

Voluntary GCM review by Japan

1 Ensuring that migration is voluntary, orderly and regular

(GCM Objectives: 2, 5, 6, 12, 18)

a) Progress

As for the objective 5, On April 1, 2019, the status of residence “Specified Skilled Worker (i)” and “Specified Skilled Worker (ii)” were established in order to accept work-ready foreign nationals who have a certain level of expertise and skills in the industrial fields where labor shortages need to be supplemented by foreign nationals since it is difficult to secure human resources. At the end of November 2021, the number of specified skilled workers in Japan was 45,970.

Based on the establishment of the status of residence “Specified Skilled Worker (i)” and “Specified Skilled Worker (ii)”, from the perspective of more strongly and comprehensively promoting the measures for acceptance and coexistence of foreign nationals, in December 2018, the government has come together to compile “Comprehensive Measures for Acceptance and Coexistence of Foreign nationals” which include measures related various scenes in daily life such as work environment, education, medical care and housing, under which the government has worked together to steadily promote the relevant measures. This “Comprehensive Measures” were revised three times based on implementation status of the relevant measures.

As for the objective 6, "Guidelines for Employers to Improve the Management of Employment of Foreign Workers", which includes relevant laws to be complied with and substance of labor management to be strived by employers who employ foreigners were revised in April 2019, in line with 'Comprehensive Measures for the Acceptance and Coexistence of Foreign Nationals' indicate the necessity of improving the environment for the realization of a society of harmonious coexistence with foreign nationals based on increasing the number of foreign workers every year, and Japanese labor-related laws and regulations have been made amendments recent years.

As for the objective 12, the Immigration Services Agency puts efforts into advancing the knowledge and awareness of its officials on measures to combat trafficking in persons through lectures on human rights at training programs according to their careers.

In addition, in cooperation with external instructors from the relevant ministries and agencies, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and NGOs, specialized training on human rights and measures to combat trafficking in persons was also conducted targeting mid-level officials who deal directly with such trafficking cases.

In specially-developed training on trafficking in persons countermeasures, the agency carries out case studies that clarify the main points to consider when identifying victims and delivers a lecture emphasizing the practical work involved in identifying victims.

The Immigration Services Agency provides lectures on dealing with trafficking cases for the Organization for Technical Intern Training staffs who may encounter such cases.

b) Best practices

In the specialized training on measures to combat trafficking for Immigration Services Agency staffs, 13 training sessions were conducted from 2009 to 2021. A total of 283 officials attended the training.

The training for the Organization for Technical Intern Training has been started from 2020. (It can be conducted at any time by using online teaching materials (video)).

As for the objective 6, Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare Japan, as a policy to promote improving the management of employment of foreign workers, is making efforts in raising awareness of 'Guidelines for Employers to Improve the Management of Employment of Foreign Workers' through organizing seminars and providing onsite consultation services to offices.

2 Protecting migrants through rights-based border governance measures (GCM Objectives: 4, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 21)

a) Progress

As for objective 8 (in March 2019, we issued a notice concerning the "Promotion of comprehensive measures to ensure the safety of foreigners in Japan"), the National Police Agency have instructed the prefectural police forces to protect foreigners from becoming a victim of crime and to prevent organized crime groups from infiltrating foreign communities, by using means such as providing information on crimes involving foreigners, etc., to relevant administrative entities, resident groups and companies. As a result, the prefectural police forces have set up a system to promote the measures.

As for objective 9, we have been working to acquire information and to crackdown on malicious intermediary organizations inside/outside our border that are involved in cases relating to illegal stay, fraudulent residence status, etc.

We have been sharing such information with relevant internal/external organizations, as necessary.

The police will strengthen cooperation with relevant internal/external organizations, and will keep working to crackdown thoroughly on organized and/or malicious crimes, enhance border security measures and continue investigation into fugitives abroad.

As for the objective 9, Japan proactively provide assistance to such projects by UNODC that contributes to strengthening measures to address smuggling of immigrants and migrants across borders of the ASEAN member states, including efforts in building new border liaison offices, updating old equipment of existing border liaison offices, reinforcing networks and information exchange mechanism between border liaison officers, and assisting of making agreement on border control by all relevant law enforcement authorities of each member state of the ASEAN.

As for the objective 10, in order to prevent and eradicate trafficking in persons, the Government of Japan has continued to implement various programs including

repatriation and reintegration assistance for trafficked foreign victims identified in Japan through its contribution to IOM, as well as provision of trainings for relevant organizations and awareness-raising on trafficking in persons especially in ASEAN countries under cooperation with multiple organizations such as JICA, UNAFEI, UNODC and UN Women.

Since 2005, Japan has been financially contributing to the project to provide repatriation and reintegration support (e.g. employment and vocational support, and provision of legal assistance, medical expenses, counseling, etc.) with foreign victims of trafficking in persons identified in Japan through the International Organization for Migration (IOM). In 2021, Japan contributed approx. US\$142,000 to the IOM. Since 2005, this project has provided support with 354 victims to return to their home countries (as of December 31, 2021).

As for the objective 10, the Immigration Services Agency grants non-Japanese victims who were put under protection special permission to stay making efforts to stabilize the legal status of them even if they have illegally entered Japan or illegally overstayed in Japan.

With regard to victims who wish to stay in Japan and victims who are unable to return to their countries, the Immigration Services Agency gives comprehensive consideration to the situation of each individual while respecting their wishes, and where necessary, permits them to change their statuses of residence to ones that allow them to work in Japan.

b) Best practices

During the reporting period, the IOM office in Japan has provided 12 victims with repatriation support through the program contributed by the Government of Japan (mentioned in 2a) above). All the 12 victims received counselling and tailor-made reintegration assistance related to legal (11 victims), business setups (11 victims), and medical (1 victim) after their repatriation. Following on the results and recommendations of the tracer survey released in 2019, IOM has ensured guidance quality and reintegration flexibility, promoted more synergies with NGOs and relevant Consulates, and provided information of safe migration by using awareness measures such as booklets. Also in Japan, IOM delivers lectures and shows the awareness video with Japanese subtitles developed in cooperation with ANA HOLDINGS INC. at workshops and university classes to alert citizens and public officials on trafficking in persons.

The number of non-Japanese victims who were put under protection by the Immigration Services Agency between 2005 and 2020 was 426. Of these victims, 193, who had illegally entry and illegally overstayed, and of all were granted special permission to stay and aiming to stabilize legal status.

As for objective 8, as a result of the instructions given by the National Police Agency to the prefectural police forces, the prefectural police forces have set up a system to promote the measures.

As for objective 9, in 2020, the police arrested 339 suspects in 335 cases for facilitating illegal work, 579 suspects in 790 cases for having fake residence cards, and 278 suspects in 382 cases for forging passports and residence cards.

3 Supporting the integration of migrants and their contribution to development (GCM Objectives: 14, 15, 16, 19, 20, 22)

a) Trends

As of the end of 2020, the number of mid- to long-term foreign residents in Japan was about 2.6 million and the number of special permanent residents was about 304 thousand, and the total number of foreign residents in Japan was about 2.9 million. This number has decreased by 1.6% from the end of the previous year, still many foreigners are residing in Japan. In addition, with this increase, the number of foreign children enrolled in Japanese schools has also been increasing year by year.

b) Progress

As for the objective 16, the Government of Japan (Ministry of Foreign Affairs) and IOM have held the “International Forum on Acceptance of Foreign Nationals and Their Integration into Japan” since 2005. Most recently, under the theme of “Foreign residents in Japan and Healthcare”, good practices and agendas are introduced through the presentation by experts from Japan and overseas, as well as the discussion by panelists for initiatives to deepen understanding the issues regarding integration of foreign nationals into Japanese society.

In addition, as far as objectives 15 and 16, based on the Comprehensive Measures for Acceptance and Coexistence of Foreign Nationals (revised in FY2021), which are applicable for the entire government, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) has been making efforts to improve the quality of, opportunities for Japanese language education nationwide for foreign nationals as residents in Japan. For developing education for foreign children, MEXT also has been making efforts to ascertain and improve foreign children's school attendance as well as strengthen teaching environment for children who require Japanese language instruction.

As for the objective 20, to improve the convenience for foreign nationals when using financial services such as opening bank accounts and global remittance, the Government of Japan has conducted publicity work to foreign nationals as well as financial institutions and accepting companies. On the legal front, for the sake of enhanced convenience and protection of customers, the Payment Services Act was amended in June 2020 and took effect in May 2021, which would lift a ban on a large amount of money transfer and introduce flexible regulations on Funds Transfer Service Provider.

c) Best practices

“International Forum on Acceptance of Foreign Nationals and Their Integration into Japan” mentioned in the above (3.b.) has been held annually, as it helped to raise awareness toward smooth acceptance and integration of foreign nationals into Japanese society.

4 Improving value-driven and evidence-based policymaking and public debate, and enhancing cooperation on migration (GCM Objectives: 1, 3, 7, 17, 23)

a) Progress

As for the objective 23, the Government of Japan contributed a total of 106.8 million USD from the fiscal year 2019-2022 supplementary budget to support IOM activities for vulnerable migrants, internally displaced persons, returnees and affected communities. In addition, for the purpose of contributing to the smooth acceptance of refugees coming to Japan through the resettlement program, Japan entrusts to IOM the language training and departure procedure support for the refugees as an outsourced project, with a contribution of 1.2 million USD.

b) Best practices

While local governments in the Tokyo metropolitan region have traditionally played a central role in operations concerning the smooth acceptance of refugees coming to Japan through the resettlement program, proactive efforts are being made to resettle refugees in municipalities outside of the Tokyo metropolitan area, aimed at promoting a better nationwide understanding of the refugee issue. (However, since COVID-19 has a significant impact on local cities, the actual selection of settlement sites will take into account the actual conditions in each local city.)

In light of this movement among the international community and to better balance the burden for the refugee problem among the international community, Japan made the decision in June 2019 to accept more refugees resettling from third countries under part of a new framework. Specifically, beginning in FY2020, Japan will now accept up to 60 refugees temporarily residing in Asia once or twice a year without restriction on their birthplace or region of residence, and any of the family members of the refugees who have already been accepted in Japan under a resettlement program.

Considering the impact of COVID-19, and in order to safely and accurately resettlement, in February 2022, with the cooperation of the UNHCR Malaysia Office, an online interview survey was conducted for refugees staying in Malaysia who wish to settle Japan.

In addition, in March 2022, the Japanese government implemented the acceptance of refugees resettled in third countries, which had been postponed due to COVID-19.

The human rights bodies of the Ministry of Justice carry out human rights awareness-raising activities and conduct remedy activities in order to eliminate prejudice and discrimination against foreign nationals.

In particular, the bodies established the Foreign-language Human Rights Hotline and the Foreign Language Human Rights Counseling Services on the Internet in ten languages, as well as human rights counseling centers for foreign nationals at Legal Affairs Bureaus and District Legal Affairs Bureaus nationwide to provide human rights counseling services to foreign nationals who cannot speak Japanese fluently. Furthermore, the bodies carry out human rights awareness-raising activities, such as delivering awareness-raising booklets and videos.

The human rights bodies of the Ministry of Justice accepted the following number of human rights counseling and human rights violation cases related to discrimination against foreign nationals in 2020.

- The number of human rights counseling related to discrimination against foreign nationals 598 cases

- The number of human rights violation cases related to discrimination against foreign nationals (started newly in the year) 60cases