

Activities of the ILO Office in Japan

The ILO Office in Japan has prepared Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP) 2007-09 as framework for ILO activities in Japan, in consultation with government, social partners and ILO Association of Japan. The Office has been conducting activities in accordance with five priorities set in the programme.

In addition, starting from fiscal 2007, the Office has been promoting advocacy activities based on the Decent Work National Plan of Action entitled "Towards Realization of Decent Work in Japan," jointly prepared by Japanese government, employer and worker members of the ILO Governing Body, ILO Office in Japan and the ILO Association of Japan.

Five Priorities of Japan's Decent Work Country Programme 2007-09 and Example of Activities

Priority 1 - Promotion of Ratification of ILO Conventions

- The Office has been promoting international labour standards through various occasions. Presentations made in 2006 at annual National Congress on Occupational Safety & Health and ILO Forum on World Day for Safety and Health at Work held in Tokyo on 27 April 2007 are considered to have contributed to early ratification of Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 2006 (No. 187) on 24 July 2007.
- The Office co organizes annual International Labour Issues Symposia with the Hosei University since 2005. Subject of the symposium is selected from agenda items of the International Labour Conference held in the same year. The 21st symposium on "Skill Development for Decent Work Creation" was held in Tokyo in October 2008, inviting Manager of the Regional Skills and Employability Programme (SKILLS AP) as one of speakers.
- ILO publication, "Rules of the Game," was translated into Japanese in 2006 and copies have been distributed to visitors to the Office premises as well as participants to relevant symposia in order to raise awareness on international labour standards among Japanese public. The Office also produces and regularly updates introductory booklet on international labour standards.
- Texts of all ILO Conventions and Recommendations, which are translated into Japanese by the government, are made available in the Office's website.

Priority 2 - Assistance in Realizing Decent Work Corresponding to Changing Patterns of Work

- The Office organizes various occasions including seminars and lectures and translates ILO publications into Japanese to promote Decent Work Agenda in Japan in general. To coincide with the organization of the preparatory meeting for G8 Labour and Employment Ministers' Meeting, the Office organized a symposium, "Changing Pattern of Work and Future Labour Policies," jointly with the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Tokyo Center and the ILO Association of Japan on 27 Feb 2008. Speakers from ILO, OECD, G8 countries and Japanese tripartite constituents discussed changing patterns of world of work in the globalized society and the role of government and social partners with a view to find labour policies to achieve decent work for all in resilient and sustainable society. The Office distributed Japanese version of "Changing patterns in the world of work," Report of the Director-General submitted to the 2006 session of the International Labour Conference, among participants to the symposium.
- The Office organized a symposium, jointly with the United Nations University and the ILO Institute of Labour Studies (IILS), on "CSR in the Field of Labour and Human Rights" in Tokyo on 9 May 2007 with Mr. Nobuo Tateishi, Executive Adviser of OMRON; Prof. Yozo Yokota, member of ILO Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations; and high-level ILO and IILS officials as keynote speakers. On this occasion, ILO's relationship with Global Compact Local Network of Japan was strengthened through various meetings and interviews, and Japanese version of ILO's "Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy (4th edition)," prepared by the Office, was distributed among Japanese multinational enterprises.
- The Office organized a symposium together with the Waseda University, on "Future of Atypical Employment in Time of Global Competition," in Tokyo on 27 September 2007, with ILO officials with the

Economic and Labour Markets Analysis Department delivering keynote addresses. Since the Department was responsible for ILO publication "Key Indicators of the Labour Market (KILM)," its fifth edition having being launched earlier that month, speakers from the ILO introduced main findings and key messages of the publication. The Office also distributed Japanese version of "Changing patterns in the world of work" among the audience.

Priority 3 - Assistance in Promoting Social Dialogue

- The Office coordinated tripartite consultation meetings for the formulation of the Decent Work Activity Plans towards Realization of Decent Work in Japan for fiscal years 2007 and 2008, which were adopted by the Japanese tripartite members of the ILO Governing Body and ILO Association of Japan.
- Partnership with social partners and policy-makers are strengthened and coordination and joint activities with other United Nations (UN) agencies in Japan are promoted. The Office joins other UN agencies in co-organizing meetings including annual International Women's Day (8 March) and UN Day (24 October) events to publicize "One UN" in Japanese society. As for policy making level, the Japanese Parliamentary League on the ILO Activities, multi partisan forum of parliamentarians was formed in 1988 by the initiative of Ms. Tamiko Nakanishi, then member of the parliament and Deputy Director, ILO Tokyo Branch Office. Objectives of the League are to enhance Japanese governmental support to the ILO technical cooperation activities; to support the Governments' efforts to ratify ILO Conventions and; to promote strategic ways to support ILO activities. Recent activities of the League include field visits in ILO projects in Asia, facilitation of the process for ratification of ILO Conventions, in particular for the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182) which was ratified by Japan in 2001, and support to obtain funding to ILO projects from UN Human Security Fund. The Office facilitates the League to organize meetings with ILO officials and visit ILO projects.

Priority 4 - Resource mobilization

- Although the government of Japan is one of major donors to ILO projects, the Office works to raise interests and recognition in ILO technical cooperation activities among potential donors, which led to obtain new resources.
 - i) Health Cooperative Association of Japanese Consumers' Cooperative Union made a donation in 2006 to help ILO activities to rebuild earthquake affected areas in Yogyakarta and Central Java, Indonesia.
 - ii) One of largest supermarket chains, AEON Co., Ltd, made financial contribution to the ILO project entitled "Strengthening vocational training options to prevent child labour in rural schools in Changrai Province of Thailand" in 2007.
 - iii) Japan Trade Union Confederation (JTUC-RENGO) has been funding ILO SCREAM (Supporting Children's Rights through Education, the Arts and the Media) from 2004 to 2008 under the RENG- ILO/SCREAM Project. Currently, follow-up activities to mobilize and build capacity of teacher trade unions are conducted in Indonesia.
 - iv) In coordination with departments and offices concerned, the Office effectively approached UN Trust Fund for Human Security, financed by Japan's ODA, to mobilize substantive funding to ILO activities in the field of human trafficking and post conflict poverty reduction.
- To promote understanding on ILO technical cooperation activities in the field, the Office coordinated study tour visits of Japanese groups including trade unions, media, NGOs, students to ILO project sites in India, Thailand, the Philippines and Cambodia. They showed interests in such areas as child labour and employment promotion of women.

Priority 5 - Strengthening Knowledge-based Reporting on Japan's Labour & Social Trends, and Networking of Experts

- The Office has been strengthening such activities as to be considered useful to share Japan's knowledge and experience in Decent Work Agenda with other countries.
- The Office has been strengthening partnership with academic institutions and civil society organizations including through co organizing symposium and lecture meetings.
- The Office facilitated meeting opportunities for ILO officials on mission in Japan to exchange views with Japanese experts and academics in social and labour fields so as to promote sharing of information, knowledge and experience.

Others:

- Raising profile and visibility of ILO Decent Work Agenda and labour issues in partnership with media and other partners
- The Office, jointly with ILO Association of Japan and with participation of Japanese tripartite constituents, organized two Decent Work seminars in local cities (Hokkaido and Kobe) in the last quarter of 2007 to promote decent work concept among local administrators, workers and employers. At each locality, approximately 100 people attended the seminar to discuss how they can promote actions for decent work under local conditions.
- ILO Director-General's op-ed on the outcome of G8 Labour and Employment Ministers' Meeting (Niigata, Japan, May 2008) focussing on Green Job Initiative appeared in Yomiuri Newspaper on 12 June 2008.
- For child labour issues, ILO Director-General's op-ed for the launch of Global Report 2006, "The end of child labour: Within reach," appeared in Asahi Newspaper on 5 May (Child Day in Japan) 2006. In May and June 2007, Mainichi Newspaper carried more than dozen articles in series, in which ILO Conventions and activities were frequently referred to. The Office coordinated with ILO Offices in New Delhi and Kathmandu the reporter's mission to feature child labour issues in India and Nepal. On World Day against Child Labour (12 June) 2008, taking the opportunity of the Fourth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD IV) held in Yokohama, the Office co-organized seminars and photo exhibition with the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) Yokohama, focusing on child labour in Africa and importance of education. Opening Seminar of photo exhibition with attendance of Director of the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) was well covered by local newspaper and she was interviewed by several news reporters.