



Established in 1974, JPPF is the world's first supra-partisan parliamentary group on population and development.

In an age when global solidarity is needed to address various challenges, JPPF is expected to play an increasingly important role as a parliamentary caucus with a long history and tradition of leading Japan's diplomacy in the international community.

In every issue of JPPF Newsletter, we will carry "News" on activities and initiatives related to population and development issues.

## News:

○ *JPPF Meeting Held for Supporting Afghanistan and Ukraine*

[Editorial responsibility: JPPF secretariat]

## News

### JPPF Meeting Held for Supporting Afghanistan and Ukraine

As the humanitarian crisis escalates in the wake of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the Japan Parliamentarians Federation for Population (JPPF) held emergency meetings on 30 March and 5 April. Members at the meetings listened to reports on how support is provided in the affected areas and what support is needed, and discussed the role Japan should play and the way in which Japan can provide assistance.

In December last year, JPPF organized a study meeting on "The Humanitarian Crisis in Afghanistan and the Role of Japan", and drew up concrete recommendations on effectively providing assistance to Afghanistan. Champions from JPPF submitted the recommendations to the Prime Minister's Office and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (["Newsletter No. 113"](#)). Follow-up reports related to the recommendations were also made at the meeting on 30 March. In this and the next newsletter, we report on the two meetings, respectively.

◎ Agenda for the meeting on 30 March

Moderator: Hon. Hitoshi Kikawada, Secretary-General of JPPF

Opening address: Hon. Yoko Kamikawa, Chair of JPPF

1. Follow-up on the "Five Recommendations on the Humanitarian Crisis in Afghanistan and Japan's Role" submitted to the Government of Japan
  - Report: Mr. Tomofumi Nishinaga, Deputy Director-General/Deputy Assistant Minister, Middle Eastern and African Affairs Bureau, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA)
  - Comments: Dr. Daisaku Higashi, Sophia University
  - Dr. Khaled Reshad, Executive Director, Karez Health and Educational Services
2. Assistance for Ukraine, Part I
  - Ms. Mariko Sato, Director, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Tokyo Office
  - Ms. Tomoko Fukuda, Regional Director, East and South East Asia and Oceania Region, International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF)
  - Mr. Masayuki Takeuchi, Counsellor, Permanent Delegation of Japan to the OECD, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA)
  - Mr. Hideharu Maruyama, Director-General of the Residency Management and Support Department, Immigration Services Agency, Ministry of Justice (MoJ)



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### Follow-up on the "Five Recommendations on the Humanitarian Crisis in Afghanistan and Japan's Role" submitted to the Government of Japan

[Mr. Tomofumi Nishinaga, MOFA]

The Taliban interim government this year postponed reopening of secondary education for girls in contradiction of their previous announcement. The foreign ministers of Japan and other interested countries issued a joint statement calling for reversal of the decision. The humanitarian situation in Afghanistan remains difficult. According to the United Nations, 23 million people, or more than half of Afghanistan's 38 million people, are in particular need of food assistance. After the deterioration of the situation in Afghanistan, Japan has decided to provide a total of \$174 million in humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan (\$65 million in emergency grant aid and \$109 million from the FY2021 supplementary budget). Japanese NGOs for international cooperation active in Afghanistan are providing not only food assistance, but also support in education and agriculture.

**Japan Parliamentarians  
Federation for Population  
(JFPF)**

Established 1 April, 1974

Chair: Hon. Yoko Kamikawa  
(7th Chair)

Membership: 74  
(As of 28 April 2022)


Secretariat: Asian Population  
and Development Association  
(APDA)

TEL: +81-3-5405-8844

FAX: +81-3-5405-8845

E-mail: [apda@apda.jp](mailto:apda@apda.jp)

Website: <http://www.apda.jp>

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from this link 

<https://www.apda.jp/en/topics.html>

[Dr. Daisaku Higashi, Sophia University]

I would like to express my appreciation to JFPF for submitting your recommendations to the government. The economic sanctions have caused food shortages and economic paralysis, and it is expected that much of humanitarian aid will henceforth be directed to Ukraine. For these reasons, there is concern that the situation in Afghanistan will further worsen. The Peshawar-kai, which inherited the ambitions and projects of Dr. Tetsu Nakamura, who spent 20 years transforming Afghanistan's desert into farmland, has held discussions with the Taliban interim government in Afghanistan, and continues to provide assistance. In February this year, the Peshawar-kai and JICA jointly completed writing a textbook on Dr. Nakamura's irrigation system in Japanese, English, Dari, and Pashto. It will be important to distribute this textbook throughout Afghanistan in order to normalize the economy and send the message that Japan will help the Afghan society become self-reliant and stable.

[Dr. Khaled Reshad, Karez Health and Educational Services]

The local situation remains dire. Even though remittances for humanitarian assistance are not in breach of the sanctions, organizations cannot send money, and assistance is restricted. There is no food in local hospitals, and reportedly children in hospitals are starving to death. The Japanese government is to be most trusted. We ask the Japanese government to hold dialogue with the Taliban interim government, while providing Afghan people with direct support in one way or another.



◎ Q&A Session

[Hon. Ayano Kunimitsu]

I visited Dr. Nakamura's Peshawar-kai several times when I was a student. He taught me that to save lives, it is not enough that we treat patients, but we must also look at the social structure, poverty issues, and the political situation. It was reported that there are food shortages and that people are starving to death even in hospitals. I think there are ways for Japan to lift restrictions on remittances or send food and supplies instead of money. I would like to hear from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on this point.



[Ministry of Foreign Affairs]

The international community contributes to UN agencies working in Afghanistan, notably the World Food Programme (WFP), and support those agencies' projects for procuring food and transporting it to Afghanistan for distribution. There are no restrictions on remittances to WFP, and Japan has contributed a total of \$31.4 million from the FY2021 supplementary budget.

[Dr. Daisaku Higashi, Sophia University]

People are barely subsisting on such aid. It is not enough. We do not even know how many tens of thousands are dying. We send money to neighboring countries and have supplies transported into Afghanistan, but there are limits. As Dr. Nakamura said, we need to help the Afghan people feed themselves. Otherwise, our assistance will not be sustainable. If we can start the irrigation system described in the Peshawar-kai's textbook, it will have a profound effect. We would appreciate it if you could give us support in that regard.

[Hon. Seigo Kitamuras]

There is once again concern that we might have to discard large volumes of surplus raw milk in Japan. But instead of wasting money on discarding milk, can we not think about converting milk into other dairy products with longer life and distributing them to those facing hunger? I think we should use the money on something positive like helping out each other. The preamble of the Constitution states, "We desire to occupy an honored place in an international society". To this end, we should contribute to the world not only in the area of military security but also in food security.



[Hon. Keizo Takemi, Executive Director of JPPF]

I believe that there is an agreement on sanctions against Afghanistan. But within this framework, we could, for example, negotiate with the United States to allow a certain amount of remittances for humanitarian assistance through Japanese banks, or negotiate with the Taliban interim government, on the receiving end of assistance, to have their cooperation in humanitarian assistance. Without concrete actions in such bilateral diplomacy, the problems we face now cannot be resolved. This is something only the government can do. Please comment on this point.



[Ministry of Foreign Affairs]

The immediate task for Japan, the United States, and Europe is to bring the Taliban interim government to a situation where they can do well enough to be recognized internationally. The important point is to persuade the Taliban to change their behavior with respect to girls' education, democratic processes, and so on, and we are earnestly and forcefully working on the Taliban interim government.

[Hon. Keizo Takemi, Executive Director of JPPF]

Rather, I think that the order in which we should proceed is to first work on the Taliban interim government to cooperate from the humanitarian perspective on specific cases and gradually expand international recognition and build a momentum for lifting of sanctions. From what was mentioned just now, Japan cannot initiate its own moves unless with the agreement of the United States. I think Japan should set itself apart and adopt a more flexible diplomatic stance of working on the Taliban interim government, even if it is under economic sanctions, and seek an opening to resolve the situation. I think such a stance essentially aligns with Japan's diplomacy based on human security.

[Hon. Hitoshi Kikawada, Secretary-General of JPPF]

While Japanese banks have cleared the issue of remittance to some extent, U.S. banks are apparently hesitating to make the remittance in dollars. The High-level Pledging Event on Supporting the Humanitarian Response in Afghanistan will convene tomorrow, and I urge the Japanese government to recognize this remittance issue and speak out at the event.

[Dr. Khaled Reshad, Karez Health and Educational Services]

Japan has hosted conferences to enable support for Afghanistan in the past, which was instrumental in bringing about various kinds of international assistance. I hope that Japan will host an international conference, including with the participation of the Taliban, so that there can be opportunities for discussions on what the international community wants from the Taliban and what the international community can do for them. For this, I would like to ask for your cooperation.

[Ms. Mariko Sato, UNFPA]

UNFPA is working with Family Health Houses and midwives in Afghanistan. As noted in the video message from Dr. Aleksandar Sasha Bodiroza, UNFPA Representative in Afghanistan, one pregnant woman is dying every two hours from complications related to childbirth or pregnancy, and one in two women face gender-based violence (GBV). We express our appreciation to the Japanese government for your support, and would like to ask for your further assistance in dealing with the current situation.



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### Assistance for Ukraine, Part I

[Ms. Mariko Sato, UNFPA]

At the start of the military invasion, some 265,000 women in Ukraine were pregnant, of whom estimated 80,000 are expected to give birth in the next three months. UNFPA has set up mobile clinics and temporary maternity units, and is delivering medical supplies and other items needed to deal with complications related to pregnancy and childbirth in bulletproof vehicles. Dr. Natalia Kanem, Executive Director of UNFPA, visited a shelter in Moldova for Ukrainian refugees, and emphasized the vital need for increased support and mutual help to prepare health systems to cope with the impact of a further increase in the number of refugees. ([Video message](#))

[Ms. Tomoko Fukuda, IPPF]

Leveraging the strength of an international federation working with NGOs based in 142 countries around the world, IPPF is working with Member Associations and partners (local NGOs, networks of obstetricians, gynecologists, and counselors, etc.) in Ukraine and six neighboring countries (Poland, Latvia, Romania, Hungary, Moldova, and Slovakia) to provide sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services and emergency supplies. As GBV is increasing, IPPF has also started providing physical and mental health care for victims. The activities of local partners in Ukraine include procurement and delivery of medical supplies needed for reproductive health, blood transfusions, obstetric care, and clinical management of rape.

[Mr. Masayuki Takeuchi, MOFA]

On 11 March, the Japanese government decided to provide \$100 million in emergency humanitarian assistance to Ukraine and neighboring countries, and on 24 March, it announced an additional \$100 million in emergency humanitarian assistance in the fields of health and food. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has also taken direct steps to simplify requirements for visa applications to expedite the process of screening and visa issuance for refugees from Ukraine.

[Mr. Hideharu Maruyama, MoJ]

The government has announced a policy whereby the Immigration Services Agency will take the lead in matching Ukrainian refugees who have arrived in Japan without known acquaintances or relatives in Japan with local governments, companies, and NGOs that have offered assistance. The agency will also provide livelihood support for the immediate future during their stay in Japan. A contact point has already been established at the agency to accept offers for assisting the refugees. In addition, at a meeting on 25 March, the Cabinet approved a reserve fund for activities supporting the acceptance of refugees.

[Closing Address by Hon. Yoko Kamikawa, Chair of JPPF]

In an emergency, it is very important to know what the priorities are. Needless to say, measures to save lives are essential. Besides, agriculture and health care may unravel when we need them, if we fail to consider the medium- to long-term responses in these areas. Therefore, I think we will also need to consider what preparations are needed in this regard when providing support.

With respect to support for Afghanistan, it is very important that Peshawar-kai and Karez Health and Educational Services can continue their long-standing activities. I would hope that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will work on improving their conditions through proper stocktaking of the situation and diplomatic negotiations. I would ask the ministry to report on the work to JPPF, because we would like to take further actions if the work is found to be wanting.

In Ukraine, many pregnant women are in a distressing situation of having to evacuate while protecting their own and their child's lives. As I listened to reports on how you are providing humanitarian assistance in the field to protect the lives, health, and dignity of women, by trial and error in some sense, I felt that JPPF should also be able to respond more effectively to the priority issues in emergencies and fulfill our roles. And the next time an emergency situation arises, we would be better poised to respond more quickly. I hope our activities can enhance our responsiveness. I would like to express my appreciation for your very valuable follow-up reports today as well as for your reports on the efforts of your respective ministries and organizations in responding to this emerging situation.



JPPF Secretariat  
TEL: +81-3-5405-8844  
FAX: +81-3-5405-8845  
E-mail: [apda@apda.jp](mailto:apda@apda.jp)



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