

◆ Part 2 ◆

Primary Measures Related to Immigration Control Administration in FY 2008

Chapter 1

Outline of the New System of Residence Management

At the 171st session of the Diet, the “law for partial amendment to the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act and the Special Act on the Immigration Control of, Inter Alia, Those who have Lost Japanese Nationality Pursuant to in the Treaty of Peace with Japan” was approved and enacted on July 8, 2009. On July 15 of the same year, it was promulgated (Act No. 79, 2009). The outline is as follows:

Section 1 ◆ Outline of the Amended Law

1 Measures on the New System of Residence Management

Under the existing residence management system, the Minister of Justice manages residence information on foreign nationals at a specific point in time, through examinations based on necessary materials submitted by foreign nationals at the time of applying for permission to enter Japan or to extend the period of stay, etc. Changes in the situation of foreign nationals during the period of stay are monitored through the Alien Registration System by municipalities. On the other hand, foreign nationals are not covered by the Basic Residents' Register System under existing laws. In reality, the municipalities treat foreign nationals who have been registered on the alien registration cards as their residents and use such information as a basis for providing various administrative services.

However, as Japan globalized and an increasing number of foreign nationals, so-called newcomers, came to live in Japan for diverse purposes, the constitution of foreign nationals residing in Japan has significantly changed compared with the time immediately after the end of the War. There have appeared many newcomers who did not have stable livelihoods in Japan and failed to apply for alien registration properly, who frequently changed address without reporting, or who returned to their home country after being granted a re-entry permit and then cut off contact while staying in their country, and regarding the latter, it is not known whether they intended to re-enter Japan.

According to changes in the constitution of foreign nationals and their behavioral patterns, it has been more difficult to keep precise information related to foreign nationals, including their actual state of residence, under two separate laws of the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act and the Alien Registration Act. There are some problems from the perspective of immigration control administration and provision of proper administrative services to foreign nationals.

Under such circumstances, the Government set up the Working Team Concerning the Residence

Management of Foreign Nationals consisting of the Cabinet Secretariat and other related government ministries, including the Ministry of Justice, under the Ministerial Conference to Discuss Countermeasures against Crime on July 2005. This team carried out a study and submitted a report to the above ministerial conference on July 2007. In addition, the Three-Year Plan for Promotion of Regulatory Reform, which was decided by the Cabinet on June 2007, included “reorganization of the alien registration system” in the item “Reinforcement of the System for Monitoring Foreign Residents after Entry”, and stated that the related bill would be submitted in an ordinary session of the Diet in 2009 at the latest.

On February 2007, the Ministry of Justice requested the Discussion Meeting on Immigration Control Policy, a private consultative group for the Minister of Justice, to study a new system, and then the meeting submitted a report entitled “Proposal Concerning the New System of Residence Management”, to the Minister of Justice on March 2008 (<http://www.moj.go.jp/NYUKAN/nyukan44-11.pdf>).

Since April 2008, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications and the Ministry of Justice jointly held the Discussion Meeting on the Alien Registration System, from which a report was released in December of the same year.

On a basis of the above background, the Ministry of Justice drastically overhauled how a new system of residence management, along with the alien registration system, should be, and finally decided to reform the existing information collecting system under the Immigration Control Act and the Alien Registration Act with the aim of establishing a new system to properly and continuously collect information necessary for management of foreign nationals who are residing in Japan for a medium to long term.

The new system is expected to facilitate the following processes for foreign nationals residing in Japan for a medium to long term: (1) Issuance of a residence card after obtaining some permits, such as landing permission, permission for extension of period of stay, and permission for changes of status of residence; (2) Report of changes during the period of stay from foreign nationals to the Minister of Justice; (3) Provision of information about foreign nationals from organizations at which they study or receive training to the Minister of Justice. This will enable the Minister of Justice to more precisely and continuously keep the information related to the residence conditions of foreign nationals. Information about the situation of foreign nationals residing for the medium to long term, which will be precisely kept under the system, will be reflected in the Basic Residents' Register for Foreign Nationals in municipalities, which will be newly established in accordance with the Act for Partial Amendment of the Basic Residents' Registration Act. As a result, these foreign nationals will be able to receive enhanced administrative services. Along with the introduction of the system to keep precise information, provisions to enhance convenience for these foreign nationals, including extension of the maximum period of stay and alleviation of the re-entry permit system, will be established.

(1) Measures for establishing a system that enables the Minister of Justice to keep necessary information continuously

- A. The Minister of Justice shall grant a residence card specifying basic matters related to identification, status of residence, period of stay, etc. to foreign nationals residing in Japan with the status of residence under the Immigration Control Act as medium to long-term residents (hereinafter referred to as "medium to long-term residents", except those who fall under any of the following: (i) Those whose period of stay for three months or less has been approved; (ii) Those whose status of residence as "Temporary Visitor" has been approved; (iii) Those whose status of residence for "Diplomat" or "Official" has been approved; (iv) Those who are stipulated as equivalent to the above foreign nationals by the Ordinance of the Ministry of Justice.
- B. Medium to long-term residents shall inform the Minister of Justice of the addresses of main residence in Japan (hereinafter referred to as "place of residence") where they decide to reside after landing through heads of the municipalities where they live, within a certain period of time (place of residence will be included on their residence cards).
- C. Medium to long-term residents shall inform the Minister of Justice of any change in not only the matters included on their residence cards (change of place of residence will be informed through municipal heads), but also the organizations to which they belong and their personal status or position according to their status of residence.
- D. The Minister of Justice shall be allowed to obtain information about specific foreign nationals from the organization to which they belong.
- E. The Minister of Justice shall be allowed to conduct surveys to confirm matters notified, if necessary, in order to continuously keep information about specific foreign nationals.
- F. Registering of false place of residence and failing to continue to engage in activities as a spouse while residing in Japan for six months or more in spite of residing under the status of residence which is based on the status as a spouse without justifiable reason shall be added to conditions of revocation of status of residence. Provisions on delivery of documents regarding procedures for revocation of status of residence shall be established.
- G. With regard to forgery of residence cards, penal provisions conditions of forced deportation shall be established. Penalty related to illegal employment shall be revised.

(2) Measures for enhancing the convenience of foreign nationals legally residing in Japan

- A. The maximum period of stay shall be extended to five years.
- B. Foreign nationals and special permanent residents who have valid passports and residence cards (special permanent resident certificates in the case of special permanent residents) and who re-enters Japan within one year from their departure in principle (two years in the case

of special permanent residents) shall not need to apply for re-entry permits, and it shall be considered that they have been granted re-entry permits only if they convey their intention of re-entry to an immigration inspector when they leave Japan. Previously, there had been various requests for review of the re-entry permit system. The introduction of the new system of residence management will allow the Minister of Justice to precisely keep residence conditions of medium to long-term residents, and to reduce the need to confirm residence conditions in relation to applications for re-entry permits. The new re-entry permit system ensures further convenience of foreign nationals.

(3) Measures for special permanent residents

- A. The Minister of Justice shall grant a special permanent resident certificate that certifies the legal status as special permanent resident.
- B. Special permanent residents shall be allowed to extend the valid period of re-entry, and in principle, to re-enter within a certain period of time without applying for a re-entry permit.

(4) Date of implementation

Measures related to the new system of residence management shall be implemented on the date designated by a Cabinet order within three years from the date of promulgation.

2 Measures on Matters Other Than the New System of Residence Management

(1) Measures for reviewing the foreign trainee system

To deal with the situation where an increasing number of foreign trainees and technical interns are inappropriately treated as low-wage workers, (see Chapter 2), the industrial training and technical internship program was reformed to strengthen the protection of foreign trainees and technical interns by implementing necessary measures.

Specifically, necessary provisions were established based on the “Three-Year Plan for Promotion of Regulatory Reform (Revised)” decided by the Cabinet on March 25, 2008. The plan includes the application of labor-related laws and regulations to trainees during their internship and the establishment of status of residence for technical interns, and states that the relevant bills should be submitted to an ordinary session of the Diet in 2009 at the latest.

In addition to the above, it has become possible to deport those who introduce trainees to companies other than those permitted to implement the training program, or those who are involved in preparing documents that contain false statement in order to help trainees to enter Japan.

- A. The status of residence of “Technical Intern Training” was established to ensure that labor-related laws and regulations can be applied to activities by those who have obtained the status of residence of “Trainee”, which covers internship (except those who are accepted by the national government, local government, or the organizations which is provided for by a Ministry of Justice ordinance), and those who have acquired skills by engaging in such activities can engage in work that requires skills acquired based on the employment contract.
- B. For the purpose of addressing malicious brokers who are involved in preparing documents containing false statements, including employment certificates in order to help trainees to enter Japan, the conditions of forced deportation applicable to those who are involved in aiding and abetting for document forgery were stipulated.
- C. This provision shall be enacted on the date designated by a Cabinet order within a year from the date of promulgation.

(2) Measures for integrating the two statuses of residence of “College Student” and “Pre-college Student”

After the then Prime Minister Fukuda proposed the “300,000 Foreign Students Plan” in his policy speech in January 2008, the outline of the plan was compiled by ministries and agencies concerned, including the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, in July of the same year.

In order to listen to various experts' views on how immigration control administration should be run with a view to the realization of the “300,000 Foreign Students Plan”, discussions had been made at the Discussion Meeting on Immigration Control Policy, a private consultative group for the Minister of Justice. This January the “Proposal on Acceptance of College Students and Pre-college Students” (see Chapter 3) prepared by the discussion meeting were reported to the Minister of Justice. Based on the proposals, two statuses of residence of “College Student” and “Pre-college Student” were integrated into one status of residence of “College Student” to ensure that foreign college students can stably reside in Japan.

This provision shall be enacted on the date designated by a Cabinet order within a year from the date of promulgation.

(3) Establishment of the Immigration Detention Facilities Visiting Committee

The aim of facilities, such as Immigration Detention Centers (hereinafter referred to as “immigration detention facilities”), is to temporarily detain foreign nationals who fall under any of the conditions of forced deportation to achieve the administrative goal of deporting such foreign nationals. The actual situation of those facilities cannot be open to the public due to

concerns about detainees' privacy and the detention facility's security. Therefore, international organizations and human rights groups have been calling for the establishment of a third-party organization to supervise the operation of those facilities.

Efforts to ensure appropriate treatment through the objection petition system specified in the Detainee Treatment Regulation have now been promoted. Although recently, the Penal Institution Visiting Committee and the Detention Facilities Visiting Committee had been established in penal institutions and detention facilities, respectively, it was decided to establish the Immigration Detention Facilities Visiting Committee in immigration detention facilities in order to ensure transparency in treating detainees. This is because an immigration detention facility, which is a facility to detain people and needs to ensure transparency in its operations, is similar to the above facilities, regardless of having a different purpose and the nature of detention.

This provision shall be enacted on the date designated by a Cabinet order within a year from the date of promulgation.

(4) Clear wording of the prohibition of deportation under the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

It is pointed out that "The State party should ensure that all measures and practices relating to the detention and deportation of immigrants are in full conformity with article 3 of the Convention. In particular, the State party should expressly prohibit deportation to countries where there are substantial grounds for believing that the individuals to be deported would be in danger of being subjected to torture. In the light of such a suggestion, the statutory provision was established to clarify that countries to which forced deportees are expatriated shall not include "State where there are substantial grounds for believing that he would be in danger of being subjected to torture" specified in Paragraph 1, Article 3 of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (hereinafter referred to as "Convention against Torture").

The conclusion of the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (hereinafter referred to as "Convention against Enforced Disappearance") was approved at the 171st session of the Diet. This convention contains provisions similar to Paragraph 1, Article 3 of the Convention against Torture, and it was decided to make a provision to clarify such prohibition.

The provision of the Convention against Torture was enacted on the date of promulgation, and the provision of the Convention against Enforced Disappearance will be enacted on the date when the Convention becomes effective in Japan.

(5) Measures for special exceptions on the period of stay for those who have filed applications such as for extension of the period of stay

With regard to foreign nationals who filed applications such as for extension of the period of stay by the expiration date of the period of stay and have not received official decision by the said date, a special provision was made. This provision enables them to continue staying in Japan with the same status of residence by the date the decision is made or the date in two months after the expiration date, whichever comes earlier.

The aim of this provision is to respond to various problems, for example, in the case where a foreign college student is forced to apply for an extension of the period of stay just before expiration because the applicant may be required to submit a grade report as a document attached to application forms for change of status of residence or extension of the period of stay, it may be too severe to consider the applicant as an overstayer just because official decision on the application has not been made during the period of stay. In addition, an applicant regarded as an overstayer cannot acquire a permit to engage in activities other than those permitted under their status of residence, nor a re-entry permit. Moreover, the situation may affect the link between the new system of residence management and the Basic Residents' Register System for Foreign Nationals.

This provision shall be enacted on the date designated by a Cabinet order within a year from the date of promulgation.

(6) Measures for special exceptions with respect to denial of landing

Conditions for denial of landing specified in the Paragraph 1, Article 5 of the Immigration Control Act shall be classified into categories according to cases where foreign nationals should not be permitted to land in Japan, including the case of those who have been deported from Japan due to overstay, and all foreign nationals who fall under any of these categories shall be uniformly denied permission for landing.

For example, a foreign national who met and married a Japanese citizen in his/her home country during the period of denial of landing due to a past forced deportation, must obtain special permission for landing through a three-step procedure by an immigration inspector, a special inquiry officer, and the Minister of Justice every time the foreign national intends to re-enter Japan, even if the foreign national was once granted special permission for landing by the Minister of Justice in consideration of various factors. The aim is to respond to the above cases of less appropriateness by enabling the Minister of Justice to decide not to deny landing of a foreign national when he/she finds that there are reasonable grounds to do so, even if such foreign national falls under any of the conditions for denial of landing.

This provision shall be enacted on the date designated by a Cabinet order within a year

from the date of promulgation.

(7) Measures for obligation of those with landing permission for crew members to carry and present identification such as a valid crew member's pocket-ledger

Under the existing law, foreign nationals who have obtained landing permission for crew members are obliged to carry and present their crew member's landing permits. However, the problem is that such foreign nationals cannot be identified as those granted landing permission for crew members because crew member's landing permits have no head-shot photo. The Action Plan for the Realization of a Crime-Resistant Society 2008 (decided at the Ministerial Conference to Discuss Countermeasures against Crime on December 22, 2008), which was developed on December 2008, specifies that, with regard to crew members of an aircraft or vessel who landed after obtaining landing permission for crew members, obligation to carry passports or crew member's pocket-ledgers with them will be reviewed in order to appropriately confirm the identity of such crew members. To respond to this, it was stipulated that those who have obtained landing permission for crew members shall be obliged to carry and present their passport or crew member's pocket-ledgers, as well as their crew member's landing permits

This provision shall be enacted on the date designated by a Cabinet order within six months from the date of promulgation.

(8) Measures for establishment of conditions for deportation in order to appropriately deal with activities involving encouragement of illegal employment

In order to ensure a consistent response to activities involving encouragement of illegal employment, the conditions for forced deportation due to activities involving encouragement of illegal employment were revised.

This provision shall be enacted on the date designated by a Cabinet order within a year from the date of promulgation.

**Section 2 ◆ Partial Amendment of the Basic Residents' Registration Act
(Establishment of the Basic Residents' Register System for Foreign Nationals)**

1 Study on the Register System for Foreign Nationals

The municipalities treat foreign nationals who have been registered on the alien registration card as their residents and use alien registration information as a basis for providing various administrative services. However, the Alien Registration System and Basic Residents' Register System have different purposes, which hinder the provision of administrative services. The municipalities therefore need to develop a register system for foreign residents who legally stay in Japan to keep their correct records, by referring to the Basic Residents' Register System.

The Three-Year Plan for Promotion of Regulatory Reform, which was decided by the Cabinet on June 22, 2007, also states, “The current alien registration system will be reorganized into a register system for foreign residents who legally reside in Japan, by referring to the Basic Residents' Register System. This reorganization of the system is intended to prepare the legal ground for municipalities to hold accurate information on foreign nationals as their residents and to ascertain their residential status while alleviating the financial burden on the State and local public bodies.” Furthermore, the “Three-Year Plan for Promotion of Regulatory Reform (Revised)”, which was decided by the Cabinet on March 25, 2008, states that the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications and the Ministry of Justice should prepare and make public the basic scheme for such register system in coordination with the Cabinet Secretariat (measures for 2007) and that both Ministries should introduce such a register system properly and steadily, giving full consideration to the opinions of local public bodies (the related bill will be submitted in the Ordinary Session of the Diet in 2009 at the latest).

Under such circumstances, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications and the Ministry of Justice jointly formulated “The Basic Scheme of the Register System for Foreign Residents Who Legally Reside in Japan” in March 2008 (<http://www.moj.go.jp/NYUKAN/nyukan71.pdf>). Both ministers have also served as the joint secretariat of the “Discussion Meeting on the Register System for Foreign Nationals” since April, and have held meetings to discuss the relevant registration system. The results of discussions in those meetings were summarized in a report (http://www.soumu.go.jp/menu_news/s-news/2008/081218_1.html).

2 Law for Partial Amendment of the Basic Residents' Registration Act

In response to these developments, the law for Partial Amendment of the Basic Residents' Registration Act, which aims to make some revisions, such as inclusion of foreign residents in the residents covered by the Basic Residents' Registration Act, was approved and enacted in the ordinary session of the Diet held on July 8, 2009, and was promulgated on July 15 of the same year (Act No.77, 2009).

Details of major revisions related to foreign residents are as follows: (i) Resident registration

cards for foreign residents, including medium to long-term residents and special permanent residents, will be created; (ii) These cards shall specify not only name and address, but also matters specific to foreign nationals, such as nationality, status of residence, and period of stay; (iii) If modification of the matters listed in the resident registration cards for foreign nationals becomes necessary along with a change of status of residence, extension of period of stay, etc., the Minister of Justice shall inform municipality heads of such modification.

These revisions aim to allow the Minister of Justice to smoothly provide municipality heads with the requisite information that the Minister will have under the new system of residence management, and to play an important role in operating the register system based on precise information.

The enforcement date of this law shall be the same as that of the amended Immigration Control Act concerning the new system of residence management (Section 1, Paragraph 1 (4)).

Section 3 ◆ Measures to Ensure Accurate Registration

Before the enforcement of the new system of residence management and the register system for foreign residents, it is important to ensure in the mean time that accurate registration is practiced under the current alien registration system, and the Immigration Bureau is taking a series of measures.

Specifically, in FY 2007, (i) posters in various languages were posted at the counters, etc. of municipal offices all over the country and regional immigration offices, calling on foreign residents to accurately apply for registration and (ii) additional measures were implemented to ensure prompt notification of departure to the municipalities concerned of foreign nationals whose data is registered in the municipalities in case they leave Japan without having a re-entry permit issued.

Further, the Team for Enhancement of Accuracy and Improvement of Operations was set up in the Registration Division of the Immigration Bureau in April 2008. This team was set up to enhance accuracy and to improve the operations of the Immigration Bureau through various new measures including: (i) start of quick acceptance of inquiries from municipalities by setting up an exclusive e-mail address for inquiries, etc.; (ii) tentative provision of departure and landing information based on the granting of a re-entry permit (Note); and (iii) sending of registration cards which are considered to be out of date to the Ministry of Justice and encouraging management thereof.

From the standpoint of smooth transition to the new system, the Immigration Bureau intends to enhance accuracy and improve operations based on the opinions of the municipalities expressed at the Meeting of Representative Staff of the Municipalities for Alien Registration Services.

(Note) In January 2009, an agreement on pilot cases was made with Minokamo City, Gifu Prefecture, and provision of information was initiated.

Chapter 2 Measures on the Training and Technical Internship Programs

The training and technical internship programs are designed to train human resources who will assist in the economic progress of various countries through the transfer of technology and skills to trainees and technical interns. Those who enter Japan with a status of trainee and those who apply to change their status to a technical intern are increasing year by year, and the programs have become established in Japan.

However, some accepting organizations that do not understand the objectives of the programs treat the trainees and interns improperly and pay them low wages.

Under the provisions of the ordinance of the Ministry of Justice, the Immigration Bureau may make a finding of “misconduct” with regard to organizations that have acted inappropriately regarding training and technical internship and suspend such organizations from accepting trainees and technical interns for three years. The number of organizations that were recognized to engage in “misconduct” during the year 2008 was 452.

According to the type of receiving arrangement, there were 7 organizations (1.5%) accepting trainees under the supervision of a single company and 445 organizations (98.5%) accepting trainees under the supervision of a group of companies. According to the type of receiving organization, there were 29 organizations (6.4%) as primary receiving organizations (entities like cooperative associations, which implement training programs as an undertaking), and 416 organizations (92.0%) as secondary receiving organizations (entities like membership companies, which accept trainees). (Table 48)

Table 48 Changes in the number of organizations subject to a finding of misconduct by type of receiving arrangement

Organizations subject to a finding Type of receiving arrangement		2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Supervision of a single company		2	5	11	9	7
Supervision of a group of companies	Primary receiving organization	28	17	28	36	29
	Secondary receiving organization	180	158	190	404	416
Total		210	180	229	449	452

Three major categories of misconduct in descending order are “work in excess of statutory working hours” committed by organizations which have trainees work other than training hours or holidays when they are prohibited to work, “violation against labor-related regulations” committed by organizations which have technical interns work in violation of labor-related regulations, and “name lending” committed by organizations which allow other organizations that

had not applied for acceptance to accept trainees and technical interns, and these three categories account for about 76% of all misconduct. (Table 49)

Table 49 Number of findings of misconduct by category (2008)

(Cases)

Category \ Findings		Supervision of a single company (7 organizations)	Supervision of a group of companies		Total (452 organizations)
			Primary (29 organizations)	Secondary (416 organizations)	
1st Category	① Dual contract	0	0	0	0
	② Variance compared with training and technical internship plan	1	11	36	48
	③ Name lending	0	4	92	96
	④ In addition to the foregoing, preparation and use of fraudulent documents	1	21	6	28
2nd Category	Work in excess of statutory working hours	4	5	160	169
3rd Category	Malicious acts of infringement of human rights, etc.	1	3	32	36
4th Category	Failure to report serious cases, etc.	0	0	1	1
5th Category	Employment of illegal foreign workers	0	1	14	15
	Violation against labor-related regulations	2	0	153	155
6th Category	Recurrence of similar acts	0	1	0	1
Total		9	46	494	549

(*) If one accepting organization is recognized as having committed “misconduct” of more than one category, it is listed for the respective categories, and as such, the number of accepting organizations is not identical to the number of recognized cases by category.

To respond to an increase in cases of inappropriate acceptance, necessary reviews on the system were made in line with revisions to the Immigration Control Act, including establishment of status of residence for technical interns (see Chapter 1, Section 1, Paragraph 2 (1)).

Chapter 3 Measures on Acceptance of Foreign College Students and Pre-college Students

Section 1 ◆ Background of study on Acceptance of Foreign College Students and Pre-college Students

1 Study by the Government

The “300,000 Foreign Students Plan” was proposed in the Prime Minister's policy speech in January 2008. To that end, an outline of the plan was compiled by related ministries, including the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology in July of the same year. It aims to accept 300,000 foreign students by 2020 as part of “global strategies” to expand the flow of humans, goods, money, and information between Japan as a country more open to the world, and other countries in Asia and the world.

2 Study by the Discussion Meeting on Immigration Control Policy

The Discussion Meeting on Immigration Control Policy repeatedly held meetings on acceptance of foreign college students and pre-college students, and compiled a report entitled the “Proposal on Acceptance of College Students and Pre-college Students”, which was submitted to the Minister of Justice on January 22, 2009. The full text of the report is shown in Data Section 3, and is also available on the website of the Ministry of Justice (<http://www.moj.go.jp/NYUKAN/nyukan82.pdf>).

Section 2 ◆ Outline of a Report by the Discussion Meeting on Immigration Control Policy, “Proposal on Acceptance of College Students and Pre-college Students”

As described above, a report by the Discussion Meeting on Immigration Control Policy was submitted to the Minister of Justice, and its outline is shown below.

Based on the above outline, some measures have already been taken: the maximum period during which foreign students who graduated from colleges can engage in job-hunting activities was extended to one year; and the two statuses of residence of “College Student” and “Pre-college Student” were integrated in accordance with the revised Immigration Control Act (see Chapter 1, Section 1, Paragraph 2 (2)).

Outline of "Proposal on Acceptance of College Students and Pre-college Students"

- Ideal Situation of Immigration Control Administration for realizing "300,000 Foreign Students Plan" -

1 Proper and Smooth acceptance of college students

- Entrance exams, enrollment control, life and job-finding support, etc. by professional organizations in educational institutions are important.
- Due consideration needs to be paid in immigration control administration for realization of smooth acceptance, and regarding increase of overstayers and illegal workers.

Educational institutions

- Ensuring quality by proper entrance exams and responsible enrollment control
- Provision of information on enrollment situation

Immigration Bureau

- Proper residence management based on information provided and fact-finding research

2 Entry / residence examination for college students

- Prompt and smooth entry/residence examinations are needed to cope with the large volume of applications as a result of the 300,000 Foreign Students Plan.

- Drastic simplification of documents to be submitted
- Decision in one week after application (in principle)

- Eligibility...application from educational institutions that do not give rise to overstayers and illegal workers by proper entrance exams and enrollment control

3 Activities other than those permitted by the status of residence of college students

- Many college students actually compensate college and living expenses by part-time jobs in addition to various scholarships and money sent from their home country.

- Consideration should be given so that activity as a TA (teaching assistant), RA (research assistant) and internship, which can go together with study in college, do not require permission for activities other than those permitted by the status of residence of college students.

- On condition that the foregoing is done under the responsibility of the college

4 Job-finding support for college students after graduation

- Allowing college students to work actively and continuously in Japanese companies, etc., will not only contribute to Japan's development but also induce foreign students to study in Japan.

- Change of status of residence to work status for graduates from faculties and graduate schools needs to be dealt with broadly and flexibly by not requiring any specific relationship between their major college subjects and the details of their work at employing companies.
- Less burden on companies by reviewing documents to be submitted
- Extension of job-finding activity period after graduation (180 days (current) → about 1 year)

5 Period of stay for status of residence of "College Student"

- Under the current system, the period of stay for "College Student" is "two years" or "one year".
- More convenience and less burden on college students and educational institutions

- Extension of period of stay for "College Student"

- The foregoing should be implemented after considering potential problems such as increasing overstay, and after creating a system where problems will not arise, by thorough enrollment control by educational institutions under the new residence management system.

6 Integration of status of residence of "College Students" and "Pre-college Student"

- The current system distinguishes "College Student" and "Pre-college Student" based on the type of educational institution.
- Many western countries do not classify the status of residence by the type of educational institution.
- There is a stronger tendency to place "Pre-college Student" as a step towards "College Student"
- The number of overstayers in connection with the status of residence of "Pre-college Student" is decreasing year by year (Chart 21, Table 50)

- The difference of status of residence should be eliminated with a view to the integration of "College Student" and "Pre-college Student"

- If status of residence is integrated, the type of educational institution should continuously be reflected in the requirements for landing permission to ensure proper residence management.

Chart 21 Changes in the number and percentage of overstayers who entered Japan with the status of residence of "College Student" and "Pre-college Student"

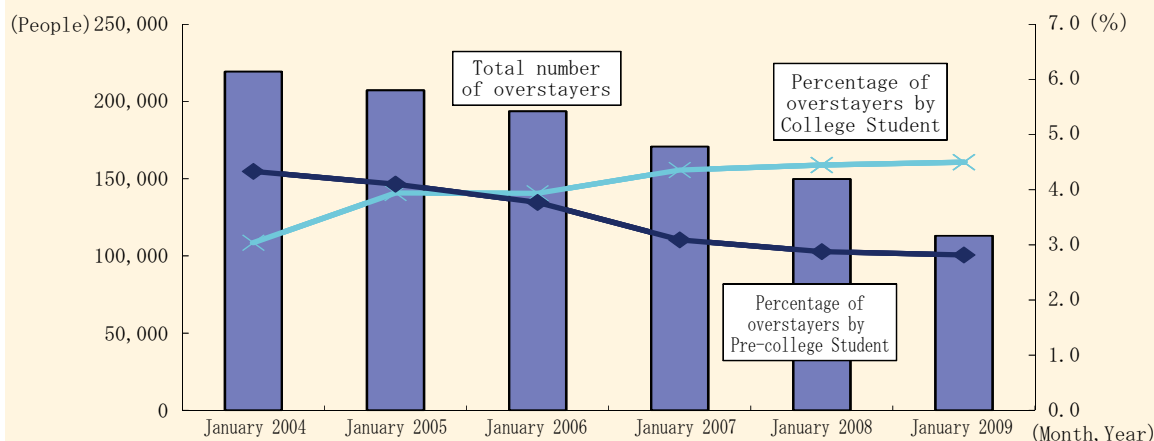


Table 50 Changes in the number and percentage of overstayers who entered Japan with the status of residence of "College Student" and "Pre-college Student"

Date	January 1 2004	January 1 2005	January 1 2006	January 1 2007	January 1 2008	January 1 2009
Division						
Total number of overstayers	219,418	207,299	193,745	170,839	149,785	113,072
College Student	6,672	8,173	7,628	7,448	6,667	5,090
Percentage of total (%)	3.0	3.9	3.9	4.4	4.5	4.5
Pre-college Student	9,511	8,506	7,307	5,281	4,311	3,186
Percentage of total (%)	4.3	4.1	3.8	3.1	2.9	2.8

Chapter 4

Efforts Toward the Creation of a Society that Prevents Foreign Nationals from becoming Illegal Residents, and that Realizes Multicultural Co-existence

Section 1 ◆ Formulation of five-year Illegal Resident Reduction-by-half Plan

1 Action Plan for the Realization of a Society Resistant to Crime

In 2003, it was estimated that there were 220,000 overstayers and 30,000 illegal entrants, many of whom were presumed to engage in illegal employment. In addition, some foreign nationals were involved in vicious crimes. Therefore, it was pointed out that the existence of illegal residents was a hotbed of recurrent of organized crimes committed by foreign criminal organizations. From the perspective of security in the country, the solution of problems related to illegal residents was considered to be an urgent issue.

Aiming at restoring Japan to the position of “the safest nation in the world” and taking active comprehensive measures to recover public safety, the national government formulated the “Action Plan for the Realization of a Society Resistant to Crime” at the Ministerial Conference to Discuss Countermeasures against Crime on December 18, 2003.

According to this Action Plan, the government will aim at halving the number of illegal foreign residents, some of whom are potential criminals, in the next five years up until 2008 to ensure public safety. Also with a view to eliminating unreasonable suspicion toward the many foreign nationals who are staying in Japan peacefully and legally, the Immigration Bureau will promote various measures such as “tightening monitoring immigration control at the border”, “taking measures against foreign nationals who illegally enter and stay in Japan”, and “reinforcing cooperation with foreign counterparts”. Namely, the Immigration Bureau will actively strive to implement stricter examination of the status of residence on entry, strengthen detection of illegal residents increase efficiency in the deportation procedures and promote measures to properly accept foreign nationals such as students and trainees, and will request foreign countries to exercise stricter control over their nationals who have been deported from Japan. Aiming at reinforcement of the immigration control procedures and a significant reduction in the number of illegal foreign residents, the Immigration Bureau will also promote measures to reinforce the immigration control system by increasing the number of immigration control officers and immigration inspectors and by upgrading the facilities for detention, devices and equipment.

2 Promoting Comprehensive Efforts to Halve the Number of Illegal Residents

With the aim of halving the number of illegal foreign residents, including overstayers and those residing secretly in Japan after entering with the help of brokers, namely stowaways, in the five-year period from 2004 to 2008, the Immigration Bureau has been working closely with the police and other agencies concerned to jointly detect illegal residents in order to prevent illegal foreign residents from “staying in Japan”. The bureau has also promoted active transfer of custody in accordance with Article 65 of the Immigration Control Act, and the application of the departure order system enforced on December 2, 2004. Further, by improving the efficiency of procedures for deportation to speed up the process to handle cases of violations by illegal residents and promoting active negotiations with the countries of origin on deportation and passport issuance, it has been taking measures to promptly deport illegal residents. To prevent foreign nationals to intend to illegally stay from “coming to Japan”, the Immigration Bureau has been strictly examining foreign nationals applying for certificate of eligibility, requesting foreign countries to effectively prevent its nationals from leaving for Japan if many nationals of that country are working illegally in Japan, and introduced a pre-clearance system in 2005. As for those foreign nationals intending to illegally stay in Japan who pass themselves off as tourists, to prevent these fake tourists from “landing in Japan”, the Immigration Bureau has been taking various measures, including tightening landing procedures, introduction of the Advance Passenger Information System, implementation of immigration examination utilizing information for personal identification, and reinforcement of the examination of forged or altered passports. To meet the recent strong social need for restoring public safety, the bureau has been actively working with the agencies concerned to address the problem of illegal immigrants in accordance with three principles: preventing illegal immigrants from “coming to”, “landing in” and “staying in” Japan.

3 Results and Future Efforts

The number of overstayers as of January 1, 2009 is 113,072, down by 48.5% from 219,418 as of January 2004. The goal of halving the number of illegal residents in five years has almost been achieved, and it means that the plan has contributed to realization of a society in which people can live in security. It is estimated that there were originally about 30,000 illegal entrants, and they have decreased to at least about 15,000 or at most about 23,000.

The Immigration Bureau intends to continue efforts for reduction of about 110,000 overstayers who are still in Japan, and to deal harshly with fake residents (those who lie about their status position and reasons for being in Japan, such as fake marriage or fake student status, and pretend to be legal foreign residents in order to work illegally in Japan), who are estimated to exist in large numbers at present.

Section 2 ◆ Action Plan for the Realization of a Society Resistant to Crime 2008

As stated in Section 1.1, the “Action Plan for the Realization of a Society Resistant to Crime” was formulated on December 2003. In the five years since then, there was a drastic decrease in the number of cases which were recognized as criminals, and overstayers, and public safety has been significantly improved. However, people's perception of safety has not yet improved, and it is necessary to continue taking more fundamental measures against crime aiming to restore Japan to the position of “the safest nation in the world” in the true sense. Thus, the “Action Plan for the Realization of a Society Resistant to Crime 2008” was formulated at the Ministerial Conference to Discuss Countermeasures against Crime on December 2008.

The above-mentioned action plan cites responses to internationalization, and methods of dealing with threats of terrorism, etc. as priority issues based on crime trends, and states that the Immigration Bureau should also make efforts from the standpoint of an agency that administers immigration control. Specifically, the bureau is supposed to carry out the following: (i) ensuring proper residence management by establishing a system to precisely and continuously keep information necessary to manage the residence of foreign nationals; (ii) implementing smooth and strict immigration examination by improving landing procedures based on personal identification information about foreign nationals and upgrading forgery detection devices; (iii) strengthened detection of illegal residents and improved efficiency in forced deportation; and (iv) ensuring effective operation of the new system of residence management to eliminate illegal residents. On the assumption that those efforts will be made, the plan aims to implement various measures to enhance the convenience of foreign nationals legally residing in Japan, including extension of the maximum period of stay and review of the re-entry permit system.

Section 3 ◆ Daily Life Support for Foreign Nationals through the Establishment of Comprehensive Consultation Counters

With the advance of internationalization, the number of foreign nationals living in Japan as of the end of 2008 has increased to about 2,220,000 by 47% compared to the end of 1998, ten years ago (see Chart 12, Chart 13). As seen from the greater diversification of foreign residents' nationalities and an increasing tendency in the percentage of “permanent resident” among all registered foreign residents, diversification and settlement of foreign nationals have accelerated. From a perspective of countermeasures against crime by foreign nationals, the “Action Plan

for the Realization of a Society Resistant to Crime 2008” emphasizes that it is important and effective to create an environment that does not allow a crime by foreign nationals to occur even before it is committed, and to take preventive measures against crime. The plan is based on the recognition that fundamental measures against crime by foreign nationals should contain stricter and more effective implementation of residence management and a crackdown on illegal acts, as well as the creation of a society in which foreign nationals legally residing in Japan can enjoy the same diverse daily life services as Japanese citizens do, and can comfortably live together with Japanese citizens. Specifically, the provision of daily life support to foreign nationals through the establishment of comprehensive consultation counters is included in the plan as measures to improve a social infrastructure that enables us to achieve multicultural coexistence.

In the light of these circumstances, in cooperation with local authorities in the region where many foreign settlers live, the Immigration Bureau decided to establish a “One-Stop General Information Center for Foreign Nationals”, which offers one-stop services, including administrative procedures for entry, immigration, etc., counseling on daily life, and provision of information. It was established in Hamamatsu City, Shizuoka Prefecture on April 1, 2009, and is planned to be established in Tokyo and Saitama Prefectures during the year.

In view of the present worldwide economic recession due to the crisis in world financial and capital markets and the fact that it is seriously affecting foreign settlers, including those of Japanese descent who do not have enough ability to speak Japanese to live in Japan, the Office for the Coordination of Policies on Foreign Residents was established in the Cabinet Office in January 2009. On January 30, 2009, the Cabinet Office formulated the “Immediate (Short-Term) Support Measures for Foreign Residents in Japan”, including improved consultation counters for foreign settlers through the establishment of one-stop information centers, etc. Thus, the Immigration Bureau intends to promote the establishment of one-stop information centers in the future.

Chapter 5 Implementation of Smoother yet Stricter Immigration Examination

It is necessary for the Immigration Bureau to provide smoother immigration procedures for the great majority of trouble-free foreign visitors who come to Japan, while imposing stricter immigration control procedures to prevent foreign visitors from entering Japan if they intend to work illegally. Since more and more foreign nationals will visit Japan in the future as a result of Japan's efforts to promote tourism, the immigration control authorities must satisfy two seemingly contradictory objectives: smoother but stricter immigration control procedures.

In order to realize this by implementing well-balanced landing procedures, the Immigration Bureau introduced a secondary examination system and pre-clearance system in FY 2005, and set up a support team in Chitose Tomakomai Branch Office and Haneda Airport Branch Office in FY 2006 in order to provide examination support to local airports, etc., more efficiently. Since November 20, 2007, smooth and strict examinations have been further assisted by installation of automated gates in Narita Airport, which allow Japanese nationals who have had their data registered in advance or foreign nationals who meet certain requirements such as having been issued with a re-entry permit, to undergo immigration procedures by going through those gates.

Section 1 ◆ Efforts for Promoting a Tourism-Oriented Country

Japan is now making government-wide efforts for promoting a tourism-oriented country, and aims to deepen international cooperation and international exchange while promoting tourism by implementing smooth immigration examinations.

The Immigration Bureau, which has already been making efforts to ensure smooth landing procedures at each airport and seaport, is now promoting secondary examinations as stated above in order to further reduce the waiting time for completing entry procedures. In addition, the bureau is working on flexible allocation of immigration inspectors according to conditions of incoming flights, establishment of a flexible examination system that allows for a change in the patterns whereby passengers are guided according to congestion level in the landing procedure area, and requests to airline companies, etc., with regard to instructions on how to properly fill out ED cards (Embarkation Card and Disembarkation Card of foreign nationals).

Section 2 ◆ Strengthened Countermeasures at the Border

To protect the lives and safety of the general public, it is extremely important to definitely deny entry at the border when terrorists pretend to be tourists etc. in an attempt to enter Japan. Since the terrorist attacks upon the United States in 2001, the Immigration Bureau has been continuously implementing strict immigration examinations in order to exclude such terrorists at the border.

In concrete terms, to prevent terrorists from entering Japan and conducting terrorist activities, the Immigration Bureau has been working closely with other related agencies in collecting information on the modes of behavior of international terrorists and other related information. Based on such information, the Immigration Bureau prepares a list of suspect persons and screens terrorists by strictly checking them against this list, aiming at detecting terrorists etc.

As terrorists are likely to use forged or altered passports, the Immigration Bureau has established document examination offices and installed new high-performance forged or altered document examination devices at major airports in order to improve document examination techniques for detection of forged or altered documents.

In addition, foreign nationals wishing to enter Japan from November 2007 are required to submit personal identification information (fingerprints and a facial photograph). Further strict immigration examination is being implemented in order to prevent terrorists from entering Japan.

On the other hand, a large number of illegal immigrants leave their country of origin with genuine passports, then obtain forged or altered passports from brokers in the transit area of Narita Airport, etc., and attempt to illegally enter the United States or other countries using such forged or altered passports. To prevent such behavior, the Immigration Bureau has been reinforcing patrol in the transit areas.

Chapter 6 Addressing the Global Community

Section 1 ◆ Treaties and International Conventions

1 Negotiations on Treaties

(1) Major Actions for Negotiations on Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) with Other Countries

A. Negotiations on the Japan-Indonesia Economic Partnership Agreement

An agreement between Japan and the Republic of Indonesia on an Economic Partnership came into force on July 1, 2008. With regard to the movement of natural persons, the two nations agreed on the acceptance of short-term business visitors, intra-corporate transferees, investors, independent professionals (e.g., attorneys), contractual service suppliers (those under the status of residence of “Engineer” or “Specialist in Humanities/International Services”), and nurse and certified careworker candidates. The two countries are also considering programs for training and a technical internship program in the area of hotel service as relevant cooperation. In order to introduce the required provisions for nurse and certified careworker candidates, the Ordinance for Enforcement and Public Notice on Designated Activities was partly revised and the “Guidelines on the treatment of Indonesian nurses, etc. subject to the provisions of the agreement between Japan and the Republic of Indonesia on an economic partnership in relation to the Immigration Control Act” was formulated (revised and formulated on May 26, 2008 and came into force on July 1, 2008).

B. Negotiations on the Japan-Philippines Economic Partnership Agreement

An agreement between Japan and the Republic of the Philippines on an Economic Partnership came into force on December 11, 2008. With regard to the movement of natural persons, the two nations agreed on the acceptance of short-term business visitors, intra-corporate transferees, investors, independent professionals (e.g., attorneys), contractual service suppliers (those under the status of residence of “Engineer” or “Specialist in Humanities/International Services”), and nurse and certified careworker candidates. In order to introduce the required provisions for nurse and certified careworker candidates, the Ordinance for Enforcement and Public Notice on Designated Activities was partly revised, and the “Guidelines on the treatment of Philippine nurses subject to the provisions of the agreement between Japan and the Republic of the Philippines on an economic partnership in relation to the Immigration Control Act” was formulated (revised on October 31, 2008, formulated on November 6, 2008, and came into force on December 11, 2008).

(Note) The Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) aims to accelerate liberalization and facilitate trade between signatory nations, and also promote coordination of policies, relaxation of regulations, and cooperation in various economic areas, including tariffs, services, trade, investment, intellectual property, and personal exchanges.

(2) Reports and Examinations in Accordance with Human Rights Treaties/Covenants

Japan is a signatory nation to various treaties, including the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, and the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. With regard to government reports on the status of implementation of those treaties, the Immigration Bureau is involved in the drafting of reports, review of governmental reports, and follow-up thereof from the perspective of immigration control administration. In this context, the meeting to review the fifth governmental report on the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights was held in Geneva, Switzerland in October 2008, and an officials from the Immigration Bureau attended the meeting to participate in the review. With regard to the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearances and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Immigration Bureau is involved in the ratification process from the perspective of immigration control.

2 International Conventions

(1) G8 Rome/Lyon Group Migration Experts Sub-Group Meeting

The Migration Experts Sub-Group Meeting, one of the sub groups of the G8 Rome/Lyon Group, which is a working experts' group to discuss measures against international terrorism and transnational organized crime at the G8 level, is discussing measures that the G8 members can take cooperatively in the area of illegal immigration and the forging or alteration of documents.

In 2008, Japan chaired the G8 summit, and three meetings in total were held in Tokyo and Kyoto. Officials from the Immigration Bureau attended all three meetings to exchange information and opinions with their counterparts in other countries.

(2) Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) Conference of Director-Generals Immigration

This meeting has been held every year since 2002 as a place where immigration officials from Asian and European countries can gather and discuss issues such as illegal entry and stay. It provides participants with opportunities to exchange and collect opinions and

information that are useful in considering measures against issues such as illegal immigration. For this reason, the Immigration Bureau sends its officials to participate in opinion and information exchange of opinions and information. In 2008, the seventh meeting was held in Paris, France to discuss policies toward legal and illegal immigrants and countermeasures against trafficking in persons.

(3) Other International Conventions

In addition to the international meetings mentioned above, the Immigration Bureau sends officials to attend consultation meetings on bilateral economic partnership, on counter-terrorism measures, and on consular services, with the aim of actively explaining Japan's position and building cooperative relations with other countries. The bureau also sends officials to participate in meetings intended for information sharing and exchange of opinions, such as the IATA/CAWG (International Air Transport Association/Control Authorities Working Group) and the PACRIM (Pacific Rim Immigration Intelligence Conference).

Section 2 ◆ Holding of Various Seminars

1 Seminar on Immigration Control

Since FY 1987, the Immigration Bureau has been inviting executive officers of the immigration control authorities of Asian countries and regions to seminars every year to exchange opinions and information on immigration control affairs in Asia. These constructive exchanges have helped the participating countries to effectively design and implement immigration control measures.

The 22nd seminar was held in December 2008. The seminar was attended by the immigration authorities of 15 countries and regions in Southeast Asia, and the Pacific Rim, etc. (U.S.A., Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Canada, China, China (Hong Kong), China (Macao), Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam), and by responsible persons from three international organizations: The European Commission (EC), The International Organization for Migration (IOM), and The Office of the United Nations High Commissioners for Refugees (UNHCR) as observers. They actively exchanged opinions on the topics: "Introduction of biometrics into entry and departure and residence management for immigration control", "Difficulties and countermeasures regarding repatriation/deportation", and "Cooperative relationship with related foreign authorities".

2 Seminar on Document Examination

Participants of the above-mentioned Seminar on Immigration Control have expressed a need for technology transfer regarding the examination of forged or altered documents. To address their need, the Immigration Bureau has been holding a seminar since FY 1995, inviting experts in the examination of forged or altered documents. At the seminar, the Immigration Bureau provides participants with information on techniques for examining forged



Seminar on document examination

or altered documents, which have been accumulated by the Bureau, and promotes effective technology transfer and information exchange in cooperation with other countries such as the United States and Canada. Thus, the bureau makes efforts to exclude foreign nationals attempting to enter illegally with the use of forged or altered documents.

In FY 2008, the bureau held the 14th seminar in Izumisano City, Osaka Prefecture in February 2009, which was attended by participants from 19 countries, 1 region in Southeast Asia, and the Pacific Rim, etc. (Australia, Bangladesh, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Canada, China (Hong Kong), India, Indonesia, R.O.Korea, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, U.S.A. and Viet Nam), and by responsible persons from the French Embassy and China (Taiwan) as observers.

Section 3 ◆ Supporting the Training Program: Immigration Control Administration Course

Since FY 1995, the Osaka Regional Immigration Bureau has given its full cooperation in a training program called the “Immigration Control Administration Course” provided by the Osaka International Center of JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency). This training program is intended to provide middle-level officers who carry out immigration control administration tasks in developing countries in Asia with information on current immigration control administration in Japan and technical training, thereby contributing to the development of immigration control administration and the establishment of its network in Asia.

Chapter 7 Introduction of Resettlement to a Third Country

Resettlement to a third country aims to transfer and resettle refugees who are temporarily taking shelter in refugee camps, to third countries which agree to accept such refugees from countries in which they first sought asylum. Resettlement to a third country is deemed as one of the permanent solutions for refugee problems, along with voluntary repatriation and resettlement of the first countries of asylum.

Until now, Japan has taken measures to support resettlement of those recognized as Indochinese refugees and other refugees under the Refugee Convention. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) encourages each country to accept refugees based on the resettlement to a third country from the standpoint of proper sharing of burdens in relation to refugee problems in the international community. The government reached a Cabinet understanding on the introduction of the resettlement to a third country (“Concerning the Implementation of Pilot Cases relating to the Acceptance of Refugees by resettlement to a third country” on December 16, 2008) to cope with various problems relating to refugees that were prevalent in the Asian region.

From now on, the Immigration Bureau will proceed to accept refugees by resettlement to a third country, and offer support for resettlement as pilot cases as from FY 2010, with the cooperation of concerned administrative agencies in accordance with the content of said Cabinet understanding and “Detailed Measures for Implementing Pilot Cases relating to the Acceptance of Refugees by Resettlement to a Third Country” (Decision by the Liaison and Coordination Conference for Countermeasures for Refugees on December 19, 2008).

Chapter 8 Improvement Public Relations and Administrative Services

Section 1 ◆ Promotion of Public Relations

Recognizing that public relations and awareness-raising activities inside and outside the country play a great role in the smooth implementation of immigration control, the Immigration Bureau is promoting more active public relations than ever before.

In June every year, the government conducts a campaign for “Foreign Labor Problem Awareness Month”, and the Immigration Bureau also conducts the “Illegal Work Prevention Campaign” as part of the above campaign. In 2008, the bureau promoted awareness-raising activities for prevention of illegal employment by distributing posters and leaflets in cooperation with related ministries and local authorities, etc.

The activities included events like “Appointment as an Honorary Director of the Immigration Bureau” (Nagoya Regional Immigration Bureau and Fukuoka Regional Immigration Bureau), targeted for PR ambassadors of local autonomous body, and “One-day Information Center” (Tokyo Regional Immigration Bureau), which provides consultation on immigration and residence to foreign residents.

In addition, the Tokyo Regional Immigration Bureau established a toll-free number to offer counseling services nationwide in order to accept reports through the voluntary reporting system and promote active public relations.



Front page of the leaflet for the Illegal Work Prevention Campaign



Scene from the Illegal Work Prevention Campaign (Tokyo)



Appointment as an Honorary Director of the Immigration Bureau (Nagoya)

Section 2 ◆ Improvement of Administrative Services

1 Facilitating the Landing Examination Procedures

The Immigration Bureau has made efforts to facilitate the landing examinations at airports and seaports, but foreign nationals who visit Japan through airports have pointed out that they have to wait in line for a long time for the landing examination. In response to this complaint, measures have been taken at the immigration counters at large scale airports to resolve this problem, by assigning some immigration inspectors in charge of examining Japanese nationals to the examination of foreign nationals, and transferring immigration inspectors between immigration counters depending on the degree of congestion. In addition, the expected waiting time for examination of foreign nationals is indicated and priority lanes for the elderly, the disabled and pregnant women have been established. Thus, the Immigration Bureau has made additional efforts to facilitate procedures and improve administrative services.



Priority lanes



Display of the waiting time for examination

Moreover, a fork line approach, which allows arriving passengers to stand in a single line and to proceed one by one to the next available booth, is being employed. Airports also increase the number of immigration inspectors when the airport becomes congested, allocate crowd-control staff, broadcast a guidance video explaining about how to provide personal identification information, and display an information board that illustrates how to fill in an ED card. In this way, the Immigration Bureau is making efforts for smoother immigration procedures by shortening the waiting time for examination, while sometimes asking airlines for cooperation in view of the actual situation of each airport.

2 Information Service for Foreign Nationals

The Immigration Bureau is tackling the “Comfortable Administrative Services Campaign” for the purpose of realizing a friendly and caring administration, while there is a demand from some applicants for reduction of the waiting time for application and provision of detailed and easy-to-understand guidance on procedures. To meet such a demand, regional immigration bureaus are continuously making efforts to improve staff attitudes towards administrative services and improve the reception manner by holding seminars for a more humanitarian approach, and by

improving the environment of the reception counter or using ingenuity in making various kinds of guide services friendly to users.

Further, to support a number of foreign nationals who are unfamiliar with procedures relating to immigration and residence due to differences in language, immigration information centers have been established to provide foreign nationals and relevant Japanese nationals with information on procedures for alien registration and preparation of application documents concerning immigration and residence of foreign nationals.

These information centers were established in the Tokyo Regional Immigration Bureau and its Yokohama District Immigration Office, the Nagoya Regional Immigration Bureau, the Osaka Regional Immigration Bureau and its Kobe District Immigration Office, the Hiroshima Regional Immigration Bureau, the Fukuoka Regional Immigration Bureau, and the Sendai Regional Immigration Bureau. They provide consultation on procedures for immigration and residence to foreign nationals on the phone or face-to-face in various languages, such as English, Korean, Chinese and Spanish. In the Sapporo Regional Immigration Bureau, the Takamatsu Regional Immigration Bureau, the Naha District Immigration Office of the Fukuoka Regional Immigration Bureau, and the Shinjuku Foreign Resident Information Center at Shinjuku Ward, counseling staff have been allocated to provide the same service as the above information centers

In November 2007, counseling staff who provide services for overall procedures related to immigration and residence were assigned to three major airports (Narita, Chubu and Kansai).

In addition to the above, the Immigration Bureau has been offering a joint counseling and information service to foreign residents in cooperation with Saitama Prefecture and Nagano Prefecture since 2007.



Immigration Information Center (Tokyo)



Immigration Information Center (Osaka)

3 Immigration Bureau Website

In March 2002, the Immigration Bureau established its own website separately from the website of the Ministry of Justice. Through this site (<http://www.immi-moj.go.jp>), the Immigration Bureau publishes questions and answers on immigration and residential procedures as well as the addresses, contacts and business hours of regional immigration offices for the convenience of applicants. Since February 2004, the Immigration Bureau has been receiving information about foreign nationals who may be staying illegally by e-mail.

Moreover, to improve information services for foreign nationals, the Immigration Bureau opened a website in English at the end of FY 2005, and websites in Chinese, Korean and Portuguese to provide services in many languages at the end of FY 2006. Thus, the Bureau has been making the website more convenient for foreign nationals.