

# Kawasaki City Representative Assembly for Foreign Residents Newsletter

## Issue No. 42



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### To Victims of the Great East Japan Earthquake

A huge earthquake struck the north-east coast of Japan on March 11, 2011, inflicting a massive amount of damage beyond all imagination, and a large number of precious lives have been lost. With no choice but to live in emergency shelters or temporary housing, many people are still experiencing hardships during day-to-day living. The Kawasaki City Representative Assembly for Foreign Residents, as fellow residents of Japan, would like to offer our deepest condolences and prayers for those who lost their lives in the disaster. We would like to extend our sympathy to all those who have been affected by the disaster and pray for an early recovery of the region.

July 10, 2011

Kawasaki City Representative Assembly for Foreign Residents

### ★Announcements: Multicultural Festa, Citizen's Festival, and Open Forum★

The Representative Assembly is once again participating in a variety of events this year to meet with citizens and promote the Representative Assembly. In November, the Representative Assembly will hold an its Open Forum as an extraordinary session. We hope that many people will join us.



#### ◇Multicultural Festa Mizonokuchi◇

October 22 (Sat.) 10:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.  
At Takatsu Civic Hall, Nocty 2, rooftop patio (A 2-minute walk from Mizonokuchi or Musashi Mizonokuchi Station)  
The Representative Assembly will set up a multicultural food stall.  
Shrimp crackers (Chinese), goulash (East European) and rice noodle (the Philippines) will be served. Bon appetit!



#### ◇Kawasaki Citizen's Festival◇

November 4 (Fri.) - 6 (Sun.)  
At Fujimi Park, Kawasaki Ward  
The Representative Assembly will participate on the 5th (Sat.) and 6th (Sun.). We will be in the parade and on stage. We will also set up an area where people can try on ethnic costumes and take photographs, an area where people can play folk instruments, and an area where people can enjoy teas from various countries. There will also be fun and games for children.



#### ◇Open Forum◇

November 20 (Sun.) 2:00 - 5:00 p.m.  
In the Main conference room, Takatsu Civic Hall  
(Nocty Plaza 2, a 2-minute walk from Mizonokuchi or Musashi Mizonokuchi Station)  
We will hold a panel discussion as well as a plenary meeting where participants can express their opinions. There will be a small party (free) where people can mingle and get acquainted with others after the meeting.

### ◆◆Now Seeking Members for the Ninth Representative Assembly for Foreign Residents◆◆

The Representative Assembly for Foreign Residents was established in 1996 in accordance with a city ordinance to promote mutual understanding and create better local communities. Assembly members choose several themes from among the problems that foreign residents face every day, conduct research into those topics, discuss their findings, and make proposals to the mayor. This is your chance to ensure that your voice is heard by the city administration.

Term: April 1, 2012 to March 31, 2014 (two years)

(Civil servant position for special government service. You will receive remuneration for attending meetings.)

Description of activities: Participate in meetings held approximately eight times a year (generally held on Sundays and conducted in Japanese).

Eligibility: Individuals who have been registered as foreign residents in Kawasaki for at least one year and are 18 years of age or older.

How to apply: Send in your application by December 14, 2011 (as indicated by the postmark on the envelope)

\* Application forms will be available from October 1 at ward offices, civic halls, libraries, and the Kawasaki International Center. Alternatively, the forms can be downloaded from the Representative Assembly's Web site (<http://www.city.kawasaki.jp/25/25zinken/home/gaikoku/index.htm>)

Inquiries: Human Rights and Gender Equality Office, Citizens' and Children's Affairs Bureau, Kawasaki City  
TEL 044-200-2359 FAX 044-200-3914 E-mail [25gaikok@city.kawasaki.jp](mailto:25gaikok@city.kawasaki.jp)

# The Representative Assembly FY2011 Meeting Schedule



First Meeting, Day 1: Sunday, May 15(finished)  
First Meeting Day 2: Sunday, June 12 (finished)  
Second Meeting, Day 1: Sunday, July 10(finished)  
Second Meeting Day 2: Sunday, September 11 (finished)  
Third Meeting, Day 1: Sunday, October 30  
Third Meeting Day 2: Sunday, December 11  
Fourth Meeting, Day 1: Sunday, January 22  
Fourth Meeting Day 2: Sunday, February 19  
Time: 2:00 - 5:00 p.m.  
Location: Kawasaki City International Center  
(Closest station: Tokyu Toyoko Line Motosumiyoshi Station.  
A 10-minute walk from the station.)

◇Extraordinary session (Open Forum)  
Time and date: 2:00 - 5:00 p.m. on November 20 (Sun.)  
Location: Takatsu Civic Hall  
(A 2-minute walk from Mizonokuchi station,  
Tokyu Denentoshi, Oimachi Line,  
or from Musashi Mizonokuchi station, JR Nanbu Line)

Everyone is welcome  
to come to observe  
any meetings. Please  
feel free to join us.

**Meeting reports**(May 2011 - July 2011)

## Life and Society Section

- First Meeting, Day 1 (May 15, 2011)
- First Meeting, Day 2 (June 12, 2011)
- Second Meeting, Day 1 (July 10, 2011)

From among the topics that were not expected to take a great deal of time, we had already discussed Immigration Control issues, the availability of public services on Saturdays and Sundays, increasing the number of foreign language books available, and assistance for overseas students. In fiscal 2011, discussions covered housing assistance, the final non-time-consuming topic, and then moved on to topics that will require some time to discuss. Up to July, we have discussed housing assistance, labor, pensions, surveys of foreign residents, and a system to collect opinions of foreign residents. The following reports part of the discussions.

### <Housing assistance>

There is a concern that information about housing assistance is not being adequately disseminated to foreign residents although Kawasaki City has a good housing assistance system.

### <Labor and pensions>

People in charge of labor and pensions at the Kawasaki Pension Office, Kanagawa Prefecture National Pension Fund, Pension and Insurance Section of Kawasaki City explained the pension system. For residents who return to their home countries after working in Japan for between one and three years and those who are permanent residents when they receive a pension, the fact that they are foreign nationals will not likely cause any problems. However, if they leave Japan after having worked for more than three years, they will only receive a small lump sum withdrawal refund. We find this situation quite unfair.

### <Surveys of foreign nationals and a system to collect opinions of foreign residents>

The challenge is how to grasp the current conditions and opinions of foreign residents who do not participate in the Representative Assembly. In particular, this is a difficult problem with foreign residents who do not understand much Japanese. An opinion was expressed that gathering statistics through surveys may help.

In the Life and Society Section, we plan to discuss the proposals we will make to the mayor after discussing social participation.

(David CHART, Life and Social section)

# FY2010 Activity Report and Proposals Presented to the Mayor and City Assembly



## ◇Presenting to the Mayor◇

On Monday, June 6, Ping WANG, vice-chairperson of the Eighth Kawasaki City Representative Assembly, submitted the FY2010 Annual Report to Mayor ABE. Vice-Chairperson Ping WANG explained the discussion topics of the Representative Assembly in FY2010, opinions expressed, and details of activities in the Open Forum to the mayor in line with the annual report. Mayor Abe said, "I would like you to continue discussions on the issues for another year and make constructive proposals, " in response.

## ◇Report to the City Assembly◇

On Wednesday, July 27, Vice-Chairperson Ping WANG attended the City Assembly Citizens' Committee as a witness and made a report based on the annual report about the Representative Assembly's FY2010 activities. This hearing was held for the committee to get the opinions of a representative and take them into consideration. The chairperson of the committee said, "I would like the Representative Assembly to continue to be the backbone of multiculturalism in Kawasaki City, taking an active part." "



## Meeting reports(May 2011 - July 2011)

### Education Section

- First Meeting, Day 1 (May 15, 2011)
- First Meeting, Day 2 (June 12, 2011)
- Second Meeting, Day 1 (July 10, 2011)

Last year we discussed assistance for parents. This year we have been discussing multicultural education, bullying, and information provision. Members actively exchanged their opinions, with each member talking about their experiences and introducing examples from their home countries. The following presents some of the opinions.

#### <Assistance for parents>

Before our children enter school, we would like guidance seminars to be held for foreign parents in multiple languages and in simple Japanese.

At the time of foreigner registration, there should be a mechanism to check whether or not information for foreign parents is necessary.

It would be helpful if there were volunteer interpreters to help schools and parents communicate.

#### <Multicultural education>

How about requesting the board of education to establish a system to send instructors for world cultures across the prefecture?

#### <Bullying>

Multicultural education helps children take pride in their roots and their parents.

If children can tell their parents what happens at school, the parents will detect bullying at an early stage.

It is a good thing that we have been learning how to handle situations when our children are bullied at school, as well as children's rights.

Each member of the Education Section has a high level of interest in children's education and actively participates in discussions. We welcome your opinions through questionnaires distributed to observers ("Observer's Voices"). We would like to improve our proposals by considering opinions from many people.

(Duncan EDMOND, Education Section Leader)



## Registered Foreigners in Kawasaki City (by Ward) As of the End of June 2011 (Unit: Number of People)

Kawasaki Ward	Saiwai Ward	Nakahara Ward	Takatsu Ward	Miyamae Ward	Tama Ward	Asao Ward	City Total
11,806	3,667	4,369	3,738	2,716	3,625	1,873	31,796

### New Chairperson and New Vice-Chairperson

Hallimah ELOK, who had served as chairperson of the Eighth Kawasaki City Representative Assembly for Foreign Residents since April 2010, resigned at the end of March 2011. Deke OPANGO (Democratic Republic of Congo) was elected the new chairperson and Ping WANG (China) was elected the new vice-chairperson. Under the new chairperson and the new vice-chairperson, we will continue our discussions. The Representative Assembly pledges to continue to put forth its full efforts.



Chairperson OPANGO (Left),  
Vice-chairperson WANG (Right)

#### Introduction

##### Chairperson Deke OPANGO

My name is Deke OPANGO and I have been elected Chairperson. I am from the Democratic Republic of Congo.

I will endeavor to make Kawasaki a comfortable city to live in by working with Japanese citizens and foreign residents. I hope to benefit from your support and cooperation.

#### Introduction

##### Vice-chairperson Ping WANG

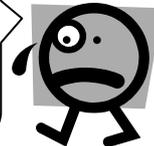
I have a special feeling for Kawasaki City. As this is the first time I have been a representative, the representative meeting is a big challenge for me. I will fulfill the role of vice-chairperson to the best of my abilities in order to meet my responsibilities. Although I am not good at appearing in public, I will work hard to support the chairperson as much as possible.

### - Useful Information for Foreign Residents #3 -



## Housing assistance

I'm in a fix. I can't rent a house because I don't have a guarantor.



There is a system for renting a house without a guarantor!

Kawasaki City has a system to assist residents to move into private rental housing if they cannot find a guarantor because they are foreign nationals. A guarantee company offers monetary guarantees, and Kawasaki City or a support organization provides services such as sending an interpreter for those who do not speak Japanese. To be eligible for the service, the applicant needs to be able to pay the rent, live independently, and secure an emergency contact (relative or friend) in Japan. The applicant also needs to pay the guarantee charge and insurance fee.

◇ People who can use the system

(1) Foreign residents, (2) Seniors, (3) People with disabilities, (4) Single-parent families, (5) People who have lived in an emergency shelter due to domestic violence and are moving out, (6) Those who moved out of self-support facilities for the homeless, (7) Those who moved out of child welfare facilities, (8) People with specific diseases

◇ How to use the system

Consult with the Housing Construction and Improvement Division of Kawasaki City Urban Improvement Bureau and confirm that you are eligible for the system → Receive an explanation of the system at the counter, and obtain a list of cooperating real estate agencies → Search for accommodation at a cooperating real estate agency and make arrangements to use the system.

\* We offer an explanation of the housing assistance system in multiple languages at the Consultation Desk for Foreign Residents of Kawasaki City at the Kawasaki International Center

### Inquiries and applications: Housing Construction and Improvement Division, Kawasaki City Urban Improvement Bureau TEL: 044-200-2997

<Inquiries> Human Rights and Gender Equality Office, Citizens' and Children's Affairs Bureau,  
Kawasaki City (川崎市市民・子ども局人権・男女共同参画室) 1 Miyamoto-cho, Kawasaki-ku, Kawasaki  
City 210-8577 (〒210-8577 川崎市川崎区宮本町1)

Tel : 044-200-2359 Fax : 044-200-3914 E-mail : 25gaikok@city.kawasaki.jp

We welcome your ideas and input regarding the newsletter and Assembly.