



# **COUNTRY OPERATIONS PLAN**

**Country: Japan**

**Planning Year: 2004**

## **Part I: Executive Committee Summary**

### **A. Context: Beneficiary Population(s) and Theme(s)**

Japan is party to the 1951 Convention and 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees. The country acceded in 1982 and adopted national legislation the same year. Except for the earlier period when Japan was also affected by the Indo-Chinese refugee boat arrivals, the country continues to host a small population of urban refugees and asylum-seekers of various nationalities, numbering a few hundreds annually. The number is inclusive of those in the process of applying for refugee status as well as those who had claims rejected, some of whom were accorded mandate status by UNHCR. In comparison with other industrialised nations, Japan has yet to satisfactorily fulfil her obligations to international protection standards.

Japan is a member state which has been most supportive of UNHCR, both politically and financially, through their active participation in EXCOM deliberations and through her annual contributions to UNHCR programme. For years, Japan has consistently ranked as the second largest country donor to UNHCR. The country's contribution peaked at US\$ 135 million in 1999 when two high-visibility emergencies (Kosovo and East Timor) occurred. For 2002, the contribution of Japan totalled some US\$ 117.9 million, which was considerably higher than that of the previous year, owing to the heightened public interest in humanitarian issues generated by the aftermath of the September 11 and the ensuing crisis in Afghanistan. Additionally, private-sector donations to UNHCR in Japan have annually been averaged at some US \$ 3-4 million for the past five years, constantly placing the country amongst the top of the PSFR operations.

The above context provides the rationale for UNHCR's presence and involvement in Japan. The Office's role in the country also derives from Headquarters' over-arching strategies and the operational objectives in the Regional Bureau for Asia and Pacific. The objectives which are of relevance to this sub-region include promotion of asylum and international protection, pursuit of durable solutions, mobilisation of resources and support for UNHCR activities, and improved emergency preparedness and response. On this basis, the overall objective of UNHCR operation in 2004 in Japan will continue to be threefold; (a) the provision of international protection to persons of concern and (b) the promotion of relations with the Governments, public information and public awareness with a view to maintain and/or broaden support of both public and private sectors towards the work of UNHCR and its programmes of assistance and (c) the provision of capacity-building in the field of emergency preparedness and response management for the direct benefit of targeted beneficiaries within the Asia and Pacific Region.

Within the sub-regional context, it is expected that the overall challenge for UNHCR in Japan would continue to be influenced by the implications of the post-Ogata era as well as the aftermath of the September 11 and the ensuing tightened immigration control. Special efforts will be required for the Office to sustain the current level of support from the Government of Japan and public interest. On the other hand, continued efforts will be needed in the area of refugee protection where substantial improvements are still required. In pursuit of these two imperatives, given their potentially conflicting implications vis-à-vis relations with the two host Governments, a delicate balance would need to be maintained and constantly monitored to avoid a situation where pursuit of one objective could undermine another.

In light of the above-mentioned, the Country Operations Plan for 2004 foresees implementation of four inter-linked operational themes i.e. (1) provision of international protection, (2) mobilisation of support/resources, (3) public information, and (4) emergency preparedness and capacity building in Japan and the Asia-Pacific Region, in addition to the ongoing provision of support, both protection and assistance, to the small beneficiary population of urban refugees and asylum-seekers. Operationally, efforts in respect of the first two themes will need to be synchronised to ensure that while global refugee situations continue to enjoy attention and support from both the Government and the public, domestic asylum situations would not be neglected. Implementation of the latter theme of public

information, through introduction of a more comprehensive public awareness strategy integrating public information activities with protection goals, is expected to provide an essential means to help underpin this delicate balance.

The theme of emergency preparedness and response in the region has been included in the office's objectives since 2000. The proposal for 2004 is based on the success of the eCentre as a regional asset and on the request by HQs to extend the services of the eCentre to cover areas outside of Asia-Pacific.

This theme has been realised since 2000 through capacity building for the benefit of NGOs, Government Officials, UN staff and others in Japan and the Asia-Pacific region. This COP foresees the continuation of the eCentre (The Regional Centre for Emergency Training in International Humanitarian Response), implementing a range of complementary emergency preparedness activities for the region.

**B. Main Programme Goals and Principal Objectives**

<b>Name of Theme:</b>	
<b>Ensure the quality of asylum in Japan and fulfil responsibilities towards the supervisory Mandate of Art. 35 of the 1951 Convention</b>	
<b>Main Goal: Japan applies the 1951 Convention in good faith</b>	
<b>Principal Objectives</b>	<b>Related Outputs</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The legislation and procedures in place adhere to international standards</li> <li>• Japan builds capacities to protect refugees, including proper identification of refugees within broader migration movements</li> <li>• Create awareness for Japan to share asylum burdens and responsibilities more equitably</li> <li>• Japan redoubles the search for durable solutions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Monitor</u> the RSD procedures through cases; support the recognition of individuals fulfilling the refugee criteria; bring to the attention of the MOJ in a frank and constructive manner issues considered contrary to basic asylum principles, especially regarding access, detention and non-refoulement</li> <li>• UNHCR maintains contacts with the Ministry of Justice and Parliamentarians in fulfilment of its <u>advisory</u> role</li> <li>• UNHCR keeps the media and the public informed of developments and problems observed in the asylum system in fulfilment of its <u>advocacy</u> role</li> <li>• UNHCR <u>advises</u> Courts and asylum lawyers on specific questions of International Refugee and Human Rights Law</li> <li>• The Government improves <u>transparency</u> in its reporting on caseloads, RSD and detention.</li> </ul>

<b>Name of Beneficiary Population: Urban caseload of asylum seekers and refugees in Japan</b>	
<b>Main Goal(s) Ensure the respect of basic human rights of asylum-seekers and refugees in Japan</b>	
<b>Principal Objectives</b>	<b>Related Outputs</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that asylum-seekers and refugees' living conditions improve, following the policy decisions by the Government</li> <li>• Ensure the provision of legal support for applicants</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Asylum-seekers and refugees do not face hunger, lack of shelter and lack of medical services</li> <li>• The Government of Japan fills most of the existing needs with the help of NGOs affiliated to PARINAC</li> <li>• Applicants receive legal counselling and representation in their RSD procedures</li> </ul>

<b>Name of Beneficiary Population/Theme: Public Information and Public Awareness activities in Japan</b>	
Main Goal(s) <b>Public understands and supports refugee cause as promoted by UNHCR</b>	
<b>Principal Objectives</b>	<b>Related Outputs</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public awareness towards goals and objectives of UNHCR is raised through means of publications and by strengthened relationship with the media in Japan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PI/PA materials regularly produced and disseminated to key decision makers, media and the public at large</li> <li>• Media interest increased in non-emergency period</li> <li>• Increased interest in domestic as well as international issues</li> </ul>

<b>Name of Beneficiary Population/Theme: Private sector fundraising in Japan</b>	
Main Goal(s) <b>Enhance PSFR in Japan</b>	
<b>Principal Objectives</b>	<b>Related Outputs</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Private Sector contributions increase</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Japan for UNHCR implements active PSFR in Japan</li> <li>▪ Number of regular donors increases</li> </ul>

<b>Name of Beneficiary Population/Theme: Emergency preparedness and capacity building in Japan and the Asia-Pacific Region</b>	
Main Goal(s): <b>To improve the level of preparedness within the region for a response to refugee emergencies. To increase the level of Japanese expertise and resources applied to assist refugees</b>	
<b>Principal Objectives</b>	<b>Related Outputs</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ There will be improved emergency preparedness in the Asia-Pacific region.</li> <li>▪ Japanese NGOs and other institutions will have an improved ability to assist in refugee operations in terms of manpower and resources.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conventional Training workshops and seminars.</li> <li>• Distance learning courses.</li> <li>• Systems of Information sharing through a Website, email and other means.</li> <li>• Institutions in the region capable of undertaking training for emergency response.</li> <li>• A regional network of organisations mutually supporting for emergency response</li> <li>• Reference documents on emergency preparedness and response easily and widely available.</li> </ul>