

## **Chapter 4. Aiming for a society that is harmonious for work and life for both men and women (Realization of work-life balance)**

### **Section 1. Review of working styles**

#### **1. Developing an Environment with Suppression of Long Working Hours, Adoption of Telework, Revision of the Styles of Work and Others**

##### **1) Promotion of Initiatives Based on the Charter for Work-Life Balance and the Action Policy for Promoting Work-life Balance**

In the 'Subcommittee to Collaboratively Promote and Evaluate Work-life Balance', established under the 'Council of Executives of Public and Private Sectors to Promote Work-life Balance' consisting of representatives from economic and labor circles, local governments, experts, related ministers, the review and evaluation of efforts to promote work-life balance based on the 'Charter' and the 'Action Policy', is being performed along with the cooperation between the relative parties.

##### **2) Promotion of Suppressing Long Working Hours and Taking Annual Paid Leave**

Based on the 'Guidelines for Improvement of Working Time Arrangements', to accelerate voluntary initiatives aimed at improving Working Time Arrangements, such as working hours, work-life balance is being promoted.

##### **3) Support and Assistance for the Small to Medium Businesses for the Initiatives of Improvement of Working Time Arrangements**

Based on the 'charter' and the 'action plan', the initiatives for the businesses such as suppression of long working hours, taking annual paid vacation is promoted.

##### **4) Securing Choices for the Diverse Styles of Working Corresponding to the Life-style**

Based on the part time employment act, the administrative guidances for the business owners are implemented and the treatment for the normal worker is secured through the subsidy supply for the business owners taking initiative for the balanced treatment of the part-time worker.

In addition, the supportive guidance for short-time regular employees, to be able to obtain similar treatment to that of full-time employees, despite working less prescribed working hours (days) than that of a full-time employee, is being performed.

##### **5) Promoting teleworking**

Relevant ministries are working together by developing a "New Strategy in Information and Communications Technology(IT)" in May 2010, placing the contribution and activation of the creation of employment opportunities and community of people who hope for the variety working styles in the "promoting teleworking," aiming for the realization of the goals and seven million people of at-home type teleworkers until 2015, expanding the environment for further spread of telework, and promoting public awareness.

6) Improvement of Work Environment for Women in Agricultural Management  
Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries is promoting family management agreements' in order to reduce the workload of women, who take on the heavy burden of housework and childcare in addition to work during pregnancy and parenting and facilitate women's participation in agricultural, forestry and fishery management and community activities.

## **2. Promoting Involvement of Men in the childcare**

### **1) Promoting Acquisition of Childcare Leave for Men (( Mom & Dad Child Care Leave Plus)**

To promote childcare leave for male workers, if requested by both parents to take childcare leave, according to Childcare and Family Care Leave Act amendment, which came into effect in June 2010, the extension of the period of maternity leave can be obtained 'Papa Mama Childcare Leave Plus' ('Daddy Quota' Japanese version) has been incorporated.

### **2) Awareness and Popularization for childcare by Men**

Together with the enforcement of the Childcare and Family Care Leave Act amended in June 2010, to increase the number of 'Ikumen', men who are actively participating in parenting, the 'Ikumen Project' (<http://ikumen-project.jp/>) was started.

### **3) Consciousness for the Household Work and Childcare by Men**

The school education is going to provide guidance about the mutual cooperation and understanding, the equality of men and women as the members in the working life and social participation, the significance of building a home with mutual cooperation between men and women by playing the role as a member of the family etc.

## **Section 2. Realization of working environment that enables the coexistence of work and family-care**

### **1. Spread and establishment of coexistent support systems such as childcare leave, along with the support of work continuation, aiming to support re-employment of women raising children**

#### **1) Establishment of coexistent support systems of shortened working hours and parental leave**

The short-time working system, vacation care system and the limitations of overtime application for employers with fewer than 100 employees, that has been suspended so far, will be applied fully from July 1, 2012. While ensuring thorough and widespread application of amendments of Childcare and Family Care Leave Act, we are supporting the development of work environment of coexistent support systems, that can be used with confidence, such as shorter working hours and predetermined measures of Childcare and Family Care Leave, which is defined by the act.

#### **2) Development of the Work Environment with Easy to Use Dual Support System**

After grant restructure in September 2011, to assist employers in the performing maintenance of employment environment for workers to take care of work and family childcare is likely to continue, with coexistent support grant and small and medium-sized enterprises coexistent support grant.

#### **3) Preventing of Disadvantageous Treatment Serving as the Reason for Obtaining Childcare Leave**

The government has been supervising quickly and strictly for cases where there is suspicion of violating the law, responding appropriately to the consultation from workers pertaining to dismissal or other disadvantageous treatment on the grounds of pregnancy, childbirth, and the acquisition of maternity leave before and after childbirth and childcare leave and notifying for preventing from violating the law.

#### **4) Promoting Health Management during Pregnancy and after childbirth**

The disseminate information is addressed to the business owners, female workers, medical persons for the maternal health control measures based on the equal employment opportunity act for Men and Women and maternity protection regulations of labour standards act ( Act No. 49 of 2010).

#### **5) Supporting Re-employment of the Child Caring Women**

The relevant ministries are taking efforts working in coordination with each other to implement support measures for supporting reemployment and entrepreneurship of the women who has left her job for the child care, based on the 'Child care re-challenge support plan' (enforced in December 2006 (H18)). The training courses using time zone of weekends and late evenings are set in the employment competence development facility and training opportunity are assured.

#### **6) Supporting Continuing Employment by Securing Equal Employment Opportunity for Men and Women**

The guidelines are given to the business owners who are thorough in the average man and woman handling according to the equal employment opportunity act for Men and

Women and smooth and rapid solution is addressed according to the conflict resolution assistance by prefectural labor bureau and conciliation by the equal opportunity conciliation conference, for the conflicts between the worker and the business owner.

## **2. Promoting Further Initiatives Using ‘Visualization’ of the Initiatives in the Companies and others**

### **1) Conscious Reformation of the Business Managers**

For efficient work habits that are required in order to achieve work-life balance, educational brochure for businesses “Three things to consider and ten practical steps taken toward the realization of work-life balance’ was created in September 2010.

### **2) Promotion of Formulation and Publishing of the General Action Plan (Act for Measures to Support the Development of the Next Generation)**

By the enforcement of the revised Act for Measures to Support the Development of the Next Generation amendment, the government is working to further promote the development of action plan and notifications for general employers.

### **3) Promotion of the Initiative and Common Knowledge of the Next Generation Certification Mark (Kurumin)**

Companies that meet certain requirements to develop and implement appropriate action plans and to achieve those goals, are accredited by the Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare, with a certification mark (nicknamed Kurumin). To increase the awareness of the certification mark and this certification system, the recognition of the tax measures for certified companies founded in June 2011 was implemented, thereby promoting the acquisition of the certification.

### **4) Support for Companies through Award System**

‘Square of balance support’ sites that publish the efforts of companies that are actively engaged in supporting both indices and supports can be evaluated, check the ‘ease of work-life balance’ their (<http://www.ryouritsushien.jp/>), encourages voluntary efforts toward work-life balance.

In addition, the government is going to actively support efforts to balance work and childcare nursing, for companies that perform significant results, the ‘Equality and balance promotion company award’ is implemented by the public, praising the efforts and making them widely known.

### **5) Dealing with Tendering Procedure**

From 2010, the cabinet office has introduced the structure to add point to the companies which positively carry out initiatives for work-life balance etc., when carrying out tendering according to the general competitive tendering comprehensive evaluation bidding system for the survey related to work-life balance or gender equality.