

Tokyo Forum Discusses New System to Boost Foreign Workers in Japan

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Tokyo, Japan -- The 35th Peace Diplomats Forum, hosted by UPF-Japan, convened at the United Nations University in Shibuya, Tokyo on April 3, 2019. Seven current ambassadors and three chargé d'affaires as well as 90 other guests, who included former members of the National Diet, Japan's legislature; UN representatives; former ambassadors of Japan; and academics and scholars participated in the forum.

The event opened with Mr. Kajikuri Masayoshi, president of UPF-Japan, introducing UPF's activities around the world, including the World Summit and International Leadership Conference that were held in 2018, and UPF's vision.

The Japanese government has introduced a new "Specified Skills" visa status for foreign workers to alleviate labor shortages in a range of industries that takes effect on April 1. In this forum, an official from the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare and an official from the Ministry of Justice spoke about policies relating to and the situation of foreign workers and the Technical Intern Training Program, under the theme of "Labor Market Trends and Recent Policies about Foreign Workers in Japan,"

After the official from the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare highlighted statistics on foreign workers, he spoke about the revised Immigration Control Law, which establishes a new resident status of "Specified Skilled Workers" 1 and 2. The new visas seek to boost the number of foreign workers in 14 industries, including agriculture, nursing care, construction, and restaurants.

The official from the Ministry of Justice spoke about the current situation of the Technical Intern Training Program, which was initiated in 1993 to contribute to human development in developing economies by

providing training, technical skills and technology experiences to workers from these countries. However, due to some challenges the program faces, both ministries are reviewing how to improve the program.



Also on April 1, the Immigration Bureau was upgraded to the Immigration Services Agency, which will be an affiliate of the Ministry of Justice. The agency will function to prevent illegal work but also to support foreign nationals living in Japan.

Afterwards, the participants asked many questions and gave comments.

At the end of the event, eight diplomats from embassies in Japan were appointed as Ambassadors for Peace.