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Japan's efforts to improve competitiveness in the Olympics are not limited to domestic athletes. The athletes from developing countries are invited to Japan under "Olympic Solidarity Tokyo 2020 Special Program" which is international support developed by International Olympic Committee (IOC) and Japanese Olympic Committee (JOC), and they are expanding their skills at universities and high schools in Japan. It is one legacy that Tokyo Olympic/Paralympic leaves in the next generation. The future Olympian of "Nurturing in Japan" is about to be born. (Article was written by Tsuyoshi Sugai, Photograph taken by Shigeki Tomita)

International support program of Olympic

Olympic Solidarity is defined in the Olympic Charter. For countries and regions that are economically disadvantaged, IOC leads and provides technical guidance, build sports facilities, and support sports promotion and competition improvement in various programs. By this approach, athletes in over 200 countries can now join the Olympics.

As the television broadcasting rights fee associated with the Olympics is the main financial source, the four-year (2017-20) budget for Tokyo Olympics increased to \$509.28 million (approximately 54.9 billion yen) which is 16% up from the previous term. In the last Rio 2016 Olympics, a refugee team was formed for the first time in Olympics history by 10 athletes such as South Sudan.

Tokyo 2020 Special Program, launched in September 2017, is the part of Solidarity, and it is the first attempt by the Olympics host country to accept and strengthen athletes from other countries. IOC, JOC, and the Japanese sports associations decided on the target countries, athletes and domestic recipients. IOC will cover almost entirely the tuition and living expenses of the athletes.

Accepting international students and providing technical guidance

A total of 27 athletes have learned so far, 24 in 5 competitions as of July. = Table = There is also a menu for accepting short-term study abroad for about two weeks and dispatching coaches to developing countries. The program is in principle until the end of August 2020.

Besides, as an international contribution project by sports in Japan, there is "SPORTS FOR TOMORROW". It is unique to the government that conducts sports exchange and human resource development by dispatching coaches to over 100 countries for seven years from 2014 to 2020.

Target countries and recipients of the Tokyo 2020 Special Program

Competition	Country name	Number of Athletes	Acceptance Organization
Track & Field	Eritrea	2	SEISA Kokusai Shonan (Kanagawa prefecture)
	Bhutan	1	
Gymnastics	Syria	1	Tokai University Shonan campus (Kanagawa prefecture)
	Venezuela	1	
	Philippines	1	Teikyo University Tsukahara Gymnastics Center (Tokyo)
	Sri Lanka	1	SEISA Kokusai Tachikawa (Tokyo) Tsukahara Gymnastics Center
Judo	Costa Rica	2	Tokai University Shonan Campus
	Venezuela	2	
	Botswana	1	
	Dominica	1	
	Ecuador	1	
	Moldova	1	
	Vietnam	1	
	Cote d'Ivoire	1	
	Mongolia	1	Tenri University (Nara prefecture)
	Laos	1	
	Madagascar	2	International Budo University (Chiba prefecture)
Table Tennis	Fiji	1	Chinzei Gakuin High School (Nagasaki prefecture)
Archery	Bhutan	2	SEISA Kokusai Shonan

* There are two types of athlete acceptance: long-term (3 years) and short-term (2 weeks), and the table shows the long-term program (as of July)

Golden Eggs of developing countries are growing in Japan

Tshering Penjor (20 years old), an track and field athlete from Bhutan of South Asia, has been studying in SEISA Kokusai Shonan High School since one and half year. His personal

record of 400m was improved from 56 seconds to 52:76:00. “This is because I could train in Japan”, says he happily.

Bhutan is a country as same land size as Kyusyu with around 750 thousand population. Its economy activity is limited, and people are not very excited about sports. In Bhutan, there is only one athletic stadium which track has only 5 lanes with too sharp corners. This is not even qualified for the international standard.

Penjor started track and field training at the age of 15. Even though he is the front athlete in Bhutan, he had never received a proper training before. After joining in SEISA Kokusai Shonan, he has learned running techniques such as arm swing motion and foot movement. All those are so refreshing to him. Observing the running styles of Japanese high school students equipped with basic running skills are also helping. Penjor lives in the dormitory with other students. He attends the classes in English and Japanese.

The participation standard record of 400m male track race of 2020 Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games is 44:90, defined by International Amateur Athletic Federation. The hurdle is rather high. After Tokyo Olympic and the Solidarity Program ends in August 2020, Penjor plans to continue studying in the university and training with the professional team in Japan. He is determined to run in 2024 Olympic Games to be held in Paris, France. “I am confident to participate in Paris Olympic if I can continue training in Japan”, says he.

Through the same program, SEISA Kokusai Shonan offers the scholarship for 2 other students, Dejen Tesfalem Weldu (20 years old) for 5000m, and Anur Mohamed Ata (19 years old) for 1500m from Eritrea of the North-East Africa. With quality trainings, “I could improve the skill to speed up”, says Dejen Tesfalem Weldu, and “My running form became better”, says Anur Mohamed Ata.

The learning experiences in Japan brought confidence and hope for the international students.

As for Judo, 2 female Judo practitioners from Madagascar, are receiving a training through the program at International Budo University in Chiba prefecture. Because they didn't have appropriate training environment in their country, they are so eager to learn skills in Japan. Their sincere attitude towards practice is giving a good influence to other Japanese students. They will make an appearance in the World Judo Championship to be held at the Budokan, Tokyo in August 2019.