



Permanent Mission of Japan to the United Nations

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At the Forty-sixth Session of the United Nations
Commission on Population and Development

Mr. Chairperson,

I would like to express my warmest congratulations to your Excellency, Ambassador Vlad Lupan of the Republic of Moldova, on your election as Chairperson of the 46th Session of the Commission on Population and Development. I am delighted to have this opportunity to address this important topic of “New trends in migration”.

Japan has renewed its membership to the Commission on Population and Development for the period from this year to 2016. We will continue to commit ourselves to addressing population issues, which are the basis of all aspects of development.

In the present globalized world, both international and internal migrations are key elements for development, and it is significant that this theme was selected as a topic of this forty-sixth session.

Last year, on 1 October –the International Day of Older Persons– UNFPA, together with the Government of Japan, organized a symposium in Tokyo on Global Ageing. As the country with the highest proportion of the aged among its population, Japan has already been experiencing a population decline for several years. Thus, international migration is a matter of public concern in Japan.

It is known internationally that there are not many foreign migrants in Japan. The percentage of foreigners in Japan is 1.7% of the total population, which is much lower than that in the United Kingdom at 10.4% or France at 10.6%. However, among the Asian countries, this level is not extraordinarily low. Although the number of registered foreign residents had decreased since 2009 due to the global financial crisis, the Great East Japan Earthquake and other reasons, the number of registered permanent foreign residents has been steadily increasing, and exceeded 1 million people in 2012.

Recent statistics show that 1 in 25 marriages in Japan is between a Japanese person and his or her foreign partner; and that 1 in 50 children born in Japan has at least one non-Japanese parent. Slowly and steadily Japanese society is becoming more internationalized. Looking back to the long history of humankind, the population was formed through migration and interaction; Japan is no exception.

We have been taking concrete measures to cope with the increasing number of foreign-born citizens and foreign nationals. For example, the Basic Resident Registration System, which previously used to register only Japanese Nationals, was extended to cover foreign residents in July 2012. With this reform, the basic infrastructure for the delivery of public services such as National Health Insurance was refined and administrative procedures such as address change notification became much easier to implement. Furthermore, points-based preferential immigration for highly-skilled foreign professionals was introduced in May 2012 in order to promote the entry of foreign nationals with advanced abilities and qualities, who are expected to contribute to economic growth and the creation of new demand and employment.

On the other hand, the number of the Japanese who go abroad has also been increasing recently. In 2011 some 1.18 million Japanese nationals were living outside of Japan, which was a record high. These overseas Japanese nationals need not only basic information or protection in cases of emergency, but also other services such as health care or basic education for their children, which requires close coordination with each country of destination.

Mr. Chairperson,

Broadening our view to Asia as a whole, the rapid decline of fertility and consequent ageing of the population can be seen as the positive results of human development. On the other hand, these effects might trigger a shortage of manpower in labor-producing countries. There are also notable negative impacts such as the brain-drain of young professionals who would otherwise strengthen the development of their home countries. Furthermore, the migrants who act as care-givers for the elderly might end up being unable to take care of their own parents or grand-parents. Considering the cultural context of Asia, where the role of family for the care of the elderly is important, a closer regional collaboration could be effective toward finding a common solution to our common challenges.

In the global context, the recent growth of international migration is partly due to the growth of migration from South to South. Regional integration and the exchange of human resources are

driving forces for development. In this connection, the Japanese Government will host the Fifth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD V) this coming June in order to further promote African development, including maximizing the positive effects of migration and alleviating the negative effects. Also, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) is an important partner for us in promoting humane and orderly movement of persons across borders and in assisting both migrants and refugees. In 2012 we contributed 39 million USD toward this effort, and intend to continue to provide assistance in the future.

Mr. Chairperson,

Global development efforts have been guided by the Millennium Development Goals. We need to accelerate our efforts to achieve the MDGs by 2015. Also, discussions on the post-2015 development agenda have been taking place worldwide. In order to achieve the MDGs and establish an effective successor framework, it is important to take into account the issues related to international and internal migration. Moreover, population dynamics should be considered when setting the priorities and targets for development. In this respect, Japan supports the recommendations of the High-Level Task Force for ICPD on the priorities for the Post-2015 development agenda. It is important to achieve universal health coverage, which should be inclusive to migrants as well. Also the unfinished business of the MDGs should be tackled in an integrated manner. As a member of the global community, Japan will continue to mobilize our resources for the realization of the ICPD Programme of Action and for the elaboration of the post-2015 development agenda, based on Human Security.

Thank you.