require their members to pay for the plans for a certain period of time to receive benefits. People who work overseas for a short period of time may not be able to secure their eligibility for an old-age pension plan because many of them cannot meet the payment requirements to be eligible to receive the pension benefits of the plan even if they participate in a public pension program in that foreign country for that period.

Under a social security agreement, the total period of participation in the pension systems of both countries can be added up so that, if it exceeds the minimum period required to receive pension benefits, pension benefits corresponding to the period of participation in each country's system can be received from their respective systems.

because the pension premiums they paid in their home countries do not lead to pension benefits in Japan. These safety nets need to be considered for these foreign nationals.

For this reason, with regard to the following three aspects, the government needs to understand the circumstances and support needs of foreign nationals, including elderly foreign nationals who have no relatives to depend on<sup>35</sup>, and discuss safety nets for them.

- Long-term care insurance system, which plays an important role in welfare policies for the elderly
- Pension system, which serves as the important foundation of financial security after retirement
- How to die with human dignity

In terms of safety nets for elderly foreign nationals, the government should discuss how the social insurance system should be structured so that it can be understood by all people, including foreign nationals, bearing in mind that the social insurance system is a system of compulsory participation based on the spirit of social solidarity and mutual aid.

#### **4 Initiatives to Establish the Foundation of Society of Harmonious Coexistence**

Measures related to key points 1 to 3 should fully reflect the actual living conditions of foreign nationals. When implementing these measures, the government must promote close cooperation among relevant organizations that contribute to providing support for foreign nationals and adequate residency management while gaining a broad public understanding of harmonious coexistence with foreign nationals.

In order to attract more foreign nationals who want to work in Japan, the government should foster an environment in which they can enjoy a secure and continued stay in Japan and demonstrate their abilities to their fullest, by taking measures to encourage their social participation.

This section presents issues and the direction of the initiatives concerning the foundation for development of an environment for the acceptance of foreign nationals under the above circumstances.

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<sup>35</sup> According to Shigehiro Ikegami's article "The Brazilian Family and Crisis: 30 Years After the Amendment to the Immigration Control Act in 1990" (page 62 of *Migration Policy Review*, No. 13 of 2021), in the FY2020 Shizuoka Prefecture Basic Survey of Multicultural Coexistence (survey of foreign residents), of the 92 Brazilian residents in the prefecture who answered "living alone," 42.4% were in their 50s and 19.6% were in their 60s or older, accounting for 60% of the respondents.

## **(1) Current situation and issues**

Described below are issues concerning the groundwork for a society of harmonious coexistence.

### **a. Raising awareness to realize a society of harmonious coexistence**

In order to create a society of harmonious coexistence, all people, including foreign nationals, need to understand the significance of working together to build society.

However, there is still discrimination and prejudice against foreign nationals in various social settings, such as schools, workplaces, and communities<sup>36</sup>, and making it necessary to raise public awareness of the need to create a society of harmonious coexistence.

### **b. Creating a system to acquire knowledge of social systems**

Foreign nationals are also expected to fulfill their public obligations, such as paying taxes and social insurance premiums, and act responsibly as members of society.

Despite these expectations, some foreign nationals unintentionally fail to fulfill their public obligations or cannot receive necessary public services because they do not fully understand Japanese culture, customs, or social systems, including the tax and social security systems.

The reason for this situation is that the government and local governments are not enough to ensure that foreign nationals fully understand Japanese social systems. It is therefore important to create systems that help foreign nationals fully understand Japanese culture, customs, and social systems, including tax and social security systems.

### **c. Grasping the actual living conditions of foreign nationals**

Considering the impact of the COVID-19, the government has promptly provided adequate support to technical intern trainees who were dismissed or could not continue their internship by allowing them to find new work in a designated industry and granting them “Designated Activities” status. However, the government still needs to do more to make such support known to more foreign nationals and used by them.

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<sup>36</sup> In the FY2020 Basic Survey on Foreign Residents conducted by the Immigration Services Agency, in response to the question, “What problems do your children face at school?”, 7.8% of the respondents answered “Bullied for their foreign roots,” as the most common answer, along with “Not understanding Japanese.” In addition, in response to the question “When have you experienced discrimination?”, the most common answer was “When searching for somewhere to live” (24.6%), followed by “When working” (24.1%) and “When searching for a job” (19.6%).

In order to provide detailed support during ordinary times that meets the needs in each of their life stages and cycles as well as social demands and from the perspective of gender equality, the government needs to understand the actual living conditions of foreign nationals through government statistics and public opinion polls. However, it is difficult to fully understand their actual living conditions because only a limited number of government statistics focus on “nationality,” “status of residence,” “country/region of origin,” and “main language spoken” as survey items.

**d. Collection of information and cooperation among relevant organizations for the support and residence management of foreign nationals**

The government needs to make more efforts to strengthen its information collection functions in cooperation with private support groups and other organizations in order to identify the problems and support needs of foreign nationals and provide them with support that meets their needs.

Although relevant organizations are working to provide better support to foreign nationals, it is important for them to cooperate with each other in order to address their diversified and complex problems. For this purpose, it is necessary to develop human resource for coordinating support provided from relevant organizations to meet individual support needs.

Moreover, in order to reduce the burden of foreign nationals in the application process for status of residence and properly manage their residency, the Immigration Services Agency needs to improve convenience by realizing the smooth immigration examination and achieve proper residency management, by efficiently obtaining the information necessary for residency management (information on the payment of taxes and social insurance premiums and identity) through linkage with the Individual Number (My Number) system.

Foreign nationals have been subject to the Basic Resident Registration System since 2012. Nevertheless, some local governments do not make use of data available from their Basic Resident Register, such as the population of foreign nationals, to make their services more convenient for foreign residents.

**e. Social participation of foreign nationals**

In terms of developing an environment to accept foreign nationals, the Comprehensive Measures for “Foreign Nationals as Residents” finalized in December 2006 required the government to “it is necessary to create an

environment where foreign nationals can use the same public services as Japanese as members of society.” This principle is still advocated by the Comprehensive Measures revised in FY2021<sup>37</sup>.

Thus, Japan’s initiatives to develop an environment to accept foreign nationals have centered on a social welfare approach, with insufficient efforts to help them participate in society and demonstrate their abilities to their fullest.

There are growing expectations for foreign nationals as members of society because many among them are playing active roles in Japan, such as young foreign students who received education in Japan, foreign researchers and executives who contribute to Japan’s social and economic development with their advanced knowledge and skills, and foreign residents who volunteer to interpret in times of disaster and who join a residents’ association or volunteer to be in a fire brigade or on a PTA committee. It is therefore necessary to provide more opportunities to foreign nationals who want to participate in society.

## **(2) Direction of the initiatives**

### **a. Raising awareness to realize a society of harmonious coexistence**

In order to create a society of harmonious coexistence, all people, including foreign nationals, need to respect the diversity that each of us has and grow together through interaction with foreign nationals.

For this purpose, all people, including foreign nationals, should understand the significance of working together to build society and participate actively in the efforts to create a society of harmonious coexistence. The government needs to continue its current efforts, including the activities to raise public awareness, and discuss new initiatives as described below.

#### **(a) Support regional activities to raise public awareness**

Some local governments hold events to raise public awareness of harmonious coexistence with foreign nationals in cooperation with local private support groups. They need to expand such activities to involve those who work for harmonious coexistence with foreign nationals and capture the interest of more Japanese people.

Therefore, the government needs to incorporate the theme of creating a society of harmonious coexistence into events related to human rights in order

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<sup>37</sup> The Comprehensive Measures revised in FY2021 show the government’s commitment to “making every effort to create an environment where foreign nationals can use the same public services as Japanese and live comfortably.”

to raise public awareness of human rights in society as a whole and promote that all forms of discrimination and prejudice will not be tolerated.

Linking the theme with other issues also helps expand the activities to raise public awareness of harmonious coexistence with foreign nationals. A good example of this initiative is the case of a workshop jointly organized by a local government and other organizations for the purpose of fostering entrepreneurs, which included multicultural coexistence as a theme, where participants discussed and presented business models based on the ideas of local foreign nationals<sup>38</sup>.

Such events combining “harmonious coexistence with foreign nationals” with other issues can link diversity with innovation, creation, and growth, and are very helpful in spreading the vision of a society of harmonious coexistence and promoting public understanding of the significance of working together to build society. In order to promote such events nationwide, the government should be active in making advanced initiatives known to the public and consider providing financial support to model projects.

Furthermore, the government should promote efforts to raise public interest and the understanding of harmonious coexistence with foreign residents by creating a month for raising public awareness of harmonious coexistence with foreign nationals and incorporating participatory events such as national caravans, symposiums, and essay contests during said month.

(b) Promote education about harmonious coexistence with foreign nationals in preschool and school education

Children with foreign roots are sometimes subjected to bullying at school and prejudice and discrimination in their communities.

Under these circumstances, it is important to promote efforts to deepen the understanding of harmonious coexistence with foreign nationals in preschool education, which provides the foundation for personality development, and in school education, along with regional activities to raise public awareness of harmonious coexistence with foreign nationals.

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<sup>38</sup> In November 2015, with a broad range of participants interested in entrepreneurship, community development, and design, Shiga Prefecture held Startup Weekend Shiga (Change Makers in Nagahama City)\*, an event which had a subtheme of harmonious coexistence with foreign nationals. Under the theme of services created together with people who have foreign roots, participants discussed and presented business models based on the ideas of local foreign residents.

\* Startup Weekend is a global entrepreneurship training program provided by UP Global, an NPO headquartered in Seattle, U.S.

For this purpose, the government should discuss the introduction of education about harmonious coexistence in preschool and school education, taking into account the reality of discrimination against foreign nationals and overseas advanced approaches to education about harmonious coexistence. In this process, the government should ensure that human rights education aimed at reducing prejudice and discrimination in schools is not only superficial, but substantial enough so as to confront the seeds of discrimination in the mind of children.

The government should also consider providing foreign children with opportunities to be exposed to their native languages if local circumstances require it, because language education helps cross-cultural understanding and have more confidence in themselves through opportunities to learn the culture, history, and customs of countries where their native languages are officially spoken.

**b. Creating a system to acquire knowledge of social systems**

For foreign nationals to fulfill their public obligations, such as paying taxes and social insurance premiums, it is necessary to establish a system that helps them fully understand Japanese culture, customs, and social systems.

For this purpose, the government should provide foreign nationals with information on such public obligations through daily life orientation programs (see Item a, Section 1 (2), Chapter 3) and to continuously do so after the government has done such programs.

In addition, for their secure and continued life, the government should provide them with useful information that they need for life planning (information on marriage, childbirth, higher-level education for children, and retirement life) and establish systems that helps them understand it.

**c. Improvement of government statistics to investigate on the actual living conditions of foreign nationals**

In order to discuss and provide support that meets the needs in each life stage and cycle of foreign nationals, it is important to accurately understand their actual living conditions in each life stage, focusing on what trends are seen in each attribute, such as “nationality,” “status of residence,” “country/region of origin” and “main language spoken” as well as “individuals who have roots in foreign countries,” and how foreign nationals compare with Japanese people.

Then, based on the problems identified from their actual living conditions, the government needs to improve its current measures, and plan and formulate

new measures, and introduce a KPI-based assessment system for the progress of the measures.

The Population Census<sup>39</sup>, the Vital Statistics<sup>40</sup>, and the National Survey on Migration<sup>41</sup> include nationality data while the Basic Survey on Wage Structure<sup>42</sup> includes status of residence data.

In this regard, estimates based on the Vital Statistics reveal that, for example, people from Thailand and the Philippines are prone to heart or cerebrovascular diseases<sup>43</sup>. However, public surveys that inquire about health checkups, alcohol and tobacco consumption, and other health-related habits do not include nationality data, making it impossible to identify factors that caused the aforementioned diseases. As a result, these public surveys do not help public health authorities to implement well-designed disease control measures based on actual health conditions.

In addition, some have suggested that the School Basic Survey<sup>44</sup> would enable schools to have accurate information on their foreign students by adding “by school grade and by nationality” to the School Survey Form.

The government therefore needs to discuss the new initiatives described below.

(a) Review the survey items of government statistics

The government should review and consider adding survey items to

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<sup>39</sup> The Population Census conducted by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications is the Japan’s most important statistical survey, covering all people and households living in Japan, surveying the population by age, family structure, people working and foreign nationals living in Japan.

<sup>40</sup> The Vital Statistics conducted by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare is an important statistical survey to understand Japan’s demographic changes. Covering all births, deaths, marriages, divorces, and foetal deaths reported under the Family Register Act and the Stillbirth Reporting Regulations, the survey aims to obtain data such as the total fertility rate, the average number of children a woman would bear in a lifetime, the number of deaths by cause of death, and the number of marriages and divorces by age.

<sup>41</sup> The National Survey on Migration conducted by the National Institute of Population and Social Security Research, which consists of the Annual Population and Social Security Surveys, aims to clarify recent migration trends and obtain basic data for projecting future migration.

<sup>42</sup> The Basic Survey on Wage Structure conducted by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare collects information on wages by worker attributes, such as type of employment, type of work, occupation, sex, age, school career, length of service, and occupational career.

<sup>43</sup> Reiko Hayashi, “Causes of Death of Foreign Nationals in Japan: In Comparison to Japanese and Nationals at Origin,” *Population Research Journal* (2020), Vol. 76, No. 2, pp. 218–239

<sup>44</sup> The School Basic Survey conducted by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology collects basic school data, such as the number of schools in Japan, their number of current students, and their number of graduates.



government statistics that contribute to the understanding of the living conditions of foreign nationals at each stage of life, including those with foreign roots, in order to understand what trends are seen in each attribute such as "nationality," "status of residence," "country/region of origin," and "main language spoken," and how foreign nationals compare with Japanese people.

- (b) Promote the improvement of current measures using information obtained and analyzed based on government statistics

The government should compile information obtained and analyzed based on government statistics reviewed in the above initiatives (a) into a report called the “White Paper on Harmonious Coexistence (tentative title).”

In addition, the government should then understand and identify problems with the actual living conditions of foreign nationals by listening to the opinions of experts, visualize the gap between the problems and the government’s measures, and urge relevant ministries and agencies to improve their current measures and plan and formulate necessary ones. In this process, the government should thoroughly manage the progress of its efforts by using KPIs.

In the future, when providing support to people who are not protected by national safety nets, the government should consider including foreign nationals in those who can receive the support. In this process, the government should carefully listen to the voices of those who work at the forefront of supporting foreign nationals in need and search thoroughly for potential problems even if quantitative evidence, such as government statistics, is not available.

**d. Enhancement of information collections and strengthening of cooperation among relevant organizations for the development of infrastructure to realize the society of harmonious coexistence**

In order to strengthen information collection functions and cooperation among relevant organizations to develop the infrastructure for a society of harmonious coexistence, the government needs to continue its current efforts and discuss the new initiatives described below.

- (a) Strengthen information collection functions and cooperation among relevant organizations to provide support to foreign nationals and properly manage their residency
- Strengthen information collection functions and cooperation among

relevant organizations to provide support to foreign nationals

- The government should help private support groups and other organizations build support networks for foreign nationals in order to identify their problems. In this process, the government should encourage them to build regional networks tailored to local needs by making use of the knowledge and experience of local universities, industries, and government authorities.

Accepting Environmental Coordinators assigned to the Regional Immigration Services Bureaus play an important role in helping build support networks for foreign nationals. For this reason, the government should develop the coordinators' system, such as assigning enough coordinators, offering training programs, establishing career paths for them.

In order to make support for foreign nationals sustainable, the government should also consider providing support, including financial support, to certain private support groups and supporters who serve as a bridge between administrative agencies and foreign nationals.

- Amid the COVID-19, local governments were unable to receive the information held by the government regarding the workplaces of foreign nationals. Therefore, some issues became apparent such as which made it impossible to alert foreign nationals of infections.

For this reason, the government should provide its information on foreign nationals to local governments with their consent if the provision contributes to their support or make other efforts to strengthen information-sharing among relevant organizations.

- The government should discuss how local governments can properly use information that makes the life of foreign residents more convenient, such as the population of foreign nationals compiled from their Basic Resident Register, while protecting personal information.
- Strengthen information collection functions and cooperation among relevant organizations to ensure proper residency management and improve the convenience of the application process for status of residence
- The Immigration Services Agency needs to obtain all the

information necessary for the residency management of foreign nationals (information on the payment of taxes and social insurance premiums and identity) and reduce their burden in the application process for status of residence. For this purpose, the government should consider establishing a system that enables the Agency to obtain such information directly from relevant organizations.

- The government should increase the types of statuses of residence and processes covered by online application, allow foreign nationals to apply via Mynaportal, and consider enabling them to use their own information (such as resident, tax, and social security information) on Mynaportal for their application.
- If more foreign nationals have a My Number Card as a result of the government's planned integration of residence cards with My Number Cards, they will have better access to Mynaportal. In preparation of improved accessibility, the government should make all useful information available through Mynaportal and consider increasing useful information available through Mynaportal and send tailor-made and push-type notifications on various information.

(b) Consider a system to develop and certify human resources for coordinating comprehensive support

Administrative agencies, private support groups, and key persons in communities of foreign nationals, and others need to work together to address diversified and complex problems faced by foreign nationals, such as problems with Japanese language proficiency and status of residence.

From the perspective of dissemination of information, for example, human resource for working and communicating with communities of foreign nationals are also important.

We have proposed providing human resources and systems that help foreign nationals create study plans and provide support for learning so that they can receive Japanese language education that meets their individual learning needs, according to their life stages and cycles (see Item a (a), Section 1 (2), Chapter 3). However, creating such plans requires human resources for assisting foreign nationals in their life planning and career path designing, including changing their status of residence, with accurate understanding of their household circumstances, and based on their needs.

Since solving their problems requires human resources who are familiar

with various support initiatives and who can provide comprehensive support coordination in cooperation with related organizations, the government should discuss an ideal form of certification system for such human resource for supporting foreign nationals by listening to the opinions of experts.

(c) Establish support centers for private support groups

The government should establish support centers that provide information and consultation services to private support groups and human resources for coordinating support for foreign nationals. These centers should consider implementing a system to support the activities of supporters of foreign nationals, such as networking those supporters, and offering training programs to improve their skills.

(d) Develop the foundation for strengthening cooperation among local governments

The government formulated the Plan for Promotion of Multicultural Coexistence in Local Communities to help local governments formulate their guidelines and plans on the promotion of multicultural coexistence, but it still needs to develop the foundation for local governments in order for them to respond to local needs, as there are differences in their efforts to develop an environment to accept foreign nationals.

For this purpose, it is essential to strengthen cooperation among local governments. For example, if local governments face the same challenge, such as how Japanese language education can be effectively provided to foreign residents in communities with a small population of scattered foreign residents, they should work together to overcome it. Alternatively, if they are experiencing a rapid increase in the number of foreign nationals in a short period of time, they should follow the successful cases of other local governments to develop an environment to accept foreign nationals when formulating measures.

Therefore, in order to promote cooperation among local governments and the spread of successful cases, the government should develop a system based on the Regional Economic Analysis System (RESAS)<sup>45</sup> that visualizes with

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<sup>45</sup> The RESAS (Regional Economy Society Analyzing System) is a system created by the Secretariat for the Headquarters for Overcoming Population Decline and Vitalizing Local Economy in Japan, Cabinet Secretariat and the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry in order to gather and visualize big data from the government and private sector, such as industrial structure, demographic changes, and migration.

This system primarily aims to provide prefectures and municipalities with objective data so that

maps and graphs the foreign resident data of each local government, including their attributes (e.g., nationality, status of residence, and age), ratio of their population to the total population, and the number of foreign children eligible for school attendance, and enables local governments to easily search for those who face the same issues and those who have made progress in development of an environment for the acceptance of foreign nationals.

This system should be equipped with support functions that help plan and formulate measures for harmonious coexistence, such as functions to compare the differences in the living conditions and population of local foreign residents with national averages and tips for formulating and reviewing regional guidelines and plans on the promotion of multicultural coexistence.

**e. Creating a system where foreign nationals also play an active role in a society of harmonious coexistence**

Until now, the government's efforts to develop an environment to accept foreign nationals have centered on a social welfare approach, but there has also been growing attention to the role of foreign nationals as supporters, such as interpreters, firefighters, and volunteers in times of disaster. In recent years, foreign nationals have been playing an active role in various aspects of Japanese society, such as the younger generation of foreign nationals who received their education in Japan, and researchers and executives who contribute to the social and economic development of Japan with their advanced knowledge and skills.

It is important to enable motivated foreign nationals to participate in society and demonstrate their abilities to their fullest in order to use their linguistic, cultural, and other diverse backgrounds as social resources and vitalize society. For this purpose, the government needs to continue its current efforts, such as the JET Programme<sup>46</sup>, and discuss the new initiatives described below.

- (a) Promote initiatives to encourage foreign nationals to participate in society
  - Provide foreign nationals with information and support for human resources development

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they can understand their local situation and issues, identify tasks that meet their local needs, and formulate a comprehensive regional strategy. The system is equipped with a variety of functions to support data analysis, including “suggestions,” which highlight divergences from national averages, and “case studies,” which provide tips for formulating measures based on analysis results.

<sup>46</sup> The JET Programme, or the Japan Exchange and Teaching Programme, invites young foreign nationals to Japan to be employed by local governments as e.g. assistant language teachers in order to provide better foreign language education and promote regional international exchanges.

In order to encourage foreign nationals to participate in society, the curricula for learning Japanese for daily life (see Item a (b), Section 1 (2), Chapter 3) should include opportunities to learn the skills necessary for smooth communication with Japanese and the provision of information on social participation, such as disaster management activities by residents' associations and communities, as initiatives to contribute to the development of community leaders who serve a bridge between foreign residents and Japanese residents.

In light of the increasing number of foreign nationals and their tendency to settle in Japan, the government should consider measures to indirectly support human resources development, such as the establishment of scholarship programs in fields of healthcare, welfare services, and other services where the demand for foreign service providers is expected to grow.

- Provide support for matching foreign nationals who want to participate in society with local governments

The government should consider establishing necessary systems, such as talent pools, to help match foreign nationals who want to participate in society with local governments and private support groups who want interpreters, translators, or other multicultural social workers.

- Provide more opportunities for foreign nationals to participate in local public services

As the population of foreign nationals is increasing, it is also important to find ways that enable foreign nationals familiar with Japanese society to participate in local public services.

For example, some police stations appoint local foreign residents to members of their police station councils<sup>47</sup>, which are used to listen to the opinions of local residents and ask for their support and cooperation.

The government needs to consider the appointment of foreign nationals as welfare commissioners in order to provide foreign nationals with more opportunities to participate in local public services.

- (b) Create synergy between harmonious coexistence with foreign nationals and the revitalization of local communities

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<sup>47</sup> In principle, every police station across Japan has a police station council, where the chief listens to the opinions of local residents and asks for their support and cooperation.

It is also important to consider the diversity of foreign nationals as a social resource, and to utilize it to revitalize and globalize local communities.

Among the initiatives taken by local governments, some<sup>48</sup> have taken advantage of the unique perspective of foreign nationals to revitalize their local communities, such as by uncovering new tourist attractions and effectively communicating such new attractions overseas. In order to promote such efforts to link harmonious coexistence with foreign nationals and regional revitalization at the nationwide level, the government needs to be active in making advanced efforts widely known and consider providing financial support to model projects.

(c) Promote the accreditation of overseas skill tests and qualifications

The measures (a) and (b) above aim to encourage the social participation of foreign national already residing in Japan. However, in order to attract foreign nationals who want to work in Japan, including those residing outside Japan, it is important to promote the accreditation of overseas skills tests and qualifications conducted in various fields.

For example, currently the government already accredits tests and qualifications of various countries related to information processing technology in the field of IT. However, it still needs to actively promote the accreditation of overseas tests and qualifications in the fields where foreign nationals are expected to play an important role.

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<sup>48</sup> The initiatives of local governments are presented in the Case Studies on Multicultural Coexistence (March 2017) created by the Case Studies on Multicultural Coexistence Production Working Group.

## **Closing Remarks**

All the members of this Advisory Panel have seriously and earnestly discussed based on each respective expertise on how to create a society of harmonious coexistence with foreign nationals. The Opinion summarizes the visions for the society and the direction of the initiatives needed to create it.

In order to create a society of harmonious coexistence with foreign nationals, it is necessary to link foreign nationals with those issues, such as “foreign nationals and education,” “foreign nationals and disasters,” “foreign nationals and aging,” and “foreign nationals and gender,” and to address diversified and complex issues, such as “foreign nationals, disasters, and aging.” Addressing these issues will require the close cooperation of relevant ministries and agencies, as well as government-wide initiatives. As stated in the Introduction section, we want the government to formulate a medium- to long-term action plan and promote government-wide initiatives in order to create a society of harmonious coexistence with foreign nationals under the coordination of the Immigration Services Agency.

When planning and formulating specific measures in line with the medium- to long-term action plan, as mentioned repeatedly in this report, the government should continuously spare no pains to listen to the opinions of private support groups and foreign nationals through the Hearings to the Relevant Parties and other opportunities, and reflect these opinions in the measures with a view to accurately understanding and meeting their actual needs.

In this report, we have proposed introducing a KPI-based assessment system for the progress of measures in order to realize a society of harmonious coexistence with foreign nationals. However, we believe it would also be effective to check for inadequacies and omissions in the measures taken in line with the 17 international goals, 169 targets, and 231 indicators of the SDGs, which share some philosophies with Japan’s visions for a society of harmonious coexistence with foreign nationals.

Although we are not in a position to investigate on how Japan should accept foreign nationals or give our opinions about the issue to the Ministerial Conference, we recommend that the government should formulate and promote the medium- to long-term action plan in light of Japan’s visions for the acceptance of foreign nationals in order to lay the groundwork for realizing the ideal society of harmonious coexistence described in the three visions.

Lastly, we ask the government to seriously discuss the medium- to long-term action plan on the basis of the Opinion and from the perspective of where Japan stands regarding cross-border migration and harmonious coexistence with foreign nationals, and what kind



of society Japan should build.

## List of the Members of the Advisory Panel of Experts for the Realization of Society of Harmonious Coexistence with Foreign Nationals

[Chairperson] Akihiko Tanaka, President of the National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies

[Members] Shigehiro Ikegami, Professor at the Shizuoka University of Art and Culture

Gunei Sato, Specially Appointed Professor at Meiji University

Susumu Takahashi, Chairman Emeritus of the Japan Research Institute

Taro Tamura, Representative Director of the Institute for Human Diversity Japan

Reiko Hayashi, Deputy Director-General of the National Institute of Population and Social Security Research

(All names, excluding the chairperson, are listed in the order of Japanese syllabary with their honorific titles omitted.)

## Past Meetings of the Advisory Panel of Experts for the Realization of Society of Harmonious Coexistence with Foreign Nationals

First meeting: February 24, 2021

- Visions for a society of harmonious coexistence with foreign nationals and medium- to long-term tasks

Second meeting: March 24, 2021

- Initiatives Such as Japanese Language Education for Smooth Communication
- Disseminating Information to Foreign Nationals/Strengthening Consultation Systems for Foreign Nationals

Third meeting: April 28, 2021

- Support for Each Life Stage and Life Cycle

Fourth meeting: May 24, 2021

- Initiatives to Establish the Foundation of Society of Harmonious Coexistence

Fifth meeting: June 24, 2021

- Drafting of the Opinion

Sixth meeting: July 28, 2021

- Drafting of the Opinion

## Documents

- Document 1 Changes in Policies of Harmonious Coexistence with Foreign Nationals (Page 1)
- Document 2 Outline of the Comprehensive Measures for Acceptance and Coexistence of Foreign Nationals (FY2021 revised) (Page 2)
- Document 3 National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights (Outline) (Page 3,4)
- Document 4 Ideal Society of Harmonious Coexistence with Foreign Nationals (Three Visions) (Page 5)
- Document 5 Changes in the Number and Percentage of Foreign Residents, and the Number of Foreign Workers (Page 6)
- Document 6 [Status of Residence] Changes in the Number and Proportion of Foreign Residents (Page 7)
- Document 7 [Nationality/Region] Changes in the Number and Proportion of Foreign Residents (Page 8)
- Document 8 [Nationality/Region] Changes in the Number and Proportion of Foreign Workers (Page 9)
- Document 9 [Age] Changes in the Number and Proportion of Foreign Residents (Page10)
- Document 10 [Age] Comparison of the Number of Foreign Residents and the Japanese Population (Page 11)
- Document 11 [Gender/Age/Status of Residence] Number of Foreign Residents (Page 12)
- Document 12 [Gender] Changes in the Number of Foreign Residents and the Ratio of Male and Female Residents (Page 13)
- Document 13 Summary of Hearings to the Relevant Parties (Page 14-43)
- Document 14 Current Status of Support for Each Life Stage and Life Cycle (Comprehensive Measures) (Page 44)
- Document 15 Reference Cases on Presenting Role Models (Page 45)
- Document 16 Reference Cases on Publicizing Good Practices for Hiring Foreign Nationals (Page 46)

# Changes in Policies of Harmonious Coexistence with Foreign Nationals

## 1 December 25, 2006 “Comprehensive Measures for Foreign Nationals as Residents” (Liaison Committee among Ministries and Agencies on the Problems Faced by Foreign Workers)

(Background) Issues became apparent as the number of foreign nationals settling in Japan, as well as the number of children, were expected to increase.

(Outline) In light of the above background, it is necessary to develop an environment in which foreign nationals can live as members of society and enjoy the same public services as Japanese people. Therefore, the government decided to implement policies such as **(1) creating a community in which foreign nationals can live comfortably, (2) enriching education for foreign national children, (3) improving the working environment for foreign nationals and promoting their enrollment in social insurance, and (4) reviewing the residency management system for foreign nationals.**

## 2 January 30, 2009 “Immediate (Short-Term) Support Measures for Foreign Residents in Japan” (Cabinet Office)

(Background) People of Japanese descent and other foreign residents faced severe situation by the global financial crisis in terms of education, employment, and the other areas.

(Outline) In light of the above background, the government has compiled the above measures and the “Promotion of Support Measures for Foreign Residents in Japan” (April 2009), and has implemented various policies on education, employment, housing, support for repatriation, and the provision of information both in Japan and abroad.

## 3 August 31, 2010 “Basic Policy on Measures for Foreign Residents of Japanese Descent” (Council for the Promotion of Measures for Foreign Residents of Japanese Descent) March 31, 2011 “Action Plan on Measures for Foreign Residents of Japanese Descent” (Council for the Promotion of Measures for Foreign Residents of Japanese Descent)

(Outline) Basic policy on measures to accept foreign residents of Japanese descent as members of Japanese society were formulated, and measures related to the five areas described below were considered: **(1) to be able to live using the Japanese language, (2) to take good care of children, (3) to have stable work, (4) to cope with difficulties in society, and (5) to respect each other’s culture.** Afterwards, an action plan was formulated with the aim of implementing the measures set forth in the basic policy. (In March 2014, the “Promotion of Measures for Foreign Residents of Japanese Descent” was formulated, integrating the above basic policy and action plan [Council for the Promotion of Measures for Foreign Residents of Japanese Descent].)

## 4 July 24, 2018 Establishment of the Ministerial Conference on Acceptance and Coexistence of Foreign Nationals

(Outline) • The Ministry of Justice was given a comprehensive coordination role regarding the improvement of the environment for accepting foreign nationals. (Cabinet decision)  
• Establishment of the “Ministerial Conference on Acceptance and Coexistence of Foreign Nationals” (Cabinet approval)

## 5 December 25, 2018 “Comprehensive Measures for Acceptance and Coexistence of Foreign Nationals” (126 policies) (Decision by the Ministerial Conference on Acceptance and Coexistence of Foreign Nationals)

Revised three times

(Outline) The following policies was implemented from the perspective of promoting the acceptance and coexistence of foreign nationals in a stronger and more comprehensive manner through the concerted efforts of the entire government: (1) listening to opinions and awareness-raising activities to realize a society of harmonious coexistence with foreign nationals, (2) support for foreign nationals as ordinary residents, (3) initiatives to promote the appropriate and smooth acceptance of foreign nationals, and (4) establishment of a new residency management system.

## Comprehensive Measures for Acceptance and Coexistence of Foreign Nationals (FY2021 revised) (197 policies)

## Outline of the Comprehensive Measures for Acceptance and Coexistence of Foreign Nationals (FY2021 revised)

- As of the end of 2020, the number of foreign nationals residing in Japan was 2.89 million. The number of foreign workers as of the end of October 2020 was 1.72 million (a record high).
- Formulated from the point of view of further enhancing the environment for the acceptance of foreign nationals also based on the issues identified due to the spread of COVID-19, etc. (197 policies).
- The government will work together to continue to steadily implement the relevant measures and enhance the Comprehensive Measures.

### Listening to opinions and awareness-raising activities, etc. to realize a society of harmonious coexistence with foreign nationals

- (1) Building a framework to listen to opinions of Japanese and foreign nationals  
Formulation of work schedule for medium to long-term issues and measures, etc. to be addressed to realize a society of harmonious coexistence <Policy 1>
- Listening to the opinions that contribute to the planning and drafting of harmonious coexistence measures through the "Meeting to Listen to Voices of Our people" and "opinion box", etc. <Policy 2>
- (2) Implementation of awareness-raising and other activities  
➢ Implementation of human rights awareness-raising activities in order to realize an inclusive society where all people support mutually and value each other's human rights <Policy 7>
- Implementation of publicity of human rights counseling, and investigation and remedy procedures available in multiple languages <Policy 8>

### Support for smooth communication and information collection

- (1) Provision of administrative and living information in multiple languages and plain Japanese, and development of counseling systems  
Consideration of measures to promote the establishment of one-stop consulting counters by the local governments <Policy 9>
- Taking effective and efficient supporting measures for creating an environment for acceptance of foreign nationals to Japanese society, and providing relevant information to the local organizations by P-RESC <Policy 10>
- (2) Enhancement of Japanese language education (realization of smooth communication)  
Creation of guidebooks for the utilization of the "framework of reference for the Japanese language education", and creation of the "Can do for foreign nationals as residents" indicating the content of education in the fields of life <Policy 21>
- Promotion of the utilization of the "framework of reference for the Japanese language education" and the creation of systems to fortify the Japanese language education environment to be carried out by prefectures, etc. in cooperation with relevant organizations <Policy 22>
- Enhancement of life situations based on the "framework of reference for the Japanese language education" on the Japanese language education site "Connect and Enhance Your Life in Japanese" <Policy 23>
- Enhancement and dissemination of training programs for Japanese language teachers to workers, and development and dissemination of ICT teaching materials for smooth implementation of "essential educational contents" required for the development of Japanese language teachers <Policy 27>
- Consideration of the legislation of qualifications of Japanese language teachers and mechanisms to maintain and improve the level of Japanese language education by Japanese language education institutions <Policy 28>
- Dissemination and promotion of utilization of bidirectional educational video training materials and guidebooks in workplaces for Japanese employees and foreign national employees <Policy 32>

### Support according to life stages and life situations

- (1) Promotion and support of measures for multicultural coexistence in local communities  
Identification of the current status and issues of activities of foreign national supporters, etc. and establishment of a network of foreign national supporters <Policy 34>
- Promotion of efforts of local governments and NPOs, etc. to build a society of harmonious coexistence through cooperation with JICA <Policy 39>
- (2) Improvement of the environment on life services  
Placement of staff members capable of responding in foreign languages in the police and promotion of responses concerning various procedures in foreign languages <Policy 50>
- Promotion of dissemination and publicity of the "Guide for foreigners looking to rent", etc. that can be utilized when looking for apartments <Policy 56>
- Support for smooth account opening by foreign nationals at financial institutions (distribution of leaflets for foreign nationals in 14 languages, dissemination for the prevention of involvement in financial crimes, etc.) <Policy 58>
- (3) Measures for foreign national children  
Establishment of Japanese language teaching system, etc. in schools for foreign pupils and students, etc. <Policy 66>
- Collaboration between the school-age children registration system and the Basic Resident Registration system, and integrated management and identification of the school enrollment status of foreign children <Policy 69>
- (4) Supporting employment for international students, etc.  
Support for online education for foreign international students in their home countries in preparation for prolonged COVID-19 and new risks <Policy 79>
- Deployment of the "Handbook for the Employment of International Students and Empowerment After Hiring" to local governments and support organizations, etc. <Policy 82>
- Consistent employment support through reinforced cooperation between universities and Hello Work, and sharing of information on good practices, etc. with universities and relevant organizations across the country <Policy 95>
- (5) Ensuring an appropriate work environment  
Multilingualization of audiovisual materials for foreign workers (14 languages) <Policy 98>
- Provision of training aimed at improving communication skills in Japanese workplaces, etc., and creation of model training curriculum, etc. <Policy 104>
- (6) Promotion of enrollment in social insurance, etc.  
Implementation of personal identification and insurance qualification check by utilizing the Individual Number Cards in medical institutions, etc. <Policy 110>

### Safety net and support, etc. for foreign nationals in time of emergency

- (1) Information dissemination and support in time of emergency such as a disaster, etc.  
Dissemination of "Safety tips", etc. and development of an environment for accurate information transmission by the revision of the multilingual dictionary <Policy 114>
- (2) Support for prevention of COVID-19 and smooth vaccination, etc.  
➢ Provision of information etc. to higher education institutions and Japanese language education institutions that contributes to the prevention of COVID-19 <Policy 118>
- Promotion of efforts to enhance and strengthen information dissemination, including aggregation and sharing of information on influencers, etc. identified by each ministry and agency <Policy 119>
- Request for strict implementation of measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in workplaces to the labor and management organizations <Policy 120>
- Implementation of screening by utilizing simple antigen kits, etc. in Japanese language education institutions with a large number of international students, professional training colleges, etc., and workplaces employing foreign nationals, and implementation of prompt and flexible PCR testing, etc. of broad contact persons when a coronavirus-positive person is found <Policy 121>
- Dissemination and publicity of vaccination to foreign residents, ensured delivery of vaccination notice, and securing consultation and response systems in multiple languages <Policy 122>
- Offering information and holding of events on COVID-19 on the "Open for Professionals" Platform <Policy 125>
- Employment support in cooperation between the relevant organizations supporting needy international students and Hello Work, and dissemination of support content <Policy 126>
- Dissemination of information in plain Japanese and multiple languages and implementation of the measures based on the content of the discussions at the Advisory Committee on the Health and Hygiene Environment as the COVID-19 measures in schools for foreign students <Policy 128>

### Smooth and appropriate acceptance of foreign nationals

- (1) Employment support for specified skilled workers and other measures  
➢ Promotion of utilization of the Specified Skilled Worker System by holding job fair in Japan and overseas information sessions, etc. <Policy 123 (reposted)>
- (2) Smooth implementation of skill exams and Japanese language tests of the Specified Skilled Worker, and dissemination and smooth utilization of the Specified Skilled Worker System, etc.  
➢ Implementation and promotion of skill exams and Japanese language tests, and consideration of utilization of new Japanese language tests by the relevant ministries and agencies in the fields <Policy 134>
- Further implementation of the Specified Skilled Worker (ii) skill exams, and consideration of the addition of fields covered in the Specified Skilled Worker (ii) and the organization of business categories <Policy 141>
- (3) Elimination of malicious intermediary organizations, etc.  
➢ Indirect support for efforts in Japan by utilizing expertise, etc. gained through technical cooperation for developing countries <Policy 156>
- (4) Expansion of the Japanese language education base abroad  
➢ Promotion of efforts to reinforce the foundation for Japanese language education through the Japan Foundation and to disseminate attractiveness of Japanese culture and society, etc. <Policy 161>

### Construction of the residency management system as a foundation for a society of harmonious coexistence

- (1) Implementation of smooth and expedited procedures for the status of residence  
➢ Consideration of measures to improve the convenience of electronic payment, etc. of fees for residence procedures, etc. <Policy 163>
- Realization of online application by foreign nationals themselves and consideration of expansion of procedures to be made online <Policy 164>
- Consideration of integration of the residence cards and the individual Number Cards toward the commencement of issuance within FY2025 <Policy 166>
- (2) Strengthening residency management network  
➢ Organization of information on the places of residence of foreign residents in cooperation between the relevant ministries and agencies and local governments, etc. <Policy 170>
- (3) Accurate management of international student enrollment  
➢ Stricter status of residence examinations, such as not permitting the acceptance of international students, for universities, etc. that do not appropriately manage international student enrollment <Policy 179>
- (4) Further optimization of Technical Intern Training Program  
➢ Optimization of Technical Intern Training Program by strengthening investigations conducted in cooperation between the Immigration Services Agency and the Organization for Technical Intern Training, etc. <Policy 97 (reposted)>
- Strengthening of onsite inspections as measures against disappearance of the technical intern trainees and termination of new acceptance from the sending organizations with a large number of missing technical intern trainees <Policy 184>
- Confirmation of equal remuneration between the technical intern trainees and Japanese nationals, etc., and thorough dissemination of work-style reform related laws <Policy 186>
- Steady implementation of employment transfer support for the dismissed technical intern trainees by the supervising organizations, and appropriate employment support through continual identification of status of the technical intern trainees <Policy 187>
- Preferential treatment of implementing organizations that secure living environments for the technical intern trainees in consideration of their privacy and prevention of infection <Policy 188>
- (5) Strengthening of measures against illegal foreign residents  
➢ Effective implementation of detection by strengthening the functions to collect and analyze the information on the Notified Foreign National Employment Status, etc. <Policy 189>

## Chapter 1

### Towards the Formulation of the National Action Plan (NAP)

- 1 Increasing International Attention to Business and Human Rights and the Need for NAPs**
  - In the midst of the formulation of the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises, the ILO Declaration on Multinational Enterprises, and the advocacy of the UN Global Compact, **the UN has endorsed the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs). Action plans were also mentioned in G7 and G20 declarations.**
  - In response to the demands of investors and other stakeholders, business enterprises also need to address the need to respect human rights. **Business enterprises need to identify risks related to human rights and take measures to respond to them.**
  - To date, the relevant ministries and agencies of Japan have implemented various legislative measures and policies contributing to the protection of human rights, and business enterprises have been responding to them.
  - In light of the growing social demand for business and human rights, the government has formulated an NAP in recognition of the need for further efforts.
  - In the context of COVID-19, it is necessary to steadily implement the NAP.

### 2 Positioning of the NAP

- The NAP was prepared based on UNGPs, the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises, and the ILO Declaration on Multinational Enterprises.
- It is positioned as one of the initiatives in the realization of the SDGs.

### 3 Objectives to be Achieved through the Launch and Implementation of the NAP

- Protection and promotion of human rights for society as a whole, including international society
- Ensure policy coherence in relation to business and human rights**
- Ensure and enhance the international competitiveness and sustainability of Japanese business enterprises**
- Contribute to achieving the SDGs

### 4 The NAP Formulation Process

In addition to a baseline study to assess the current landscape, consultation meetings were held with the business sector, the labor sector, and civil society. A draft was prepared in February 2020, and a public comment survey was carried out.

## Chapter 2

### Action Plan

#### 1 Fundamental Principles of the NAP

- Promotion of understanding and raising awareness** of business and human rights among the government, government-related organizations, and local governments
- Promotion of understanding and raising awareness** of business and human rights among business enterprises
- Promotion of understanding and raising awareness** of human rights throughout society
- Establishment of mechanisms to promote respect for human rights in the supply chain
- Establishment and improvement of remedy mechanisms

#### 2 Areas of the NAP

→ See next page for more details.

## Chapter 3

### Government's Expectations towards Business Enterprises

The Government of Japan expects Japanese business enterprises, regardless of their size and industry, to respect internationally recognized human rights and to introduce the **human rights due diligence process** (\*) based on the UNGPs and other relevant international standards.

(\*) Identify, prevent, mitigate, address, and share information on human rights impacts of business activities.

## Chapter 4

### Framework for Implementation and Review of the NAP

The NAP covers a period of 5 years. An Inter-Ministerial Committee will follow the implementation progress, and will establish opportunities for dialogue with stakeholders and the outlines of these dialogues will be made public. There will be a mid-term review of the NAP 3 years after issuance and a revision after 5 years.

# Chapter 2. 2. Areas of the NAP

## (1) Cross-Cutting Areas

- A. Labor (Promotion of Decent Work)**
- Promote decent work
  - Reinforce of measures against harassment
  - Protect and respect the rights of workers including foreign workers and technical intern trainees
- B. Promotion and Protection of Children's Rights**
- Contribute to international efforts to eliminate child labor, including trafficking in persons
  - Raise awareness about child prostitution
  - Initiatives to end violence against children
  - Disseminate Sports Principles and Business Principles
  - Develop internet usage environment
  - Steadily implement the Basic Plan on Measures against Child Sexual Exploitation
- C. Human Rights Associated with the Development of New Technologies**
- Address online defamation, including hate speech
  - Promote discussion on the use of AI from the perspective of protection of human rights and privacy
- D. Rights and Roles of Consumers**
- Popularize and raising awareness of ethical consumption
  - Promote consumer-oriented management
  - Promote consumer education
- E. Equality before the Law (Persons with Disabilities, Women, Persons of Diverse Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity, and Other Groups)**
- Promote barrier-free and universal design
  - Promote employment of persons with disabilities
  - Advance women's empowerment
  - Promote understanding and acceptance of diverse sexual orientation and gender identity
  - Ensure impartial treatment among employment fields
  - Ensure impartial treatment in public spaces or services
- F. Acceptance of and Coexistence with Foreign Nationals**
- Improve and promote of the development of an environment for acceptance of foreign nationals leading to the realization of a society of harmonious coexistence

## (2) Measures of the Government as an Actor regarding State Duty to Protect Human Rights

- A. Public Procurement**
- Thoroughly implement procurement rules relevant to business and human rights
- B. Development Cooperation and Development Finance**
- Implement effective measures regarding environmental and social consideration in the fields of development cooperation and development financing
- C. Promotion and Expansion of the Business and Human Rights Agenda in the International Community**
- Work towards promoting implementation of the UNGPs in the international community
  - Boost efforts to promote business and human rights through human rights dialogue
  - Contribute to discussions regarding relations between economic activities and social issues, at international forums
  - Make efforts towards concluding EPAs and investment agreements that benefit not only industry but also a wide range of people, including workers
  - Joint dialogue with civil society under the Japan-EU EPA
- D. Human Rights Education and Awareness-Raising**
- Raise awareness of business and human rights and conduct training on the topics for public employees
  - Implement human rights education and human rights awareness-raising activities based on the Basic Plan on Human Rights Education and Human Rights Awareness-Raising
  - Implement human rights awareness-raising activities through cooperation and collaboration with private enterprises
  - Continue awareness-raising seminars for SMEs
  - Award business enterprises tackling social issues, including respect for human rights
  - Publicize the NAP to educational institutions and other relevant bodies
  - Cooperate with international organizations on the publication of the NAP and related awareness-raising activities

## (3) Measures Promoting Corporate Responsibility to Respect Human Rights

- A. Measures Related to Domestic and Global Supply Chains and Promotion of Human Rights Due Diligence Based on the UNGPs**
- Publicize the NAP and raise awareness of human rights due diligence among Japanese business enterprises in cooperation with industry groups and other relevant bodies
  - Raise awareness on the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises and raise awareness on the ILO Declaration and ILO MNE Declaration
  - Publicize the NAP and raise awareness of human rights due diligence to Japanese business enterprises operating overseas via Japanese embassies, consulates, and overseas offices of government-related entities
  - Raise awareness on the Guidance for Collaborative Value Creation
  - Steadily implement the Act on the Promotion of Female Participation and Career Advancement in the Workplace
  - Promote information disclosure by business enterprises in accordance with the Environmental Reporting Guidelines
  - Support initiatives by international organizations overseas
- B. Support for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) regarding Business and Human Rights**
- Provide information to SMEs through the portal site on business and human rights
  - Conduct seminars targeting SMEs
  - Include policies regarding business terms and conditions and improvement of business practices

## (4) Measures regarding Access to Remedy

- Judicial and Non-Judicial Remedy**
- Digitalize civil proceedings
  - Conduct training on human rights for police officers, public prosecutors, and other relevant officials
  - Publicize activities and improve operation of the Japanese National Contact Point (NCP)
  - Continue human rights counseling
  - Prevent human rights violations and remedy damages
  - Continue and reinforce measures, including those based on specific legislation (for workers, persons with disabilities, and foreign workers, including technical intern trainees, and for whistleblower protection)
  - Promote use of alternative dispute resolution procedures
  - Continue the provision of consultation services in development cooperation and development finance

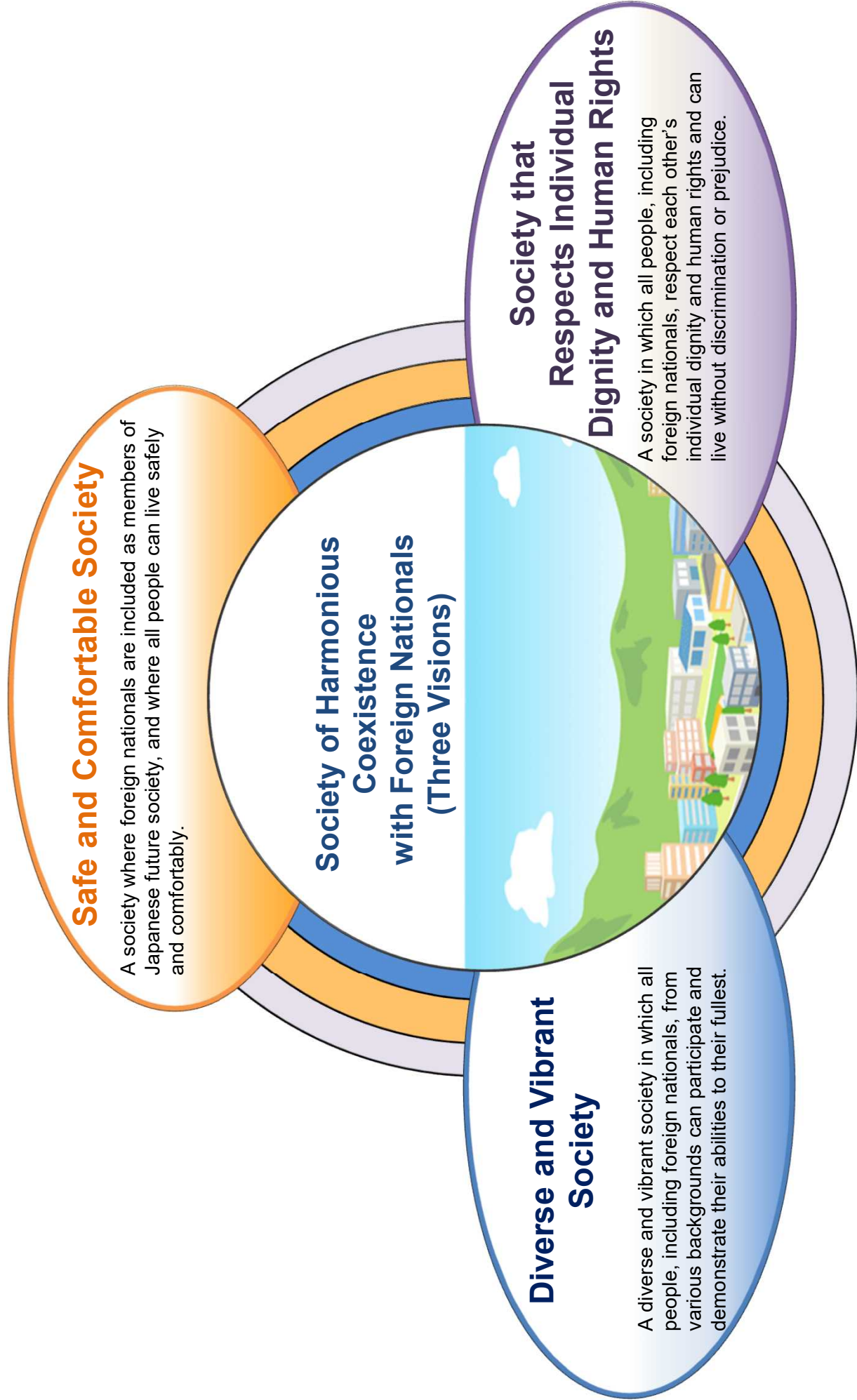
## (5) Other Measures

- Support development of legal systems in developing countries
- Promote quality infrastructure investment

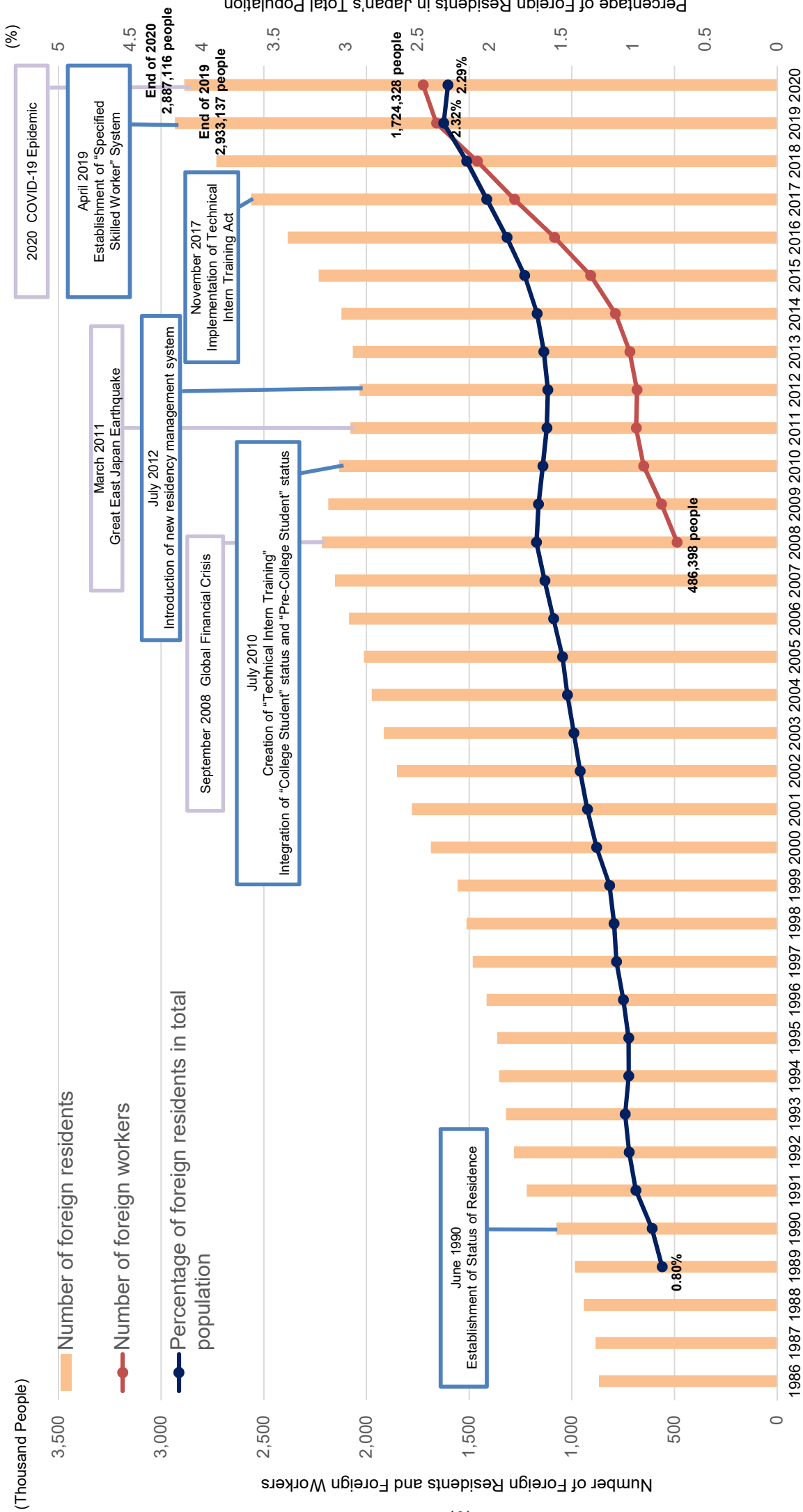


# Ideal Society of Harmonious Coexistence with Foreign Nationals (Three Visions)

The three visions of an ideal society of harmonious coexistence are based on the principles of SDGs, which set international goals for achieving a sustainable, diverse, and inclusive society that leaves no one behind.



## Changes in the Number and Percentage of Foreign Residents, and the Number of Foreign Workers

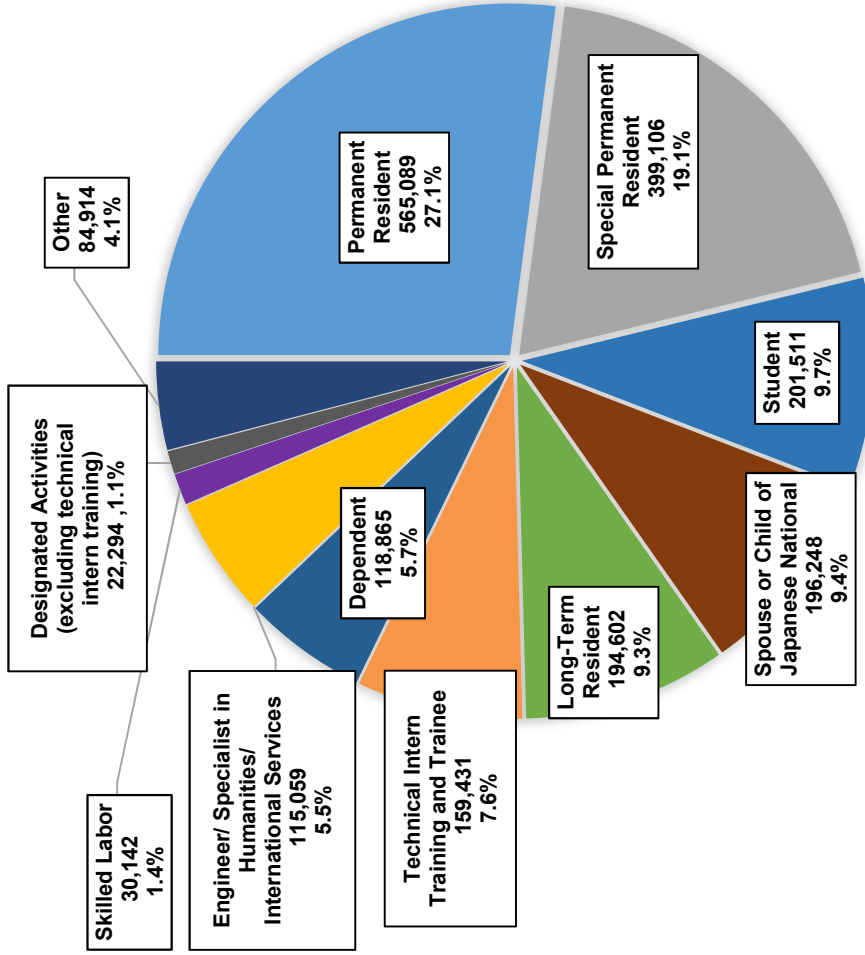


\* The number of foreign residents is based on the former "Registered alien statistics" (as of the end of December) by the then Immigration Bureau of the Ministry of Justice until 2011, and since 2012, on the "Statistics on foreign residents in Japan" (as of the end of December) by the Immigration Services Agency of Japan.  
 \* The number of foreign workers is based on the "Summary of Notification of Foreign Workers' Employment Status" (statistics as of the end of October of each year) by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (As the system for notifying the status of foreign workers began on October 1, 2007, the figures show changes since 2008).  
 \* The total population is based on the "Population Estimates" (statistics as of October 1 of each year) and the "Population Census" (preliminary results for 2020) by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications.

# [Status of Residence] Changes in the Number and Proportion of Foreign Residents

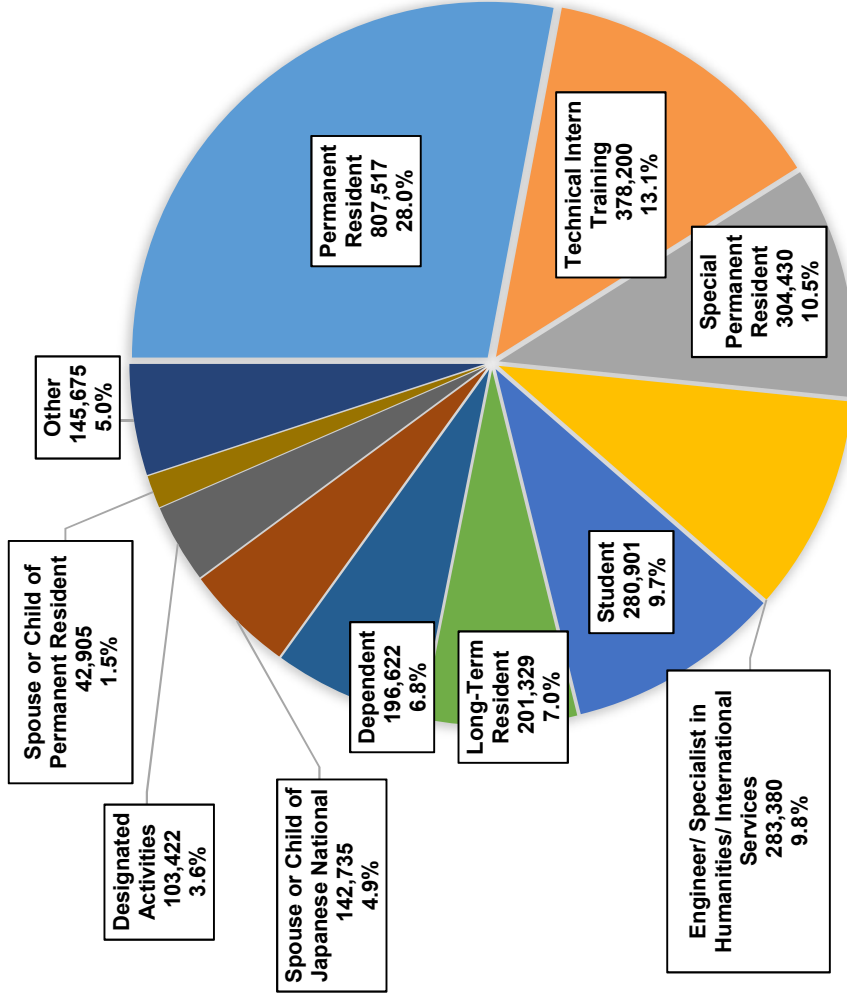
2010

Number of registered foreign nationals: 2,087,261



2020

Number of foreign residents: 2,887,116



\* Figures for 2010 are based on the former "Registered alien statistics" (as of the end of December) by the then Immigration Bureau of the Ministry of Justice. Figures for 2020 are based on the "Statistics on foreign residents in Japan" (as of the end of December) by the Immigration Services Agency of Japan.

\* The number of registered foreign nationals as of the end of 2010 (2,087,261) is the number of registered foreign nationals who have a status of residence that could be classified as mid to long-term resident or Special Permanent Resident.

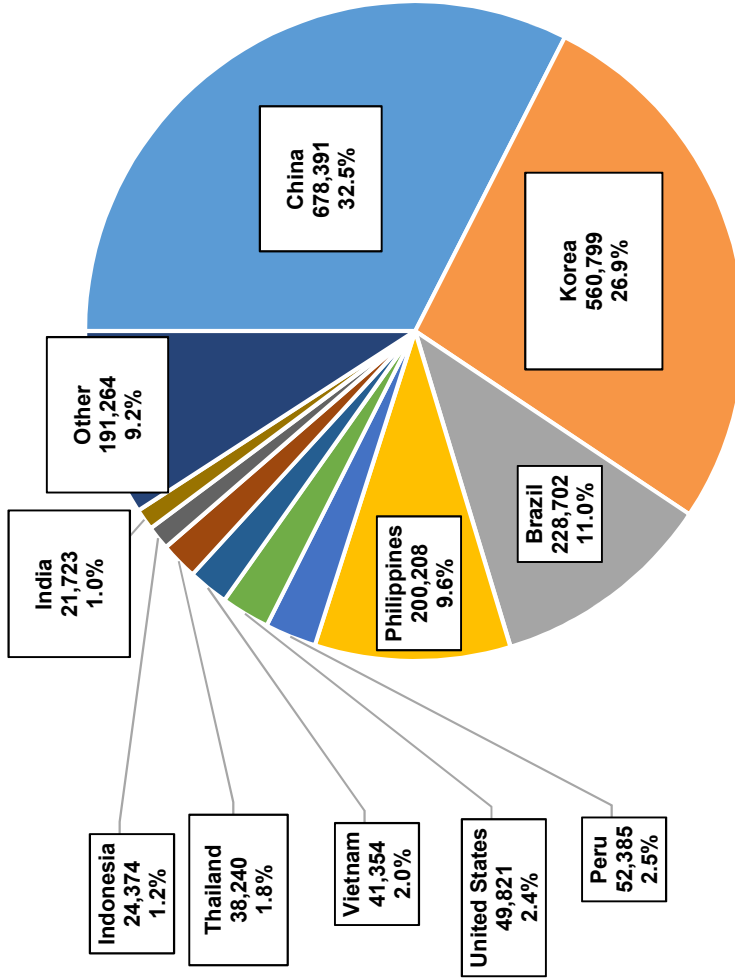
\* The number for "Engineer/Specialist in Humanities/International Services" at the end of 2010 is the total of "Engineer" and "Specialist in Humanities/International Services."

\* The number for "Technical Intern Training and Trainee" at the end of 2010 is the total of "Technical Intern Training," "Designated Activities" (Technical Intern Training), and "Trainee."

# [Nationality/Region] Changes in the Number and Proportion of Foreign Residents

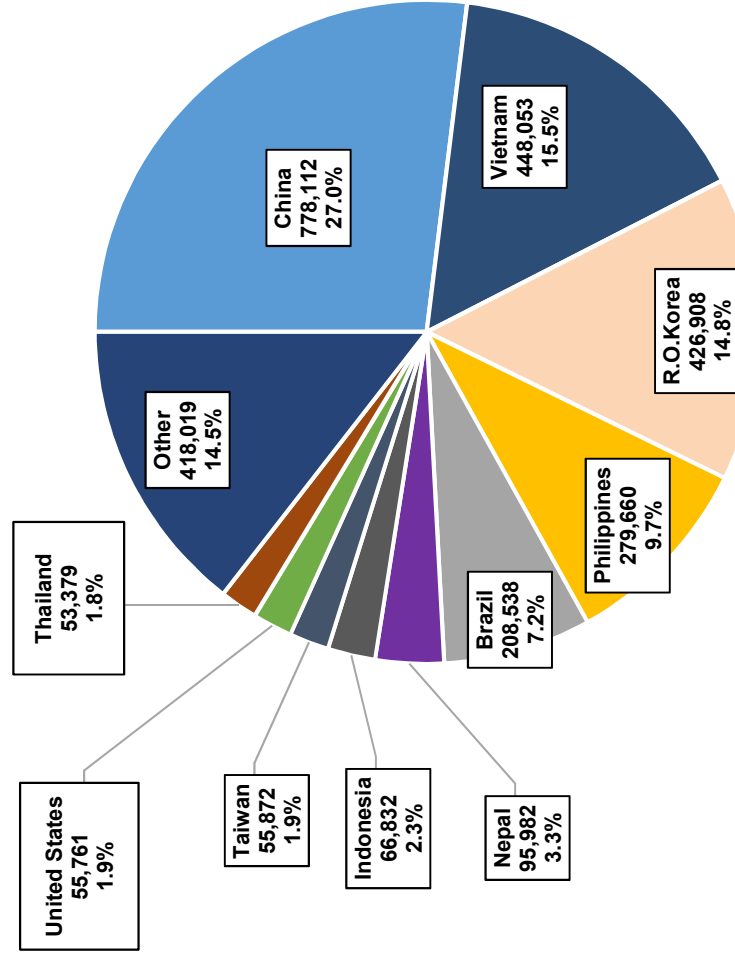
2010

Number of registered foreign nationals: 2,087,261



2020

Number of foreign residents: 2,887,116



\* Figures for 2010 are based on the former "Registered alien statistics" (as of the end of December) by the then Immigration Bureau of the Ministry of Justice. Figures for 2020 are based on the "Statistics on foreign residents in Japan" (as of the end of December) by the Immigration Services Agency of Japan.

\* The number of registered foreign nationals as of the end of 2010 (2,087,261) is the number of registered foreign nationals who have a status of residence that could be classified as mid to long-term resident or Special Permanent Resident.

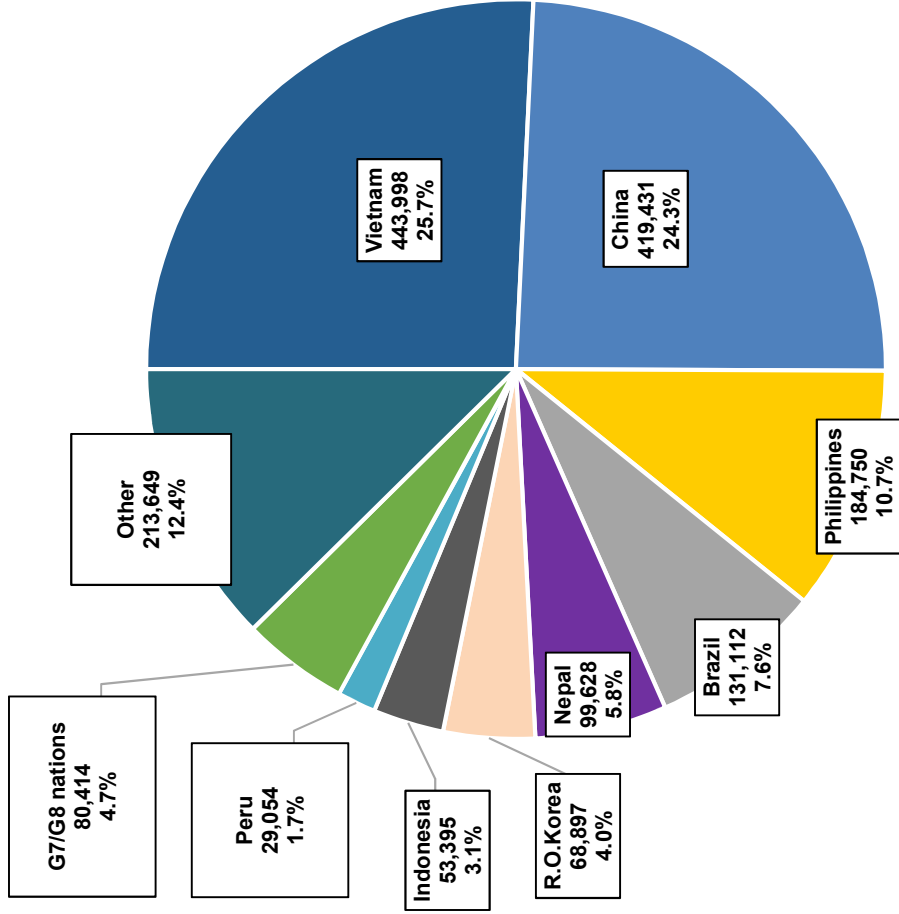
\* Regarding "Korea," until the year-end statistics of 2011, those with "Korea" in the "Nationality" column of their certificate of alien registration and those with R.O.Korean nationality with "R.O.Korea" in the column were recorded together as "Korea." However, starting as of the year-end statistics of 2012, those with "R.O.Korea" written in the "Nationality/Region" column of their residence cards are recorded as "R.O.Korea" and those with "Korea" written in the column are recorded as "Korea."

\* Regarding "Taiwan," those who hold passports issued by authorized agencies in Taiwan had a certificate of alien registration with "China" written in the "Nationality" column until July 8, 2012, but since July 9, 2012, "Taiwan" has been written in the "Nationality/Region" column of their residence cards. Starting as of the year-end statistics of 2012, those who received residence cards with "Taiwan" written on them are recorded as "Taiwan."

# [Nationality/Region] Changes in the Number and Proportion of Foreign Workers

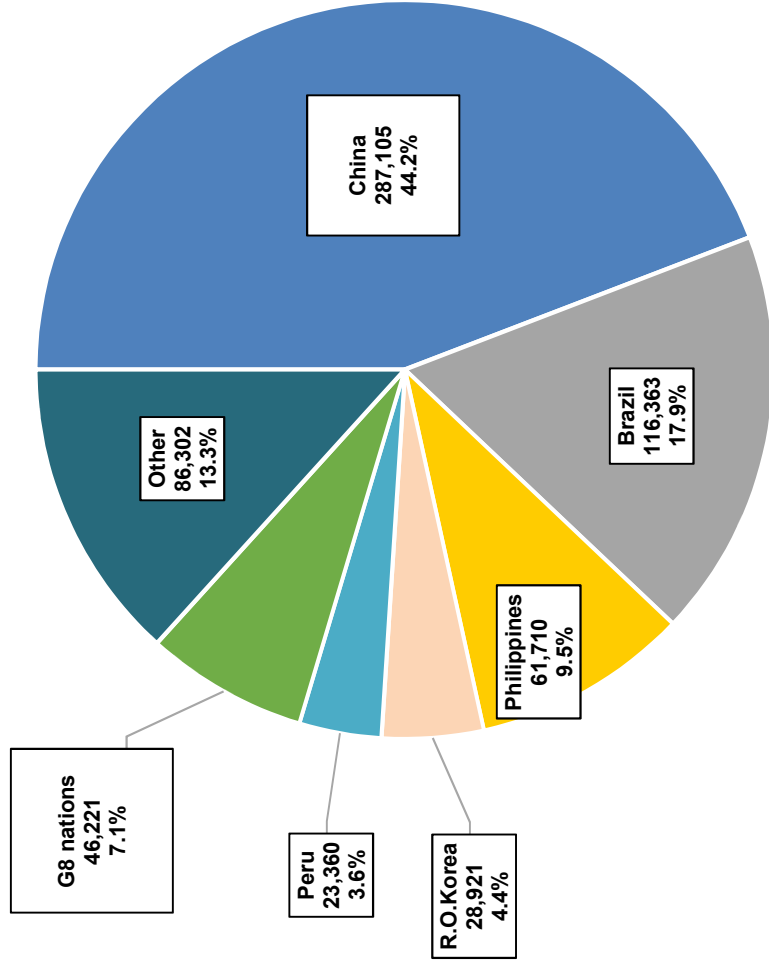
2020

Number of foreign workers: 1,724,328



2010

Number of foreign workers: 649,982



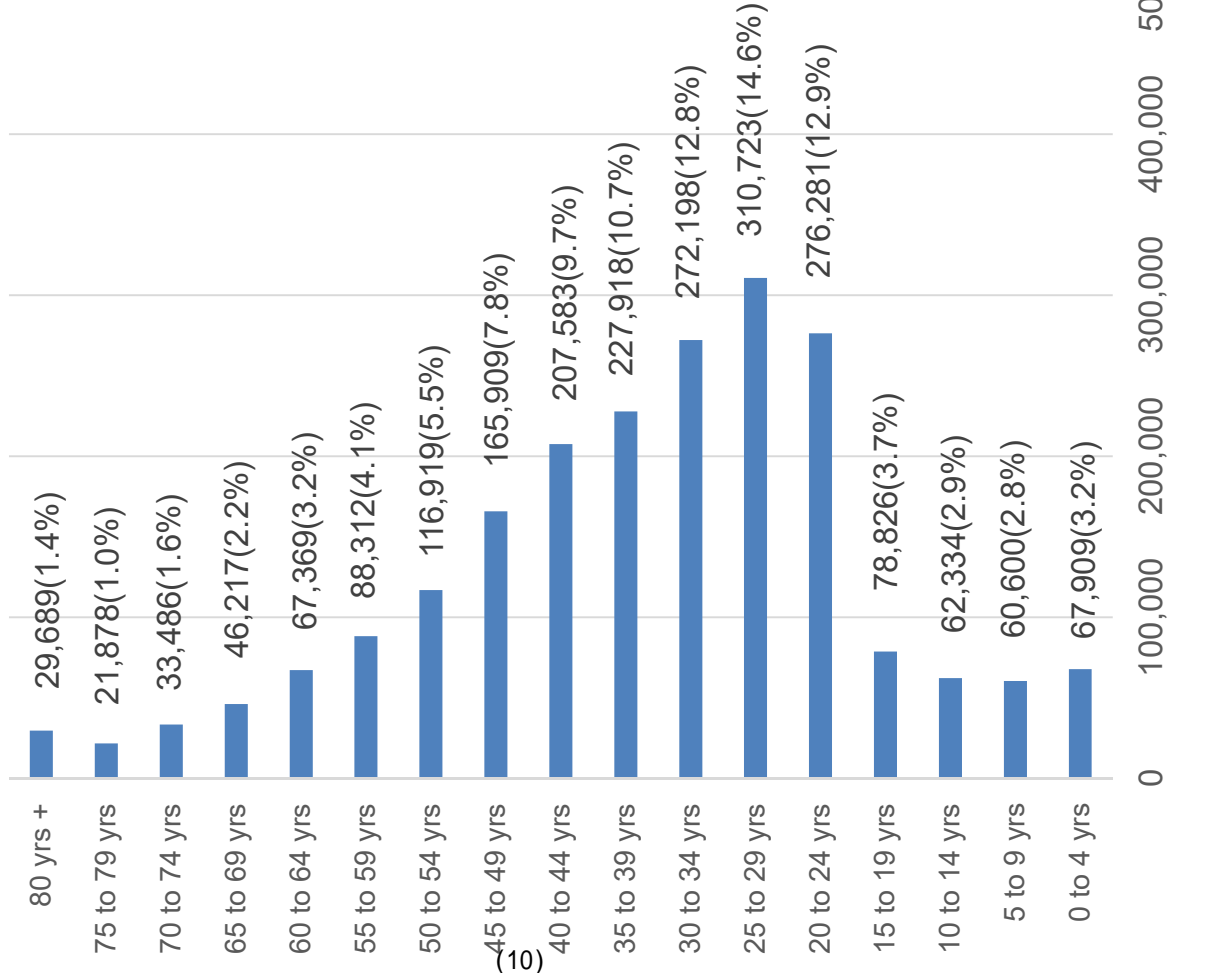
(9)

\* Based on the "Notification Status of Foreign Workers' Employment Status" (as of the end of October 2010) and "Summary of Notification Status of Foreign Workers' Employment Status" (as of the end of October 2020) by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare.

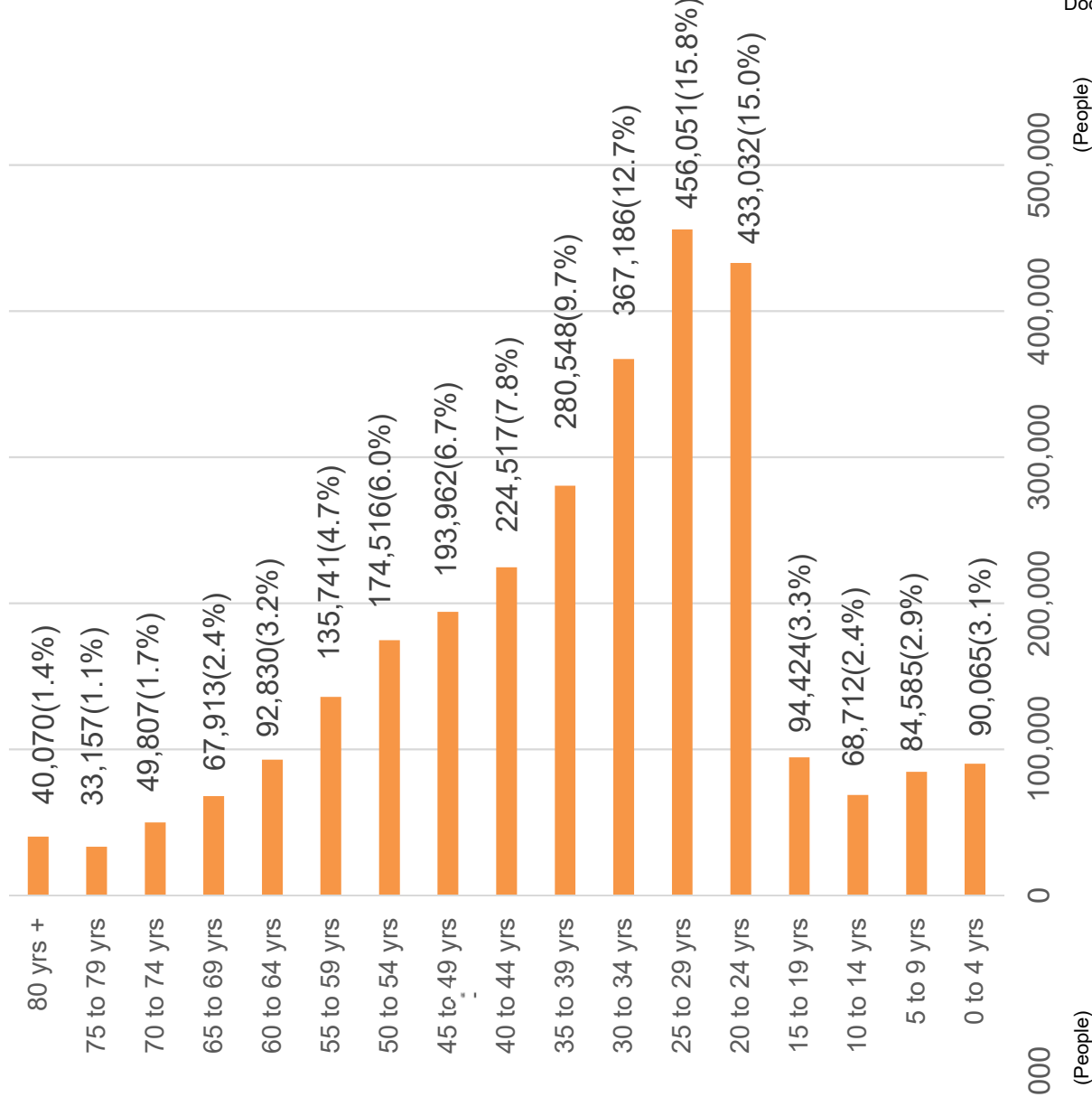
\* "G8 nations" in 2010 and "G7/G8 nations" in 2020 refer to the United Kingdom, United States, Germany, France, Italy, Canada, Russia, Australia, and New Zealand.

# [Age] Changes in the Number and Proportion of Foreign Residents

2010

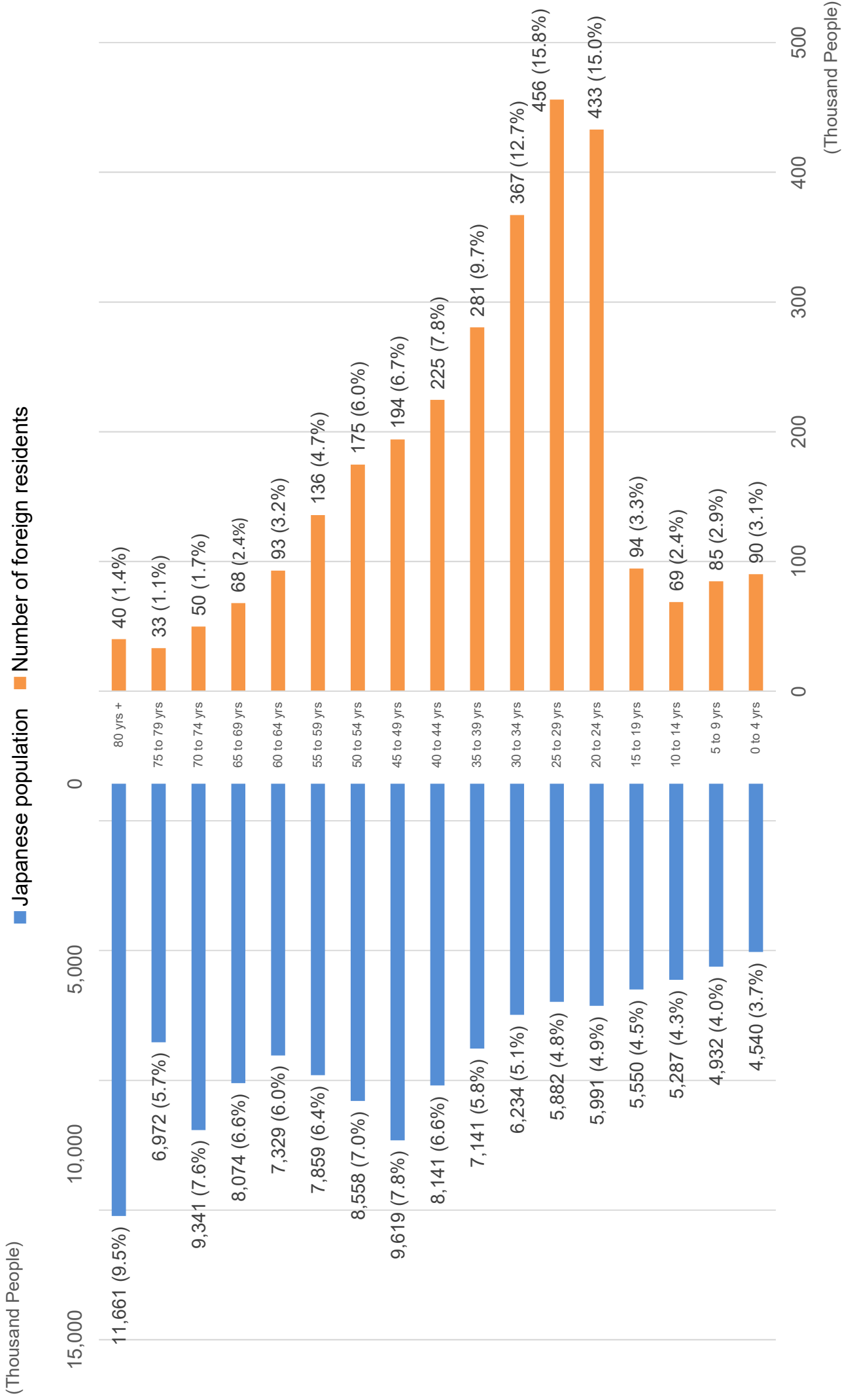


2020



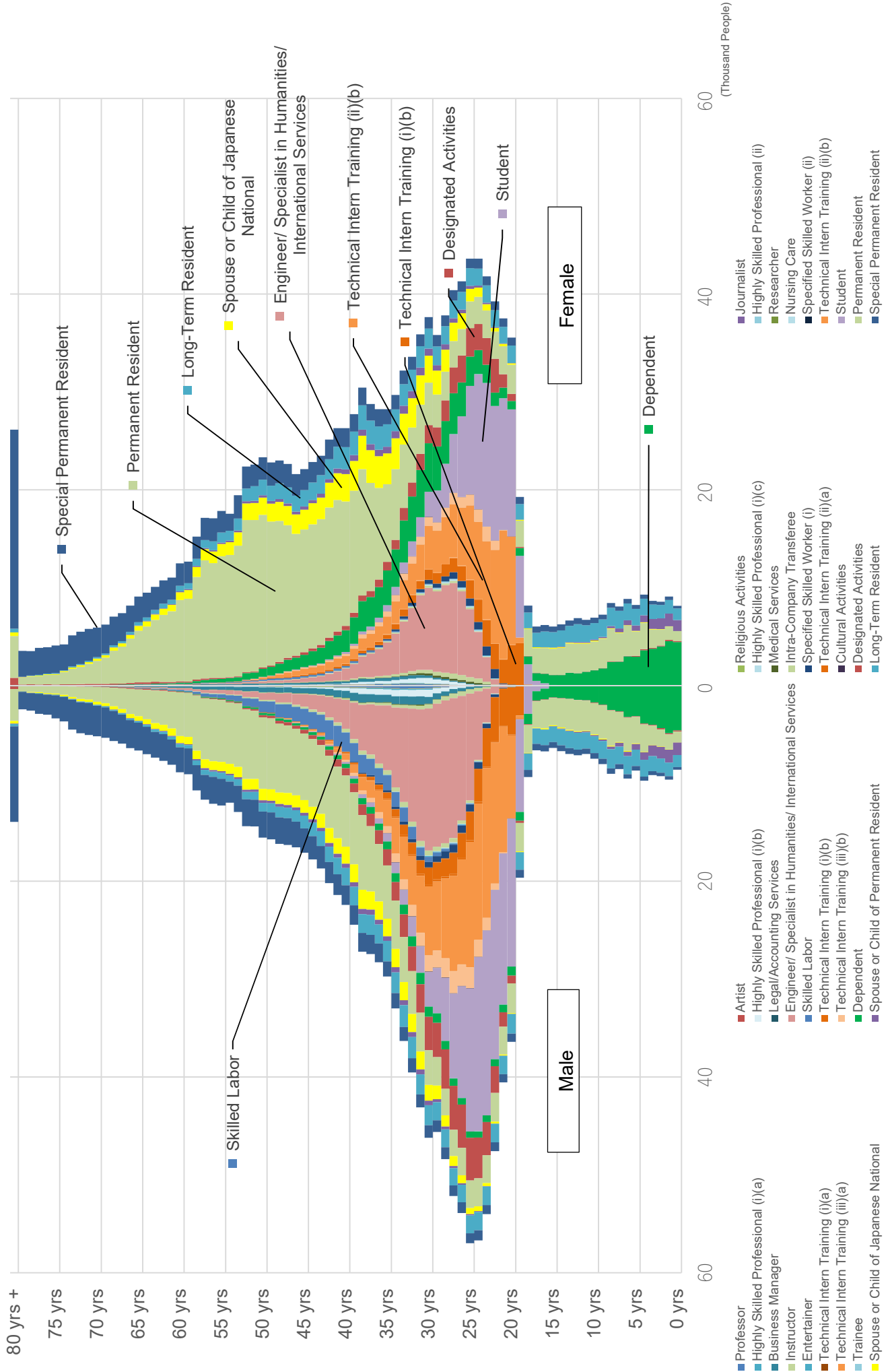
\* Figures for 2010 are based on the former "Registered alien statistics" (as of the end of December) by the then Immigration Bureau of the Ministry of Justice. The figures for 2020 are based on the "Statistics on foreign residents in Japan" (as of the end of December) by the Immigration Services Agency of Japan.

# [Age] Comparison of the Number of Foreign Residents and the Japanese Population



\* The number of foreign residents is based on the "Statistics on foreign residents in Japan" (as of the end of 2020) by the Immigration Services Agency of Japan.  
 \* The Japanese population is based on the "Population Estimates" (as of January 1, 2021, with estimates based on the 2015 Population Census) by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications.

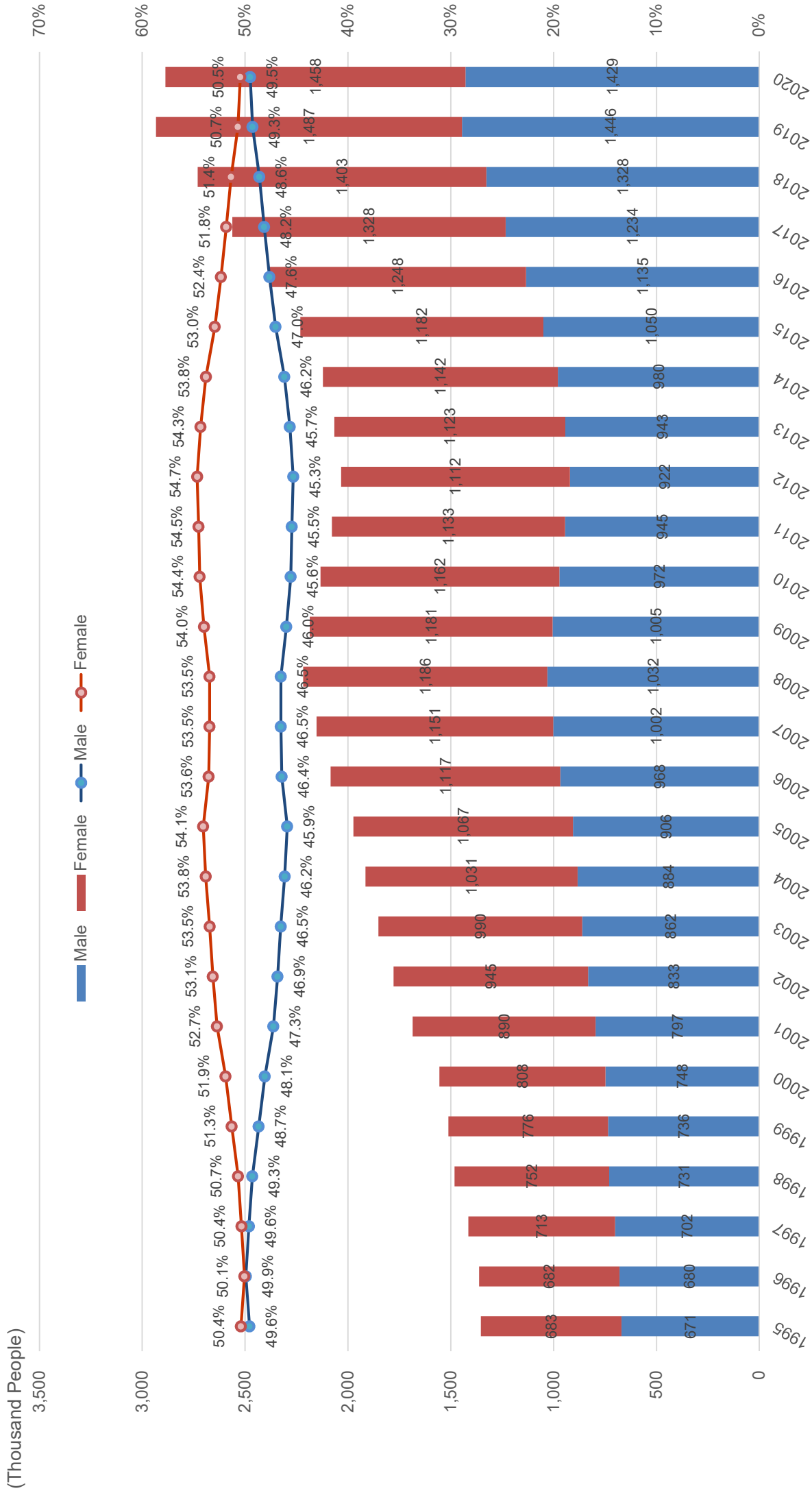
# [Gender/Age/Status of Residence] Number of Foreign Residents



\* The number of foreign residents is based on the "Statistics on foreign residents in Japan" (as of the end of 2020) by the Immigration Services Agency of Japan.



# [Gender] Changes in the Number of Foreign Residents and the Ratio of Male and Female Residents



\* Until 2011, the number of foreign residents was based on the former "Registered alien statistics" (as of the end of December) by the then Immigration Bureau of the Ministry of Justice, and since 2012, on the "Statistics on foreign residents in Japan" (as of the end of December) by the Immigration Services Agency of Japan.

## Summary of Hearings to the Relevant Parties

Contributing to consider the ideal form of Japan's immigration control and residency management administration, hearings to the relevant parties which interviews with a broad range of relevant parties are held from the perspective of listening to voices of the people.

### [Hearings]

#### ○ FY 2020

- 1<sup>st</sup> Friday, February 19, Ms. Yumi Shimokawa  
Citizen Collaboration Promotion Section, Civil Environment Department,  
Tosu City, Saga Prefecture
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday, February 22, Ms. Midori Nii  
Citizen's Network for Global Activities (CINGA)
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday, March 5, Ms. Naomi Kudo  
Originator Co., Ltd., The Japan Association for the Employment of  
Foreign Nationals, and International Person Exchange Support  
Association
- 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday, March 9, Japan Federation of Certified Administrative  
Procedures Legal Specialists Associations
- 5<sup>th</sup> Wednesday, March 10, Mr. Cesar Cabrejos  
Language One Corporation
- 6<sup>th</sup> Monday, March 15, Mr. Ichiro Asami  
Naitei Bridge Co., Ltd.
- 7<sup>th</sup> Tuesday, March 16, Council of Local Authorities for International  
Relations (CLAIR)
- 8<sup>th</sup> Friday, March 26, Mr. Takashi Tsuchiya  
Elementary and Junior High School Planning Section, School Education  
Planning Department, Secretariat of the Board of Education of  
Yokohama City, Kanagawa Prefecture
- 9<sup>th</sup> Friday, March 26, Ms. Keiko Sakurai  
Shizuoka Prefecture, Hamamatsu City Board of Education, School  
Education Department, Guidance Division, Educational Support Center,  
Foreigners Support Group
- 10<sup>th</sup> Tuesday, March 30, Ms. Iki Tanaka  
Youth Support Center

○ FY 2021

- 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday, April 6, Ms. Shuko Ebihara  
kuriya
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday, April 8, Mr. Seiju Takahashi  
Multicultural Education Network Kanagawa (ME-net)
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday, April 9, National Association for Global & Open Minded  
Communities (NAGOMi)
- 4<sup>th</sup> Monday, April 12, Ms. Rosa Mercedes Ochante Muray, Associate  
Professor  
St. Andrew's University of Education
- 5<sup>th</sup> Wednesday, April 14, Ms. Kumiko Sakamoto  
Aidensha
- 6<sup>th</sup> Friday, April 16, Ms. Yoshimi Kojima, Associate Professor  
Tokyo University of Foreign Studies
- 7<sup>th</sup> Tuesday, April 20, Suzuka City, Mie Prefecture
- 8<sup>th</sup> Interview on Wednesday, April 21, Mr. Takaharu Hayashi  
Japan Overseas Council
- 9<sup>th</sup> Monday, May 10, Ms. Megumi Fukuyama and Mr. Huhdelger  
Kobe Foreigners Friendship Center (KFC)
- 10<sup>th</sup> Thursday, May 13, Japan Association of New Economy
- 11<sup>th</sup> Monday, May 17, Ms. Yukimi Miyagi
- 12<sup>th</sup> Tuesday, May 25, KEIDANREN (Japan Business Federation)
- 13<sup>th</sup> Tuesday, June 4, Mr. Tetsuyoshi Kodama  
ALIANÇA DE INTERCÂMBIO BRASIL JAPÃO
- 14<sup>th</sup> Wednesday, June 9, National Federation of Small Business  
Associations
- 15<sup>th</sup> Tuesday, June 29, Japan Trade Union Confederation
- 16<sup>th</sup> Thursday, July 15, Japan Federation of Bar Associations

[Summary]

- 1st Interview (February 19, 2021)  
Ms. Yumi Shimokawa  
Citizen Collaboration Promotion Section, Civil Environment Department, Tosu  
City, Saga Prefecture

(Points of Opinions)

- The use of plain Japanese should be promoted as a tool for making communication with foreign nationals easier and on the national government's websites.
- Japanese language classes in communities have difficulty finding teachers and staff. Since continuous human resources development is necessary, the government should take necessary action.
- It is essential to promote the use of plain Japanese in order to promote the development of intercultural communities. If Japanese residents can communicate smoothly with foreign nationals, they can learn about foreign cultures and customs while in Japan.
- Intercultural cohesion programs and Japanese language class programs are also helpful for Japanese residents.

- 2nd Hearing (February 22, 2021)

Ms. Midori Nii

Citizen's Network for Global Activities (CINGA)

(Points of Opinions)

- Since some government staff who attend to foreign residents are not good at communicating with foreign nationals, it is necessary to promote plain Japanese as a tool for making communication with them easier and set the trainings for the staff.
- In terms of Japanese language education, it is necessary to provide foreign nationals with opportunities to learn the Japanese language necessary for them to live independently in communities.
- The Foreign Residents Support Center should provide intermediary support (support for local governments and international exchange associations which carry out front-line support).
- It is necessary to motivate foreign residents to receive Japanese language education (link learning Japanese with their status of residence).
- In terms of personnel development for Japanese language education, it is necessary to invest in personnel development in elementary education.

- 3rd Hearing (March 5, 2021)

Ms. Naomi Kudo

Originator Co., Ltd., The Japan Association for the Employment of Foreign Nationals, and International Person Exchange Support Association

(Points of Opinions)

- Japanese companies tend to expect foreign workers to be very proficient in Japanese language. They should get accustomed to Japanese language spoken by non-native.
- To motivate foreign nationals to learn Japanese, it is important to clarify their individual learning needs, for example, business terms necessary for their work and words and expressions useful for shopping.
- In terms of human resources of Japanese language education, there are difficulties of developing a long-term career mainly due to pay levels. It is necessary to provide Japanese language teachers with information on Japanese language learners and Japanese language education institutions.
- There should be a national system for providing Japanese language education to newcomers. There should also be national programs like orientation programs other than language programs to provide them with information necessary for life in Japan.
- Even if public support is available to foreign nationals, some of them are unaware of the support and cannot use that. Information of public support should be shared through social network services or by other means.

- 4th Hearing (March 9, 2021)

Mr. Haruo Mizuno and others

Japan Federation of Certified Administrative Procedures Legal Specialists Associations

(Points of Opinions)

- In terms of information dissemination of special measures for the status of residence, from the viewpoint of certified administrative procedures legal specialists who support foreign nationals, we request the government to clarify the legal grounds for the special measures for status of residence, in addition to merely explaining the special measures for the status of residence.
- In terms of making sustainable support for foreign nationals, the Immigration Services Agency should consider providing financial support to the proven NPOs in supporting foreign nationals.
- While many minors under provisional release go to school, schools have to be very careful about them as they are not eligible to health insurance.

Therefore, such minors should be eligible for health insurance so that they can study in the same conditions as other students.

- 5th Hearing (March 10, 2021)

Mr. Cesar Cabrejos

Language One Corporation

(Points of Opinions)

- Since many foreign residents understand some Japanese language, even if an interpreter is available, healthcare workers should speak with them in plain Japanese so that they can understand their condition to some extent. However, healthcare workers still need to be careful of their possible misunderstanding of plain Japanese.
- It will be effective in transmitting information for foreign nationals to use social networking services and places where they gather, such as international exchange associations.
- Officially certifying medical interpreters is preferable, but it would hinder volunteer interpreters.
- To have more foreign children playing an active role in Japanese society, it is important to provide their parents with more information on educational support. Support programs, such as scholarship programs, are unused if foreign parents do not know such support is available.

- 6th Hearing (March 15, 2021)

Mr. Ichiro Asami

Naitei Bridge Co., Ltd.

(Points of Opinions)

- When communicating with foreign nationals, we need to tell them the cultural codes and backgrounds behind our words which we are not usually conscious of. Since many Japanese companies seek for foreign workers who can understand such cultural codes at the same level as native Japanese, they fail to tell their foreign workers necessary cultural codes when coaching or training their foreign workers in workplaces and formulating their work rules or other internal rules. The government needs to change such a corporate mindset.
- Plain Japanese language used to support companies hiring foreign workers needs not only to simplify words and phrases, but also to help foreign workers understand such cultural understanding.

- It is not very effective for administrative agencies to promote Japanese language education for foreign workers in an uncoordinated manner. Instead, they need to work together toward the common goal: “settlement after hiring.”
  - To retain and rely on foreign workers, companies hiring foreign workers and their industrial associations should show the necessary Japanese language levels when foreign workers join the company and after that.
- 7th Hearing (March 16, 2021)  
 Mr. Takanori Shimizu and Ms. Kaori Fujinami  
 Council of Local Authorities for International Relations (CLAIR)  
 (Points of Opinions)
    - Although many local governments provide foreign residents with information in multiple languages, such information includes mere translations of information aimed at Japanese citizens and information hardly understandable for foreign nationals without background knowledge. In terms of the Guidebook on Living and Working published by the Immigration Services Agency, to make it more understandable and useful, it is preferable that the agency would revise it with the help of foreign committee members and so on.
    - To raise Japanese awareness of their role as a host country, it is necessary to provide multilingual information for foreign nationals through new channels from the viewpoint of promoting intercultural cohesion.  
 If such information is provided not only by local governments, international exchange associations, and NPOs and other parties involved in intercultural cohesion, but also by private companies, schools, local communities, and other organizations not related with foreign nationals before, Japanese citizens can understand what considerations they should show for foreign nationals around them and that their workplaces and schools already have those with foreign roots. This will help broader public understanding of people with various backgrounds.  
 Information should be provided in plain Japanese as well as multiple languages. Wider use of plain Japanese by Japanese people will make it easier for them to communicate with foreign nationals and promote mutual understanding through, for example, greeting exchanges in communities, disasters, the activities of neighborhood associations, and other opportunities.

- Support desk workers, whether for Japanese or foreign nationals, have a role that not everyone can do as they need listening skills, mental care skills, and a personal and institutional network. For this reason, support desk workers for foreign residents should be professionalized with qualifications or certifications. In addition, coordinators need to be assigned to support desks so that support desk workers can refer foreign nationals seeking help to suitable organizations.

The assignment of coordinators can create a cycle of analyzing handled cases, identifying the problems of foreign nationals seeking help, conducting specialized training, and providing better support services, and even help plan and implement effective measures for intercultural cohesion.

- Support for foreign children needs to include not only educational support, but also human resource development and providing sufficient financial support to help them learn their native language and Japanese, promoting their parents' understanding of their career development, providing healthcare support in infancy and childhood, and providing livelihood support including support for households in need. It is therefore important for local governments to make interdepartmental efforts to support foreign children.

- 8th Hearing (March 26, 2021)

Mr. Takashi Tsuchiya

Elementary and Junior High School Planning Section, School Education Planning Department, Secretariat of the Board of Education of Yokohama City, Kanagawa Prefecture

(Points of Opinions)

- The name of a foreign national on their residence card is used as their official name. While graduation certificates need to bear the official names of graduates, schools cannot write their official names in kanji on graduation certificates if asked by foreign students whose residence card does not have their names in kanji or their parents. Every year we have many inquiries related to this problem from local schools. If the application form for issuance of residence card has a Chinese version, there will be less misunderstanding and fewer troubles at the time of application.
- Foreign children and students include those enrolling in a school for foreign students, those enrolling in an international school, and even those not



living in Japan. Although teachers visit such children and students to check their school enrollment as whether they live in or outside Japan is not known, it is still difficult to understand the actual situation.

- If children and students with foreign nationality have good memories of school days, they will be good friends of Japan in the future. Since there are no parents who are not interested in the education of their children, it is important to ensure that foreign parents can make their children study at school without worry.

- 9th Hearing (March 26, 2021)

Ms. Keiko Sakurai

Shizuoka Prefecture, Hamamatsu City Board of Education, School Education Department, Guidance Division, Educational Support Center, Foreigners Support Group

(Points of Opinions)

- To assist children who need Japanese Language Support, it is important to create an environment that values the student culture and native (mother) language, cultivate their skills to study by themselves, and guide them to be able to have dreams and hopes.
- Since the school system differs from country to country, it is important to explain to the parents about Japanese Schools. In order to provide the child's needed support, Hamamatsu City's "Orientation about Japanese Schools" also talk about the children's/parents' Japanese ability, situation at the previous school, diagnosis of developmental disorder (if needed), religion, among others.
- Children who do not have a status of residence cannot be identify unless they come to the consultation. It would be nice to have a system to follow foreign children when their families move into a new city.
- Some children with foreign nationality born in Japan are neither fluent in Japanese language nor in their native (mother) language. Without a conscious opportunity to nurture their native (mother) language, it could be difficult to develop that language, and parent-child communication becomes impossible.
- Children can improve their Japanese ability if they enter a Japanese school, parents cannot. It would be nice to have a system where parents and children can learn Japanese in their communities.

- 10th Hearing (March 30, 2021)

Ms. Iki Tanaka

Youth Support Center

(Points of Opinions)

- YSC Global School mainly admits children with foreign roots and provides them with Japanese language education. Most of our students are in their mid-teens, including those who are over school age and those who graduated from junior high school without a clear career path. There are few places that accept such students aged 15 or older who want to go to high school or work. Night junior high schools do not meet their needs.
- The school offers online classes, but of course those classes cannot provide everything, particularly local information. It is thus essential for us to work with local supporters, such as schoolteachers, who are close to students, and international exchange associations.
- Some students with foreign roots are ineligible for a quota for foreign students when taking a high school entrance examination because they have Japanese nationality or have lived in Japan for certain years. We are working with local high schools to help as many students as possible enroll in the high schools of their choice.
- An increasing number of students who use the school's scholarship program suggests that many of their families have been financially affected by the COVID-19.
- Foreign children under provisional release are placed in a very precarious position, and the situation needs to be improved.
- The government should provide sufficient educational information to foreign nationals before their arrival in Japan. Their migration conditions, such as when they come to Japan and where they live in Japan, make huge differences in the living conditions and career paths of their children, including ineligibility for a quota for foreign students, but many foreign nationals migrate to Japan without knowing this fact.

FY 2021

- 1st Hearing (April 6, 2021)

Ms. Shuko Ebihara

kuriya

(Points of Opinions)

- The worries of young people with foreign roots often come from multiple reasons, such as poor academic ability, the lack of role models, problems with their status of residence, and financial problems. These problems need to be addressed individually.
  - Young foreign nationals who stay in Japan with a “Dependent” or “Official” status are not eligible for scholarship programs or other financial support, so the eligibility requirements should be eased.
  - High schools need to support their students with foreign roots as a team of their teachers and outside staff, such as counselors and social workers. Since not all young foreign nationals are covered by safety nets, they should be provided with multilayered support through cooperation by inside and outside of schools.
  - Providing necessary information to foreign nationals needs someone who enters foreign communities and builds a relationship with foreign nationals. For this purpose, it should be a good idea to use liaison meetings with key persons of support groups and foreign communities.
  - The COVID-19 has worsened the isolation of foreign residents. The government should grasp the reality of their isolation and visualize their problems.
  - Some young foreign nationals graduate from high school without a clear career path and have difficulty going to Japanese language school because of high tuition. The government should identify their needs and discuss measures to help them learn Japanese.
  - Since a job of supporting foreign nationals hardly provides financial security, and also the aging of the staff is ongoing, young staff is not developed. There needs to be a system that develop human resources, for example, by covering part of our personnel expenses.
- 2nd Hearing (April 8, 2021)  
 Mr. Seiju Takahashi  
 Multicultural Education Network Kanagawa (ME-net)  
 (Points of Opinions)
    - We need a fair entrance examination system for high schools that takes into consideration differences in Japanese levels and educational backgrounds among foreign students. It is necessary to provide special education nationwide that meets the individual needs of foreign students.

- For supporting children with foreign root, it is necessary to understand the reality of children with foreign roots and consider supporting way for them based on their detailed data, such as data by municipality, age and status of residence.
  - It is necessary to develop human resources of addressing issues of multiculturalism and diversification through education at universities and professional training colleges.
  - To help young foreign nationals who stay in Japan with a “Dependent” status find employment and change the status of residence, the government needs to inform the system that allows such foreigners to work, simplify the paperwork for changing the status of residence, and promote online application.
  - Since foreign children applying for a refugee status, overstaying their visas, or with a “Dependent” status are often placed in a precarious position, support desks for them should be established.
  - The government should assist with cooperation between local governments and NPOs and other organizations to eliminate differences in support for foreign residents among local governments.
  - With the government’s support, local governments should train multicultural social workers who can handle complicated problems.
  - To eliminate children with foreign nationality who do not attend school, there should be a system where local governments and schools cooperate in referring school-aged foreign children to local schools when they come to Japan.
- 3rd Hearing (April 9, 2021)  
 Mr. Tsutomu Takebe, Mr. Kunio Umeda, and Mr. Masao Manjome  
 National Association for Global & Open Minded Communities (NAGOMi)  
 (Points of Opinions)
    - In terms of the Technical Intern Training Program, the lack of communication is one of the main causes of disappearance and other problems. Passing the N5 level of the Japanese Language Proficiency Test should be requirement of the program.
    - Applicants for a “Student” or “Engineer/Specialist in Humanities/ International Services” status should be obligated to submit a graduation certificate and transcript issued by the competent authorities as countermeasures against document falsification.

- The Organization for Technical Intern Training should conduct stricter inspections of licensed supervising organizations and implementing organizations impose severer punishment on unlawful organizations (as measures to prevent human rights violations).
- Appropriate measures should be taken to avoid incurring unnecessary debts for technical intern trainees and Japanese language school students.
- The government should assess and support the efforts of licensed supervising organizations to protect technical intern trainees facing difficulties resulting from the COVID-19, such as the termination of their contracts, and prevent their situations from worsening. The government also needs to expand matching support.
- More support is needed to provide better Japanese education in the post-arrival training for technical intern trainees.
- The Japanese that foreign nationals want to learn varies depending on their migration purposes. It may be a good idea to launch other tests for measuring the Japanese communication skills of mid- to long-term foreign residents such as adding higher levels to the Japanese Foundation Test for Basic Japanese.
- It is necessary to strengthen the system which strictly conduct on-site inspections, examine, and punish Japanese language education institutions and universities. Records of past inspection and guidance should be publicly disclosed.
- The Japanese proficiency requirements of the migration system for fourth-generation foreign nationals of Japanese descent should be eased.
- It may be a good idea to promote the export of TV dramas, animations, music, and other Japanese cultural content to increase opportunities for foreign nationals to be exposed to Japanese.
- It is effective to utilize living guidance counselors and training instructors as well as licensed supervising organizations and implementing organizations so that technical intern trainees can quickly get information on social rules in an easy to understand format.
- It is effective to share the health problems of technical intern trainees seen by licensed supervising organizations and implementing organizations and their responding to the problems as know-how. Since some hospitals do not accept foreign patients not accompanied by an interpreter, the government should consider providing an online interpretation service and assigning medical interpreters to hospitals.

- Since the Comprehensive Measures for Acceptance and Coexistence of Foreign Nationals can be interpreted that disaster and weather information to be targeted at only foreign nationals with specific statuses of residence, the government should clarify that such information needs to be shared by all foreign nationals.
  - The government should consider providing public housing or other housing support to technical intern trainees who were dismissed due to the COVID-19 and lost their homes.
  - The government should clarify its recognition of the current situation/issues of the aging issues of permanent foreign residents, including those of Japanese descent, in the Comprehensive Measures, and discuss the need for measures.
  - The government should establish one-stop support centers nationwide as places where foreign residents can get necessary information on various public services. Local governments should regularly meet to share their advanced measures related to harmonious coexistence.
  - It may be a good idea to create “Handbook on Employment Management of Foreigners” (provisional name) and conduct awareness activities to enable companies hiring foreign workers to share know-how on how to prevent various problems resulting from differences in languages, religious beliefs, and customs as well as employment-related laws.
- 4th Hearing (April 12, 2021)  
 Ms. Rosa Mercedes Ochante Muray, Associate Professor  
 St. Andrew’s University of Education  
 (Points of Opinions)
    - Many children with foreign nationality are traumatized by bullying or discrimination. Schools need to provide intercultural cohesion education and human rights education involving local communities.
    - It is important for foreign children to use their native language. I have seen many young foreign nationals who stopped speaking their native language in their early childhood as a result of feeling uncomfortable using it at Japanese school, and relearn it afterward. Since Japanese society will be more diversified in the future, bilingual children should be encouraged to use their native language.

- It is necessary to eliminate regional differences in support for foreign students after compulsory schooling, such as quotas for foreign students in high school admission.
  - Foreign students drop out of high school for multiple reasons, such as their academic ability, bullying, and financial difficulties. As the reasons include their parents' failure to understand Japanese educational systems, it is necessary to make foreign parents understand the importance of going to high school.
  - Compared to elementary and junior high schools, study support provided by high schools to their foreign students is not enough. Moreover, there is a lack of individual tuition and support in learning native languages.
  - The financial insecurity of foreign parents affects their children. It is necessary to prevent foreign nationals from being isolated and inform them of where they can seek help when necessary.
  - Role models are important for foreign children to determine their career paths and develop their careers. If they do not have role models around them, it is preferable to make opportunities to interact with role models by using online.
  - Children with foreign roots will become members of Japanese society. There needs to be a common understanding that support for them will contribute to Japanese future society.
- 5th Hearing (April 14, 2021)  
 Ms. Kumiko Sakamoto  
 Aidensha  
 (Points of Opinions)
    - Aidensha is devising information conveyance such as using Facebook paid advertising to transmit information to foreign nationals who really need it. It is effective to transmitting information to foreign nationals in each foreign language.
    - Information provided by the government and local governments has some issues such as tending to use too much text and be difficult and poorly interpreted and translated. They need to transmit understandable information and carefully check the interpretation and translation quality of their information.
    - Networking of support for foreign residents and intercultural cohesion and other cooperation frameworks have enabled us to work with support

groups to provide better support, discuss necessary support, and make joint proposals to the government. It is particularly important that local governments can now directly hear the opinions of foreign nationals in cooperation with local foreign communities.

- Amid the accelerating decline of the Japanese population, measures for harmonious coexistence with foreign nationals should be linked with population issues. The government should enlighten encouraging companies and other organizations to accept foreign nationals as members of society.
- While the population of foreign residents is increasing, there is a limit to the support that NPOs and other organizations can provide without compensation or with a single-year budget, so it is necessary to be multi-year budget projects.

- 6th Hearing (April 16, 2021)

Ms. Yoshimi Kojima, Associate Professor

Tokyo University of Foreign Studies

(Points of Opinions)

- Local governments should include education of foreign nationals in their “official functions” to eliminate Non-Japanese Children not attending school.
- Some schools do not grasp accurately nationalities and situation of their Non-Japanese Children. The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology should add the “numbers of students by school year and by nationality” to the School Basic Survey and include Non-Japanese Children in the subjects of the Survey on School-Aged Children and Students Not Enrolling in Compulsory Schooling.
- It is necessary to eliminate regional differences in the availability of quotas or other special measures for students who graduate from a junior high school in high school admission since the availability greatly affects their career paths.
- More relearning support needs to be provided to Non-Japanese Children over school age. Especially, every prefecture and ordinance-designated city must have a public night junior high school.
- In some municipalities, graduates from a junior high school of Ethnic and International Schools are not qualified for entrance examinations for public high schools. This is because local governments differently interpret “other



persons who are considered by a high school to have academic ability equal or superior to that of junior high school graduates” under the Regulation for Enforcement of the School Education Act. They should therefore have the same interpretation. To ensure the health and safety of Non-Japanese Children, the School Health and Safety Act, the Act on the National Agency for the Advancement of Sports and Health (the Injury and Accident Mutual Aid Benefit System), and the School Lunch Program Act should apply to full-time Ethnic and International Schools that provide group activities.

- Whether Non-Japanese Children can receive sufficient education depends on the financial security of their parents. The government should provide employment security to Non-Japanese parents, for example, by providing them with opportunities to learn Japanese through the refugee resettlement program or other programs.
- Non-Japanese Children and their parents who are considered to stay in Japan for a long time should be provided with information on school attendance soon after their arrival and tracked afterward.

- 7th Hearing (April 20, 2021)

Mr. Akihiro Yamada and others

Suzuka City, Mie Prefecture

(Points of Opinions)

- Since FY 2019, we have provided study support to elementary school students with foreign nationality on summer or winter vacation under the sponsorship of the local international exchange association with the help of volunteers. It is preferable to continue this program from the perspective of developing human resources of supporting our community because it has helped foreign students smoothly start their study in the new school period and made other achievements. The program, which has been subsidized by the social welfare promotion and subsidy program of the Welfare and Medical Service Agency (WAM) until this fiscal year, needs future financial support as it is unknown whether it will be continuously subsidized in the next fiscal year and afterward.
- As our support for preschool foreign children, we have assigned coordinators who can speak Portuguese and Spanish to public day-care centers to provide support services to their parents. Some private day-care centers with many foreign children also employ interpreters or foreign staff.

However, only a few day-care centers can do so, so continuous support is necessary.

- Suzuka City has three Japanese language classes, all of which are operated by local volunteers, and short-staffed is an issue due to the aging of their staff. While they are more often asked by local companies hiring foreign workers to admit the foreign workers, they cannot operate with the current staff also due to the COVID-19. Companies should provide Japanese language education to their own foreign workers as their responsibility. On the other hand, the government should consider providing know-how on online learning and financial support for retaining the current learning environments.
  - Information for foreign nationals needs to be provided in multiple foreign languages. Ministries and agencies, which have translated information on COVID-19 into multiple foreign languages, should continuously provide in multiple foreign languages such information that can be used by local governments.
  - Since social media, such as Facebook, can effectively provide information to foreign residents free of charge, they should be useful tools for communities with a small population of scattered foreign residents.
- 8th Hearing (April 21, 2021)  
Mr. Takaharu Hayashi  
Japan Overseas Council  
(Points of Opinions)
    - The 1990 revision to the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act attracted many foreign nationals of Japanese descent as labor, who have not been covered by social security programs due to the subsequent collapse of the bubble economy and corporate downsizing. In three to five years, they will reach an age that needs long-term care and may need to live in nursing homes or other facilities, so it is necessary to respond their demand.
    - Many elderly foreign residents of Japanese descent who want to spend the rest of their lives in their home countries will not (or cannot) do so for such reasons as their families or relatives living in Japan or the poor welfare systems of their home countries.
    - Many foreign residents of Japanese descent currently receiving our support do not understand their own employment status (such as direct or

indirect employment and regular or non-regular employment). Due to the COVID-19, there are many cases that their working days are significantly reduced. These foreign workers have not been identified as those who need support because they have not been fired yet.

- Any official support, including public assistance, is not provided without application. For this reason, many foreign residents of Japanese descent cannot receive public assistance because they do not know how to apply.
  - Cremation is not customary in some countries while people in other countries do not want to keep the ashes of their dead families at home. As such, views about funerals differ from country to country, consideration for funeral is needed.
  - It is necessary to investigate on the actual situation by realistic survey like our survey on all the apartments of the Chiryu housing complex.
  - Corporate downsizing and the government's program for supporting return home after the Lehman shock prompted some foreign community leaders to return home, causing serious damage to the whole foreign communities. The absence of community leaders is a serious problem.
  - Having conducted many support activities, including support sessions and food banks, we want government officials to see our activities with their own eyes because they will not otherwise understand the reality. We also want them to listen to foreign nationals patiently.
- 9th Hearing (May 10, 2021)  
Ms. Megumi Fukuyama and Mr. Huhdelger  
Kobe Foreigners Friendship Center (KFC)  
(Points of Opinions)
    - After the start of the long-term care insurance system in 2000, many foreign elderlies were reluctant to use the system because of their misunderstanding of the system or cultural differences. We explained the system to them and encouraged them to use the system through such opportunities as social gatherings of Vietnamese.
    - Many foreign elderlies forget to extend their periods of stay or find it difficult to go out for the procedure. The government should allow the elderlies to stay in Japan for five years, make it unnecessary for them to renew their residence cards, or take other measures for them.
    - Since language or cultural barriers often make it difficult for many foreign residents to be aware of and access available public services, they should

be provided with better access. Local governments should have staff who understand their public services and can communicate directly with foreign residents without an interpreter.

- Local governments should support foreign workers, including technical intern trainees, as their residents. They seem to be excluded from those eligible for public services as short-term workers.
  - The first generation of Japanese war orphans left behind in China is decreasing, and the second generation is aging. While the first generation is provided with a lot of support from the government under law, the second generation is not. The government should consider providing some support to the second generation.
  - Without an interpreter, foreign elderlies cannot understand the contents of an interview at home for a certification of needed long-term care. In addition, even if an interpreter is available, they may find it difficult to explain the long-term care insurance system to foreign elderlies because the system is complicated. They need someone who understands both the system and their native language.
  - Support for foreign elderlies needs skills of handling dementia or other similar condition as well as understanding of their linguistic, cultural, and historical backgrounds. Long-term care insurance services provided in a foreign language should be rewarded under the system.
  - Some foreign nationals are not rewarded for their hard work, such as those who cannot pass The National Examination for Certified Care Workers due to their language problems and those who cannot work full-time to take care of their children. These people should be provided with opportunities to learn Japanese and gain the knowledge necessary to live in Japan after their arrival and support in taking such examinations. And there should be discussions on how permanent residency should be so that these people will have a chance to live permanently in Japan.
- 10th Hearing (May 13, 2021)  
Mr. Soichi Sato and Mr. Yoshio Takahashi  
Japan Association of New Economy  
(Points of Opinions)
    - Diversity brought by foreign nationals is a source of innovation and helps Japanese society with a declining population. Amid intensifying global

competition for foreign workers, it is important for both the government and the private sector to take action to make Japan more attractive.

- The government should clarify its basic visions of acceptance of foreign nationals, including the goals, what kind of foreign nationals Japan wants, and how Japan accepts them, as well as its strategies to realize the visions.
- In line with the strategies, the government should also redesign the residence status system (primarily to enable foreign nationals to have various career paths) and further promote its measures to integrate foreign nationals into society.
- For policies on the acceptance of and harmonious coexistence with foreign nationals, the measures of the private sector, including companies, are important. The government's support for the measures of the private sector will make it possible to effectively achieve the policy goals.
- More specifically, the government first needs to show the basic concept of the acceptance of immigrants as "Basic Immigration Act." Under this law, it needs to set the specific goals of acceptance plans and social integration policies and manage the progress toward the goals with KPIs.
- In addition, the government needs to design the residence status system to provide foreign nationals with various career paths. More specifically, necessary changes should include adding the industries in which "Specified Skilled Workers (ii)" can work, taking special measures to allow foreign nationals to be accompanied by their families when they change their status of residence from "Engineer/Specialist in Humanities/International Services" to "Specified Skilled Worker (i)," and easing the requirements for "Designated Activities (46)"<sup>1</sup>.
- The Comprehensive Measures for Acceptance and Coexistence of Foreign Nationals needs to organize problems with a matrix of tasks and their targets. For this purpose, there needs to be a system for collecting data by such means as website reviews and surveys.
- Although the government has made various improvements, including the launch of a portal site for foreign nationals, there are the opinions that information provided in plain Japanese or multiple foreign languages is still

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<sup>1</sup> This status of residence allows foreign nationals who graduated from a Japanese university to engage in a broad range of work at a public or private organization in Japan on the condition that they use their broad knowledge or practical ability gained at the Japanese university or their high Japanese proficiency gained through their experience as an international student.

difficult to understand or find, so the government needs to constantly review these problems. The government also needs to ensure that more foreign nationals know the Foreign Residents Support Center and trust it as a place where they can solve their problems.

- Speaking of each issues, foreign nationals are still often treated in an unfriendly or unreasonable way when renting an apartment, opening a bank account, paying tax or insurance premiums, or using necessary services. Japanese commercial practices and public services need to be changed as necessary.
  - Individual Number (My Number) and My Number Card can be useful from the viewpoint of the social integration and proper residency management of foreign residents.
  - In terms of support in the private sector, some companies have promoted initiatives to retain their foreign workers and for achieve harmonious coexistence, such as support for Japanese language education, life assistance, and consideration for different cultures and customs. The government should support those positive initiatives with tax breaks or other measures.
  - In terms of digitization of administrative procedures, we hope that the government will make steady efforts to put into action in accordance with the basic plan to significantly increase online application and reporting.
- 11th Hearing (May 17, 2021)  
Ms. Yukimi Miyagi  
(Points of Opinions)
    - The education and career paths of children with foreign roots are greatly affected by their parents. It is therefore necessary to ensure that not only children with foreign roots, but also their parents understand Japanese school systems and curriculums and the importance of educational backgrounds for the future. It is particularly necessary to provide more information on post-compulsory education because such information is less available than that on compulsory education.
    - While individual tuition in a subject for children with foreign roots is effective in providing them with study and psychological support, it could make them fall behind in their study of other subjects. It is thus necessary to carefully choose subjects for individual tuition and provide individual tuition only for a limited time.

- There are preschools for children with foreign roots, and similar programs should be available to children admitted to a school in the middle of an academic year. Such programs should measure their academic ability and help them understand Japanese school rules and what they need to know about their school life in Japan.
  - Public high schools should have an international course for children who are good at study, but not good at Japanese.
  - Support for children with foreign roots in learning their native language depends on volunteers and has difficulty finding places to teach. Local governments should provide financial support to teachers of their native languages and places where they can gather.
  - In terms of Japanese language education, there are regional differences as it is more available in cities with a large population of foreign nationals than other cities. Opportunities for Japanese language education should be provided equally, for example, with standardized learning materials.
  - While the government and local governments need to provide foreign nationals with necessary information in plain Japanese and multiple languages, it should be more efficient for them to use social media, such as LINE, because such information is not always available to those who need it.
  - Although discrimination and prejudice against foreign nationals seem to be less common than 10 years ago, I still often hear stories of foreign nationals being blamed for messy garbage dumps or refused an apartment application because of their nationality.
  - To build a society of harmonious coexistence, it is necessary to educate the public, particularly children, about diversity, including nationality, and the importance of showing their individuality.
- 12th Hearing (May 25, 2021)  
 KEIDANREN (Japan Business Federation)  
 Mr. Yasukiyo Horiuchi *et al.*  
 (Points of Opinions)
    - Basically, foreign nationals need to have certain Japanese proficiency to settle in Japan. For this reason, it is necessary to improve the quality of Japanese language education for them and provide them with more learning opportunities.

- We highly value the role of the Foreign Residents Support Center (FRESC) as a cross-cutting institution to support foreign residents to settle in Japan. The FRESC should provide genuine one-stop support services, including administrative applications such as status of residence, share data to support foreign nationals among other institutions, and widening their service network across Japan through their local offices.
- Foreign nationals tend to gain information mostly from their compatriot communities without accessing to official information provided by the national/local governments. The national/local governments should improve the ways to reach foreign nationals to attend to their various needs with the aids of NGOs/NPOs supporting foreign nationals.
- It is also important to ensure that technical intern trainees who face human-rights infringements can access to helplines to get support.
- The number of foreign nationals who wish to work in Japan has not been on steep rise. A more strategical public relations to attract overseas talents would be necessary.
- To attract the top tier of highly-skilled professionals, the level of salary is the largest obstacle for Japanese companies to hire them. Other obstacles include housing, tax rates, and education for children.
- The concept of “marriage/family” in Japan is different from that of the western countries, as the latter includes same-sex marriage, civil partnership (available to both same-sex couples and opposite-sex couples), and couples without legal grounds. Therefore, some migrants who are out of the conventional Japanese family concept face difficulties to be accompanied by their partner/spouse/step-children, thereby giving up moving to Japan.
- Japan’s labor practices, such as seniority systems and the systematic difficulty of taking long vacations, sometimes make it difficult for Japanese companies to retain foreign nationals.
- Japanese companies need not only to respect the human rights of their foreign workers in their workplaces and comply with relevant laws and regulations, but also to provide them with better working environments that enable them to work in Japan for a long time. Japanese companies need to continue promoting diversity programs and improving working environments.
- Foreign nationals have been expected to be proficient in Japanese when accessing to social security such as medical, welfare, and public services



in their daily life. It is therefore necessary to actively promote the usage of plain Japanese and English.

- We believe the government should appoint an administrative leader (someone like Minister in charge of migration policies) to coordinate migration policies across Ministries with their strong leadership in order to create a friendly environment for foreign nationals. For example, it might be helpful to expand the administrative capacities of the Immigration Services Agency so that the Agency can exert the leadership role across Ministries.
  - It is necessary to establish databases for seamlessly integrated migration policy. The government needs to integrate Individual Number Card (My Number Card) and a residence card to realize a data linkage between them.
  - If foreign nationals can access the information required across their life cycle through Mynportal, the portal will be useful in the face of various typical challenges including seeking for a job, opening a bank account, concluding lease contracts for residential or office properties, as well as renewing a period of stay or a status of residence. Procedures required by the Act on the Protection of Personal Information, measures, and adequate security control are essential there.
- 13th Hearing (June 4, 2021)  
Mr. Tetsuyoshi Kodama  
ALIANÇA DE INTERCÂMBIO BRASIL JAPÃO  
(Points of Opinions)
    - After the Lehman shock, some Brazilians of Japanese descent who kept living in Japan recognized the importance of the education of their children. And their children graduated from a high school or university in Japan and had a full-time job in various industries. Such children are less connected and affiliated with Brazilian communities.
    - Speaking of support for mother tongue and native culture, in Hamamatsu City, support groups provide Portuguese classes. Appreciating the government's support for such activities, we think that the government does not necessarily need to do those measures. Moreover, the government's duty is rather teach Japanese to all foreign children.

- We hope that children with foreign roots will be treated equally with Japanese based on their ability rather than nationality without any discriminations.
- Brazilian children who enroll at Brazilian school in Japan to go to university in Brazil have to live in Japanese society if they do not return to Brazil. Some of them, even if they did well academically, have no choice but to get a job that does not require Japanese language skills, such as a manufacturing job, because they have never received Japanese language education before. Brazilian school students need to be provided with opportunities to learn Japanese language necessary to live in Japanese society.
- As foreign nationals who have a certain Japanese proficiency can work in more various types of industries, they need to be frequently provided with opportunities to learn Japanese.
- Despite the Social Security Agreement between Japan and Brazil entered into force in 2012, many Brazilians of Japanese descent employed through a dispatching business operator are not entitled to either Japanese or Brazilian pension benefits because they do not meet the premium payment requirements due to their failure to enroll in the pension programs. As a result, some of these people have no choice but to rely on public assistance if they cannot work for sickness or other reasons.
- For those who do not use social media, the city office distributes information magazines to local temporary staff agencies and places where Brazilian living in Japan gather, but providing information through social media is the quickest way of transmitting information.
- Many Japanese Brazilians do not know when they can be vaccinated against COVID-19. They should be clearly informed of who can be vaccinated and when they can be vaccinated.
- Some foreign nationals have no one to talk to when they face discriminatory treatment. I think places where they can ask for help should be available to them.
- Even if local governments advocate intercultural cohesion, genuine intercultural cohesion cannot be achieved unless it is understood by the general public and accepted of foreign nationals. It should be important for local governments to gain public understanding and encourage Japanese residents to have an open-minded attitude toward foreign nationals.

- 14th Hearing (June 9, 2021)  
 Mr. Kazuhiro Sakuma and Mr. Yuki Kumano  
 National Federation of Small Business Associations  
 (Points of Opinions)
  - Many internship hosts have had difficulties finding homes for their technical intern trainees because property owners do not want to rent their property to foreign nationals. The governments and local governments should encourage property management companies to accept foreign nationals, rent local vacant houses to technical intern trainees, find apartments where technical intern trainees can live, or provide other support.
  - The difficulty that technical intern trainees have in opening a bank account on their own prompts some of them to illegally buy an account under the name of someone else. It should be smoother for them to open a bank account.
  - Resident registration procedures at local government offices are a very difficult, time-consuming process for foreign nationals. We hope interpreters of various languages should always be available at local government offices.
  - Local governments show how to dispose of waste, but should provide it in multiple languages by such means as leaflets so that foreign nationals can understand it.
  - Since information provided by the government and local governments is often available to foreign workers through their companies, they should provide information in a manner that makes it easy for companies to provide the information to their foreign workers.
  - The job-matching events organized by the Immigration Services Agency to increase employment opportunities for foreign nationals are helpful, but need to be known by more foreign nationals because they are not widely known.
  - Although some NPOs, business cooperatives, and enterprise cooperatives are conducting activities to promote harmonious coexistence, they are not networked and fail to convince foreign nationals and companies that they are trustworthy. If the government or local governments create lists of such organizations and such organizations form a nationwide or regional association, they can manage these organizations and share their information with foreign nationals and companies.

- We hope that the Immigration Services Agency will continue dialogues with licensed supervising organizations and registered support organizations.
- 15th Hearing (June 29, 2021)
  - Mr. Akira Nidaira
  - Japan Trade Union Confederation
  - (Points of Opinions)
  - Since information gathering tools used by foreign nationals differ from their country to country, it is necessary to understand the use of social media in their countries when discussing how to provide them with information. Posts on social media are buried under newer posts, so the same information needs to be repeatedly posted.
  - Although it is a good thing that the website of the Immigration Services Agency is translated into various foreign languages, updates are available only in Japanese. The Agency should discuss how to provide updates and important information in foreign languages.
  - Since many foreign nationals who need support related to public services or livelihoods do not know where to go for support, places that refer them to suitable institutions or services, like the Foreign Residents Support Center (FRESC), are important. Relevant ministries and agencies, including their local branches, therefore need to work together.
  - It is necessary to ensure that many foreign nationals know the business hours and locations of support desks where those who cannot go on weekdays can go for support. It may also be necessary to increase supporters, for example, by asking international students to interpret for foreign nationals coming for support.
  - I think that a certain level of Japanese language is essential for foreign nationals to live in Japan, so opportunities to learn basic Japanese need to be available in their workplaces and communities.
  - While some companies want their foreign workers to learn Japanese, Japanese language classes offered by local governments and other available opportunities to learn Japanese are not widely known. More efforts are necessary to make such opportunities widely known and increase them.
  - We think it is necessary to provide Japanese language courses that foreign workers can take on their days off or financial support for them to take Japanese language courses.

- Medical care systems should be more accessible to foreign nationals.
  - Some foreign nationals cannot rent apartments because they have foreign nationalities. The government and local governments may need to take some action, such as conducting activities or workshops to encourage local residents, including property owners, to accept foreign nationals.
  - It may be necessary to establish places where foreign nationals can learn basic Japanese social manners.
  - Useful information on pregnancy, childbirth, childcare, and school enrollment procedures should be available to foreign nationals in their native languages. They should be allowed to prepare and submit forms and documents in their native languages.
  - In terms of social insurance, it is necessary to instruct companies to enroll their eligible foreign workers. It is good that both employers and foreign workers know the system of Lump-sum Withdrawal Payment for pension benefits and allow foreign workers to claim such payment in their native languages.
  - The government should be praised for its whole-of-government approach to formulating the Comprehensive Measures for Acceptance and Coexistence of Foreign Nationals. The government needs to continue the Comprehensive Measures while checking how far the Comprehensive Measures have been taken and how recipients of services provided through the Comprehensive Measures feel about the services.
- 16th Hearing (July 15, 2021)  
 Lawyer Sosuke Seki and Lawyer Tomohiro Yoshida  
 Japan Federation of Bar Associations  
 (Points of Opinions: Lawyer Seki)
    - The Japan Federation of Bar Associations declared and announced at its recent general meetings and other opportunities its commitments to (1) improving the legal access of foreign nationals, (2) training lawyers who support foreign nationals and reinforcing its support infrastructure, and (3) promoting cooperation with the Japan Legal Support Center, local governments, international exchange associations, relevant ministries and agencies, and one-stop support centers, making various efforts to fulfill the commitments.
    - In quite a few cases involving foreign nationals, they cannot pay attorney's fees or interpretation/translation fees, but are often ineligible for the legal

aid system of the Japan Legal Support Center because of its address and status-of-residence requirements. Therefore, the Japan Federation of Bar Associations financially supports such foreign nationals to fill the blank as a provisional measure, and the government should legislate in the future.

- The COVID-19 has increased online and telephone consultations about cases involving foreign nationals. Our challenges related to such consultations include how to provide foreign nationals with information on legal consultation services, how to make legal consultation services accessible to them, and how to find interpreters of minor foreign languages. We have recently started using social media to provide such information. Increasing online consultation services have also helped improve the accessibility. To find interpreters of minor foreign languages, we are working to share information on the interpreters of each bar association.
- Foreign nationals can be saved if they have a status of residence. The government should have an immigration control system that can protect all foreign nationals. I hope that the government should also positively consider “legalizing” a certain number of foreign nationals without a status of residence by issuing them a special stay permit if they do not have any other major problem because I see it as a reasonable decision given the aging population combined with a declining birthrate.

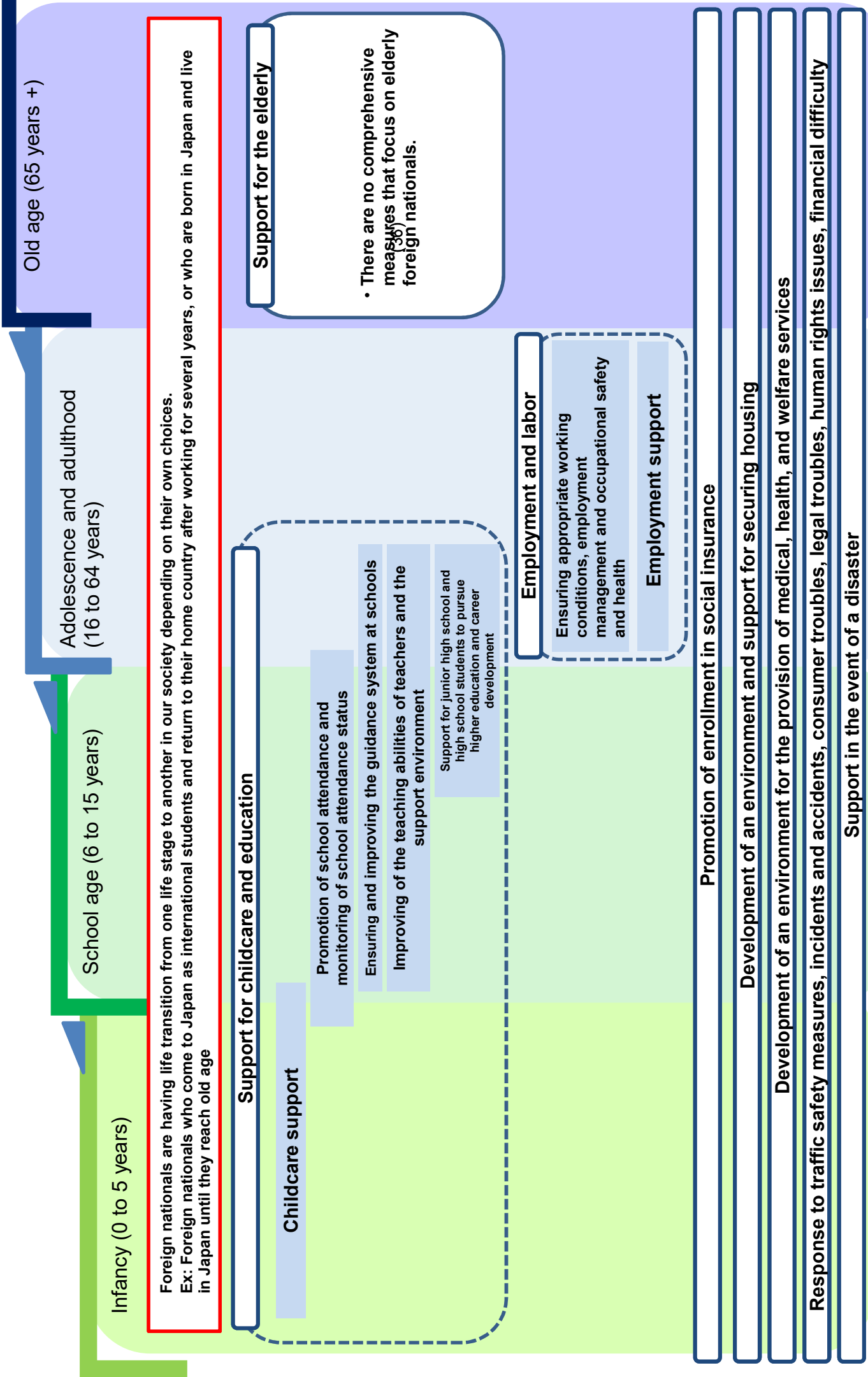
(Points of Opinions: Lawyer Yoshida)

- Children with foreign roots are sometimes refused school admission and should be guaranteed educational opportunities. If they are significantly lacking in basic qualifications for a suitable grade because of their lack of communication skills in Japanese or differences in school curriculums between Japan and their country, they should be admitted into a lower grade; if they are past school age without completing compulsory education, they should be admitted to a public or night junior high school. The government also needs to conduct continuous research on children not enrolling in compulsory schooling.
- Although some local governments provide a quota or other special measures for children with foreign roots in high school admission, they need to improve the availability, which is still limited.
- Children with foreign roots are more likely to drop out of school than other children because they cannot receive a higher level of education due to financial problems, are not permitted to work due to their status of residence, or have unclear future prospects for other reasons. Although it

is a significant improvement that the government has eased the requirements for “dependent” children to change their status of residence to “long-term resident” or “designated activities,” it still needs to eliminate the condition that their change to “designated activities” requires their supporters (parents) to be their reference and to expand the eligibility for “designated activities.”

- The government should have statistics that link statuses of residence with career paths to accurately understand the situation of children with foreign roots. The government should also have standardized statistics for the rate of students who go on to high school and the rate of children not enrolling in compulsory schooling.
- As measures to prevent high school students with foreign roots from dropping out, they need to be provided with support, including support for their home and community life. School social workers are effective in linking their schools with their families and communities. Budgetary measures need to be taken to secure school social workers and other workers who support children with foreign roots, such as interpreters and counselors who speak their native languages.
- Since we receive increasing consultation cases involving a status of residence from child consultation centers, support workers for children with foreign roots need to be provided with opportunities to learn about statuses of residence and other related matters.
- Many problems concerning children with foreign roots are caused by the dependence of their stay in Japan on the status of residence of their parents. Those who become a victim of domestic violence or abuse cannot escape from their parents because the escape would affect their own status of residence. The residence status system needs to enable children with foreign roots to escape from their parents in case of such an emergency.
- The residence status system makes it difficult for children with foreign roots born in Japan to find a job, receive a scholarship, or otherwise start their life again, closing many doors for their future. The system should provide them with opportunities to start their life again.

# Current Status of Support for Each Life Stage and Life Cycle (Comprehensive Measures)





## Reference Cases on Presenting Role Models

### Shizuoka Prefecture: Compilation of featuring role models of foreign residents active in the corporate world

- Introduced role models of foreign residents who have made use of their diverse background, have overcome language and cultural differences, and currently work as full-time employees in the corporate world.
- In addition to Japanese version, Portuguese, Filipino, and Spanish versions of this booklet were created to help children together with their parents think and choose their career path.  
<http://www.pref.shizuoka.jp/sangyou/sa-210/bookdata.html#roll>



### Mie Prefecture: Creation of career guide booklets and DVDs for foreign national children

- Created a DVD and a multilingual job introduction booklet to convey the importance of having a dream for the future and working towards one's goals to children and parents with ties to foreign countries through the messages of senior citizens who are active in Mie Prefecture or their home countries.  
DVD: Available in plain Japanese, Portuguese, English, Spanish, Filipino, and Chinese.  
Booklet: Available in Japanese, Portuguese, Spanish, English, Chinese, and Filipino.  
<https://www.pref.mie.lg.jp/TABUNKA/HP/73513032706.htm>  
<https://www.pref.mie.lg.jp/TABUNKA/HP/49135032696.htm>



### Osaka Prefecture: Hosting the OSAKA Multicultural Forum

- Junior high school students in need of Japanese language instruction and junior high school students with foreign roots from all municipalities in the prefecture gather to meet junior high school students from other schools who speak the same native language and to learn about multicultural activities at other schools, with the aim of nurturing their identity and enhancing their self-esteem.
- In addition, by listening to the stories of high school students who serve as role models and information about high school life, the participants are able to gain perspective on their career paths.  
<https://www.pref.osaka.lg.jp/hodo/index.php?site=fumin&pageId=41826>

# Reference Cases on Publicizing Good Practices for Hiring Foreign Nationals

## Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry: Handbook for the Employment of International Students and Empowerment after Hiring

- Provides a checklist of 12 points to be noted for companies in employing international students and empowering them after hiring, and provides corporate examples.
- In the “Collection of Best Practices of Leading Companies as a Reference for Employment and Empowerment of International Students,” companies that are making distinctive efforts to employ and empower international students are listed.

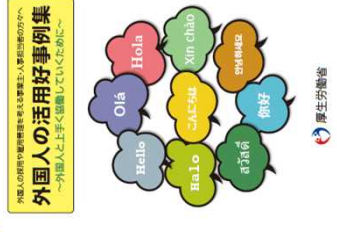
<https://www.meti.go.jp/press/2019/02/20200228007/20200228007-1.pdf>



## Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare: Collection of Good Practices for Using Foreign Nationals

- A compilation of the content of good practices, based on the analysis of findings by an expert panel following interviews regarding employment management with approximately 50 companies employing foreign nationals.

<https://www.mhlw.go.jp/content/000541696.pdf>



## Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry: Diversity Management Selection 100

- With the aim of expanding the base of companies that engage in diversity management, companies that utilize the abilities of diverse human resources such as women and foreign nationals to create corporate value are awarded and their initiatives are publicized.

<https://www.meti.go.jp/policy/economy/jinzai/diversity/kigyo100sen/>

