

Viewpoints of Discussions

Amid the increasingly severe labor shortage, foreign nationals are integral pillars of Japan's economy and society. Given such circumstances, we must bear in mind that we should realize a society of harmonious coexistence with foreign nationals, safeguard their human rights, and strive to appropriately accept foreign nationals as important members of our industries, economy, and local communities. This will realize a diverse, dynamic society in which foreign nationals working in Japan can demonstrate their full potentials and consequently contribute to easing the serious labor shortage. From these viewpoints, we intend to resolve the issues facing the existing technical intern training program and the specified skilled worker system and gain international understanding.

Direction of Discussions

Issue	Current situation	New program/system
How to design systems that reflect desirable purposes and actual needs	Aiming to make international contributions through human resource development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider abolishing the current technical intern training program and establishing a new program (thoroughly review the current program to reflect the reality of its roles) aimed at securing and developing human resources (develop unskilled workers into workers with a certain level of expertise or skills). Consider continuing to use the current specified skilled worker system while making necessary improvements and, in the meantime, keep discussing the relationship with the new program and how to improve governmental supervisory and support functions.
Establishing a career-path that enables foreign nationals to continue to grow and to play active roles over the mid- to long-term	Inconsistencies between the job categories of the technical intern training program and the industrial fields of the specified skilled worker system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider aligning the job categories of the new program with the industrial fields of the specified skilled worker system (develop and assess the essential skills of foreign nationals and keep discussing how such assessment should be conducted). Consider reviewing all job categories and industrial fields as well as applying the status of Specified Skilled Worker (ii) to other industrial fields, and discuss how these industrial fields should be selected based on the necessity of such job categories and industrial fields.
How to decide the numbers of foreign nationals that can be expected to be accepted	Lack of transparency in the process of deciding the expected numbers of foreign nationals to be accepted	Introduce a system whereby the efforts of ministries and agencies in charge of industrial fields are assessed and the expected numbers of foreign nationals to be accepted and industrial fields to accept foreign nationals are decided based on stakeholders' opinions and evidence in order to ensure process transparency.
How employer changes should be handled (for technical intern training program)	Not allowed as a general rule	Ease the overall restrictions on employer changes in order to fulfill the purposes of the new program and protect foreign nationals because of the inclusion of securing human resources as a purpose, but retain to some degree the restrictions on employer changes specifically aimed at human resource development (keep discussing how restrictions on employer changes should be designed).
How supervisory and support functions should be provided	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Insufficient supervisory and support functions of supervising organizations, registered support organizations, and the Organization for Technical Intern Training Unscrupulous organizations sending foreign nationals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The functions of supervising organizations and registered support organizations are important. However, it is necessary to regulate or eliminate supervising organizations that are incapable of preventing and addressing human rights violations as well as registered support organizations that are incapable of appropriately supporting specified skilled workers. Improve the supervisory and support functions of supervising organizations and registered support organizations by tightening the requirements (keep discussing the functions and requirements, including incentives for excellent organizations). Improve the supervisory and support functions of the Organization for Technical Intern Training by providing it with necessary resources. Conclude effective Memorandums of Cooperation with sending countries to eradicate unscrupulous sending organizations and promote similar efforts.
Efforts to enhance the Japanese language proficiency of foreign nationals	No requirements for technical intern trainees' Japanese language proficiency or educational level	Take measures to ensure that foreign nationals have the necessary Japanese language proficiency before starting work in Japan and establish a system that can help them gradually enhance their Japanese language proficiency after arrival to ensure that foreign workers have a certain level of Japanese proficiency.

Future Discussions

The Advisory Panel will discuss the details of the new program and system in line with the direction of discussions described in the interim report and draw up the final report by autumn 2023.