

The 1st Yao City Foreign Residents' Council Meeting in FY 2020

[Minutes Summary]

Date & Time: Thursday, September 17, 2020, 7:00 p.m.–8:30 p.m.

Location: Conference Room 701, 7th Floor, Main Building, Yao City Hall

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

Secretariat Members

(Cultural and International Affairs Division):

Mr. KAMATA (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

2. How to proceed with the meetings

A member of the Secretariat explained how to proceed with the Yao City Foreign Residents' Council Meetings in FY 2020 (Document 1).

3. Current situation involving Yao City foreign residents

A member of the Secretariat explained the current situation involving Yao City foreign residents (Document 2).

4. Report of the survey on the provision of information for and other needs of Yao City foreign residents

Mr. Park from NPO Tokkabi Association presented interim results of the survey on the provision of information for and other needs of Yao City foreign residents conducted by the NPO (Document 3). He reported the outline of the survey and the results of some of the survey items, including how foreign residents find employment, their child-rearing concerns, and whether they are aware of designated disaster evacuation sites.

- Regarding employment, more foreign residents have taken jobs as nursing caregivers as compared with the last survey.
- On their child-rearing concerns, multiple respondents stated that they had difficulty carrying out the necessary procedures for their senior high school children, since interpretation or translation support for school-related procedures is not available for children of that age or older.
- On concerns related to medical treatment, it turns out that many respondents have experienced

problems communicating with their doctor and felt the need for a medical interpreter.

- To the question regarding disaster evacuation, etc., there was a response stating that they obtained the information via YouTube.
- The question regarding access to information was responded to with requests for dissemination through the City's Facebook page and expansion of the range of multilingual information provided on its website.
- More respondents than expected had the experience of coming across discriminatory demonstrations, flyers or handouts.

5. Report on achievements in fiscal 2019 related to the Yao City Plan to Promote a Multicultural Society

A member of the Secretariat presented a progress report (FY2019) on the Yao City Plan to Promote a Multicultural Society (Document 4).

<Opinions>

- Does the City have any plan to increase the number of consultation service desks for foreign residents? I teach at Shiki Elementary School, where many foreign students are enrolled. We refer them to any of the City's consultation service desks for foreign residents. However, under the present circumstances, where those facilities are located too far away and not easily accessed, interpreters at our school actually provide advice/support for our students when they have questions. Recently, we also assisted with their applications for the Special Cash Payments. However, due to the large number of inquiries we have been receiving, our limited capacity will no longer allow us to process all of them. I wish the City could set up a consultation service desk for foreign residents in its branch office in Shiki or at another convenient location.

(Secretariat)

- At present, we have no plans to expand the number of consultation service desks. However, there will be ways for the existing desks to work with you, such as providing telephone consultation and dispatching a staff member for on-site service as necessary.

6. Action taken and results obtained regarding the Yao City Plan to Promote a Multicultural Society

A member of the Secretariat presented the results of the Yao City Plan to Promote a Multicultural Society (FY 2014 to FY 2020) (Document 5).

7. Opinion exchange – Topic: “What are considered to be the challenges in connection with the Yao City Plan to Promote a Multicultural Society”

<Opinion exchange>

- We must consider where interpreters will be required when a new need arises involving foreign residents, such as the response to the coronavirus pandemic.
- The take-up rate of the Special Cash Payments could serve as a reference in judging the extent to

which information reaches foreign residents.

- It is not known whether the information dispatched is really received by those in need. While most Vietnamese collect information via Facebook, people use different information gathering tools, depending on their nationality and other factors. It is therefore important to examine effective ways of disseminating information.
- There seem to be some cases where registration of marriage between foreign nationals is handled differently depending on the staff member involved when it is accepted at the city hall; there must be uniformity in the handling procedure.
- While elementary and junior high schools offer many opportunities to experience multiple cultures, it is desirable that opportunities to have contact with different cultures and people from different countries be available at an earlier stage such as at kindergarten or nursery school. This will enable both Japanese children and those of foreign origin to more easily accept differences between each other.
- The lack of translations in minority languages is a challenge regarding the dissemination of information.
- Information easily spreads within a community in an area with a concentrated population of foreign residents, but not in an area with a dispersed foreign population.
- Given that smartphones are now more widespread than when the previous plan was developed, and more people obtain information using smartphones, the City should use them to disseminate information more effectively.
- How to convey information to elderly people and others who cannot use a smartphone remains an issue.
- Those who have lost their jobs due to the impact of the coronavirus pandemic do not know where they can go to seek advice and support.
- Those wishing to receive welfare benefits have encountered difficulties if they own their own home, because home ownership is sometimes an obstacle to receiving such support.
- While the City has worked to make the Livelihood Welfare Fund Loan System operated by Yao City Social Welfare Council more widely known through means such as distributing relevant brochures and posting relevant information on its website, such information has not reached all people. It remains a challenge as to how the system can be known to those not connected to the network.
- It would be helpful if some of the medical interpreters could have expertise in pregnancy and other female-specific conditions and diseases.
- For those who do not understand the Japanese language, going to the city hall itself is already a difficult obstacle to overcome, and they seek advice/support instead from their community.
- As an issue related to child-rearing and education support, such support is not readily available for people living in an area with a dispersed population.
- It is essential to work toward creating an environment that helps children of foreign origin establish their own identities and that the people around them acknowledge and support this

effort, so that the children concerned can respect their own origins.

- It is difficult to properly deal with children with developmental disorders or children who do not meet the diagnostic criteria but display the symptoms of a developmental disorder. Their parents/guardians as well may have difficulty understanding or accepting that the child needs help, which could create a delay in taking action. In addition, whether the symptoms are due to a developmental disorder or the lack of Japanese-language proficiency may be difficult to determine, so it may not be possible to determine whether the child suffers from a developmental disorder. Requests for advice/support from people with such concerns have been received in various places and on different occasions.
- Decisions for promoting community development are usually made with very few foreign residents involved, even in an area where many of them gather and live. We must develop an environment that enables foreign residents to participate in this decision-making process.

8. Adjournment