

◆ Part II ◆

Major Policies Related to Immigration Control
Administration

Chapter 1 Implementation of a new technical intern training program

Technical Intern Training Act was established at the 192nd session of the Diet on November 18, 2016, promulgated on the 28th of the same month, and entered into force on November 1, 2017.

The status of implementation of the new technical intern training program pursuant to the enforcement of the Technical Intern Training Act is as follows.

Section 1 Responses for smooth transition to the new program

In accordance with the provisions of Article 13 of the Supplementary Provisions of the Technical Intern Training Act, with regard to applications for a change of the status of residence or applications for extension of the period of stay pertaining to the technical intern trainee whose period of stay would be to expire by January 31, 2018, or applications for issuance of a certificate of eligibility pertaining to a technical intern trainee intending to enter Japan by this date, which were filed before the date of enforcement of the Act (November 1, 2017), transitional measures have been established to the effect that the provisions then in force shall remain applicable, and these applications shall be treated appropriately.

In addition, as measures under the new program pursuant to the enforcement of the Technical Intern Training Act, preliminary acceptance of applications for the license of supervising organizations began on June 1, 2017, and applications for accreditation of the technical intern training plans began on July 3 of the same year, and after the enforcement of the Act, the licenses of supervising organization and accreditations of the technical intern training plans have been issued in turn.

Section 2 Status of Expansion of the Program

① Extension of the technical intern training period for excellent supervising organizations and implementing organizations

Under the new technical intern training program, technical intern trainees are able to proceed to technical intern training (iii), the third stage of training (two years), following on from technical intern training (i) and technical intern training (ii) provided they will engage in technical intern training under an excellent supervising organization and implementing organization, and ever since the start of this new program, the new program is being utilized in such manner as having former technical intern trainees first return to their home country after completion of technical intern training (ii) and then newly enter Japan once again as a technical intern trainee (iii) (see Reference 4).

② Expansion of the job categories

Under the new program, a number of skills-transfer job categories such as the category of nursing care (nursing care work) have been added when needed (77 job categories, 139 selective works as of December 2017). In addition, airport ground handling (aircraft ground support work) was added to the skills-transfer job categories / selective work as an enterprise-specific job category utilizing internal testing in the individual-enterprise-type technical intern training.

Section 3

New Initiatives for Proper Technical Intern Training and Protection of the Technical Intern Trainees

① Business councils

The minister with jurisdiction over the business may relating the technical intern training program organize a business council composed of the relevant organizations of each industry with the aim of securing proper technical intern training in such field of business by sharing information on problem cases and reviewing voluntary guidelines. The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries established and held the fisheries technical intern training business council on December 13, 2017, and the agricultural technical intern training business council on June 5, 2018; the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure Transport, and Tourism established and held the technical intern training automobile servicing business council on February 19 of the same year, and the business council on construction field technical intern training on March 26 of the same year; and the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry established and held the textile industry technical intern training business council on March 23 of the same year, and these business councils have been engaging in information sharing and discussions to secure proper technical intern training in each field of business.

② Regional councils

The issues and concerns of the technical intern training program differ depending on the region where technical intern trainees are being accepted, and the organizations of the national government and prefectural governments, and the Organization for Technical Intern Training collaborate with each other and hold regional councils divided into eight blocs (Hokkaido, Tohoku, Kanto, Chubu, Kansai, Chugoku, Shikoku, and Kyushu) in order to promote information-sharing at a regional level of the measures aimed at securing proper technical intern training, and during June and July, 2018, the regional council was established and held at least once a month in each bloc where information-sharing and discussions on efforts towards the securing of proper technical intern training were conducted in each region.



Scene of a regional council

③ Memorandum of Cooperation (MOC)

Memorandum of Cooperation with the government of the sending country have been entered into with 10 countries (Vietnam, Cambodia, India, the Philippines, Laos, Mongolia, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Myanmar and Bhutan) at the time of October 2018 with the aim of securing proper sending organizations. In addition, the Ministry of Justice, based on the same agreements has been striving to give out thorough information on the purpose of the programme of technical intern training and to foster understanding, and has made requests for the securing of proper sending organizations by holding opinion exchanges with the government of the sending countries and has also been attending seminars on explanations on the programme in the partner country together with the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Organization, and the Organization for Technical Intern Training.



Scenery of opinion exchange based on a Memorandum of Cooperation

④ Protection of the technical intern trainees

In order to protect the technical intern trainees, the Ministry of Justice, along with the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare which has joint jurisdiction over the technical intern training programme, give instructions on the protection measures for technical intern trainees to be implemented by the Organization for Technical Intern Training. The Organization for Technical Intern Training now has a reporting and consultation desk (telephone, emails and correspondence) in Chinese, Vietnamese, Indonesian, Tagalog, English, Thai, Cambodian and Myanmar, which are the principal mother tongues of the technical intern trainees, and as well as providing counseling and support for the technical intern trainees, they strive to protect the technical intern trainees by accepting reports from the technical intern trainees pursuant to Article 49, paragraph (1) of the Technical Intern Training Act.

In addition, in cases where it has become difficult to continue with the technical intern training at the training site due to the business problems of the accepting enterprise or various circumstances such as acts of violation of human rights, but where the technical intern trainee wishes to continue with the technical intern training, it is possible for the technical intern trainee to change the training site, and in relation to this, the Organization for Technical Intern Training provides various kinds of support such as giving advice and counseling in response to consultations from the technical intern trainees, introducing training sites to which the trainee will be able to transfer through the establishment of a website to provide support to change the training site for supervising organizations, and also providing temporary housing facilities for those technical intern trainees for whom it has become difficult to stay in the housing facilities secured by the supervising organization, etc.

Chapter 2 Acceptance of Foreign Nationals and Immigration Control Administration

Section 1

Promotion of the Acceptance of Highly-Skilled Foreign Professionals

① Outline of Points-Based Preferential Treatment for Highly-Skilled Foreign Professionals

Japan introduced preferential immigration treatment based on the points-based system for highly-skilled foreign professionals (hereinafter referred to as “points-based system for highly-skilled professionals”) in May 2012, and has since been promoting the acceptance of highly-skilled foreign professionals. The points-based system for highly-skilled professionals aims at foreign nationals who have advanced capabilities and qualities and are expected to contribute to Japan’s economic growth and divides the contents of the activities of the highly-skilled foreign professionals into the three categories of “advanced academic research activities”, “advanced specialized/technical activities” and “advanced business management activities”. According to the characteristic features of each category, points are awarded for each item such as “academic background”, “professional career” and “annual salary”, and if the total number reaches 70 points, such a foreign national is recognized as a “highly-skilled foreign professional” and becomes eligible for preferential immigration treatment.

Following the introduction of the system, a recommendation was made by the 6th Immigration Policy Discussions Panel to the Minister of Justice to revise the points-based system for highly-skilled professionals in May 2013. In the “Japan Revitalization Strategy” approved by the Cabinet on June 14 of the same year, a goal was set out to revise the system and to start the new system within the same year. Based on these, the Immigration Bureau amended the Ministry of Justice public notice on December 17 of the same year with the aim of revising the criteria for recognition pertaining to highly-skilled foreign professionals and revising the preferential treatment.

In order to further promote the acceptance of foreign human resources who possess a high degree of professional competence, the statuses of residence of “Highly-Skilled Professional (i)” and “Highly-Skilled Professional (ii)” were newly established by an amendment of the Immigration Control Act in 2014 for highly-skilled foreign professionals who had previously been granted the status of residence of “Designated Activities”.

② Highly-Skilled Professional (i) and “Highly-Skilled Professional (ii)”

The new statuses of residence of “Highly-Skilled Professional (i)” and “Highly-Skilled Professional (ii)” established by the 2014 Amendment Act are both limited to foreign nationals who meet the criteria prescribed in the Ordinance of the Ministry of Justice, and in response, the Ordinance to Provide for the Criteria in the Right-Hand Column Corresponding to “Highly-Skilled Professionals as Specified in the Appended Table I (2) of the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act” (Ministerial Ordinance No. 37 of 2014) was enacted and the criteria were set. With regard to “Highly-Skilled Professional (i)”, the criteria for the points-based system for highly-skilled professionals followed those previously the status of residence of “Designated Activities”. And the total number of points set for each of the categories of “academic background”, “professional career” and “annual salary” needs to reach 70 points or more. In addition, with regard to “Highly-Skilled Professional (ii)”, the total number of

points needs to be 70 points or more as with “Highly-Skilled Professional (i)”, and moreover, foreign nationals are required to reside in Japan for three years or more with the status of residence of “Highly-Skilled Professional (i)”, to engage in the activities for the status, to demonstrate good behavior and to be deemed to suit Japan’s interests.

(1) Preferential Treatment for “Highly-Skilled Professional (i)”

- A. Grant of period of stay for five years
- B. Permission to engage in activities covering multiple statuses of residence
- C. Permission for the spouse of the highly-skilled foreign professional to work^{(*)1}.
- D. Permission for the parent(s) to accompany the highly-skilled foreign professional to Japan under certain conditions^{(*)2}.
- E. Relaxation of requirements for permanent residence
- F. Permission for a domestic worker to accompany the highly-skilled foreign professional to Japan under certain conditions^{(*)3}.
- G. Preferential processing of entry and residence procedures

(2) Preferential Treatment for “Highly-Skilled Professional (ii)”

- A. Engaging in almost all of the statuses of residence based on employment, in conjunction with the activities is permitted.
- B. An indefinite period of stay is granted
- C. The preferential treatment of the abovementioned from C. to F of (1) is provided.

Although the status of residence of “Highly-Skilled Professional (ii)” has no restrictions on the period of stay and cannot be granted at the time of landing similar to the status of residence of “Permanent Resident”, it differs from the status of residence of “Permanent Resident”, which has no restrictions on activities, because the status of residence of “Highly-Skilled Professional (ii)” requires engaging in activities as a highly-skilled foreign professional. As a result, if a foreign national with the status of residence of “Highly-Skilled Professional (ii)” does not engage in the activities as a highly-skilled foreign professional for an ongoing period of six months or more, this may become grounds for revocation of the status of residence, and there are certain requirements which are not imposed on the status of residence of “Permanent Resident” such as the requirement to notice the organization of affiliation (workplace, etc.) to the Minister of Justice. On the other hand, foreign nationals with the status of residence of “Highly-Skilled Professional (ii)” are given preferential immigration treatment which is not accorded to “Permanent Resident” such as allowing parents or a domestic worker to accompany the highly-skilled foreign professional.

(*)1 In cases of activities coming under the statuses of residence of “Instructor”, “Engineer/Specialist in Humanities/International Services” etc. it is possible to work with the status of residence of a spouse of a highly-skilled foreign professionals even without meeting certain criteria relating to academic background or professional career.

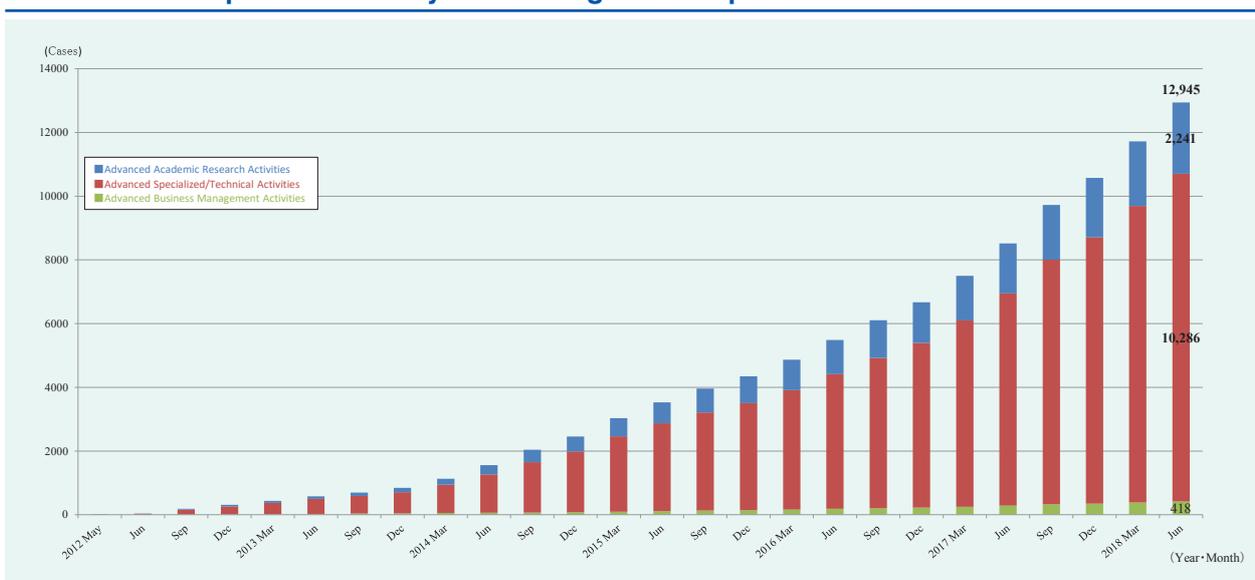
(*)2 In cases where there is a child under seven years old or where the highly-skilled foreign professionals or his/her spouse is pregnant.

(*)3 In cases where there is a child under 13 years old or where spouse is unable to engage in the day-to-day household chores owing to an illness or other reasons.

③ Situation of Acceptance

After the start of the system in May 2012, the cumulative number of cases of recognition up until the end of 2013 was a low number of 845, but the number of new cases of recognition has significantly increased following the policy reform made in December of the same year. The “Growth Strategy 2017” (approved by the Cabinet decision of June 9, 2017) set a goal of recognition of 10,000 highly-skilled foreign professionals in number by the end of 2020, and 20,000 highly-skilled foreign professionals by the end of 2022. By the end of June 2018, 12,945 foreign nationals were recognized as highly-skilled foreign professionals since the start of the system (Reference 71).

Reference 71 Changes in the total number of cases of recognition through the points-based system for high-skilled professionals



④ Publicity Measures

It is important to proactively conduct publicity measures and to promote the use of the points-based system for highly-skilled professionals in order to have as many highly-skilled foreign professionals utilize the system as possible. Therefore, the Immigration Bureau has been conducting the following kinds of publicity measures.

(i) A special “Points-based System for Highly-Skilled Professionals” page was created in the Immigration Bureau’s website on which easily-comprehensible explanations on the system can be found in Japanese and English

(Japanese: http://www.immi-moj.go.jp/newimmiact_3/index.html,

English: http://www.immi-moj.go.jp/newimmiact_3/en/index.html).

In addition, as well as attaching banners to specially prepared pages on the websites of the relevant ministries and agencies, videos of the points-based system for highly-skilled professionals have been aired on the government public relations broadcasting site, “Japanese Government Internet TV”.

(ii) A leaflet which clearly show at a glance how the points are calculated has been created, and in coordination with the relevant ministries and agencies, officers of the Immigration Bureau have been sent to the various conferences hosted by companies, universities and other organizations, which are likely to employ the highly-skilled foreign professionals in order to give a talk explaining the system.

The Immigration Bureau intends to continue its efforts to enhance its publicity measures relating to the points-based system for highly-skilled professionals with the cooperation of the relevant ministries and agencies.

5 Implementation of a “Japanese Green Card for Highly-Skilled Foreign Professionals”

The “Japan Revitalization Strategy 2016” (approved by the Cabinet decision of June 2, 2016) proposed the establishment of the world’s fastest “Japanese Green Card for Highly-Skilled Foreign Professionals” greatly reducing the current five-year period of stay required for the application for permanent residence for highly-skilled foreign professionals as one of the “considering immigration and residence control systems that further attract highly skilled foreign professionals”, and the requirements were also reviewed and further promotion of publicity for the system conducted from the perspective of making the points-based system for highly-skilled professionals more accessible.

Based on this, as a result of consideration with the relevant ministries and agencies, the residence period required in the applications for permanent residence of highly-skilled foreign professionals was reduced from the previous five years to three years (to one year for professionals with particularly high skills (where the total number of points is 80 points or more)), additional points categories were added, and the operations for these commenced in April 2017, the number of cases of permission for permanent residence through the “Japanese Green Card for Highly-Skilled Foreign Professionals” granted up until June 2018 was 815 cases.

Section 2

Acceptance of Foreign Nationals in the National Strategic Special Zones

1 Entrepreneurs

The “Project for Facilitation of Acceptance of Foreign Entrepreneurs in National Strategic Special Zones” was stipulated in the “Act for Partial Amendment of the Act on National Strategic Special Zones and the Act on Special Zones for Structural Reform” (Act No. 56 of 2015) as a special measure in order to strengthen the international competitiveness of industries and to form an international economic activities hub in such zones by promoting the acceptance of foreign entrepreneurs in national strategic special zones.

In this project, the Council on National Strategic Special Zones specifies the project in the special zone plan, and once the plan has been approved by the Prime Minister, the local government pertaining to national strategic special zone examines the feasibility of the business start-up plan for foreign nationals who intend to enter Japan with the status of residence of “Business Manager”, and if it confirms that the requirements pertaining to the stability and sustainability of the business have been fulfilled, the entry is permitted on condition that the requirements pertaining to the status of residence of “Business Manager” which are normally required at the time of landing examination are to be met within six months of landing, and the activities to start up a business in national strategic special zone are specially permitted.

As of July 2018, operations for the project have commenced in the Tokyo Area National Strategic Special Zone (project implementation area: all of Tokyo metropolitan area), the Fukuoka-Kitakyushu National Strategic Special Zone (all of Fukuoka city and all of Kitakyushu city), the Niigata National Strategic Special Zone (all of Niigata city), the Hiroshima prefecture-Imabari National Strategic Special Zone (all of Hiroshima Prefecture and all of Imabari city), the Sendai National Strategic Special Zone (all of Sendai city) and the Aichi Prefecture National Strategic Special Zone (all of Aichi Prefecture).

② Foreigners Conducting Housekeeping Services

The “Project to Accept Foreigners Conducting Housekeeping Services in National Strategic Special Zones” that the activities of domestic workers in national strategic special zones are deemed to come under the public notice on the status of residence of “Designated Activities” was stipulated as a special measure in the “Act for Partial Amendment of the Act on National Strategic Special Zones and the Act on Special Zones for Structural Reform” (Act No. 56 of 2015).

This project is a special measure where the Council on National Strategic Special Zones establishes the project as a special zone plan, and the special zone plan is approved by the Prime Minister, domestic workers (foreigner conducting housekeeping services) who have entered into an employment contract with a specified organization are able to engage in general domestic work such as cooking, washing, cleaning and shopping in the household using the domestic services, under a framework where a third party management council composed of the local government of the zone implementing the project and the relevant ministries (Cabinet Office, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, and Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry) is involved in ensuring appropriate acceptance (confirmation that the specified organizations are complying with the criteria, implementation of audits, etc.).

As of July 2018, operations for the project have commenced in the Tokyo Area National Strategic Special Zone (project implementation area: all of Tokyo metropolitan area and all of Kanagawa prefecture), the Kansai Area National Strategic Special Zone (all of Osaka city and all of Hyogo prefecture) and the Aichi Prefecture National Strategic Special Zone (all of Aichi prefecture).

③ Foreigners Conducting Agricultural Works

In order to realize “strong agriculture” through promoting the production of various kinds of crops in the production areas and expanding the scale of the business by utilizing foreign workers in the field of agriculture, the “Project to Accept Foreigners Conducting Agricultural Works in National Strategic Special Zones” that the activities of agricultural support workers in national strategic special zones are deemed to come under the public notice on the status of residence of “Designated Activities” was stipulated as a special measure in the “Act for Partial Amendment of the Act on National Strategic Special Zones and the Act on Special Zones for Structural Reform” (Act No. 71 of 2017) (effective from September 22, 2017).

This project is a special measure where the Council on National Strategic Special Zones establishes the project as a special zone plan, and the special zone plan is approved by the Prime Minister, foreign agricultural support workers who have entered into an employment contract with a specified organization are able to engage in agricultural support works (production, manufacturing, processing, etc.) in the agricultural management body, etc., which is the agency that has entered into a worker dispatch contract with a specified organization, under a framework where an appropriate acceptance management council composed of the local government of the zone implementing the project and the relevant ministries (Cabinet Office, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, and Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries) is involved in ensuring appropriate acceptance (confirmation that the specified organizations are complying with the criteria, implementation of audits/patrol guidance, etc.).

As of July 2018, operations for the project have commenced in the Kansai Area National Strategic Special Zone (project implementation area: all of Kyoto), the Niigata National Strategic Special Zone (all of Niigata city), the Aichi Prefecture National Strategic Special Zone (all of Aichi prefecture), and the Okinawa National Strategic Special Zone (all of Okinawa prefecture).

④ Foreigners Supporting Overseas Demand Development

In order to flexibly respond to the needs for acceptance of foreign nationals who have expertise related to “cool Japan and inbound responses” and to maximize use of the specialized knowledge and skills acquired by foreign nationals in companies and other enterprises, the “Project to Promote Activities Supporting Foreigners Overseas Demand Development in National Strategic Special Zones” was stipulated as a special measure in the “Act for Partial Amendment of the Act on National Strategic Special Zones and the Act on Special Zones for Structural Reform” (Act No. 71 of 2017) (effective from September 22, 2017).

This project is a special measure where if the Council on National Strategic Special Zones intends to stipulate the contents of the activities of supporting overseas demand development, which is the subject of the project, as a special zone plan, it consults the related ministries and agencies in advance as to whether or not the activities of supporting overseas demand development come under the status of residence of “Engineer/ Specialist in Humanities/ International Services” or “Skilled Labor”.

If they do come under one of the statuses of residence, the Council on National Strategic Special Zones consults the relevant ministries as to whether the level of knowledge and skills, etc. of the foreign nationals equivalent to the academic qualifications and practical experience required for the current landing permission criteria may be substituted with qualifications, examinations or awards, etc. in or outside of Japan.

If deemed appropriate as landing permission criteria as a result of the consultation, the Council on National Strategic Special Zones establishes the project as a special zone plan, and if the special zone plan is approved by the Prime Minister, the landing examination criteria for foreign nationals for the supporting overseas demand development, etc. specified in a Cabinet order as special measures for the Ministerial Ordinance for Landing Criteria, will be deemed to be the criteria prescribed by the Ordinance on Criteria, and if the foreign national meets these criteria, he or she will be permitted entry with the status of residence of “Engineer/ Specialist in Humanities/ International Services” or “Skilled Labor”.

Section 3 Other Measures

① Time-Limited Emergency Measures in the Fields of Construction and Shipbuilding

In order to deal with the further acceleration of the reconstruction projects and temporary increased demand for construction owing to the 2020 Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games, a decision was made by the Ministerial Committee on the Employment of Foreign Workers in the Construction Field (April 4, 2014) to permit as an emergency measure for a limited time, foreign nationals who have completed their technical intern training in the construction field to engage in construction work in Japan with the status of residence of “Designated Activities” under a special supervision framework, in principle, for a maximum period of two years (three years in the case of a person who has returned to their home country for a period of one year or more following the completion of their technical intern training), on condition that utmost efforts have been made to secure human resources in Japan.

In response, the “Public Notice on Projects for Acceptance of Foreign Construction Workers” (Public Notice of the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism. Hereinafter referred to as “Construction notification”), which provides for the specific contents of the measures, was announced

in August 2014, with the administrative work of certifying trustworthy supervising organizations, etc. commencing in January 2015, and those foreign construction workers who are eligible under these measures being accepted from April of the same year.

In addition, with regard to the shipping industry, which tends to see a large two-way flow of human resources to and from the construction industry, the “Japan Revitalization Strategy (Revised in 2014)” (approved by a Cabinet decision on June 24, 2014) stated that time-limited emergency measures similar to those of the construction industry should be taken, and therefore, the “Public Notice on Projects for Acceptance of Foreign Shipbuilding Workers” (Public Notice of the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism. Hereinafter referred to as “Shipbuilding notification”), which provides for the specific contents of the measures was announced in December 2014, with the administrative work of certifying trustworthy supervising organizations, etc. commencing in January 2015, and those foreign shipbuilding workers who are eligible under these measures being accepted from April of the same year.

In October 2017, in response to the “Future Investment Strategy 2017” (Cabinet decision of June 9, 2017) stating to the effect that, “With regard to the construction field, in light of the purpose of the program which is to take all possible measures to ensure the success of the 2020 Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games, review the operations to further enhance the construction system, and review the operations as well in the shipbuilding field”, as well as the enforcement of Technical Intern Training Act on November 1, 2017, making the acceptance of technical intern trainees (iii) possible, the construction notice and shipbuilding notice were revised, and the acceptance period based on these acceptance projects was extended to the end of FY 2022, and in principle, a period of return home is required of one month or more after the completion of “technical intern training (ii)” and before the start of the designated activities, and of one year or more after the completion of “technical intern training (iii)” and before the start of the designated activities (one month or more in cases of having gone back to the home country for one year or more after the completion of technical intern training (ii) and before the start of technical intern training (iii)), and the employment period, in principle, is for a maximum of two years (in cases of returning to the home country for one year or more after completion of technical intern training (ii), or in cases of completing technical intern training (iii), a maximum of three years).

② Work from a fashion design educational institutions

In order to promote the acceptance of foreign nationals to Cool Japan, it was decided that from March 2018, foreign students, who have graduated from a specialized course of a fashion design educational institutions which is permitted to accept foreign students where it is deemed possible for the foreign student to acquire specialized knowledge and skills would be eligible for permission to change of status of residence for the purpose of finding employment with a Japanese company or other enterprise.

③ Further acceptance of fourth-generation foreign nationals of Japanese descent

With regard to fourth-generation foreign nationals of Japanese descent, only unmarried minors who are natural children supported by a third-generation foreign national of Japanese descent residing in Japan with the status of residence of “Long-Term Resident” were permitted to enter or reside in Japan, but following the deliberations at the National Diet, in February 2017, Prime Minister Abe asked then Minister of Justice Kaneda to consider further acceptance of fourth-generation foreign nationals of Japanese descent. As a result of the deliberations, a system was established for the purpose of promoting understanding of and interest in Japan through the acceptance of young fourth-generation foreign nationals of Japanese descent and activities to have them learn about Japanese culture, and thereby, to develop human resources acting as a bridge to strengthen the connections between Japan and Japanese societies abroad, that became effective from July 2018.

Under this system, basically the same entry requirements as for the working holiday system are required, but as a unique requirement of this system, a certain level of Japanese language proficiency is required at the time of entry into Japan or at the time of renewing the period of stay, as well as the guarantee of a “supporter to accept the fourth-generation foreign national of Japanese descent” to provide support pertaining to the entry and residence of the fourth-generation foreign national of Japanese descent being required. Fourth-generation foreign nationals of Japanese descent who are accepted under this system are able to engage in activities to understand Japanese culture, including the Japanese language, for a total of a maximum of five years, and to engage in activities to receive remuneration within the necessary limit to supplement necessary funds in order to engage in the activities (except for activities to engage in amusement-business work).

④ Facilitated and expedited procedures for the status of residence

The “Future Investment Strategy 2017” decided by the Cabinet in June 2017 intends to strengthen the residence management framework to facilitate and expedite procedures for the status of residence, etc. and a decision was made to proceed with the necessary preparations to start new procedures for the statuses of residence, including the use of online procedures from FY 2018.

In response to this, while strengthening the residence management framework with regard to the status of residence procedures for foreign residents who have been increasing in number in recent years so that the statuses of residence can be ascertained accurately through accurate collection and utilization of information, a specific system is being designed, which includes a reliable affiliated organization to handle the online applications in order to achieve greater facilitation and expedition of the residence management procedures, including the online procedures.

⑤ Acceptance of foreign entrepreneurs

Expansion of further acceptance of entrepreneurs was included in the “Future Investment Strategy 2017” decided by the Cabinet in June 2017, and in the “New Economic Policy Package” decided by the Cabinet in December of that year, as measures to strengthen venture support, a “start-up program (provisional name)” is to commence in FY 2018 to support entrepreneurial activities, such as the taking of measures in terms of the immigration control system to grant a period of stay of up to one year in order to prepare to establish an entrepreneurial start-up.

In response to this, we are considering the establishment of a system that permits entrance and stay for entrepreneurial activities for up to one year under proper management and support of the national and

local governments with the relevant ministers and agencies.

Chapter 3 Smooth and Strict Implementation of Immigration Examination at the Port of Entry

In order to contribute to the realization of a tourism-oriented country, it is important on the one hand to strive to implement smooth landing examinations for the majority of foreign nationals, who come to Japan without causing any problems, but in order to realize a society where Japanese nationals and foreign nationals can live together harmoniously, it is also necessary to implement strict landing examinations and reliably prevent the entry of foreign nationals whose objective is terrorism, illegal work or other illegal activities.

The number of foreign nationals entering Japan in 2017 reached approximately 27 million and it is expected that this number will continue to increase in the future, but since acts of terrorism are taking place in many parts of the world and Japanese nationals have been held captive and murdered, the Immigration Bureau has been working to reconcile the seemingly conflicting goals of smooth and strict examinations through the implementation of smooth and strict examinations depending on the case.

Section 1 Efforts to Promote a Tourism-Oriented Country

① Introduction of Bio Carts

Regarding the waiting time for immigration examinations, in the “Tourism Vision Realization Program 2017” (2017 Action Program for Realization of the Tourism Vision) (decision of the Ministerial Conference for the Promotion of Japan as a Tourism-Oriented Country of May 2017) as with the previous year, the Immigration Bureau has been aiming to realize the goal of reducing the time spent waiting in line for an immigration examination at the airport to within 20 minutes, and as one of the new measures to reduce the waiting time, devices to acquire Biometric information (fingerprints and a facial photograph) utilizing the time spent waiting in line for a landing examination, so-called Bio Carts, were introduced at Kansai, Takamatsu and Naha airports in October 2016 where it was thought they would be particularly effective in reducing the waiting time for an examination.

Bio Carts help to simplify the procedures at the landing examination booth through acquiring the Biometric information of applicants for a landing examination, which usually is collected by the immigration inspector at the landing examination booth, utilizing the time normally spent waiting in line by means of specialized devices which differ from the examination equipment, and aims to expedite the immigration procedures of foreign travelers, and they were introduced at 12 airports including Narita Airport in April 2017, and at Kitakyushu Airport and Oita Airport in May 2018 for further promotion of smooth examinations.



Bio Carts

② Automated Gates

(1) Promotion of Use of the Automated Gates

Japanese nationals and foreign nationals satisfying certain requirements (in possession of re-entry permission, etc.), who have registered in advance as users of the automated gates, are able to undergo the immigration procedures using the automated gates and do not have to undergo the usual examination by an immigration inspector at an immigration examination booth, and in this way, smooth and strict examinations are being further promoted. Following the installation of the automated gates at Narita Airport in November 2007, automated gates were installed at Chubu Airport and Kansai Airport in September 2009 and were additionally installed at Haneda Airport in October 2010. As of the end of FY 2017, 70 automated gates had been installed throughout the country.

User registration of automated gates was started at the Tokyo Regional Immigration Bureau and the Narita Airport District Immigration Office in November 2007, followed by the Nagoya Regional Immigration Bureau, the Chubu Airport District Immigration Office, the Osaka Regional Immigration Bureau and the Kansai Airport District Immigration Office in September 2009 and the Haneda Airport District Immigration Office of the Tokyo Regional Immigration Bureau in October 2010.

Moreover, in order to promote user registration of the automated gates in 2013, as well as increasing the number of devices for user registration and posting information in airport facilities and in-flight magazines through the cooperation of the airport operating companies and airline companies, the Immigration Bureau has been working to improve its administrative services with regard to those wishing to register for use of the automated gates through such means as sending immigration officers to the prefectural passport offices in order to enable mobile on-the-spot user registration.



Automated Gates



On-site registration using a mobile device to register as a user of the automated gates

(2) Trusted Traveler Program

The Trusted Traveler Program (TTP) commenced its operations on November 1, 2016 expanding the scope of eligible users of the automated gates into certain foreign nationals intending to engage in activities under the status of residence of “Temporary Visitor”, who have visited Japan certain times in the past and have registered as a low risk traveler in terms of immigration control such as business persons working for a listed company in and outside Japan. Those who are registered in this program are exempted from receiving a seal of verification for landing, and issued a “Registered User Card” as a proof of landing permission in lieu of the seal of verification for landing.

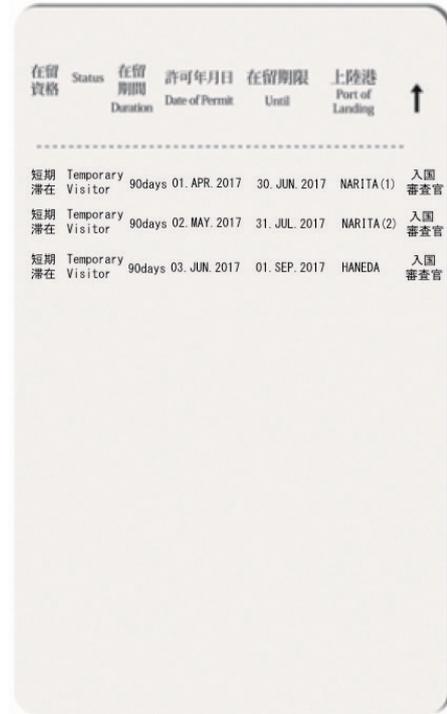
In addition, in order to contribute to expediting the immigration examinations between Japan and the

United States, the immigration authorities of Japan and the United States discussed specific operations of TTP and commenced the operations that US citizens who have applied for TTP will not be required to meet some of the requirements on the premise that they are already enrolled in the U.S. Global Entry Program (GEP).

Registered User Card



Front



Back

(3) Introduction of Facial Recognition Technology in the Departure and Return Procedures for Japanese Nationals

As further expediting of the immigration examinations is required in order to promote Japan as a tourism-oriented country and in anticipation of the Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2020, the Immigration Bureau intends to further expedite the examination procedures, while maintaining strictness of the examination, by streamlining the departure and return for Japanese nationals through the use of facial recognition technology and allocating more inspectors to the examination of foreign nationals.

The Immigration Bureau conducted a trial test of examinations utilizing facial recognition technology in 2014, and the evaluation of the “Committee for Evaluation of Facial Recognition Technology in the Immigration Examinations” composed of outside experts was that from the perspective of technology “there is sufficient possibility of utilizing facial recognition technology in the departure and return examinations of Japanese nationals”.

After necessary reviews facial recognition automated gates were developed in the two years of FY 2016 and FY 2017, and advance operations of the facial recognition automated gates in the return confirmation procedures for Japanese nationals commenced at Haneda Airport on October 18, 2017.

In addition, during FY 2018, the facial



Facial recognition automated gates

recognition automated gates were successively launched at the landing and departure examination areas of Narita Airport, Haneda Airport, Chubu Airport, Kansai Airport and Fukuoka Airport, and are being operated in the departure and return procedures for Japanese nationals.

(4) Study on Expanded Use of the Automated Gates in the Departure Procedures for Foreign Nationals

The “Tourism Vision Realization Program, 2016” (Tourism Vision Realization Action Program 2016) (decision of the Ministerial Council on the Promotion of Japan as a Tourism-Oriented Country of May 2016) outlined a plan to expand the use of the automated gates in the departure procedures for foreign nationals in order to reduce the time required for the departure procedures at airports in Japan. Based on this, surveys were conducted related to expanding use of the automated gates in the departure procedures for foreign nationals in FY 2016, and a study was also conducted on the scope of foreign nationals who should be eligible to use the automated gates in the departure procedures, necessary matters for system renovation, and methods of arranging the automated gates in the departure examination areas. Based on the results of these surveys and study, a decision was reached to make use of the facial recognition automated gates used in the departure and return procedures for Japanese nationals in the departure procedures of foreign nationals who had entered Japan for the purpose of sightseeing and other such activities.

③ Response to Cruise Ship Passengers

In recent years, the number of cruise ships calling at ports in Japan has increased and the size of ships has been getting much larger in size. In response to requests from the municipalities hosting the cruise ships at their ports, for prompt processing of post-arrival procedures to enable passengers to fully enjoy sightseeing and other activities within the limited time the ship stays at the port, the Immigration Bureau has been conducting prompt examinations, while securing strict examinations, since June 2012. These efforts include preparation for onboard examinations for large-sized cruise ships, adoption of a new method of examination utilizing permission for landing at a port of call, utilization of examination devices for which the systems have been modified, and the dispatch of help personnel for examinations across Japan.

In addition, the operation of a system of landing permission for cruise ship tourists permitting foreign passengers of cruise ships designated by the Minister of Justice to land through simplified procedures commenced on January 1, 2015, the number of landing permission for Cruise ship tourists has been steadily increasing from about 1,070,000 in 2015 to about 1,940,000 in 2016, and about 2,450,000 in 2017.



Cruise ship examinations

④ Other Measures to Reduce the Waiting Time for Examinations

Measures are being implemented to reduce the waiting time for landing examinations such as simplifying a disembarkation card for foreign nationals (omission of some of previously required details), which is submitted by the foreign nationals to an immigration inspector at the time of landing examination (enforced from April 1, 2016), and increasing the number of booths through the installment of a newly-arranged examination booth in which two immigration inspectors are located front and back to conduct a landing examination respectively at the same time.



Newly-arranged examination booth

⑤ Revision of the method of measuring the time spent waiting in line for an examination, and announcement of the waiting times for the examination

The time spent waiting in line for an immigration examination is measured at each airport (by terminal and examination areas), by distributing a survey form to the last foreign tourist in the immigration waiting queue every 30 minutes, and when this person reaches the immigration examination booth, the survey form is collected and the time measured. Through these measurements, the longest time spent waiting in line for an examination in that day was set as the longest examination waiting time at the airport, and then the average time per month was calculated, but in the past, there were no proactive or regular announcements of the maximum amount of time spent waiting for an immigration examination.

However, considering the fact that the amount of time spent waiting in line for an immigration examination is a matter of great concern for foreign travelers visiting Japan as it affects the time they spend in Japan, a decision was made to revise the method of measurement from January 2017 so as to utilize the electronic data held by the Immigration Bureau. As a result, it became possible to measure the “rate of achievement of the goal of an immigration examination waiting time of 20 minutes” and the “longest immigration examination waiting time / time of occurrence” for each airport (terminal and examination areas), and this data is now compiled on a monthly basis and published once a month on the Ministry of Justice website.

(http://www.moj.go.jp/nyuukokukanri/kouhou/nyuukokukanri07_00117.html)

Section 2 Strengthened Countermeasures at the Port of Entry

① Immigration Examinations Utilizing Information

(1) Implementation of Immigration Examinations Through the Use of Biometric Information

Since November 20, 2007, foreign nationals who intend to enter Japan have been required to submit their Biometric information (fingerprints and a facial photograph). This enables the Immigration Bureau to accurately and promptly confirm that the applicant for the verification for landing is the same as the passport holder, and to check the applicant against the blacklist maintained by the Immigration Bureau. In addition, it has become possible to stringently detect those who have previously been deported and again try to enter Japan illegally using a forged passport or another person's passport by checking their information against the data on fingerprints and facial photographs of those who departed under a departure order or who were deported in the past retained by the Immigration Bureau. In addition, since October 2016, in order to rigorously detect terrorists etc. at the time of the landing examination, we have been cross-checking the facial photographs provided by foreign nationals at the time of the landing examination against the facial images of terrorists and other suspect persons. The total number of foreign nationals ordered to depart through a departure order and deported through a deportation order based on the utilization of Biometric information was approximately 8,600 from the start of utilization of this information in the immigration examinations by the end of December, 2017.

On the other hand, there have been an increasing number of cases where in order to avoid their past history of deportation being discovered, foreign nationals have attempted to disguise their fingerprints by scarring their fingers or undergoing surgery and have illegally entered Japan using a forged or altered passport obtained through such means. In order to respond more appropriately to cases of disguised fingerprints, we have been striving to uncover these disguised fingerprints by modifying the fingerprint acquisition devices, and in addition to executing the deportation procedures, the Immigration Bureau has been strictly enforcing criminal dispositions through accusations and notifications to the police and other law enforcement agencies.



Immigration examination through the use of Biometric information

(2) Use of ICPO's Database of Stolen and Lost Travel Documents

The introduction and operation of a system to enable the utilization of ICPO's database of stolen and lost travel documents at the time of the landing examinations as a measure to prevent terrorism was decided in the "Action Plan for the Prevention of Terrorism" (decision of the Headquarters for the Promotion of Measures against Transnational Organized Crime and Other Relative Issues and International Terrorism on December 10, 2004), and examinations have been conducted since August 2009 utilizing ICPO's stolen and lost travel documents database search system.

The Immigration Bureau seeks to detect illegal entry cases by terrorists and those contemplating illegal conduct through the misuse of lost or stolen passports, by utilizing the abovementioned database.

(3) Immigration Examinations Through the Use of API and PNR

From February 2007, the Immigration Bureau has made it mandatory for the captain of all vessels and aircraft entering Japan to submit advance passenger information (API), and from February 2010, the advance passenger information system (APIS) is being operated making it possible for the advance passenger information of aircraft arriving at the airports to be received electronically via the Nippon Automated Cargo and Port Consolidated System (NACCS) operated by Nippon Automated Cargo and Port Consolidated System, Inc. From June 2017, the reporting time of the information, which, in principle, used to be set at "90 minutes before arrival" was revised to, in principle, "30 minutes from the time of departing the area outside of Japan", making it possible to detect the arrival of suspect persons much sooner and to realize stricter and more prompt immigration examinations.

In addition, as the number of foreign nationals entering Japan has increased significantly, in order to stringently prevent the entry of suspect persons through immigration control at the border, the airline companies have been requested since 2015 to provide passenger name records (PNR), and from January 2016, we have commenced electronic receipt of PNRs via NACCS and have been using them in the immigration examinations.

② Reinforcement of Information Collection and Analysis

At the beginning of 2017, terrorist attacks that caused many fatalities and casualties took place in Manchester, UK in May, London, UK in June, Barcelona, Spain in August, and New York, USA in October, and since the 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games are to be held in Tokyo, the Immigration Bureau is expected to implement even stricter measures at the border.

Meanwhile, due to various measures being implemented to promote Japan as a tourism-oriented country and the continuing trend of the increasing number of foreign visitors coming to Japan, it is necessary to achieve the intricate balance of strict immigration control, including measures to prevent terrorism, and also smooth landing examinations to realize Japan as a tourism-oriented country.

Therefore, in October 2015, as the core organization for information gathering and analysis in immigration control, the Immigration Control Intelligence Center was established in the Immigration Bureau of the Ministry of Justice, and this Center promotes information sharing with domestic and overseas related organizations, collects information on international terrorists and other information, implements an advanced analysis of the information together with other information held by the authorities including API and PNRs, and uses the results at the regional immigration offices of the airports and other places, thereby, implementing smooth and strict countermeasures at the border.

③ Patrol Activities at Airports and Seaports

In fact, there have been some cases of illegal entry into a third country misusing the transit areas (special areas made available in international airports, consisting of areas through which those who enter the country by airplane move until they reach the landing examination site, and places where those who are making airplane connections can stay before they go onboard) in Japanese major airports.

Accordingly, the immigration control officers monitor and detect suspicious individuals by reinforced organizational patrols, in the transit areas of Narita Airport and other major airports.

In addition, there is a concern that illegal entry cases using vessels to smuggle those who have been deported from Japan in order to avoid landing examination utilizing Biometric information, would increase.

Owing to the possibility that terrorists or other related persons, etc. may be hidden among the foreign nationals who have illegally entered Japan, in order to deal appropriately with these cases, mobile teams composed of immigration control officers (mobile teams for Kita-Nihon (northern Japan), Tokyo Bay Chiba, Tokyo Bay Yokohama, Naka-Nihon (central Japan), Kobe and Nishi-Nihon (West Japan)) have been assigned to the regional immigration bureaus in Tokyo, Nagoya, Osaka and Fukuoka, and the border measures have been strengthened. These mobile teams gather, analyze and share information on illegal foreign nationals entering and departing from Japan and conduct various joint drills, while reinforcing their cooperation with the related ministries and agencies. These mobile teams conduct patrols at the seaports and coastal areas under their jurisdictions and search onboard ships in port, as well as conducting investigations and detection of suspects, related suspects and brokers in connection with illegal immigration issues.



Joint drill



Patrol activity



Detection on a smuggling boat

Article: Promotion of countermeasures against terrorism in anticipation of the 2020 Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games

In December 2017, the Headquarters for Countering International Organized Crime and International Terrorism headed by the Chief Cabinet Secretary compiled the Guidelines for Promotion of Terrorism Countermeasures in Anticipation of the 2020 Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games, which states that the government will unite to intensively promote counter-terrorism measures in order to take all possible measures against counter-terrorism looking ahead to the 2020 Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games.

For the Immigration Bureau, implementing border measures to prevent terrorism and conducting appropriate immigration examinations to handle the increasing number of tourists and others is an urgent and important issue, and the Immigration Bureau will be carrying out the following measures in cooperation with the related ministries and agencies in order to balance both strict immigration examinations and smooth immigration examinations at an advanced level.

[Reinforcement of immigration control system]

- In addition to developing and strengthening the personnel infrastructure in immigration control, we will continue to promote the development and reinforcement of the physical infrastructure

[Reinforcing the collection and analysis of border information, etc.]

- Further promotion of electronic acquisition of passenger name records (PNR) of passengers under an appropriate system for the protection and management of personal information
- Advanced analysis of PNRs and other information at the Immigration Control Intelligence Center, the core organization for information gathering and analysis, prompt sharing of the results with the regional immigration offices, utilization in the immigration examinations, reinforced information coordination with foreign immigration authorities and further promotion of stricter border measures
- In order to promote international cooperation towards proactive utilization of border-related information including PNRs, approaches are made under bilateral and international framework in collaboration with relevant ministries and agencies

[Utilization of advanced technologies etc. and implementation of joint exercises, etc.]

- In order to prevent the entry of terrorists and other suspect persons at the border, we will continue to utilize Biometric information (fingerprints and a facial photograph) and the International Criminal Police Organization (ICPO)'s Database of Stolen and Lost Travel Documents, and cross-check the facial photographs provided by foreign nationals at the time of the landing examination against the facial images of terrorists and other suspect persons gathered from the relevant organizations.
- In addition to conducting joint checks of the training and security equipment at the international airports and ports, promotion of immigration patrols in the major airports and joint patrols in the transit areas, and joint on-site inspections of vessels.

In addition to promoting the abovementioned efforts, the Immigration Bureau has streamlined the departure and return procedures for Japanese nationals and the departure procedures for foreign nationals by utilizing facial recognition technology, and intends to further strengthen the immigration examination system by allocating a greater number of immigration inspectors to the immigration examinations for foreign nationals.

Article: At the Front Line of Immigration Control Administration (Voice of an immigration control officer in charge of investigation) (Enforcement Department, Naha District Immigration Office, Fukuoka Regional Immigration Bureau: Kaoru Isonami)

There have been incidents occurring in the waters surrounding the Senkaku Islands where activists from China, Taiwan and Hong Kong departed by ship heading to these waters as part of their activities to assert the Senkaku Islands' claim of territorial rights, invading Japan's territorial waters, and illegally landing on the Senkaku islands.

The Immigration Bureau closely cooperates with the relevant organizations and is in charge of responding to these activists' claim of territorial rights.

At the Naha Branch Office Enforcement Department to which I belong, as part of the activities of investigating violations, immigration control officers board Japan Coast Guard patrol vessels, which carry out security activities in the waters surrounding the Senkaku Islands, and conducts security activities against the illegal landing etc. of these activists.

Normally, the work of immigration control officers is to investigate violations and carry out the work of detention and deportation, but this work of guarding these remote islands is unusual even from a nationwide perspective, and in addition, it is a worthwhile job where we feel pride and a sense of mission.

In addition to this, in recent years, the number of foreign nationals entering Japan has been increasing rapidly, and the number of cases of violation by foreign nationals are on the rise. Also here in Okinawa prefecture, there has also been an increase in illegal acts such as foreign tourists bringing in illegal drugs and activities outside the authorized designated activities being conducted in the tourism-related industries, and in order to deal with these cases, we endeavor every day to be attuned to every field, and to devote ourselves to gathering information and responding with speed.



Chapter 4 Measures Against Illegal and Imposter Foreign Residents, etc.

Section 1

Implementation of Measures Against Illegal Foreign Residents

① Past Efforts to Reduce the Number of Illegal Foreign Residents

Based on the “Five-Year Plan to Halve the Number of Illegal Foreign Residents” launched in 2004, each regional immigration bureau has actively promoted various measures, including strict implementation of landing/residence examinations, proactive public relations activities regarding illegal employment, strengthened detection by the Special Detection Officer Units (see subsection 2 (1) below), etc. wider application of custody transfer in accordance with Article 65 of the Immigration Control Act and the encouragement of the appearances of illegal foreign residents under the departure order system. As a result, the number of illegal foreign residents, which was approximately 250,000 at the start of the plan, decreased to approximately 130,000 as of January 2009, and its goal was almost accomplished.

Based on the “Action Plan 2008 for the Realization of a Society Resistant to Crime” aiming to “create a society that generates no illegal foreign residents under the new residency management system”, as the Immigration Bureau has continued efforts to further reduce the number of foreign nationals illegally staying, consequently the number of foreign nationals overstaying their authorized period of stay was decreased to approximately 59,000 as of January 1, 2014.

However, as of January 1, 2015, the number of illegal residents staying beyond their authorized period of stay became about 60,000, which was an increase for the first time in 22 years, and at the time of January 1, 2016, the number of illegal residents staying beyond their authorized period of stay was about 63,000. This further increased to about 65,000 as of January 1, 2017, and about 66,000 as of January 1 2018, as figures for January 1 each year, it has increased for four consecutive years, and has now reached a situation where future trends are unpredictable.

② Efforts to Further Reduce the Number of Illegal Foreign Residents

The steady decrease of the number of illegal foreign residents in Japan is recognized as a result of past efforts. However, it is estimated that there are still approximately 66,000 foreign nationals staying in Japan illegally beyond their authorized period of stay.

Owing to the variety of measures being taken by the entire government aiming at the realization of a tourism-oriented country, it is expected that the number of foreign nationals entering Japan will further increase in the future. In response to this, since it is very likely that the number of foreign nationals staying illegally beyond their authorized period of stay will also increase, we will be maintaining a commensurate framework in order to crack down on these illegal residents and will also be strengthening the following measures in order to work on further reducing the number of illegal residents.

(1) Strengthened Detection

The Immigration Bureau has established the “Special Detection Officer Units” that are to engage full-time in detecting offenders in violation of the Immigration Act and locate the unit in large city areas where there are many illegal foreign residents, by which the Immigration Bureau has reinforced the ability to detect illegal foreign residents, has strengthened cooperation with the local police authorities and has promoted joint detection.

In addition, since it has come to our attention that illegal foreign residents tend to be concentrated in smaller groups and are scattered throughout the country, these days the Immigration Bureau is making efforts to improve collection and analysis of various kinds of information pertaining to illegal foreign residents and to promote efficient and effective exposure through assembling immigration control officers who engage in detection tailored to the target of the detection.

(2) Preparation of an Environment Facilitating Voluntary Appearance

The Immigration Bureau introduced the departure order system as a measure to encourage illegal foreign residents existing in various parts of the country to voluntarily appear at the immigration office, and also took other measures, including a revision of the “Guidelines on Special Permission to Stay in Japan”^(*) and publication of such cases, as well as public relations activities to encourage voluntary appearance at an immigration office.

The departure order system is a system where, unlike with the deportation procedures, foreign nationals staying illegally beyond their authorized period of stay, who meet certain criteria such as appearing in person to make a declaration in order to depart from Japan, are able to depart through simple procedures without being detained (see Part 1, Section 5, Subsection 5 below). 4,423 foreign nationals were issued with a departure order based on this system in 2017.

Meanwhile, the “Guidelines on Special Permission to Stay in Japan”, which was approved and announced in 2006 was revised in July 2009 in order to increase the transparency of the operations. The revised guideline shows that if an illegal foreign resident voluntarily appears at the immigration office, this is considered a positive factor in the judgment on adjustment of their legal status.

The Immigration Bureau is also taking measures to further publicize the departure order system and the revised guideline on special permission to stay in Japan by conducting active public relations activities, improving the environment for voluntary appearances and aiming to encourage illegal foreign residents to voluntarily appear at an immigration office^(**).

(*) In order to ensure further improvement of the transparency and equity of the special permission to stay, the Immigration Bureau formulated and published the “Guidelines on Special Permission to Stay in Japan”. The guideline articulates what elements are considered positive elements and what are considered negative elements in determining whether special permission to stay should be granted or not and presents what points are considered in determining whether special permission to stay should be granted or not (<http://www.moj.go.jp/content/000048156.pdf>).

(**) Examples of public relations activities:

- (i) During the “Campaign for Measures against Illegal Foreign Workers” held in June, every year public relations for the prevention of illegal employment are conducted.
- (ii) A page for “Procedures for Voluntary Appearance at the Immigration Office” was created on the websites of the Ministry of Justice and the Immigration Bureau in order to give clear explanations of the benefits of a voluntary appearance at an immigration office and the procedures after the appearance both to those wishing to return to their home country and to those wishing to continue staying in Japan (<http://www.moj.go.jp/content/000052868.pdf>).

Section 2**Implementation of Measures Against Imposter Foreign Residents****① Countermeasures Against Imposter Foreign Residents, etc.**

“Imposter residents” are foreign nationals residing in Japan having illegally received entry or landing permission as though they came under one of the statuses of residence having disguised their identity or activities such as by using forged or altered documents or false documents under the cover of a fake marriage, fake studies or fake employment, etc., or they may not necessarily have concealed the purpose of their activities from the onset but are currently engaged in illegal work which is far removed from their actual status of residence, and therefore, taking measures against imposter residents is also an important task in terms of immigration control administration along with measures against illegal residents. “Imposter residents” appear on the surface to be legal residents, which makes it difficult to accurately ascertain their situation, but their increase in number is a cause for concern since they substantively orchestrate illegal entry and residence in Japan.

Since the existence of imposter residents abusing the system of status of residence is related to the foundation of immigration control in Japan, it cannot be overlooked, and therefore the Immigration Bureau has been striving to respond strictly to clarify the realities of these kinds of cases through detailed investigations and has been enforcing deportation procedures against persons coming under the grounds for deportation and enforcing the procedures for revocation of the status of residence of persons coming under the grounds for revocation of the status of residence.

In addition, in recent years, there has been a significant number of cases where foreign nationals use forged or altered residence cards or abuse the refugee recognition system. Since these methods are becoming more malicious and sophisticated, the Immigration Bureau closely collaborate with the police and other related organizations, and in malicious cases, the Immigration Bureau proactively seeks criminal punishment and deal strictly with such persons, and also strives to work on measures to uncover the situation of these cases.

② Crackdowns on Imposter Foreign Residents, etc.

(1) Reinforcement of the Collection and Analysis of Information

In order to promote measures against imposter foreign residents, it is very important to carry out further effective crackdowns by uncovering such residents based on the collection and analysis of information.

For this reason, the Immigration Bureau will continue to effectively uncover and crack down on imposter residents by accurately tracking the information reported by foreign nationals and their organizations of affiliation, as well as utilizing the abundant information sent in by the general public, the information shared by the police or other related organizations and the employment status reports of foreign nationals provided by the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare, and strengthening the analysis of information at the Center of Collection and Analysis of Intelligence newly established in October 2015 as a center dedicated exclusively to information gathering and analysis, all of which enables the immigration bureau to implement strict crackdowns on imposter foreign residents.

(2) Handling Through Reinforced Exposure and Proactive Application of Law

In order to work on proactive exposure of imposter residents, when as a result of an investigation, a foreign national who resides in Japan with a status of residence which has restrictions on the contents of the activities is discovered engaging solely in a work activity which is not permitted with his/her status of residence previously granted, deportation procedures will be executed against such a foreign national as a violator engaging in an unauthorized activity.

In addition, even if a foreign national does not fall under the grounds for deportation, the Immigration Bureau has been making efforts to reinforce crackdowns through such means as having immigration control officers and immigration inspectors coordinate to uncover the actual situation of the foreign national, and if a foreign national is found to fall under the grounds for revocation of the status of residence, the procedure for revocation of the status of residence will be instituted.

Article: Cases of revocation of the status of residence of imposter residents

In accordance with the amended Immigration Control Act enforced on January 1, 2017, since it is now possible for immigration control officers to conduct investigations pertaining to revocation of the status of residence which was previously only authority accorded to the immigration officers, further reinforced measures against imposter residents are required.

Maximizing the investigative authority of the immigration control officers, in cooperation with the immigration inspectors, immigration control officers have been conducting the procedures for revocation of statuses of residence, and have uncovered the following cases of imposter resident groups.

Case studies

When an immigration control officer analyzed various information held by the Immigration Bureau, he realized that a number of foreign nationals of Indian nationality and Nepalese nationality had sent in suspicious notifications in that one room in a communal building was given as their residence, and as the result of a further investigation into the situation of residency of each foreign national, it became clear that they were working as cooks in Indian restaurants (three restaurants) operated by an Indian national X, and that one person had the status of residence of “Skilled Labor” and the others were family members.

As well as the suspicions about the residence, the number of cooks working at the three restaurants exceeded 30, and since it was strongly suspected that this was a case of group imposter residency submitting false notifications on the residence and organization of affiliation, the immigration control officer conducted the abovementioned investigation together with an immigration inspector on the suspicion that this case came under the grounds for revocation owing to the operations of the restaurants and the status of residence of the persons working there, and followed the following procedures.

- Deportation procedures for persons who were found to have committed a violation of engaging in activities other than the activities authorized through the status of residence.

- Procedures for revocation of the status of residence for persons who had not engaged in the activities of the status of residence of “Skilled Labor”, and persons who had received extension of the period of stay, etc. through submitting an application or other documents with a false statement.

In addition, deportation procedures were also taken against the Indian national X who was operating the three restaurants since it was uncovered that he had prepared documents which contained false statements for the purpose of having numerous foreign nationals illegally receive landing permission or other forms of permission.

Such a case can be said to be a case which was uncovered due to the fact that the immigration control officer was able to conduct an investigation pertaining to revocation of the status of residence.

③ Strict Handling of Brokers Involved in Aiding Illegal Residence and Imposter Residence

Article 24 of the Immigration Control Act provides that anyone coming under any of the following grounds for deportation will be deported: a person who has prepared or otherwise provided forged or false documents for the purpose of having another foreign national illegally acquire permission; a person who has had another foreign national engage in illegal work; a person who possesses forged residence cards for the purpose of using them; and a person who has forged or otherwise provided residence cards. In close cooperation with the police and other agencies, the Immigration Bureau proactively exposes brokers and other offenders involved in aiding foreign nationals overstaying their authorized period of stay and imposter foreign residents pursuant to the provisions of this Article, and moreover, takes stringent actions against those unlawful employers who are involved in the crime of aiding with illegal employment.

Section 3 Efforts for Further Appropriate Treatment

① Efforts for Further Appropriate Treatment of Detainees

Based on an agreement reached with the Japan Federation of Bar Associations (JFBA) in September 2010, the Immigration Bureau started discussions with the JFBA on better measures about treatment of foreign nationals held in the detention centers, and will continue to hold such discussions in the future. To date, the Immigration Bureau has already implemented measures together with the JFBA such as having attorneys provide legal consultations to detainees, while some members of JFBA have been providing regular consultations over the phone or in person to detainees in the detention centers.

In addition, when a foreign national has been issued a deportation order, but there is no prospect for deportation owing to such circumstances preventing the deportation that the detainee suffers from a disease, that it is difficult for such person to acquire a passport or that the case is pending in court. In these situations, the Immigration Bureau, as far as possible, proactively grants provisional release to ensure that such foreign nationals are not detained for a long period of time.

Furthermore, in order to realize more proper treatment to the detainees with due consideration being given to their human rights, while taking into consideration the circumstances of individual facilities, the hours of open treatment, outdoor activities and taking a bath have been extended to the greatest extent permissible in terms of security and, periodical medical checks by visiting psychiatrists commenced in June 2011 at the Higashi-Nihon Immigration Center.

② Activities and Duties of the Immigration Detention Facilities Visiting Committee

The Immigration Detention Facilities Visiting Committee was established for the purpose of securing transparency in security treatment and of improving the management of the immigration detention facilities. Currently there are two committees; one is in the Tokyo Regional Immigration Bureau, and the other is in the Osaka Regional Immigration Bureau. Each committee takes charge of immigration centers and departure waiting facilities in 24 locations (as at the end of March 2018) spread across Japan according to its districts. Each committee inspects the facilities, meets with and interviews detainees, checks the opinions and proposals posted by detainees in the proposal boxes, and holds meetings. Based on the result of these activities, the committee expresses an opinion to the Director of the Immigration Detention Center or the Director of the Regional Immigration Bureau (hereinafter referred to

collectively as “Directors”).

Over the course of a year from April 2017 to March 2018, a total of 17 inspections and 207 interviews took place in the facilities throughout Japan, and 50 opinions were given to the directors of the facilities. On receiving the opinions from the committee, the directors promptly review them and endeavor to take measures where possible.

Committee members, who are selected from people who have a reputable character, possess deep insight and are committed to improving the operations of the immigration detention centers, are appointed as part-time officers by the Minister of Justice. A maximum of no more than ten members may be appointed for each committee from experts from diverse fields, such as academic experts, legal experts, medical experts, NGO workers, the staff of international organizations and representatives of the local community.

In addition, a summary of the opinions given by the committees and the measures taken by the Directors based on those opinions are published each year pursuant to the provisions of the Immigration Control Act.

Section 4 Promotion of the Deportation of Deportees

① Implementation of Safe and Reliable Deportation of Deportation Evaders

Recently, there has been the problem of an increasing number of foreign nationals who have been issued with a deportation order but who attempt to evade deportation (deportation evaders) because of aspiration to work in Japan or other reasons.

The Immigration Bureau tries to convince these deportation evaders to return to their country of their own volition, but if they still attempt to evade deportation, they will ultimately be deported on a regular flight accompanied by escort officers based on the provisions of law, or mass deportation may be implemented using chartered flights for the purpose of safer and more secure deportation.

In addition, some foreign nationals who attempt to evade deportation are often anxious about their lives after return, and with regard to foreign nationals who are deemed to require humanitarian considerations, programs are implemented for voluntary return and reintegration support with the cooperation of the Japan office of the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

② Implementation of Mass Deportation Using Chartered Flights

Although we endeavor to repeatedly convince deportation evaders to return to their country of their own volition, if they still attempt to evade deportation, they will ultimately be deported on a regular flight accompanied by escort officers based on the provisions of law.

However, deportation using a regular flight can cause a disturbance, for example, deportees might start shouting in the cabin, and there are cases where the deportation cannot be implemented owing to the decision of the captain to deny boarding, or alternatively, even if detainees are able to board the aircraft, there might be the situation that tremendous burden is imposed on the private airlines by the detainee bothering other ordinary passengers.

For this reason, since 2013, we have been implementing the mass deportation using chartered flights, which allows for safe and reliable deportation without boarding being refused by the captain of the aircraft, and by the end of FY 2017, a total of 295 foreign nationals were deported over a total of seven flights (five destinations).

③ Promotion of the Use of IOM Repatriation Programs

On the other hand, there are some foreign nationals whose deportation has been decided who attempt to evade deportation despite wanting to return to their home country because of fears about life after return.

Of these persons, with regard to foreign nationals who are deemed to require humanitarian considerations, programs for voluntary return and reintegration support have been implemented since FY 2013 with the cooperation of the IOM Japan office. This program aims to dispel the anxiety deportees feel about returning home and to encourage the voluntary return of the deportees through the provision of reintegration support after return such as job placement and medical support.

So far, a number of families and individuals have returned home such as Asia, Africa and South America through this program and are receiving living, employment and enrollment support after returning home from the respective local IOM office.

The Immigration Bureau intends to continue with implementation of these programs with the cooperation of the IOM and to facilitate the voluntary return of deportees and reintegration in their home country.

Article: At the Front Line of Immigration Control Administration (Voice of an immigration control officer in charge of deportation) (Deportation Department, Osaka Regional Immigration Bureau: Yukihiro Okada)

Japan is highly regarded internationally as a tourist destination, and the number of foreign visitors coming to Japan has been increasing year by year. In order to prevent the illegal entry and illegal residence of these heinous foreign nationals and to maintain public order, we believe that we, the public officers, who are Japan's civil servants must make further efforts.

As an immigration control officer, I am engaged in the work of deporting foreign nationals who have been issued with written deportation orders.

Specifically the work entails confirming deportation by presenting deportation orders to the foreign nationals, explaining that they must go back to the destination of deportation such as their home country, preparing passports and plane tickets, etc., escorting them to the airport, and confirming the departure of the aircraft. More specifically, in the case of persons who do not have a valid passport, we ensure that the foreign national is issued with a temporary passport in coordination with their embassy in Japan, and in cases where there are insufficient funds to purchase airline tickets or a request has been made for collection in cases where there is uncollected baggage, we contact the relevant people, where necessary, and strive for deportation at the earliest possible time.

On the other hand, there are many foreign nationals who refuse to be deported asserting unwarranted reasons. With regard to such persons, we persistently endeavor to persuade them to accept the deportation through the course of interviews, but if they still refuse to be deported, our immigration officers escort the foreign nationals back to the destination of deportation using regular aircraft, and hand them over to an officer in that country. In this case, there is the possibility that the foreign national will attempt to resist. If the foreign national does attempt to resist, we exercise control, through exercising the minimum required strength giving priority to protecting the person's body, so as to prevent interference with the operations of the aircraft, and we also engage in daily training of martial arts, and in addition, strive to improve our knowledge of laws and treaties in order to ensure we follow the proper procedures, and aim to achieve safe and reliable deportation so as to fulfill our duties as security escort officers.

The work of deportation is work at the final stage of the deportation procedures and it can be said to be the most important task of the deportation procedures since even if a deportation order is issued, the procedure will not be complete unless deportation is realized. Therefore, I am keenly aware of my responsibilities, and I try to perform the work accurately and appropriately with a sense of responsibility and concentration.



Chapter 5 Promotion of Appropriate and Prompt Refugee Protection

Section 1 Revision of the Operation of the Refugee Recognition System, etc.

① Revision of the Operation of the Refugee Recognition System

(1) Outline

With regard to the refugee recognition system, the time required for the examination of the cases is becoming more prolonged, and problems have been occurring which hinder the provision of prompt protection to genuine refugees owing to the proliferation of applications for recognition of refugee status in recent years and applications which attempt to abuse/misuse the system for the purpose of employment or residence in Japan. Moreover, problems have also arisen concerning the difficulty of clarifying the decisions on whether or not an applicant is a refugee.

Therefore, based on the purport of the recommendations in the reports submitted in December 2014 by the “Sixth Immigration Policy Discussion Panel”, which is the private advisory council of the Minister of Justice, and the “Expert Meeting on the Refugee Recognition System”, a study was conducted on reviewing the operation of the refugee recognition system, which was published in the form of the “Summary of the Revision of the Operation of the Refugee Recognition System” on September 15, 2015.

(2) Proper Operation of the System

The contents of the review were (i) clarifying the persons eligible for protection, the decisions on recognition and the procedures, (ii) strengthening the system and infrastructure pertaining to refugee recognition administration, (iii) appropriate handling of applications attempting to abuse or misuse the refugee recognition system and the measures implemented so far are as given below.

(i) Clarifying the persons eligible for protection, the decisions on recognition and the procedures

In the press release in March 2016 on the number of foreign nationals recognized as refugees in 2015, the cases of those recognized as refugees, the cases of those not recognized as refugees and cases where permission to stay was granted due to humanitarian considerations were announced with the points of these respective judgments. The same announcement was released in March 2018.

In addition, since March 2017, a trial has been taken to allow having interviews with a doctor, a counselor, or a lawyer, etc. for minors unaccompanied by their parents, individuals with severe physical disabilities, individuals with mental disabilities or individuals with serious illnesses.

(ii) Strengthening the system and infrastructure pertaining to refugee recognition administration

As well as implementing refugee recognition administrative staff training for management-level officers with the cooperation of the UNHCR, the Immigration Bureau has been working on the development and capacity-building of refugee inquirers through enhancing the content of the regular training relating to information on the countries of origin of the applicants for refugee recognition, and practical training using case studies.

(iii) Appropriate handling of applications attempting to abuse or misuse the refugee recognition system

In order to quickly and reliably provide protection to those in genuine need, applications attempting to abuse or misuse the refugee recognition system such as applications claiming circumstances which clearly do not come under the grounds of persecution under the Refugee

Convention are sorted beforehand at the stage prior to a fully-fledged investigation, and such cases are quickly processed while ensuring that the applicant has an opportunity to make a sufficient claim such as through a hearing into the circumstances by a refugee inquirer, and moreover, we review the handling of permission for work and residence for refugee recognition applicants, and in principle, with regard to person re-submitting an application, make judgments on an individual basis^(*).

② Revision of the System by Amendment of the Ordinance for Enforcement of the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition

As well as delegating the authority on the recognition of refugee status which was previously only accorded to the Minister of Justice, to the director of the regional immigration bureau through enforcement of the ministerial ordinance amending the Ordinance for Enforcement of the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act on June 1, 2017, a new refugee recognition application form for re-applications was created, and the process for processing cases has been streamlined so as to be able to easily ascertain the contents of the assertions, to increase efficiency in the sorting of cases, and to easily make judgements on measures prohibiting employment (referred to below as “restrictions on employment”) and measures prohibiting residency (referred to below as “restrictions on-stay”).

③ Further Revision of Operations to Optimize the Refugee Recognition System

(1) Background

Based on the “Outline of the Revisions for the Operations of the Refugee Recognition System” announced in September 2015, from the same month, applications for recognition of refugee status that attempt to abuse or misuse the system will be promptly dealt with and restrictions on work or restrictions on stay will be imposed depending on the contents of the application with regard to applicants who repeatedly submit applications for recognition of refugee status for the purpose of working in Japan or other unauthorized activities. These measures target re-applicants who repeatedly submit for recognition of refugee status applications, and although this had a certain degree of effect in curbing reapplications, since this was not intended for first-time applicants who make up the majority of the increasing number of applications for recognition of refugee status, there has been a rapid increase in the number of applications by first-time applicants that attempt to abuse or misuse the system, and this has led to a situation that hinders the provision of prompt protection for genuine refugees.

Therefore, since January 15, 2018, as described in (2) below, we have been conducting further revision of the operations relating to the status of residence of “Designated Activities” of legal residents who have submitted an application in order to further promptly offer protection to those foreign nationals who are in need of genuine protection such as applicants who are thought highly likely to be a refugee under the Refugee Convention, and to ensure that prompt protection for genuine refugees is not being hindered by curbing the applications where the applicant is not deemed to be a refugee, which attempt to abuse or misuse the system, and through ensuring a proper refugee recognition system.

(*) If a person who has applied for recognition of refugee status submits an application for permission to change the status of residence or permission to extend the period of stay pertaining to the status of residence of “Designated Activity” by reason of the application for refugee status being processed, but he/she is deemed to be able to maintain his/her livelihood without working or makes the same argument without a justifiable reason as before, the person will not be permitted to work (restrictions on employment).

In addition, those who re-apply claiming circumstances which apparently do not come under the grounds of persecution under the Refugee Convention or who apply repeating the same claim as before three times or more without a justifiable reason will not be permitted to stay (restrictions on stay).

The number of restrictions on employment from September 2015 to December 2017 was 596, and the number of restrictions on stay was 693.

(2) Outline

The contents of the further revision of the operations are as follows.

(i) Establishment of a pre-sorting period

Measures have been taken to set a time limit for pre-sorting the contents of the cases following receipt of a first-time application (time limit not exceeding two months), and based on the results of pre-sorting the contents, to promptly take measures on the status of residence (permission to stay, restrictions on stay, work permission, restrictions on employment).

(ii) Further consideration for applicants whose applicability as a refugee is deemed to be high

Applicants whose applicability as a refugee under the Refugee Convention is deemed to be high or applicants who are considered highly likely to need humanitarian consideration due to the situation in their home country, were previously granted the status of residence of “Designated Activities” (six months) permitting work after the passing of six months from the time of submission of the application for recognition of refugee status, but through a further revision of the system, these applicants will be quickly granted the status of residence of “Designated Activities” (six months) permitting work after the sorting of the application, thereby promoting quicker protection.

(iii) Further strict responses to abuse or misuse of applications

A. First-time applications

(A) Restrictions on stay will be imposed on applicants claiming circumstances that clearly do not correspond to the requests of the Refugee Convention.

(B) Even in cases where restrictions on stay are not imposed, applicants who applied for recognition of refugee status after abandoning to engage in the activities falling under the original status of residence, such as technical intern trainees who have absconded or international students who have left their educational institution, or applicants who filed an application for recognition of refugee status during the departure preparing period will have restrictions imposed on their work. In addition, the period of stay in this case will be reduced from the previous six months to three months.

B. Re-submission of applications

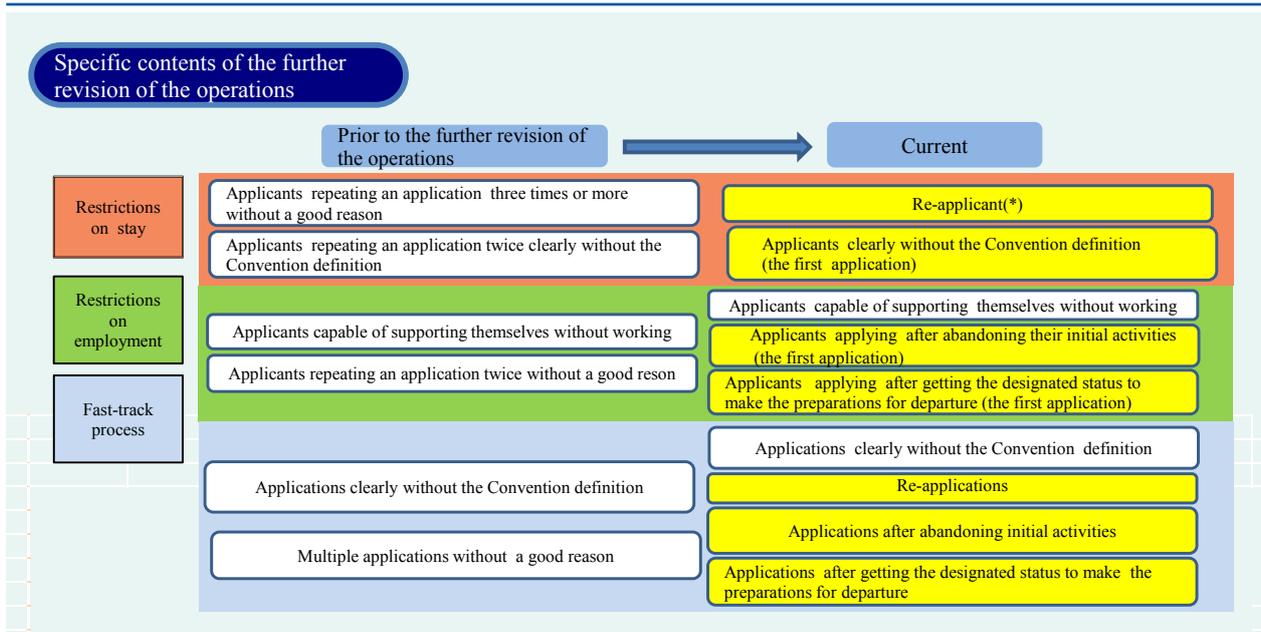
In principle, restrictions will be placed on stay in Japan.

However, even with repeat applicants, applicants whose applicability as a refugee under the Refugee Convention is deemed to be high, or applicants who are considered highly likely to need humanitarian consideration due to the the situation in their home country will be given the protection in the abovementioned (ii).

C. Fast-track process

Cases of applicants for recognition of refugee status who come under the abovementioned A and B will be promptly examined, and processed as quickly as possible ([Reference 72](#)).

Reference 72 Summary of further revision of the operations of the refugee recognition system



(*) Excludes applicants whose applicability as a refugee under the Refugee Convention is deemed to be high, or applicants who are considered likely to require humanitarian consideration due to the situation in their home country.

Section 2 Acceptance of Refugees Through Resettlement

Resettlement is intended to transfer and resettle refugees, who have been evacuated from their countries of origins and who are temporarily taking shelter in a refugee camp in a neighboring country or another place, to another country which agrees to accept such refugees from the countries where they were originally offered protection. Resettlement is deemed to be one of the permanent solutions of refugee problems, as well as “voluntary repatriation” and “resettlement in the first countries of asylum”.

The UNHCR encourages each country to accept refugees through the resettlement program from the standpoint of having the international community properly share its duties in relation to refugee problems.

In the past, Japan took measures to support the resettlement of Indochinese refugees and those recognized as refugees, but in order to deal with the various problems relating to refugees in the Asian region, on December 16, 2008, the Cabinet approval was given to the introduction of a system of resettlement (“Implementation of a Pilot Project for the Admission of Refugees through Resettlement”).

The Cabinet approval and the “Specific Measures for Implementation of a Pilot Project for the Admission of Refugees through Resettlement” (decision of the Liaison and Coordination Council for Refugee Issues on December 19, 2008) prescribed that the relevant ministries and agencies would accept approximately 30 Myanmar refugees every year from refugee camps in Thailand, as a pilot project starting from FY 2010 and would support their resettlement through inter-ministry and agency cooperation. It was also stated that the pilot project would, in the future, be reviewed from various angles, and that based on the review, further consideration would be given to a future system of acceptance (After that, targeted camps were expanded.). The first group of five families comprising 27 family members came to Japan in FY 2010, four families comprising 18 family members came in FY 2011, four families comprising 18 family members came in FY 2013, and five families comprising 23 family members came in FY 2014 (three families comprising 16 family members were scheduled to come to Japan in FY 2012, but all of the families withdrew their request before coming to Japan.).

Based on the results of the Advisory Council on Resettlement held under the auspices of the Liaison and Coordination Council for Refugee Issues from March 2012 to December 2013, the future policy was approved by the Cabinet on January 24, 2014 (“Implementation of the Admission of Refugee through Resettlement”), and in accordance with the contents of this Cabinet approval and “Specific Measures for Implementation of the Admission of Refugee through Resettlement” (decision of the Liaison and Coordination Council for Refugees Issues on January 24, 2014), a program was launched from 2015 to accept Myanmarese refugees temporarily staying in Malaysia. Then, six families comprising 19 family members came to Japan in FY 2015, seven families comprising 18 family members came to Japan in FY 2016, and eight families comprising 29 family members came to Japan in FY 2017.

The Immigration Bureau, which is primarily in charge of the selection process for the acceptance of refugees and conducts interviews by sending officers out to the field, with the cooperation of the related organizations, intends to continue in the future with efforts for the acceptance of refugees through resettlement program.

Section 3 Promotion of Collaboration with NGOs

With regard to refugee-related administration, it is necessary to identify specific points which need to be improved through discussions with individuals involved in the promotion of refugee protection incorporating the standpoint of the private sector and legal experts and to work to achieve better measures in collaboration with and cooperation from citizens’ groups.

Therefore, on February 10, 2012, the Immigration Bureau concluded a three-party agreement and exchanged a memorandum on cooperation with the Forum for Refugees Japan, which is a network of NGOs and groups supporting refugees and the JFBA, agreeing to hold discussions to identify the refugee-related administrative matters that the Immigration Bureau is responsible for and that need improving, including procedures for recognizing refugee status, and to exchange information on the provision of housing, with the assistance of refugee support groups, for refugees awaiting the results of their application for recognition of refugee status.

In accordance with the three-party discussions based on this memorandum, during the period of April 2012 and March 2014, the Immigration Bureau implemented a “pilot project”, which the Immigration Bureau requested the Forum for Refugees Japan to secure a residence for foreign nationals claiming asylum at Narita Airport for whom it is difficult to secure a residence, and Landing Permission for Temporary Refuge or Permission for Provisional Stay was granted to foreign nationals who were accepted by the Forum.

Subsequently, following discussions by the three parties, the same measures under this project are currently being taken at Narita Airport, Haneda Airport, Chubu Airport and Kansai Airport. Since March 2017, foreign nationals from these airport branches have been sent to Higashi-Nihon Immigration Center, Tokyo Immigration Bureau, Nagoya Immigration Bureau, or Osaka Immigration Bureau, and when one of the immigration offices to which the person was sent makes a decision on permission for provisional stay or permission for provisional release, the same measures apply.

Chapter 6 Responses to International Society and International Situations

Section 1 Treaties and International Conventions

① Major Actions for Negotiations for the Conclusion of EPAs with Other Countries

The Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) are agreements which aim to promote liberalization and facilitation of trade between signatory nations, as well as the coordination of policies, relaxation of regulations, and cooperation in various economic areas, including tariffs, trade in services, investment, intellectual property and personal exchanges. The Immigration Bureau has been actively involved in negotiations for the conclusion of EPAs with various countries: Singapore (effective date: November 2002), Mexico (April 2005), Malaysia (July 2006), Chile (September 2007), Thailand (November 2007), Indonesia (July 2008), Brunei (July 2008), the Philippines (December 2008), Switzerland (September 2009), Viet Nam (October 2009), India (August 2011), Peru (March 2012), Australia (January 2015) and Mongolia (June 2016); and has been responsible for the part in the negotiations in relation to the “movement of natural persons”.

As of April 1, 2018, the Immigration Bureau has primarily been involved in negotiations for the conclusion of Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) and EPAs with Turkey and other countries.

② Acceptance of Nurse and Certified Care Worker Candidates Based on EPAs

From the point of view of strengthening bilateral cooperation in economic activities, Japan commenced the acceptance of nurse and certified care worker candidates, who aim to acquire Japanese national nursing qualifications or national certified care worker qualifications, from Indonesia in FY 2008, the Philippines in FY 2009 and Viet Nam in FY 2014. The number of foreign nationals accepted as nurse and certified care worker candidates based on EPAs up until FY 2017 was 2,116 from Indonesia, 1,943 from the Philippines, and 673 from Viet Nam.

③ Reports and Examinations in Accordance with Human Rights Treaties

Japan is a signatory 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 (CEDAW), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD) and the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT). With regard to government reports on the status of the implementation of those treaties, the Immigration Bureau is involved in the drafting of reports, review of the government reports and follow-up thereof from the perspective of immigration control administration.

Section 2 International Conferences/ International Exchange

① Responding to International Conferences

The Migration Experts Sub-Group (MESG) Meeting, one of the sub groups of the G7 Rome-Lyon Group, which is a working experts' group to discuss measures against international terrorism and transnational organized crime is discussing measures that the G7 members should take cooperatively in the area of illegal immigration and forgery or alteration of documents.

MESG meeting was held in Italy in April and October 2017 and in Canada in March 2018, and officials from the Immigration Bureau attended the meetings to exchange information and opinions with the counterparts of other countries.

In addition to the international meetings mentioned above, the Immigration Bureau sends delegates to the Government Delegation on Anti-Human Trafficking Measures to exchange information on recent efforts to counter trafficking in persons, as well as to the Consular Consultation etc. to express Japan's position actively and build cooperative relationships with other countries. The Immigration Bureau also sends officials to participate in multinational meetings, such as the International Air Transport Association (IATA)/ Control Authorities Working multinational Group (CAWG) for the purpose of information sharing and exchanging opinions.

② International Exchange

The Immigration Bureau has been striving to strengthen cooperative relations with other countries and regions such as by actively exchanging views with the immigration authorities of other countries at different levels and accepting visits from related organizations.

The High-Level Immigration Officers Meeting is held mutually with the Korean immigration authorities, and the Immigration Bureau attends the immigration control meetings with Taiwan organized by the Japan-Taiwan Exchange Association and the Taiwan-Japan Relations Association and shares information and exchanges opinions on mutual efforts. In addition, a memorandum of cooperation was signed with the Australian immigration authority in August 2016, pertaining to the establishment of a framework to strengthen cooperative relations between the authorities of both countries, so that in the future, two authorities will be sharing information relating to border control to combat terrorist threats and transnational crimes and facilitation of the immigration procedures, and strengthening cooperation to develop the professional capacity of the authorities of both countries.

In addition, in FY 2017, the relevant organizations of the United States, China and Myanmar visited the Immigration Bureau in order to exchange opinions, and the relevant organizations of R.O.Korea, Indonesia and Palau visited the regional immigration bureaus and the airport district offices.

Chapter 7 Improvement of Public Relations Activities and Public Services

Section 1 Promotion of Public Relations Activities

Recognizing that public relations and enlightenment activities both in Japan and abroad play a major role in the smooth implementation of immigration control administration, the Immigration Bureau has been further promoting more active public relations activities than ever before. The main promotion of public relations activities are provision of information including the circumstances concerning immigration control administration, new systems and changes of procedures.

In terms of immigration control administration, statistics concerning immigration control administration such as the number of those entering or departing from Japan, the number of foreign residents, the number of foreign nationals overstaying and the number of applications for refugee recognition their authorized period of stay are released on the website of the Ministry of Justice. In addition, we also disclose information on cases of special permission to stay in Japan, examination of statuses of residence, the average processing time for refugee recognition examinations, the immigration examination waiting times at Japanese airports and endeavor to widely spread understanding of the current situation of immigration control administration.

In addition, we proactively publicize the immigration control systems and procedural guidelines, and give out information such as guidance on using the facial recognition gates, and guidance on the systems corresponding to changes in the amended Immigration Control Act and amendments of the Technical Intern Training Act by posting information on the websites of the Ministry of Justice and the Immigration Bureau, and also distribute posters and leaflets.

In addition, for the purpose of preventing illegal work through the appropriate employment of foreign nationals, the Immigration Bureau holds an “Illegal Work Prevention Campaign” as part of the larger campaign for “Foreign Labor Problems Awareness Month” conducted by the government every June, so that the general public, companies hiring foreign nationals and relevant organizations and governments in other countries will be able to better understand the issues and offer cooperation to the Immigration Bureau. In addition, in 2017, we produced a public relations video on the automated gates and on the points-based system for highly-skilled professionals through a tie-up plan with Yoshimoto Creative Agency Co., Ltd., and in addition, Minister Kamikawa held a Hometown Talk Circle on the topic of “Aiming for a Tourism Developed Country – Expectations of the Immigration Examinations” at a Kansai Airport affiliated facility, and engaged proactively in public relations by exchanging opinions with the staff working at the airport, persons studying tourism at universities and technical schools, persons from tourism volunteer groups and local government officers.



Promotion of the automated gates



Illegal Work Prevention Campaign



Automated gates



Points-based system for highly-skilled foreign nationals

Publicity video made through a tie-up plan with
Yoshimoto Creative Agency Co., Ltd.



Sit in a circle of hometown talk

Section 2 Improvement of Public Services

① Information Services for Foreign Nationals

There is a large number of foreign nationals who are unfamiliar with the procedures relating to entry and residence as well as Japanese laws and social systems due to differences between Japan and their countries in lifestyle, manners, customs and language, etc. For the purpose of providing consultation and information services to such foreign nationals, the immigration information centers offer advice on the various procedures related to entry, the statuses of residence and the application forms.

These information centers were established in the Sendai Regional Immigration Bureau, Tokyo Regional Immigration Bureau and its Yokohama District Immigration Office, the Nagoya Regional Immigration Bureau, Osaka Regional Immigration Bureau and its Kobe District Immigration Office, the Hiroshima Regional Immigration Bureau and Fukuoka Regional Immigration Bureau, and they are consulting in various languages such as English, Korean, Chinese and Spanish. Counseling staff members have been assigned to the Sapporo Regional Immigration Bureau, Takamatsu Regional Immigration Bureau and Naha District Immigration Office of Fukuoka Regional Immigration Bureau to provide the same services as the above information centers.

In addition to the above, in cooperation with local authorities where many foreign long-term residents are concentrated, one-stop consultation centers, which provide consultations and information on administrative procedures for entry and residence as well as on daily life, were established and have been operating in Hamamatsu City, Shizuoka Prefecture since April 2009, in Saitama City, Saitama Prefecture since August 2009 and in Shinjuku Ward, Tokyo since November 2009.



Immigration Information Center



One-stop consulting center

② Immigration Bureau Website

The Immigration Bureau set up a website (<http://www.immi-moj.go.jp/>) in March 2002 to provide Q&A such as on immigration and residence procedures, the location of the regional immigration offices, contact addresses and opening hours of the information desks, and in January 2016, the website was redesigned newly implementing in-site search functions and font size change functions and improving usability and accessibility by expanding the site for smartphones, in order to strengthen the information transmission capabilities both inside and outside the country.

In addition, in order to improve the provision of information to foreign nationals, we have been providing translations in English, Chinese, Korean, Portuguese and Spanish since FY 2005 and have also been striving to enhance convenience for foreign nationals by continuously improving the contents.



Immigration Bureau website

③ Immigration Bureau Official Twitter

In order for the Immigration Bureau to be able to further enhance its public relations activities, Twitter accounts have been acquired for the Immigration Bureau of the Ministry of Justice and each of the regional immigration offices, which have been in operation since March 2016.

The official Twitter account of the Immigration Bureau of the Ministry of Justice is usually used to send out information on updates to the website and information about new systems, and the official Twitter account of the regional immigration offices is used to send out real-time information on waiting times so that visitors coming to the residence examination desks will have an idea of the waiting time, and also to give information out on various events and campaigns to be held at the airports and other places.

List of Immigration Bureau official Twitter accounts

Operating entity	Account
Immigration Bureau, Ministry of Justice	MOJ_IMMI
Sapporo Regional Immigration Bureau	IMMI_SAPORO
Sendai Regional Immigration Bureau	IMMI_SENDAI
Tokyo Regional Immigration Bureau	IMMI_TOKYO
Narita Airport District Immigration Office, Tokyo Regional Immigration Bureau	IMMI_NARITA
Haneda Airport District Immigration Office, Tokyo Regional Immigration Bureau	IMMI_HANEDA
Yokohama District Immigration Office, Tokyo Regional Immigration Bureau	IMMI_YOKOHAMA
Nagoya Regional Immigration Bureau	IMMI_NAGOYA
Chubu Airport District Immigration Office, Nagoya Regional Immigration Bureau	IMMI_CHUBU
Osaka Regional Immigration Bureau	IMMI_OSAKA
Kansai Airport District Immigration Office, Osaka Regional Immigration Bureau	IMMI_KANSAI
Kobe District Immigration Office, Osaka Regional Immigration Bureau	IMMI_KOBE
Hiroshima Regional Immigration Bureau	IMMI_HIROSHIMA
Takamatsu Regional Immigration Bureau	IMMI_TAKAMATSU
Fukuoka Regional Immigration Bureau	IMMI_FUKUOKA
Naha District Immigration Office, Fukuoka Regional Immigration Bureau	IMMI_NAHA
Higashi-Nihon Immigration Center	IMMI_HIGASHI
Omura Immigration Center	IMMI_OMURA



Immigration Bureau Official Twitter

Article: Public Relations Activities at Regional Immigration Bureau (Voice of Public Relations Activity Officer) (General Affairs Division, Narita Airport District Immigration Office, Tokyo Regional Immigration Bureau: Takashi Ito)



I am engaged in PR activities at the Narita Airport District Immigration Office as an officer responsible for external affairs of the General Affairs Division. Specifically, we respond to visitors to our office, send out information on our office, and conduct activities to improve customer satisfaction (CS).

The Immigration Bureau conducts a campaign against illegal foreign workers every June, at which time our office distributes leaflets in the departure lobbies in the airport and also mobilize the mascot character “Toribu”, (Tokyo Regional Immigration BUreau) the

mascot character of Tokyo immigration, and devise all manner of ways to create a lively campaign.

Aside from immigration-related PR activities, we also engage in PR activities together with Narita Airport and other organizations. For example, in recent years, we have been holding a “One-Day Summer School” every summer for elementary school students organized by Narita International Airport Co., Ltd., for which our office also provides cooperation. The part our office plays is to organize a mock experience of an immigration examination in English so as to have the students develop an interest in the work of immigration control.

In addition, the office uses “Twitter” to disseminate information. We inform the general public of events like the one mentioned above and notices on precautions in the examination sites, and strive to gain public understanding and wide support for immigration control administration.

CS (customer satisfaction) may be an unfamiliar term, but it is no exaggeration to say that the impression of foreign nationals visiting Japan changes depending on how immigration officers respond. Although it is a prerequisite to conduct strict examinations for foreign nationals who should not be allowed to enter Japan, we believe that if we give courteous treatment we can increase CS and help improve Japan’s image.

At our office, CS staff are assigned to each examination section, and examples are given every month of the best practices as well as complaints. We also encourage officers to participate in the customer service seminars hosted by Narita International Airport Co., Ltd.’s, and provide opportunities for them to learn about customer service.

Chapter 8**Policy for the Achievement of a Symbiotic Society Co-existing with Foreign Nationals****Section 1****Participation in the Meeting on Cities with Large Populations of Foreign Nationals**

The Meeting on Cities with Large Populations of Foreign Nationals consists of the local governments of cities where a large population of foreign residents, including foreign nationals of Japanese descent, mainly from South America, known as “newcomers”, is concentrated and international exchange associations. The purpose of the council meetings is to exchange information relating to policies related foreign residents and the activities of member cities, and to proactively resolve the various associated problems arising in the area. The first meeting of the Council was held in May 2001, and officers from the Immigration Bureau proactively took part in the meeting.

Officers from the Immigration Bureau and the other relevant ministries and agencies participated in the “Meeting on Cities with Large Populations of Foreign Nationals 2017” held in November 2017, and exchanged opinions with the participants of the meeting on the topics of “Towards the independence of foreign residents and the realization of a symbiotic society” and “Towards human resource development of foreign nationals and revitalization of the regional economy”.

Section 2**Participation in Government-Wide Efforts**

The Council for Promotion of Measures for Long-Term Residents of Japanese Descent with the Minister of State as a chair person has been convened on a regular basis since March 2009 in order to promote measures to be taken by the government as a whole with regard to the policies relating to long-term residents of Japanese descent such as consideration of support for foreign nationals of Japanese descent who are faced with difficult circumstances such as a lack of employment, with the Immigration Bureau also taking part in the considerations. In March 2014, the “Promotion of Policies for Long-Term Residents of Japanese Descent” describing the policies of the government to be taken with regard to long-term residents of Japanese descent was compiled. Where necessary, the measures are to be revised three years after the start.

In addition, the Promotion Council for Long-Term Residents of Japanese Descent came to be held a number of times together with the Inter-ministerial Liaison Council for Foreign Worker Issues established in 1988 in order to study the various problems related to the acceptance of foreign nationals focusing on foreign workers, and therefore the Immigration Bureau has also been participating in the meetings of this liaison council.

