

Preface

The Cabinet Office, the Government of Japan has been conducting various International Youth Exchange Programs, aiming to foster healthy growth of youths who will be the core force of the next generation, by promoting friendship and mutual understanding among youths from Japan and other countries, while broadening their international view, as well as nurturing the spirit of international cooperation.

The Ship for World Youth Program (SWY) is a reorganized program of the Japanese Youth Goodwill Cruise program that began as one of the commemorative projects of the Centennial of the Meiji Restoration in 1967. Youths from 11 countries including Japan who have diverse backgrounds participate in various activities such as discussions, cultural exchanges and workshops in the program, the aim of which is to develop youths who can demonstrate leadership in various sectors of society amidst the progression of internationalization as well as to broaden their global perspectives. The participating youths originally participate in face-to-face activities such as discussions and seminars living together onboard in SWY. However, the situation of the global COVID-19 outbreak was still unpredictable, and we decided to host the SWY virtually again following the previous year.

The program consisted of 8 online sessions to provide a diverse range of programs to facilitate a simulated experience of the SWY program, including pre-program trainings for the Japanese participants, lectures on various SDGs fields by experts who are active in leadership positions in society, course discussions on the common theme of SDGs, workshops to introduce the traditional and food cultures of their countries, and the presentations of results of what they have gained in the main program. Japanese participants also expressed their enthusiasm in the debriefing session after the main program, where they talked passionately about their experiences and the outcomes of the program, and it was clear that they have achieved a significant amount of learning and growth through this program. It was also open to the public, and some youths who watched it said, "Now it's our turn to join in," showing promise for future programs.

We wish for each and every one of the participating youth to hereafter fully demonstrate their leadership skills locally, nationally or globally at any level of the stage.

The Cabinet Office would like to enrich the future SWY based on the experience and achievements of our past exchange programs.

This report records the various activities of the participating youths during the online exchange program. I hope that this report will be of use for your understanding of the fruits of the program, encouraging greater interest in international exchange and also assisting with your continued support in the years to come.

Finally, I would like to express my deepest gratitude for the cooperation of the various government representatives from the participating countries, the Ship for World Youth Alumni Associations and their members (former participants), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Japanese diplomatic offices in participating countries.

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Cabinet Office

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SWY Online

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* Personally identifiable information of PYs is deleted for the protection of personal information.