

## Section 3. Comprehensive Promotion for Self-Sufficiency Support in Employment for People with Disabilities

### 1. Revision of the Employment Promotion Act for People with Disabilities

Reflecting the increased motivation of people with disabilities to work, the employment situation of people with disabilities has been steadily improving. However, the legally mandated employment quota rate is yet to be achieved by all enterprises, especially by regional small- and medium-sized enterprises in which employment of people with disabilities is decreasing. Hence the “Draft law to amend the Law for Employment Promotion etc of Persons with Disabilities” was presented at a regular Diet session in 2008 and is still under examination. This amendment includes the following matters: ① expand the subject enterprises of the levy and grant system for employing people with disabilities gradually from those of 301 workers or more to those of 101 workers or more, and ② including part-time workers (20 to 29 hours per week) as subject to obligation with employing people with disabilities.

### 2. Employment Situation of People with Disabilities

The number of people with disabilities employed through Hello Work reached the record high of 45,565 in FY 2007. As of June 1, 2007, the actual employment rate at private enterprises was 1.55%, which was an increase of 0.03 points from the previous year, thus indicating steady improvement.

On the other hand, active openings were still large at 140,791 people (as of end of March 2008) and the number of enterprises that attained the legally mandated employment quota rate remained low at 43.8 %.

In Japan, a variety of measures have been promoted for the employment of people with disabilities in accordance with the “Basic Plan for the Disabled” (decided upon by the Cabinet in December 2002) and the “Fundamental Policy for Employment Measures for Persons with Disabilities” (notified by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare in March 2003) so that they can display their abilities to the utmost and contribute to society through working.

In accordance with the “Strategy for Improvement of Growth” compiled in February 2007, the “5 Year Plan to Promote ‘from Welfare to Employment’” for the period of FY 2007 to FY 2011 was compiled in December 2007. In addition, the “5 Year Plan to Implement Priority Measures” for the period of FY 2008 to FY 2012 was compiled in accordance with the “Basic Plan for the Disabled” same month. Further improvement in employment support for people with disabilities will be made through implementation of these plans so that people with disabilities who are eager to work can display their abilities to the utmost, realize social participation through work, and achieve self-sufficiency in employment.

The concrete measures are as follows.

### 3. Expanding Employment Opportunities through Promotion of the Employment Ratio System

#### (1) Improving and Strengthening Instructions to Attain the Legally Mandated Employment Quota Ratio

The mainstay of measures for the employment of people with disabilities in Japan is the Employment Quota System for Persons with Disabilities. According to the requirement of the “Law for Employment Promotion etc of Persons with Disabilities”, business operators must employ a certain number of people with physical disabilities or mental retardation that is equivalent to or above the legally mandated employment quota ratio (people with mental disorders issued with health and welfare handbooks for people with mental disorders are included in the employment rate of the respective enterprises). In order to facilitate measures being taken by enterprises to employ people with disabilities in attaining the quota ratio, business operators who employ less people with disabilities than the quota rate are instructed at Hello Works to formulate an employment plan in order to fulfil the legally mandated employment quota rate according to the plan. In the case the plan is not being properly implemented the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare shall give recommendations and publically disclose the names of any defaulting enterprises. Since FY 2006 the instruction standards for enterprises with an unattained quota ratio have been reviewed and instructions to attain the legally mandated employment quota ratio further strengthened. In addition, with regard to public institutions including the government and local governments, instruction goals to attain the legally mandated employment quota ratio were set for public institutions, including prefectural boards of education in October 2006, and instructions are being thoroughly provided so as to achieve these goals. The employment situation with all public institutions as of June 1, 2007 was disclosed in November the same year and ministries and agencies, local governments, and statutory corporations were encourage to make further efforts to employ people with disabilities.

#### (2) Supporting Measures based on the Levy and Grant System for Employment of People with Disabilities

The levy and grant system for employing people with disabilities was established with the contribution of business operators with the aim of adjusting the financial burden incurred in employing people with disabilities, facilitating their employment, and improving their overall employment standards.

With this system, a levy (50,000 yen per person a month for the number short of the mandated quota) is collected from business operators (with 301 workers or more) who have failed to satisfy

the legally mandated employment quota ratio, while adjustment allowances or rewards are paid to business operators that have employed more people with disabilities than that of the quota ratio. In addition, various grants are available for business operators that have improved facilities and equipment for the purpose of hiring people with disabilities or those who place orders with people with disabilities working from home.

#### **4. Improving Vocational Rehabilitation Programs**

People with disabilities who visit Hello Works to make an application for a post are provided with vocational rehabilitation programs that include thorough vocational guidance, job placements, instruction/advice after employment, and a trial employment program.

“Local Vocational Centers for Persons with Disabilities” (47 centers and 5 branches) have been established as special institutions to provide vocational rehabilitation programs. At these centers, in cooperation with Hello Works, vocational counsellors provide clients with disabilities with support including vocational evaluations and guidance, work preparation training, work preparation support, and support by Job Coaches (who help people with disabilities to adapt to workplaces). They also provide business operators with a variety of support, which includes guidance and advice on employment management of people with disabilities. In addition, comprehensive employment support for people with mental disorders has been provided according to need in each stage of employment from new employment through to reinstating and continuation in cooperation with medical institutions to improve employment support for people with mental disorders and business operators.

#### **5. Improved Employment Support in Cooperation with Employment, Welfare and Educational Services**

In order to promote the self-sufficiency of people with disabilities in communities, cooperation with employment measures, welfare measures, and educational measures is important. Hence systems such as the “Employment Shirt Support Program” and “Employment Maintenance Support Program” were established in accordance with the Services and Supports for Persons with Disabilities Act to improve employment support from the side of welfare.

In addition, the shift to regular employment from welfare employment is being promoted through “team support”, which is lead by Hello Works in cooperation with related institutions of employment support. Efforts are being made to promote understanding of regular employment with welfare institution staff, students of special support schools, guardians, and teaching staff as well as improving understanding and know-how of employment support measures.

Furthermore, the Employment and Vocational Life Support Centers for Persons with

Disabilities have been established to provide people with disabilities with comprehensive counselling on employment and daily life, forming networks of the relevant authorities in their neighborhoods that are engaged in employment, welfare and educational services (at 135 locations in FY 2007, and will be established in every health and welfare area for people with disabilities by FY 2011).

In addition, promoting employment of people with disabilities in the public sector has been an important issue for the government in promoting measures for people with disabilities, and hence the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare has taken the lead among ministries and agencies in implementing the “Challenge Employment” of 103 people since FY 2007.

## **6. Promotion of Vocational Abilities Development of People with Disabilities**

### **(1) Promotion of Acceptance of People with Disabilities at Ordinary Vocational Abilities Development Facilities**

Establishing training courses for people with mental retardation and development disorders at ordinary vocational abilities development facilities is being promoted. In addition, efforts are being made to expand opportunities to receive training through promoting facilities to adopt barrier-free accessibility so that both people with and without disabilities can receive vocational training.

### **(2) Promotion of Training at Vocational Abilities Development Schools for People with Disabilities**

Vocational abilities development schools for people with disabilities have been established for those with severe disabilities who find it difficult to take vocational training at ordinary vocational abilities development schools.

Considering the progress made regarding the severity and diversity of trainees, vocational abilities development schools for people with disabilities have been paying close attention to the degree of the disability of respective trainees and providing them with more substantial training sessions to correspond to the expanding service-oriented economy and progress in IT, thus contributing the promotion of employment of people with disabilities.

### **(3) Diverse Entrusted Training according Disability (Entrusted Training for People with Disabilities)**

In response to the increase in number of people with disabilities who are eager to be employed and work, entrusted training has been provided in all prefectures through making the best use of contractors such as enterprises, social welfare foundations, NPOs, and private educational/training institutions so that people with disabilities can receive training in the area they live which is in

accordance with their degree of disability and the need for human resources in enterprises.

The number of trainees in entrusted vocational training for people with disabilities has been increasing every year. In FY 2007, vocational training for people with disabilities was being promoted through further expanding the capacity of trainees.

#### **(4) Promotion of Vocational Abilities Development in Major Cities Designated by Cabinet Order**

A network of vocational abilities development for people with disabilities including special support schools and welfare institutions was established in the major cities designated by cabinet order that are the operating entities for education, welfare, and medical care. In addition, promotion vocational ability development programs for people with disabilities has been implemented in major cities, including providing consultations and information on vocational abilities development and identifying the potential needs of vocational training, to promote vocational training according to the degree of disability and desires of trainees as well as the need for human resources in enterprises.

#### **(5) Awareness Promotion of Vocational Abilities Development for People with Disabilities**

##### **1) Conducting National Skills Competitions for People with Disabilities (Abilympics)**

The National Skills Competitions for People with Disabilities has been conducted under the name of Abilympics since 1972 with the aim of promoting the vocational abilities development of people with disabilities and improve their vocational abilities so that they can participate in society with confidence and pride as skilled workers and to facilitate the employment of people with disabilities through raising public awareness and understanding of these people.

##### **2) Conducting International Abilympics**

The International Abilympics is held every 4 years. In FY 2007, the International Abilympics and the “39th World Skills Competition” were held at the same time for the first time in Japan (Shizuoka prefecture) as the “International Skills Festival for All, Japan 2007”. A total of 80 skilled workers, 71 workers in the 26 categories of the Vocational Skills Contests and 9 workers in 4 categories of the Leisure and Living Skills Contests, participated from Japan with encouragement from the Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare. They won a record high of 12 gold medals, 17 silver medals, 15 bronze medals, and finished number one in the world regarding the number of medals gained.