

The 3rd Yao City Foreign Residents' Council Meeting in FY 2020 [Minutes Summary]

Date & Time: Monday, February 8, 2021, 6:30 p.m.–8:00 p.m.

Location: Committee Room No. 2, 8th Floor, Yao City Hall

Council Members in Attendance (titles omitted): NONAKA Mônica, TAKAYA Sachi, I Cyanjye, LE THI KIEU Nga, Tikas Ibrahim DARLINGTON, PARK Yanghaeng, HUYNH TU VAN, YAMAUCHI Masayuki

Secretariat Members: (Cultural and International Affairs Division) Mr. KAMADA (Manager), Mr. KAWAZOE (Asst. Manager), Mr. DEMIZU (Asst. Manager and Group Chief), Mr. TOMITA (Section Chief)

(Mitsubishi UFJ Research and Consulting Co., Ltd.) Mr. SHIMAZAKI Koichi, Mr. MARUKAWA Shogo, Ms. KURIYAMA Chiho

1. Opening

It was announced that in exchanging opinions, this meeting would take the form of a plenary session with all participants brought together, instead of group work with the participants divided into two groups as it is usually the case.

2. Opinion exchange—Topic: The Second Yao City Plan to Promote a Multicultural Society (draft)

A member of the Secretariat explained the Second Yao City Plan to Promote a Multicultural Society (draft) (Document 1) and the Operating Procedure for the Public Comment Submission System in relation to the Second Yao City Plan to Promote a Multicultural Society (draft) (Document 2). Public comments are scheduled to be accepted until February 19.

<Opinion exchange>

- Those surveyed in the Needs Survey on Information Service, etc. for Foreign Residents (page 5): Of those surveyed, the second group of those marked with * is referred to as “Japan-born *zainichi* Korean nationals”, which contains a pleonasm. It is therefore suggested to modify it as “Japan-born Korean nationals.”

⇒(Secretariat) This will be modified accordingly.

- The Basic Principles (page 31): There is a mentioning of “not only Korean national residents but also Vietnamese national residents and Chinese national residents”. It would probably be better to change it to “not only Korean people but also Vietnamese people and Chinese people” since they may include those who have their roots in but not necessarily have nationality of these countries.

- ⇒(Secretariat) We will consider this matter so as to make it consistent with the expressions on other pages.
- 6. Challenges to be addressed in the future (page 28): There are two different expressions: “foreign nationals” and “foreign residents”. Are there any reasons for making this distinction?
- ⇒(Secretariat) As annotated on page 1, “foreign residents” represent foreign nationals living in Yao City. The term “foreign nationals” is used when meaning both Yao City and non-Yao City foreign residents.
- The basic viewpoint (page 31): It mentions “empowerment and social participation of foreign nationals”. What does “empowerment” mean in this context?
- ⇒(Secretariat) Annotation 6 on page 15, where the term “empowerment” appears for the first time, defines it as “to regain abilities, vitality, self-determination ability, etc. that one originally has.”
- Specified Skilled Workers (page 9): Although the relevant sentence says “not through sending organizations or supervising organizations”, the reality is that the workers are deployed through sending organizations. It is therefore suggested that this be corrected.
- ⇒(Secretariat) We will check the real situation and then consider the wording to be corrected.
- [Employment/Housing tenancy] (page 29): I feel uncomfortable about bringing these two issues under one heading.
- ⇒(Secretariat) We classify them into one in line with the current Yao City Plan to Promote a Multicultural Society, in which the “provision of support for employment and housing tenancy” is upheld as its basic policy.
- It is understood that the Second Plan (draft) makes it a rule to promote consultations and other support measures face-to-face. Given that under the influence of the COVID-19 pandemic, consultations, interpretation services and interaction opportunities have now been provided online, perhaps the City could incorporate online activities into the Plan.
- ⇒(Secretariat) As correctly pointed out, some activities have been conducted using online communication tools, though such means are not covered in the Plan. We will have the units/divisions responsible for those online activities make reports to share the information in the course of confirming the progress of the Plan next fiscal year and in subsequent fiscal years.
- Since this Plan is being formulated amid the COVID-19 pandemic, it would probably be necessary to mention, even if briefly, the influence wielded by the pandemic over foreign nationals in Japan.
- ⇒(Secretariat) We will go with this suggestion and consider where to mention and the wording.
- There may be some joint activities with Osaka Prefecture. It might be better to incorporate them in the Plan.
- ⇒(Secretariat) The City is working with Osaka Prefecture and the Osaka Foundation of International Exchange in such areas as disaster response and improvement in counselors’ skills. We will consider the possibility of incorporating such activities in the plan.

- It will be exciting if we could inform people outside Yao City that the City has a large community of foreign residents. There are some groups/gatherings of people running a business, with which we could perhaps work in extending the scope of our activities.
- ⇒(Secretariat) There may be certain elements the municipality cannot assist with. However, the City strives to enhance the empowerment of foreign residents, thereby creating an environment that contributes to expanding the circle of their business activities.
- [Health, Medical Care, and Welfare] (page 29): This section says that with the increasing number of foreign residents with mental health issues, it is necessary to make information regarding stress, depression, harassment, autism, etc. known to foreign residents. Since this is a misleading expression, it is suggested that it be modified.
- ⇒(Secretariat) This will be modified accordingly.

3. Wrap-up of the Yao City Foreign Residents' Council Meetings

A member of the Secretariat explained the Opinions from the Yao City Foreign Residents' Council (Document 3).

<Questions>

- How will the opinions from the Yao City Foreign Residents' Council be published? Will the Second Yao City Plan to Promote a Multicultural Society cover how the discussions at the Foreign Residents' Council meetings were progressing?
- ⇒(Secretariat) The matters discussed at the Foreign Residents' Council meetings, including today's meeting, will be covered under the item "The progress in formulating the Plan" on page 4 of the draft Plan.
- The cover of Document 3: The year is indicated in order of the imperial era name and dominical year. It is suggested that the order be consistent with the Plan.
- ⇒(Secretariat) The order will be rearranged for the dominical year followed by the imperial era name.

4. Other

The Secretariat explained that the term of the fifth Foreign Residents' Council members would expire on March 31, 2021, and therefore this meeting would be the last for the incumbent members.

- Since the Council will continue to exist as mentioned in the Plan (draft), the incumbent members are requested to offer their opinions and comments for use as reference for the Council's future operation.

<Opinions and Comments>

- I am willing to send out relevant information myself so as to engage young generations.
- This was an educational year for me. I will continue to work hard.
- I cannot say that my views represent all foreign residents. However, while engaged in the Council's activities, I have always sought to have my feelings based on my experiences and day-to-day involvement with other foreign residents reflected in the City's policy even in some small way.

Though it is difficult to judge how much our views were incorporated into the Plan of the next term, I hope that the plan will bear fruit little by little during the course of being implemented.

- While our activities have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, such as event cancellations, there have been some realizations; this pandemic experience led to our learning about the current situation involving foreign nationals working in Japan and also prompted us to utilize SNS and other online communication tools. The Yao International Center as well now offers Japanese language lessons online and consultations for foreign nationals via the LINE app. Since the Center is referred to many times in the Plan of the next term, I am committed to working hard toward building a multicultural society.
- I act as an interpreter between Vietnamese and Japanese. I really feel that with the number of Vietnamese residents in Yao City growing with the years, the City has worked on many support activities, developing itself into a more comfortable place to live for Vietnamese. I will continue to do my best to be of use to foreign nationals coming to live in Yao City.
- I was born and brought up in Yao City. At the time I was born, I understand that the City's policy on foreign residents was not very developed as it is now. Since I believe that efforts of communities and the municipality have enabled the City to become resident-friendly, I hope Yao City's initiatives will be shared not only within the City but also nationwide.
- I learned a lot from participating in the Foreign Residents' Council. I was impressed by how carefully the Council has been operating; the exchange of opinions in group discussions, the City's positive attitude in trying to reflect such opinions in municipal administration, and the members' active involvement - all of them have helped the Council to properly work. I hope that such a forum will spread beyond Yao City and across the country. On the other hand, only a limited number of people can participate in the Foreign Residents' Council meetings. I hope that the system will be improved in the future in order to gather voices of those not at the table.
- I regret that I could have elicited more opinions from the Council members. I hope that such activities will gain ground nationwide, not just inside Yao City. The meetings were very informative and I am grateful to the Council members.

5. Adjournment