

Information for OHCHR related to better investment in the rights of the child

1. Please provide information on the main challenges related to the mobilization, allocation and spending of resources for children. Please provide examples of good practices undertaken to prioritize resource mobilization, allocation and spending towards child-focused sectors, such as health education, social protection, child protection and child rights, in your national policy and/or overseas development assistance strategy.

(1) Major Measures under the Ministry of Health, Labour and Wealth Budget for FY2014 for child welfare
<Enhancement of childcare services including elimination of waiting lists>

In order to expand the number of accepted children, we will strongly promote actions under the “plan for elimination of waiting lists,” securing the operational expenses of childcare centers and development of the centers (including small-scale childcare services, long-hour daycare at kindergartens, and non-registered childcare facilities which aim to be registered). In addition, with the aim of providing diversified childcare services according to the parents’ work styles and the situation of local areas, we will seek to enhance extended daycare, holiday/night childcare, and daycare for sick or convalescent children, etc.

<Enhancement of after-school children’s clubs>

We will enhance after-school children’s clubs so that users of childcare services will be able to use the services continuously also after entrance into elementary school.

<Strengthening continuous local support for pregnancy and childbirth>

We will implement model programs in which support services will be continuously provided during pregnancy, childbirth and child-rearing according to each region’s characteristics, including a postnatal care program, such as physical and mental care to mothers and children immediately after childbirth, child-rearing support, etc.

We will enhance “Female Health Support Centers,” which are consultation and support centers providing consultation services and information to those who are distressed over pregnancy and childbirth, by such means as introduction of a nationally-uniform telephone number. And we will create an environment where consultation services can be easily used through holding seminars at “Infertility Specialist Consultation Centers” on weekends.

<Enhancement of social care>

We will promote placement of such children under the custody of foster parents and family homes, so that children in need of social care such as abused children can be nurtured and supported in a more family-like environment. Also, we will provide subsidies for the rent of existing buildings and for facility improvement in order to promote group homes, small-scale group care, etc.

<Promotion of comprehensive independence support for single-parent families>

In order to provide overall and comprehensive support combining appropriate support menu items toward various issues single-parent families are facing, we will strengthen consultation service systems, enhance employment support programs including support for job change and career development, and promote learning support including peer support for children.

An amendment bill was approved by the Diet in 2014; we will take necessary measures such as removing the restriction on double payment of child-rearing allowances and public pension, allowing payment of the difference when the amount of pension is less than that of the allowance; and expanding the scope of families eligible for the Loan for Single-Mother Families and Widows to include single-father families.

<Establishment of a fair and stable system for specific chronic diseases in childhood>

We are making efforts to eliminate the excessive burden placed on prefectures for measures against intractable diseases, a bill for a new act on intractable diseases, etc. was approved by the Diet in 2014, aiming to establish a new, fair and stable system for specified chronic diseases in childhood and to drastically expand the diseases applicable for the system (the expenses for the current system until the end of December 2014 will be budgeted separately).

<Support for children affected by the Great East Japan Earthquake>

We will strengthen comprehensive support for affected children, including establishment of a program for providing children living in temporary housing where they can live safely and comfortably; establishment of a program to visit households and provide consultation and support for their physical and mental health; expansion of the program for mental care of children to also cover their physical health; and expansion of playground equipment installation, etc. to the 3 affected prefectures.

(2) Good practices regarding education are as follows:

<High School Tuition Support Fund System>

The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) has been striving to reduce the burden of educational costs on families throughout the educational stages. For example, in April 2010, it built the system of tuition support for high school students.

Additionally, it revised the system in 2013 to cope with problems such as the significant gap between the tuition burden of public and private high school students and the heavy burden of the cost of education on low-income households. This new system does not apply to households paying residence taxes more than a fixed amount. On the other hand, it has further expanded additional tuition support funds for private school students in low-income households. Thus, students will be able to advance to the high school of their choice without concern over the financial situation of households.

<High School Supplemental Scholarship Fund>

In order to reduce the burden of educational costs apart from course tuition, the new grant system "High School Supplemental Scholarship Fund" was established, intended for low-income households regardless of whether a student is attending public or private school.

<Bullying prevention>

The Act for the Promotion of Measures to Prevent Bullying was enacted in 2013. The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology formulated the fundamental policy to prevent bullying and provides subsidies for prefectures to improve educational counseling systems at schools.

(3) Japan has prioritized child-focused sectors in its ODA policy. Examples of recent projects are as follows:

i) Measures against human trafficking in the Mekong region

Following rapid economic growth and advancement of information flow and networks, the number of cases of trafficking in persons (TIP) (including children) has been increasing in the Mekong region.

Japan has identified TIP as a common challenge in the region and has been supporting the anti-TIP mechanism throughout the Mekong region in addition to support in the three countries of Thailand, Vietnam, and Myanmar.

The following projects aim to support anti-TIP measures in both origin and destination countries of victims of human trafficking:

- The Project on Strengthening of Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) for Protection on Trafficked Persons in Thailand (2009-2014) has supported strengthening the MDT function of the Thai government, which intended to protect and support victims of trafficking. The members of the team published an operational guideline on MDT in 2011.
- The Project on Capacity Improvement of Recovery and Reintegration Assistance for Trafficked Persons in Myanmar (2012-2015) has supported the development of capacities of those who support victims of human trafficking.
- The Project for the Establishment of Anti-Trafficking in Persons Hotline in Viet Nam (2012-2015) has supported the development of a hotline in the Ministry of Labor, Invalids and Social Affairs of Viet Nam to enhance the prevention of human trafficking.

ii) Promoting opportunities of education for children (especially for girls)

There are many girls in the world who do not have access to school due to economic and cultural reasons, and have no choice but to get married in their early teens, and live in poverty. Japan has provided various support to improve the situations that these girls face.

- The Non-formal Education Promotion Project (2011-2015) in Pakistan has provided opportunities of the non-formal education for approximately 160,000 of children and adults (about 70% of them are female) who missed the opportunities to be educated in school. This project promotes education especially for women by encouraging every community, in such cases as a husband does not allow

his wife to go out, to take heed of their situation and to improve it. Contents of the curriculum are also designed to attract women's interest so that they can study topics related to their actual life.

- The Project for Upgrading Primary Girls Schools into Elementary Schools in Southern Rural Sindh (2014) plans to extend and reconstruct around 30 existing elementary girls schools and to convert them into elementary-middle schools for girls aged between 10 and 12 years old in Pakistan.
- Broadening the Regional Initiative for Developing Girls Education (Phase II) (2009-2013) in Yemen has supported to build capacities of administrative institutions. It has also provided educational activities to understand the importance of women's education, and promoted their participation in school management. As a result, the program has successfully changed the awareness of schools and communities on girls' education, increased the numbers of girls who go to school, and improved their learning environment.

iii) Prevention of social risk and enhancement of integrated service delivery

In the Central American region in recent years, the number of crimes has increased and public security conditions have remarkably worsened. In addition, the reported cases of accusations related to gender-based violence such as domestic violence and sexual abuse have also increased. The victims of these cases have included many girls. While possibilities for residents, including girls, to face social risks (e.g. child abuse, domestic violence, drugs, and sexually transmitted infections) are increasing, Japan has supported efforts to develop mechanisms to prevent these risks and to address them by encouraging government institutions, communities, and families to work together.

- The Project for Enhancing Integrated Service Delivery for Social Risk Prevention and Attention for Families and Communities (2012-2016) has supported the Ministry of Family, Adolescent and Children of Nicaragua to develop mechanisms to address social risks. It has also provided assistance for the analysis of the social conditions of communities and provided training for government officials.

iv) Control and Eradication of Poliomyelitis

In the world today, there remain 3 countries (Afghanistan, Nigeria and Pakistan) which are polio-endemic. Japan has contributed to support controlling and eradicating the disease, together with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). The recent projects include:

- The Project for Infectious Diseases Prevention for Children (2014-, in Afghanistan)
- The Polio Eradication Project (2014-; in Nigeria)
- The Project for the Control and Eradication of Poliomyelitis (2014-, in Pakistan)

2. Please indicate how your national laws and policies provide opportunities for children to access budget information and participate in budgeting and fiscal processes. Please specify the extent to which resources spent on children are visible and whether budget data is disaggregated by child rights related programmes, and/or age (0-18), in budget documents. Are any child friendly versions of budget information produced?

(1) The data of "public education expenses disbursed for each" is provided in the Japanese Public Finance Fact Sheet.

(2) The Ministry of Finance provides a page on its homepage for children so that children can learn about the tax and the fiscal systems easily (<http://www.mof.go.jp/kids/index.php>).

In addition, on the page called "Think about the Finance of Japan", videos and games are used so that everyone, including children, can understand the Japanese public financial system (<http://www.zaisei.mof.go.jp/>).

3. What are the mechanisms in place to ensure transparent, effective and efficient utilization of public resources for the realization of children's rights in line with Article 4 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child?

N/A

4. What mechanisms are in place to assess the impacts of fiscal policies and budgets on children? Are human rights and child rights impact assessments conducted in relation to budget planning and execution? Please indicate measures in place to identify the needs of the most marginalized and vulnerable children, and formulate targets that assess the impact of public spending on these groups.

(1) Each Ministry conducts an assessment of its policies and publicizes the results.

(2) Regarding education, elementary and junior high school students having financial difficulty attending schools can receive financial assistance to cover expenses such as for school supplies and lunches from the educational boards of municipalities if the boards approve them.

5. What systems or mechanisms are in place to ensure that the private sector contributes, rather than undermine, state efforts to improve public spending on children? Please also indicate if systems of mechanisms are in place to ensure that public resources are spent well also when government funded children's rights programmes/projects are outsourced to the private sector.

N/A

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