

# **COUNTRY OPERATIONS PLAN**

**Country:**

**Japan  
&  
Republic of Korea**

**Planning Year: 2003**

**Prepared by: Regional Office for Japan and the  
Republic of Korea**

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

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

Both Japan and the Republic of Korea are party to the 1951 Convention and 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees. Japan acceded in 1982 and adopted domestic legislation the same year, while the Republic of Korea acceded to the Convention in 1992 and amendments to the immigration law to allow for refugee status took effect in 1994. Except for the earlier period when both countries were also affected by the Indo-Chinese refugee boat arrivals, both Japan and the Republic of Korea continue 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 UNHCR mandate status. In comparison with other industrialised nations, both Japan and the Republic of Korea have yet to fulfil their obligations under international protection standards.

Japan and the Republic of Korea are two member states that have been most supportive of UNHCR, both politically and financially, through their active participation in EXCOM deliberations and through their annual contributions to UNHCR programmes. For years, Japan has consistently ranked as the second largest donor country to UNHCR. The country's contribution peaked at US\$ 135 million in 1999, when two high-visibility emergencies (Kosovo and East Timor) occurred. In 2001, Japan's contribution totalled some US\$91 million, which was at the same level as that of the previous year in local currency. The Republic of Korea continues to be considered a donor with substantial potential – evidenced by the Government's average annual contribution of US\$ 1 million in unearmarked funds over the last five years, plus in-kind contributions to the Afghan emergency in 2002 that nearly doubled this amount. Additionally, private-sector donations to UNHCR in Japan have annually averaged at some US \$ 3-4 million in the past five years, continuously placing the country amongst the top sources for the Private Sector Fund Raising (PSFR) operations. Although private sector contributions in the Republic of Korea have been virtually non-existent for a number of reasons, its vibrant private sector is considered a source of great potential, which UNHCR intends analyse in detail during the course of 2002 to implement a more robust PSFR in 2003 and beyond.

The above contexts provide the rationale for UNHCR's presence and involvement in Japan and the Republic of Korea. The Office's role in these two countries also derives from Headquarters' over-arching strategies and operational objectives, which in the 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. The overall objective of UNHCR in 2003 in Japan and Republic of Korea will continue to be threefold; (a) the provision of international protection to persons of concern, (b) the promotion of relations with the Governments, public information and public awareness networks with a view to maintain and broaden support of both the public and private sectors towards the work of UNHCR and its assistance programmes world-wide, and (c) the provision of capacity-building in the field of emergency preparedness and response management for the benefit of targeted beneficiaries within the Asia and Pacific Region.

Special efforts will be required for the Office to sustain the current level of support from the Government of Japan and public interest, whereas in the Republic of Korea, focused efforts will have to be brought to cultivate public support for UNHCR. On the other hand, for both Japan and the Republic of Korea, continued efforts will be needed in the area of refugee protection where substantial improvements are still required.

In light of the above-mentioned, the Country Operations Plan for 2003 foresees the implementation of four inter-linked operational themes i.e. (1) provision of international protection, (2) mobilisation of support/resources, (3) the dissemination of public information, and (4) emergency preparedness and capacity building in Japan and the Asia-Pacific Region. These objectives will be carried out in addition to the ongoing provision of protection and assistance to the small beneficiary population of urban refugees and asylum-seekers. Operationally, efforts in respect of the first two objectives will need to be synchronised to ensure that while global refugee situations continue to enjoy attention and support from both Governments and the public, domestic asylum obligations would not be neglected. In the Republic of Korea, UNHCR

will continue to pursue strengthened capacity of national NGO partners who can advocate for stronger protection mechanisms with Government agencies while UNHCR gains wider latitude to promote public awareness and, ultimately, mobilisation of greater public and private resources.

The fourth and most recently added objective on emergency preparedness and response will continue to be pursued through capacity building for the benefit of NGOs, Government officials, UN staff and others in Japan and the Asia-Pacific Region. This objective foresees the consolidation of the e-Centre (the Regional Centre for Emergency Training in International Humanitarian Response, based in Tokyo), which provides a range of complementary emergency preparedness activities for the region. Ultimately, the work of the e-Centre is intended to be handed over to organisations and institutions in Japan and in the region and much of the e-Centre activities will be devoted to developing such organisations. The e-Centre programme is financed primarily by the Government of Japan. However, support from other Governments in the region, in the form of cash contributions and in-kind support through Government institutions is also expected.

## B. Main Programme Goals and Principal Objectives

<b>Name of Beneficiary Population/Theme</b> Urban caseload of asylum seekers and refugees in Japan and the Republic of Korea	
Main Goal(s) <b><i>Ensure the respect of basic human rights of asylum-seekers and refugees in Japan and the Republic of Korea</i></b>	
<b>Principal Objectives</b>	<b>Related Outputs</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b><i>Improve the conditions of the urban caseload</i></b></li> <li>▪ <b><i>Ensure legal support for asylum applicants</i></b></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 Governments of Japan and Korea and national NGOs take a more proactive role to fill existing needs</li> <li>• Applicants receive legal counselling and representation</li> </ul>

<b>Name of Beneficiary Population/Theme</b> Ensure the quality of asylum in Japan and Korea. Supervisory responsibilities in respect of Art. 35 of the 1951 Convention are met	
Main Goal(s) <b><i>Compliance with the supervision Mandate of Art. 35, 1951 refugee Convention</i></b>	
<b>Principal Objectives</b>	<b>Related Outputs</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Monitor the quality of asylum in Japan and the Republic of Korea in terms of international standard and provide relevant advice to Government agencies.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The procedures for refugee determination and the criteria used comply with the 1951 Convention</li> <li>▪ UNHCR maintains close contacts with the Ministry of Justice officials in fulfilment of its advisory role</li> <li>▪ Statistical reporting by the respective Governments is transparent</li> </ul>

<b>Name of Beneficiary Population/Theme</b> <i>Public Information and Public Awareness activities in Japan and the Republic of Korea</i>	
Main Goal(s) <b><i>Public understands and supports refugee cause as promoted by UNHCR</i></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 publications and through strengthened relationships with the media in Japan and the Republic of Korea</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ PI/PA materials regularly produced and disseminated to key decision makers, opinion leaders, media and the public at large</li> <li>▪ Stable and regular media coverage on refugees issues maintained in non-emergency period/programmes</li> <li>▪ Increased interest in domestic as well as international issues</li> </ul>

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<b>Name of Beneficiary Population/Theme</b> <i>Private sector fundraising in Japan and Korea</i>	
Main Goal(s) <b>Enhance PSFR in Japan and the Republic of Korea</b>	
<b>Principal Objectives</b>	<b>Related Outputs</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Private Sector contributions are significantly increased in Japan and Korea and become reliable funding sources.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Japan for UNHCR implements active PSFR campaigns</li> <li>▪ Modest but effective PSFR activities implemented in the Republic of Korea</li> </ul>

<b>Name of Beneficiary Population/Theme</b> <i>Emergency preparedness and capacity building in Japan and the Asia-Pacific Region</i>	
Main Goal(s) <b>Improve the level of preparedness within the region to respond to refugee emergencies. Increase the level of expertise and resources allocated to assist refugees</b>	
<b>Principal Objectives</b>	<b>Related Outputs</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Improved emergency preparedness in the Asia-Pacific region.</li> <li>▪ NGOs and other institutions in the region improve their 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 conducted throughout the region and Distance learning courses made available</li> <li>• Systems for information sharing through a Website, email and other means are established and operational.</li> <li>• Institutions in the region are capable of undertaking training on emergency response</li> <li>• A regional network of organisations to provide mutual support for emergency response is established and functioning</li> <li>• Reference documents on emergency preparedness and response are easily and widely available</li> </ul>