



COUNTRY OPERATIONS PLAN

Executive Committee Summary

Country: Japan

Planning Year: 2005

Part I: Executive Committee Summary

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

Japan is party to the 1951 Convention (since 1981) and its 1967 Protocol (since 1982). With the exception of the admission of some 11,000 Indo-Chinese refugees in the context of the Comprehensive Plan of Action (CPA), the country hosts a small population of urban refugees and asylum-seekers mainly from Myanmar, Afghanistan, Iran, Turkey, China, and some African countries. There are some 428 asylum-seekers and 315 Convention refugees, including those whose claims were rejected, but who were recognized as refugees under UNHCR's Statute. While Japan's recognition rate is low (2% in 2003), it has recently been engaged in a reform process and the asylum situation is gradually improving, in particular in the provision of reception arrangements. There are, however, several areas where improvements are needed, including access to asylum procedures at ports of entry where, despite heavy passenger traffic, only 9 asylum applications were officially recorded in 2003 at airports.

UNHCR's focus will be to monitor access to asylum procedures at ports of entry and the implementation of the revised immigration law. The overriding objective in 2005 will be the protection of refugees and asylum-seekers in a developing asylum policy environment. In consultation with the government and relevant NGOs where appropriate, specific objectives will be to:

- Monitor policy developments on asylum and reception issues, and provide; advice to the government to ensure that the rights of refugees and asylum-seekers are adequately taken into account;
- Monitor the implementation of these efforts through review of individual cases, ensuring that the assessment of claims on their merits and the procedure is fair and efficient at all stages;
- Promote the creation of a resettlement programme in Japan;
- Increase public support for refugees through advocacy, public information, public awareness and private sector fund raising activities.

To meet these objectives and ensure that Japan remains committed to refugees, the Regional Office in Japan (RO Tokyo) will undertake: protection monitoring; advocacy; review of cases; refugee law training; and promotion of resettlement as a burden-sharing tool. Furthermore, RO Tokyo will continue to promote the Agenda for Protection in its dialogue with the government.

In addition to the development observed in the area of domestic asylum, Japan has consistently ranked as the second largest government donor to UNHCR. In 2002, with the launch of the Afghan repatriation operation, the contribution totalled US\$ 117 million. With less high profile emergencies in 2003, Japan still contributed US\$ 91 million. The Government has maintained that stable funding depends on enhanced visibility given to the Japanese contribution. RO Tokyo will work closely with Headquarters (HQs) to seek additional funding from the Government of Japan (GOJ) to top up its 2004 core funding of US\$ 74 million. This requires the further strengthening of links with the key actors in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) and the Parliamentarians.

The MOFA is willing to increase its involvement in international burden-sharing, so far mainly done through funding and providing staff in UNHCR. The Ministry of Justice (MOJ)'s approach has been focused in improving the domestic asylum system. Thus, in planning for 2005, RO Tokyo will continue to be prudent in fostering a coherent relationship with these two Ministries.

The goal of improving emergency preparedness and response by strengthening the operational capacity of the staff of relevant government departments, NGOs and the UN agencies in the Asia-Pacific region has been included in the office's objectives since 2000. The proposal for 2005 is based on the success of the Regional Centre for Emergency Training in International Humanitarian Response (the eCentre) as a regional asset and at the request of HQs, to extend the services of the eCentre training outside the Asia-Pacific region. This Country Operations Plan 2005 (COP 2005) foresees the continuation of the eCentre in Tokyo, implementing a range of complementary emergency preparedness activities for the Asia-Pacific region and for specific areas outside of the region as identified together with Emergency and Security Service (ESS) (e.g. in Africa and the Middle-East).

Through its PI/PA activities, RO Tokyo will disseminate to a wider public basic information on refugee issues and the work of UNHCR. Aside from general information, RO Tokyo will place emphasis sensitizing the public on domestic asylum issues and Japan's visible contribution in the form of funding (official and private sector), NGOs and Japanese staff. Through the use of NGO and teachers' networks and effective use of the internet, efforts will be made to reach out to various regions in Japan and to younger generation, rather than concentrating activities in and around Tokyo. For the private sector fundraising, RO Tokyo will continue to support the Japan Association for UNHCR (J4U) in broadening the funding base and carrying out more PA activities.

The above context provides the rationale for UNHCR's representation in Japan. The Office's role in the country also derives from HQs' over-arching strategies and the operational objectives in the Regional Bureau for Asia and the 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. In addition, as a Regional Office, it will continue to provide support (protection, programme and administration) to UNHCR office in the Republic of Korea.

On this basis, the COP 2005 in Japan foresees three priority themes;

- (a) provision of international protection to persons of concern,
- (b) stable GOJ funding which can be ensured through public support and heightened visibility of its contributions, and
- (c) capacity-building in emergency preparedness and response management for the direct benefit of targeted beneficiaries within the Asia and the Pacific Region.

These themes are further broken down into principle objectives (listed below) to be pursued by RO Tokyo. At the same time, the following assumptions are seen as

factors that will have positive bearing on RO Tokyo's strategies in reaching the objectives. (Any assumption, once proved wrong, should be considered a constraint.)

Main assumptions

- Revised law on immigration and asylum has been adapted in 2004.
- Overall domestic economy improves, Yen remains strong against USD and ODA budget is adjusted upward.
- GOJ is satisfied with the visibility given to its financial contribution.
- Relationship with Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) is enhanced.
- eCentre secretariat continues to function from within RO Tokyo.
- No serious international incidents (political, social and economical) that could jeopardize RO Tokyo's activities occur.
- Human and financial resources are provided to achieve the objectives.
- J4U strengthens its operational capacity.

Selected Programme Goals and Principal Objectives

(Protection related)

Name of Theme: Strengthening implementation of the 1951 Convention and 1967 Protocol	
Main Goal(s). Monitor policy and legislative developments on asylum and reception issues. Provide advice to the government to ensure that the rights of refugees and asylum-seekers are adequately taken into account.	
Principal Objectives	Related Outputs
Protection concerns are addressed by the Japanese authorities and translated into policy decisions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Engage the government, through continuous effective contacts, on policy developments to ensure UNHCR views are taken into consideration. - Increase contacts and advocacy activities, including through provision of comments to the government on specific issues/cases, at all levels of government.
Japan provides asylum-seekers with effective access to fair and efficient asylum procedures at ports of entry, including proper identification of refugees within broader migration movements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide training, advice and information to government officials, such as immigration officers and other relevant actors involved in refugee status determination (on refugee law and related international instruments). - Actively promote and monitor adequate reception conditions at ports of entry, including fair and expeditious asylum procedures applied by immigration and border staff.
The application by Japan of the refugee criteria is in conformity with international refugee law standards and best state practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UNHCR provides specific legal advice to Courts and MOJ through the review of individual cases.

Name of Beneficiary Population:	Refugees and asylum-seekers:
Main Goal(s). Ensure protection, especially non- <i>refoulement</i> and treatment in accordance with human rights standards.	
Principal Objectives	Related Outputs
All asylum-seekers have access to fair and expeditious asylum procedures.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UNHCR reviews selected individual cases and provides necessary information and advice to MOJ. - UNHCR visits border authorities at ports of entry and monitors conditions of access to asylum by potential applicants.
Reception conditions of asylum-seekers are in conformity with international standards and best state practice, including access to free of charge legal assistance, adequate information and counselling and assistance where needed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promote international standards and provide advice to government and NGOs in the context of the implementation of reception policies.

Name of Theme:	
Public Information and Public Awareness activities and Private Sector Fundraising in Japan	
Main Goal(s). Public awareness activities reach out to a wider public throughout Japan increasing funding from the private sector.	
Principal Objectives	Related Outputs
Protection concerns are addressed by the Japanese authorities and translated into policy decisions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Engage the government, through continuous effective contacts, on policy developments to ensure UNHCR views are taken into consideration. - Increase contacts and advocacy activities, including through provision of comments to the government on specific issues/cases, at all levels of government.
Principal Objectives	Related Outputs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Access to information on refugee situations will be provided to a wider public through PI/PA tools such as photo panels, publications and homepage as well as lectures, presentations and events. - Working relationship with television and newspaper agencies will be further strengthened with increased number of staff reporters familiar with basic refugee issues. - J4U will enhance their operational capacity to increase private sector funding and also to supplement RO Tokyo with its PA activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - PI/PA tools for the public are made widely available and easier to access. - Reach different and new audiences, including those outside of Tokyo region. - Better utilize Internet and email for information dissemination and regular update on information. - Coordinate homepage with J4U. Increase interaction with the media.

Name of Theme: Emergency preparedness and capacity building in Japan, the Asia-Pacific Region and specific priority areas as identified by ESS, together with RO Tokyo.	
Main Goal(s). Improved level of emergency preparedness generally but with special emphasis on the Asia-Pacific region and an increased level of Japanese expertise and resources applied to assist refugees.	
Principal Objectives	Related Outputs
Improved emergency preparedness in the Asia-Pacific region and elsewhere. Japanese NGOs and other institutions will have an improved ability to assist in refugee operations in terms of manpower and resources.	The following activities will be included in the work-plan under this theme: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conventional training workshops and seminars. - Distance learning courses. - Systems of Information sharing through a Website, email and other electronic means. To ensure that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Institutions in the region will be capable of undertaking training for emergency response. ii) A regional network of organizations will be mutually supporting for emergency response. iii) Reference documents on emergency preparedness and response are easily and widely available.