

# Chapter 10

## Contribution to International Society

### Section 1. Positive Participation in and Cooperation with International Organization Activities

#### 1. Activities through WHO

World Health Organization (WHO) is an international organization that implements measures against infectious diseases, drug and food safety measures, and health promotion measures with the aim of all people achieving their highest possible level of health. Japan has been positively participating in deliberations and making decisions as part of the WHO Executive Board and Assembly and was assigned as an Executive Board member for the 3 year term of 2005 to 2008.

Margaret Chan took the post of Director-General in March 2007 and is working on policies focused on health problems in Africa, women's health, and health effects due to the climate change.

In addition, the revised International Health Regulations (2005), which aimed at making the best effort to prevent the international spread of diseases, came into effect in June 2007 and the required measures are now being taken.

Furthermore, the "WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control", which aims at protecting current and future generations from the effects of smoking on health, society, the environment, the and economy, came into effect in February 2005 (Japan accepted in June 2004), and to date the Conference of Parties has been held twice. The "Guidelines on the protection from exposure to tobacco smoke" was adopted at the 2nd Conference of the Parties held in June 2007. Future discussions at the Conference of the Parties will focus on the formulation of protocols for illegal transactions, guidelines for packaging and labelling, and guidelines related to advertisements, sales promotions, and sponsorships.

In addition, there have been new topics such as avian/pandemic influenza and the connection between public health and intellectual property rights. In order to discuss these topics individually in a focused manner, inter-governmental meetings are being held separate to the WHO Assembly.

#### 2. Activities through ILO

The international Labour Organization (ILO) is an organization that implements international measures in the field of employment/work with the aim of contributing to realizing social justice through improved working conditions and is characterized by the 3 party structure of government, labour, and management, and also includes labour unions and employer's organizations.

A General ILO Conference has been held in June every year in Geneva to discuss the

formulation of ILO conventions and with the aim of improving working conditions and various labour issues. At the General Conference in 2007 the “ILO Convention on Work in the Fishing Sector (No.188)” and others were adopted. In addition, regional and industrial sectors meetings are being regularly held.

In recent years ILO has set and is working toward the goal of “Decent Work for All”. In response to the declaration of “10 Years toward realizing Decent Work in Asia” at regional meetings held in Asia in August and September 2006, the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare recognized decent work as a concept of the desires that people possess during work and in their living, which was then used in indicating the set of work and work styles that health, labour and welfare administration should aim for. The Ministry will conduct activities for realizing this goal in cooperation with labour-management. As part of those efforts ratification of the ILO conventions is being worked on, with Japan having ratified the “Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention (No. 187)” in July 2007.

### **3. Activities through OECD**

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) is an international organization that aims at contributing to economic growth through exchanging opinions on economic/social issues that developed nations share. The Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare is actively participating in meetings on health and medical care, social security, and employment.

At present follow-up activities are being carried out in accordance with the “Restated OECD Jobs Strategy” that was published in June 2006 (revised edition of the “OECD Jobs Strategy” compiled in 1994). Japan is actively contributing through participation in research activities of individual countries.

### **4. Activities through G8 and ASEAN**

#### **(1) G8 Labour and Employment Ministers Meeting**

The G8 Labour and Employment Ministers Meeting, one of the related ministers meeting of the G8 Summit (meeting of the government heads of developed nations) is held every year in the host countries of the presidency of G8. In 2008, a G8 Labour and Employment Ministers Meeting was held in Niigata City from the 11th to the 13th of May. "Seeking the Best Balance for a Resilient Sustainable Society" was the main topic of the meeting, with Mr. Masuzoe, Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare serving as chairman, and discussions were made at the meeting on measures for improving the lives of individuals from the background of prolonged longevity and globalization.

More concretely, recognition of the importance of measures for individual workers including a good work-life balance, labour safety and health, and lifetime career development was shared and it

was agreed that the mission of labour market/employment policies is to provide support for vulnerable workers and in regions in which the employment situation is severe.

In consideration of this, the importance of maintaining an organization that can adjust the supply and demand of the labour market as a nationwide network and guaranteeing vocational ability development opportunities to all people were confirmed. In addition, with the aim of realizing a sustainable society, the issue of “Work and Global Environmental” was addressed for the first time within the framework of the G8 and the “Niigata Declaration” compiled as guidelines for measures for use with this issue.

In the meantime, Italy will be hosting the Summit in 2009 with G8 Labour and Employment Ministers Meeting also being scheduled to be held in Italy.

## (2) ASEAN+3 Ministers Meeting

To further build a cooperative relationship between the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Japan, Korea, and China, the ASEAN+3 Health Ministers Meeting, Labour Ministers Meeting, and Ministerial Meeting for Social Welfare and Development are being held. In December 2007 the ASEAN+3 Ministerial Meeting for Social Welfare and Development was held in Hanoi, Vietnam with "Mainstreaming persons with disabilities in development: lessons and actions for the future" as the main topic. In May 2008, an ASEAN+3 Labour Ministers Meeting was held in Bangkok, Thailand with "Promotion and Enhancement of Decent Work for the Vulnerable Categories of Labour" as the main topic. Regarding contributing to international society in respective fields, the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare is actively responding through ASEAN+3 (described later).

Furthermore, the Ministry participates in the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) of Labour and Employment Ministers Conference that aims at establishing an interactive/cooperative relationship between Asia and Europe.

Beyond that, the Trilateral China-Japan-Korea Ministerial Meeting on Health was held in April 2007, with a memorandum on cooperative responses to novel influenza being formulated by the 3 countries.

In order to support ASEAN measures against novel/avian influenza, supplies of anti-virus agents for 0.5 million people and protective equipment for 0.7 million people were put in place utilizing the “Japan-ASEAN Integration Fund (JAIF)” in 2006 and an additional distribution of supplies for 0.5 million people to ASEAN countries made in 2007.