

**State under Review: Japan**

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We have five crucial reforms that Japan has to undertake.

The first condition that needs to be improved is the controversial Internship program for migrant workers, which touches and violates the codes of human trafficking.

Even though Japan, for the first time in history, has been recognized by the United States to have met all the human rights efforts to be classified as the highest Tier, (Tier 1) in human trafficking, we believe that we have to bring up the unethical treatment of the approximately 230 thousand foreign “internship workers” who are brought to Japan by a government-led program.

The majority of workers from Vietnam and China, face the risk of overwork, unpaid stipends and sexual abuse. The only group that protects the current problematic conditions is the Solidarity Network with Migrants Japan. Even though this group is existent, the current government program is a legal form of human trafficking.

Whilst the Organization for Technical Intern Training as the program execution body was established and introduced more criminal penalties against rights violations, there has been no reforms and protection systems implemented as promised in 2017. The government's responsibility is to establish a branch within the government to ensure the right conditions and legislate laws that will prevent and deter Japanese companies to exploit the foreign workers and further assure and provide accessibility for migrant workers to file a complaint.

The second issue that Japan needs to tackle is the housing problem in Japan. With regards to the aftermath of the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear disaster, we aim to extend housing assistance to those who were displaced by the disaster, to ensure that survivors do not fall into poverty and otherwise become forced to return to their homes due to financial hardships, which still do not have adequate infrastructure as a result of the continued concerns about environmental contamination in the area.

Furthermore, given the increasing gravity of the poverty issue in Japan, access to certain environmental services has increasingly become an issue. For example, in keeping with the Sustainable Development Goals, we pledge to a commitment to sustaining access to clean water and sanitation as well as a clean and healthy environment free from industrial pollution, both of which have been an issue in the past.

The third criteria that needs to be under consideration is in keeping with our commitment to tackling issues of poverty especially among women and children, we pledge to increase financial assistance to single-parent households, and furthermore, we aim to further tackle the wage gap between men and women by offering incentives for companies that make efforts to

allow women to keep their positions after taking maternity leave. Moreover, despite Japan having the highest paternity leave length in the world, the rate of parents who take advantage of this remains low. Therefore, we aim to increase the participation rate of fathers in this scheme. With regard to gender-based violence, we aim to further improve the way the new sex crime laws are implemented, in particular by focusing on police procedures especially with regard to bringing perpetrators to justice and ensuring proper medical care for victims.

The fourth issue is the access to the government information by the media. We will encourage increased transparency surrounding the state secrets law, by encouraging the establishment of an independent oversight board to monitor the implementation and prosecution of the law. We would also like to note that an intranet access prohibition is needed to ensure a tangible line between the information within enterprises and government related information to prevent government corruption.

The fifth and the last issue is condition of Human Rights for children. In the status quo, Japan has green light and a 9.25 rating out of 10 in terms of the well-being of Children's Human Rights. However child poverty is still prevalent, with 15% of the Japanese living in destitution.

Access to education for children in poor households, and especially access to higher education, remains an issue. Thus, we pledge to strengthen our commitment to providing financial aid and welfare services to poor families, particularly focusing on opportunities for upward mobility.

We would like to conclude this statement by addressing that for Japan there is still much space to improve the human rights conditions and we pledge to make an effort to better ensure the rights and commit our efforts to be a role model for neighboring countries.