

policy. Specific examples include the issues of low fertility rates, protection of children, and youth crime.

Health

Restructuring of health care systems is being attempted in both countries. Given the multitude of questions involved in this process, there are surely some that represent areas in which cooperation is possible. For one, there is probable general Japanese interest in learning from Canada's own reorganization of its health care systems. As well, measures that are part of Japan's financing structure for health care, including the application of user fees, could be examined by Canada in order to evaluate their impact. Another example would be for Canada to take a look at the effect of the recent introduction of Japan's chronic care insurance bill.

In turn, Japan could learn from features relating to Canada's delivery of health care, such as its successful programs of specialized medical training.

Overall, the present health care systems in Canada are viewed to be of superior quality to Japan's. Nonetheless, as already mentioned, key health indicators (eg life expectancy) in Japan are better than in Canada. Canada would gain from learning the reasons for that situation.

Part of the answer could possibly be found through another worthwhile area of research, one that accomplishes an examination of the way in which social determinants (eg literacy rates, lifestyle policy, education policy) impact on health indicators in Canada and Japan.

With an ever increasing cross-border traffic of people and goods, disease monitoring agencies from both countries could find it mutually beneficial to establish working relationships. This exercise would especially be worthwhile given the recent increase in both Canada and Japan of tuberculosis and other infectious diseases.

Multiculturalism and Diversity

Canada has tremendous experience to share with Japan in matters of diversity, experience for which Japan already has a high regard. Beyond multiculturalism, Canada could successfully help to promote in Japan a broader acceptance of diversity, one that guarantees the full rights and protection of Japanese citizenship to cultural minority groups such as Japanese of Korean descent, as well as to women and other marginalized groups.

Japanese society has for long viewed itself as homogeneous. It is faced now with the need to accommodate workers from different ethnic groups and cultures. The need for

this influx of immigrant workers has been brought about by the ageing of its population and by the unwillingness of Japanese youth to work in certain types of occupations. The Japanese government is presently trying to address this issue. Canada could offer its expertise in this endeavour.

As a specific example, there is a need in Japan presently for increased protection of the rights of minorities and women in the work force. There is now only a very weak legal framework in Japan to ensure the well-being of these groups in the Japanese workplace. Attempts at ensuring this well-being are essentially being undertaken through mediation. In Canada, it is probably more solidly ensured through the application of human rights laws.

Canada and Japan also have issues of pressing mutual concern in this domain which could benefit from closer collaboration. Both countries could work together to improve the situation of temporary workers. A specific example are the problems faced by workers from the Philippines in both countries. Canada and Japan could perhaps both benefit in such an instance from the development of similar policies that would ensure the protection of the human rights of these workers.

Human Resources

Although there is a shrinking overall share of jobs available to youth in both Canada and Japan, there are still shortages in many types of jobs, including common and more specialized ones. Canada and Japan have had different ways to fill this need for workers. Is it better to promote permanent immigration, as Canada tends to do, or the arrival of temporary workers, as Japan does? An examination of the impact of both of these choices could enhance either country's policies regarding this question.

Youth

There is a growing urgency, as alluded to above, to deal with rising inter-generational conflicts in Canada and Japan caused, for instance, by tensions over employment opportunities and the problem of financing of social welfare systems. Collaboration between Canada and Japan on this problem could focus on trying to discover and implement means of relieving these social tensions.

The question of adoption and of the rights of children could also be included in this category.

Human Mobility and Immigration

There is scarcely any debate in Japan at the moment on immigration, despite the aforementioned issues surrounding temporary workers. Such a debate may arise however, and Canada would be well positioned to offer its expertise when it does.

Human mobility is an important aspect of globalization as people more than ever cross borders for reasons of employment. Mobility between Japan and Canada is surely due to increase. In this context, it would be important for Canada and Japan to settle basic social security issues, such as the issue of transferability of pensions.

Public Participation

In Canada, non-governmental organizations are seen as vital to the healthy functioning of democracy and to a healthy debate on policies. Canada's experience in this domain could help Japan to build its capacities in this respect.

Considerable work in Canada is undertaken by volunteers whereas many of the equivalent tasks in Japan are bureaucratized. As well, volunteers often do jobs that have to be done but are not done otherwise by paid workers. Voluntarism is also the backbone of community care in Canada (care for the elderly, for the poor, for the children). There does not exist such a culture of voluntarism in Japan, from which it could probably greatly benefit at various levels. Therefore, Canada may wish to share with Japan its experience in this domain too. However, there may be difficulties in Japan to introducing an exact Canadian model of voluntarism since volunteers tend to be strangers and Japanese are generally reluctant to allow strangers (eg people other than family members, neighbours, co-workers) to interfere in their personal lives. There may be a need for a culture change in Japan before it can adopt the Canadian model of voluntarism; more likely would be for an adaptation of the Canadian model to Japanese reality to be promoted. Still, there are many dimensions of voluntarism that do not typically involve intrusion in one's personal life, such as the work of many NGOs.

In fact, Japan's ongoing policy of decentralization has already had a tremendous impact on the thinking about voluntarism and non-profit organizations (NPO). Given Japan's increasing interest in NGO and volunteer development, especially due to the recent realization that social welfare roles need to be decentralized, Canada could provide a very useful model for Japan. The Canadian experience could be invaluable for Japan which is just beginning to undertake a transformation towards that style of public participation.

Cooperation in Third Countries

The question of whether Canada and Japan can effectively join forces in third countries has already been answered positively. The issue now is to determine what the two countries can do together and where. Social policy could offer another opportunity where the complementarities of Canada and Japan could be put to good effect.

One idea for joint work in third countries would be in the domain of education, especially the establishment of secondary schools where they are most needed. As well, both countries have been forced by globalization to consider more closely the problem of child labour and work could be done jointly on this important matter.

Third country cooperation could even be an area where the involvement of Canadian and Japanese youth could be encouraged.

However, before collaborating in third countries, Canada and Japan may first need to establish a shared sense of purpose and goals and a common method. Such a shared set of philosophies and values could probably only be promoted by first working together in the context of a bilateral cooperation mechanism focused on each country's domestic situation. Therefore, in the absence of such a pre-existing dialogue on social policy, Canada-Japan cooperation in third countries on these issues early on in the process may be premature. Moreover, it must be recognized that a shared sense of purpose may be more difficult to achieve in social policy areas, because of their variety and complexity, than in foreign policy goals such as peace and security.

Other Themes and Issues

Suggestions included the questions of quality of life in urban environments; family violence; education as a distinct theme, including the issues of adult education and education for the information and entrepreneurial ages; and work on the development of tools for policy analysis (statistics and other means of impact-measurement).

Method for the Development of the Initiative

Several suggestions were also made regarding steps to follow during the development of this initiative as well as issues to take into account while guiding its evolution.

There may be a need, especially early on in order to ensure that the initiative establishes itself solidly, for Canada and Japan to identify and work on common social policy problems rather than issues of broad similarity. Similarly, the identification of a few linchpin issues, including non-controversial issues, may be beneficial to start off the initiative. As mentioned previously, the theme of aging could provide a number of such

issues. Other issues of mutual interest could then be gradually introduced as cooperation develops.

There may also be value to consider subsuming cooperation on social policy under the ongoing Canada-Japan collaboration on human security.

Also, the mobilization of forces within and without Japanese government that would be able to apply pressure would be necessary to make headway in promoting the initiative in Japan.

Much of the recent forward-looking policy work in Japan has been cross-ministerial, but the Ministry of Health and Welfare and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs are indispensable partners in this project. Other natural Track I and II partners in Japan would include: the Economic Planning Agency, the numerous governmental, semi- and non-governmental and corporate think tanks (such as the Institute of Social Security, the National Institute for Research Advancement and Sakura Research), the Japanese Association of Canadian Studies (if it could be encouraged to add more policy studies to its fields of interest), other academics involved in Canadian social policy studies, and NGOs. In regards to the participation of government departments, it may include, as in Canada, one of the ministries directly concerned with specific issues that may be made the objects of cooperation, such as the Ministry of Justice (eg family violence) or the Ministry of Education.

The round-table began a process of community-building in Canada around the initiative. The Canadian constituency could be further broadened through the continued assistance of the Policy Research Secretariat. Further efforts should be deployed to enlarge the group of government and academic contributors. Additionally, the participation of NGOs should be sought at an early point in the development of this initiative and not only when it is put into effect. Indeed, for the initiative to completely fulfil the purpose for which it was designed, participation in the development of the project needs to be extended beyond members of the government and academic communities. The use of a moderated electronic discussion group may permit the experts to continue to develop the agenda of the initiative and allow the community to be further constituted.

Furthermore, the PRS may also be able to contribute to building bridges between the communities of the two countries. The PRS could use its upcoming visit to Japan in part for this process.

A useful step to concretize the wish for Canada and Japan to look jointly into the prospects of cooperation on social policy would be to commission a joint-paper. Following the successful experience of the development of the Canada-Japan collaboration in peace and security, it is recognized that a joint-paper could also play a

useful role in exploring and defining any joint-initiative. In addition to its technical importance, such a paper could provide a political validation of the initiative. Alternative methods of defining the agenda, such as the prior joint-holding of a Canada-Japan conference or symposium on social policy, might not provide the same level of opportunity to set the required terms of reference and may therefore lack focus.

There are several possible ways of organizing the team to produce such a joint-paper. These include: a small working group made up of Canadian and Japanese government officials and experts; several small teams or pairs of researchers to each examine a single theme, coordinated by a pair of "editors"; or one or two experts on each side to consider the relevant social policy issues. Due to the complexity and variety of social policy issues, there would however probably be a need for more than one individual from each side to be involved in this work.

An alternative way to proceed would be to use a provisional overview paper to provide motivation and a framework for a conference, which would itself lead to the constitution of a team to work on a final joint-paper outlining areas and steps for cooperation.

Before approaching the Japanese formally with the proposal however, Canada should perhaps undertake an examination of Canadian social policy debates equivalent to the paper prepared by APFC for the round-table which examined Japanese social policy issues. This step may help to further construct a possible agenda for cooperation.

It would also be important to examine closely the work that has been and is being done elsewhere in the field of social policy, so as to avoid duplication and potentially provide opportunities on which this initiative could be built. Of particular relevance may be the work of certain multilateral bodies (for example, the OECD, the G7 and the work of APEC's Human Resources Working group) and the research and projects undertaken jointly or unilaterally in the Canadian and Japanese government, academic and NGO communities. It may indeed not be necessary in some instances to innovate entirely, but rather to pull together what already exists.

A collection of papers by Japanese academics on Canadian social policy (as part of a review of eight countries) will be published shortly in Japan. A validation by Canadian academics of these papers may be beneficial. As well, Canada may want to consider producing a parallel volume of research on Japanese social policy issues by Canadian academics.

In general, one of the main focal points of the continued development of the project should be the strengthening of a Canadian knowledge base on Japan's social policy situation.

Lastly, a consideration of the federal-provincial dimension in Canada on this issue must remain present throughout the development of the initiative.

SUMMARY OF ROUND-TABLE DISCUSSION
on
SOCIAL POLICY COOPERATION INITIATIVE WITH JAPAN
Canadian Embassy Tokyo
May 25, 1999

As a follow up to the March 26, 1999 Vancouver Round-Table co-hosted by the Japan Division of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) and the Policy Research Secretariat (PRS), the Canadian Embassy in Tokyo held a round-table to discuss the Social Policy Cooperation Initiative with Japan on May 25, 1999. This event was chaired by Mr. Denis Comeau, Minister and Head of Chancery for the Canadian Embassy. A number of key academics from Canada and Japan, as well as representatives of federal ministries from both countries were invited to participate in the discussion. Among the Canadians attending the meeting, a number, including an academic living and teaching in Japan, Dr. Ito Peng and the Director of Outreach from PRS, Dr. Vasanthi Srinivasan and Ms. Christine Nakamura from the Canadian Embassy in Tokyo had participated in the Vancouver discussion. A list of participants (including those who were invited but were unavailable to attend), their titles and e-mail addresses is attached to this summary along with the meeting agenda.

After a general introduction of the initiative to the group by the chair, the discussion moved in a very focussed direction with active participation from everyone in attendance. The meeting culminated in a general agreement that there were indeed numerous social policy issues, if approached collaboratively, could be mutually beneficial to both countries. The details of individual comments and/or suggestions are not recorded in this report since the discussion covered a whole range of social policy issues, similar to those which were suggested at the Vancouver Round-table. However, it was determined by all participants at the end of the discussion, that the themes which emerged as being the most beneficial to both countries and as having the greatest potential for bilateral cooperation were as follows:

- 1) issues related to the aging populations in a broad sense (including employment, morality aspects of youth, gender, preoccupations of the elderly)
- 2) underlying values and ethics of social policy
- 3) the social policy decision-making process

Before the discussion came to a close, the question as to the next steps was asked and it was generally agreed that the initiative should commence initially from a research perspective to facilitate its introduction and acceptance in both countries. Two sets of tracks for action were identified as being crucial to ensuring the timely and successful emergence of a collaborative project with the support from appropriate levels of

government ministries, NGOs and academic/research institutions.

Track 1

It was suggested that in the first track, work needed to be conducted in both countries to "officially" engage the other ministries, NGOs and academics and/or experts who would either have a vested interest in social policy issues or who could play a key role in moving the initiative forward. To date, discussions have been informal and unofficial bringing together personal and other contacts to determine whether or not, sufficient interest existed in both countries. Formal engagement of key stakeholders would need to take place quickly to provide the initiative with the necessary profile and support.

Track 2

The second track would involve the launching of a series of research papers by both the Canadian and Japanese experts. Academics and if possible, representatives of key government ministries such as Health and Welfare for Japan and Human Resources Development Canada and Health Canada on the Canadian side would be commissioned to conduct collaborative research on issues of mutual interest (themes identified in the foregoing) which could lead to a comparative study of systems in both countries. It was suggested that a symposium could be scheduled to take place perhaps in early to mid-year 2000, which would focus on the results of the research conducted by both countries. This symposium could be the first of an annual event to be announced jointly at an appropriate time.

The general feeling of the participants at the end of the round-table was that the social policy area should become an increasingly more important area for bilateral, as well as multilateral cooperation given the emerging pressures of globalization. It was noted that in many of the G-8 countries including Canada, the social welfare services or programmes have been targets of restructuring to reduce government expenditures. Because of these reforms, levels of and access to services or welfare have been significantly reduced in recent years. In Canada, the major challenge identified will be to preserve if not, once again attempt to raise its current welfare state to previous standards in the face of integration into the North American economy. Japan is just beginning to implement changes to its services and programmes.

A number of Japanese participants raised the importance for Japan to conduct research on issues related to diversity because of the changing composition of Japan's population caused by increasing global movements of people. It was reported that Japan is no longer a homogeneous society and that social policy issues related to the integration of inter-racial families in Japan for example, have already begun to pose major challenges to the country. The Japanese participants identified the need for Japan to conduct immediate research on best practices and policies of countries like Canada where such challenges have been encountered in the past and the emergence of a diverse society has already taken place.

At the end of the round-table, key participants from both Canada and Japan emphasized the need to maximize on current interest and momentum to achieve the objectives set for the Social Policy Cooperation Initiative.

After the meeting, all participants were invited to a dinner in the Embassy hosted by Minister Comeau during which, informal discussions continued to take place on a one-to-one basis. Ambassador L. J. Edwards joined the group at dinner at which time, he expressed his sincere gratitude for the active participation of all in attendance and his hope that the meeting was just the beginning of a series of events to be undertaken on a collaborative basis with Japan..