

105th International Labor Conference
Address by Mr. Hiroshi Tokumaru

June 8th, 2016

Thank you very much Mr. Chairman. It is my great honor being able to speak at this House as an Employer Representative of Japan.

First of all, taking this opportunity, I would also like to express my deep respect and appreciation to Mme. Misako Kaji, Ambassador of Permanent Mission of Japan for her excellent contribution as Chairperson of the ILO Governing Body.

Today I would like to take up 2 aspects of Decent Work in Japan. One is international aspects, the other is domestic situation. I begin by touching upon international aspects of decent work.

In February this year, TPP (Trans-Pacific Partnership) was signed among 12 countries of the Asia-Pacific region. It is clearly stipulated in the Labor Chapter of the TPP that the concerned Parties affirm their obligations as members of the ILO regarding rights within their territories. Employers of Japan welcome this movement towards ensuring labor rights and look forward to the early ratification and implementation of this TPP.

It goes without saying that labor standards should not be used for protectionist trade purposes, as stated in the TPP.

Connectivity of supply chains is being enhanced drastically through regional integration such as the TPP or many other multilateral Agreements. Global supply chains constructed by enterprises are contributing to job creation across the border while offering decent labor conditions based on international labor standards. Also, those enterprises are paying close attention to labor conditions of the suppliers of raw materials and intermediate goods so as to achieve decent work throughout those global supply chains.

In the meanwhile, setting standards at ILO intended for the buyers in supply chains would not be appropriate. The buyers' ability to influence the business conduct of suppliers depends on these market positions. It is almost impossible to address labor conditions of all tiers of subcontractors only by focusing on the

conduct of the buyers. Rather, "good governance" by each Government is the key to ensuring decent work from up-stream to down-stream of the supply chains. The key-player is "the Government" on this issue. It is of utmost importance that the Government of each ILO member introduces adequate labor standards and give necessary guidance to all tiers of subcontractors so that they could behave in a worker-friendly manner. Employers look forward to contributing in this field by sharing their initiative in compliance and corporate social responsibility (CSR). ILO could also play a vital role by offering technical and fundamental assistance to all concerned parties.

Now, let me turn to the domestic aspect of decent work in Japan.

Japan is now on the brink of shrinking labor force due to low birthrate and aging society. To secure the top-level human resources required to enhance competitiveness and achieve sustained growth, enterprises must appoint the best people available regardless of gender or nationality. In this sense, promoting women's active participation in the workforce and opening door to foreign workers are the core of our mid-to long-term growth strategy.

From 2014, employers of Japan are posting a voluntary action plan about the promotion of women to managerial and board position. Best practices of Japanese enterprises are being shared through this action plan.

As for the foreign workers, employers of Japan are urging the Government to facilitate the trans-border movement of many kinds of human resources, not only the high-skilled, but also those engaging in sectors such as nursing, care-giving, agriculture and construction. In these areas, wisdom of the ILO could be utilized in this area as well.

Thank you very much. That's all for today. But I would like to close my speech by emphasizing once again that employers of Japan are committed to tripartite collaboration, addressing both international and domestic aspects of decent work.

Thank you very much for everyone.

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