

## Acceptance of foreign residents in Japan - Creating a new, visionary Japan through phased establishment of a mechanism

Foreign Residents Policy Study Group

### Background and historical perception

Globalization has sparked an international movement of people, and the importance of these human resources is increasingly recognized as social players stimulating heterogeneity and diversity while promoting economic growth and technological innovation.

Our country has a history of achieving remarkable development through the positive acceptance of foreign culture, and we should return to such a perception.

In the rising global tide of immigrants and foreign residents, we are facing the urgent need to seriously consider the major challenges in accepting a diverse population and its social consequences. Instead of simply focusing on our population decline and labor shortage, we need to harness such diversity as “multicultural power” to help fuel our country’s growth. Currently, immigration is increasing in an uncontrolled manner without matured discussion or an adequate social system, and this can exacerbate social concerns.

To create a brighter future for Japan, now is the time to recognize the importance of accepting foreign residents and start a comprehensive discussion on how our system should support it.

### Foreign residents as a pillar of growth strategy

Acceptance of foreign residents as a direct effect on Japan’s revitalization should be discussed in the Industrial Competitiveness Council and positioned as a pillar of our future growth strategy. A high profile discussion on our policy will produce a significant international reaction, and our positive attitude toward global human resources will appeal worldwide to capable, motivated young workers who are eager to develop their careers and find Japan welcoming. Japan can contribute to the world a new possibility and hope while remaining attractive to future generations of our own citizens. Such a scenario certainly reflects our country’s history and experience.

By learning from the experiences of other advanced nations that have preceded us in accepting foreigners, it will be possible to take advantage of the diversity attending foreign residents as multicultural power while effectively minimizing any social difficulties attached to their acceptance and thus lead Japan into a brighter future.

Based on the perceptions above, our Foreign Residents Policy Study Group presents the following proposals.

#### **Four proposals for acceptance of foreign residents**

##### 1. **Start discussion as soon as possible**

- Establish a public-private organization, a council for the comprehensive study of foreign residents issues, in the Cabinet Secretariat as an engine for policy promotion and cross-ministerial discussion.
- Centralize information management to identify problems and disclose accurate information appropriately to encourage public debate.
- Research foreign residents acceptance systems in other nations.

**2. Establish an experimental acceptance system as soon as possible**

- Start an experimental initiative, such as acceptance of foreigners with specific skills and employment in Japan in industries or sectors suffering serious labor shortage.
- Monitor these foreign workers over time to consider permanent residence based on their stable livelihoods, Japanese language skills and criminal records.
- Over a longer term, establish a new system to replace the current training programs for foreign workers.

**3. Implement mandatory education for foreign residents**

- Mandate a specified level of education for foreign residents in Japanese language and culture.
- Mandate a Japanese language test (N2 or equivalent) for residence qualification.
- Provide children of foreign residents with educational opportunities equivalent to those for Japanese children.

**4. Clarify roles of municipalities and NPOs**

- Ensure that local governments recognize foreign resident acceptance as a measure to fight population decline and promote institutional reform of education and other public services.
- Enhance liaison with NPOs experienced in collaborating with local governments in multicultural efforts.

**Foreign Residents Policy Study Group**

Chairman: Takaji Kunimatsu, Chairman of Emergency Medical Network of Helicopter and Hospital

Members:

Yoshio Ishizaka, Chairman of the Outlook Foundation

Tomoyuki Isoyama, Economics journalist

Shigeru Oe, Director General of the Outlook Foundation

Takahiro Suzuki, Visiting Professor at Josai International University Graduate School

Yuya Toda, President of Aramahoshi, Inc.

Toshihiro Menju, Managing Director and Chief Program Officer of JCIE

For information, please contact:

[teijyu.gaikokujin@gmail.com](mailto:teijyu.gaikokujin@gmail.com)

03-6272-6285 (Economic Strategy Department)

Note: The Foreign Residents Policy Study Group has been formed by citizens who share an interest in the foreign residents issue and is supported by the Outlook Foundation . These proposals put forward have been based on the group's discussions.

The Outlook Foundation <http://www.theoutlook-foundation.org/>