



(Check Against Delivery)

Statement of Japan  
Commission on Population and Development fifty first session  
Agenda Item 3: General debate  
April 2018

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Mister Chairperson,

To begin I would like to express my warmest congratulations to Your Excellency, Ambassador Ion Jinga of Romania, on your election as Chair of the 51st Session of the Commission on Population and Development. Japan has renewed its membership to this Commission and sincerely hopes that there will be fruitful discussions on population and development, especially on this year's theme: "Sustainable cities, human mobility and international migration".

Japan has entered into a phase of steady population decline and subsequently both internal and international migration have become important issues. Nevertheless, despite Japan's total downward trend in population, the Tokyo area is the world's largest city according to UN estimates and its population continues to increase. According to the results of the recent 8th National Survey on Migration, Tokyo is the first choice of destination for those in Japan who intend to move within the next 5 years. According also to the recently published Regional Population Projection, there will be a delay in the depopulation of Tokyo due to continuing in-migration.

In response to this concentration of the country's population within Tokyo, measures have been taken for the revitalization of regions of Japan outside of Tokyo. Local innovation, the return migration of retirees, and the promotion of local universities and industries are encouraged through government subsidies and other strategies under the "Law for Overcoming Population Decline and Vitalizing the Local Economy". While it is neither feasible nor appropriate to stop the free movement of people within the country, encouraging even a small number of people to stay in or move to these low-population municipalities would be helpful.

It is necessary also to face to the reality of population decline and to formulate municipal plans and policies accordingly. Cities and towns are encouraged to create so-called “Appropriate Location Plans” to make populated areas more efficient, compact and better connected to transportation networks.

As for international migration, the number of foreign nationals residing in Japan has been steadily increasing. As of June 2017, there were 2,471,458 foreign nationals from 197 countries and territories residing in Japan. Replacement migration has not been the national policy of Japan, but in reality some 48% of Japan’s population decline in 2016 was offset by the increase in the number of foreign nationals living in the country.

Regarding short-term foreign tourism, the Government of Japan’s initial target to receive 20 million visitors per year was easily attained and the target has been raised to 40 million per year by 2020. To this end, enhancing the efficiency of customs and border control is important, and new measures have been introduced such as fingerprint and face recognition systems, as well as the biometric data cart (BIOCART) system.

International migration should not cause a brain drain but should benefit human development for all through mobility. Since 2016, under the Asia Health and Wellbeing Initiative (AHWIN), we have been promoting the migration of care workers within Asia for the regional development of long-term care systems to cope with region-wide population ageing. New visa status of care workers and care work interns were created, and it is intended that these workers will be able to apply the knowledge and experience that they acquire in Japan in their home countries after they return. International migration should be managed through collaboration between sending and receiving countries in order to benefit all, including most especially the migrants themselves.

Thank you.