

Section 9

Development of Postal Service Administration

1. Promotion of postal service administration

Japan started the privatization of its postal services in October 2007, and what had previously been a single company was divided into five separate companies. It has become apparent that this and other changes have led to a weakening of the postal service administration's operational foundations and a decline in the ability to offer the public convenient services. For this reason, in October 2009 the government decided the Basic Policy on Postal Reform by Cabinet decision, and determined to pursue full-fledged, sweeping postal reforms so as to "make the citizens' right to access the postal network, which is the common property of all citizens, and basic postal services such as mail delivery, postal savings and postal life insurance, available to all, consistently, in a manner that truly benefits users, and in an integrated fashion at post offices nationwide." In December 2009, a law was passed and enacted to freeze the sale of shares in Japan Post Holdings Co. Ltd and its banking and insurance units, and in April 2010, a postal reform bill was placed before the Diet which sets forth detailed reforms of the postal service administration and new regulations governing Japan Post Holdings Co. Ltd. These efforts are intended to ensure that postal reform proceeds so as to resolve the problems currently facing postal privatization and guarantee that the postal network can be maintained, basic services provided on a stable basis, and the rights of Japanese citizens protected in the future.

2. Outline of correspondence delivery system

The Law Concerning Correspondence Delivery Provided by Private-Sector Operators paved the way for private enterprises entering the corresponding delivery business, which had been monopolized by the state.

Correspondence delivery falls into two categories; general correspondence delivery and special correspondence delivery. Since the enforcement of the said law in April 2003, although none have entered the general correspondence delivery business, there are 317 business operators in the special correspondence delivery business as of the end of March 2010.

3. Promotion of new postal service administration

In response to the postal service privatization of October 2007 and emerging movements in the field of postal and correspondence delivery services, such as movements entailed by the enforcement of the postal reform law in the United States, the MIC established the Investigation Study Group for Reviewing Postal and Mail Delivery Services in February 2007 with the aim of reviewing the overall system for postal and mail delivery services after the postal service privatization. An interim report and final report were developed in November 2007 and July 2008, respectively.

The final report recommends an ideal future system to be realized in the medium and long term: a system whereby participating business operators are able to provide services using their own originality and ingenuity, and a new Postal Service Law integrates the Postal Law and Correspondence Delivery Law into a single law. In addition, it sets forth consideration of the scope and standards for universal postal service and new steps to achieve these as a measure requiring urgent consideration, along with utilization of postal networks and expansion of the scope of the correspondence delivery business.

With respect to the promotion of personal data protection, the MIC held meetings of the Study Group on Protection of Personal Information in the Correspondence Delivery Service Field and the Study Group on Protection of Personal Information in Postal Service Field from December 2006 to January 2007. Based on the deliberations of these study groups, the MIC formulated and announced the Guidelines for Personal Information Protection in the Correspondence Delivery Service Field and the Guidelines for Personal Information Protection in Postal Service Field in March 2008.