Celebrating 37 years of J ACO

J ACO has just obtained the new PBC status under the laws

Public Benefit Corporations (PBCs) of Japan are facing a new era in legal framework by enforcement of new PBC laws as from December 1, 2008, that will give greater support for encouraging their voluntary, creative and prospective activities and will ensure that the role of civil society is given greater recognition in our country.

Since the above enforcement of new PBC laws, four months have passed and on March 18, 2009, Japan Association of Charitable Organizations (J ACO) and other two organizations were recognized and granted their new legal status of PBC by the Public Interest Corporation Commission (PICC), which is a public benefit status recognition committee as Japanese version of the Charity Commission for England and Wales in UK, as the first ones under the new legal scheme.

Then, J ACO made an application at a registry office on April 1, 2009 and became the first registered PBC (number A001132) with new legal status in Japan. The rest of 25,000 conventional PBCs will have to decide the course of shifting their legal status over the next five years, exactly like J ACO did. Possibly, some organizations might be able to go separate ways, such as dissolving the organization, shifting to a General Incorporated Organization or a Specified Non-Profit Organization (SNPO) and so on.

J ACO was established in 1972 by Mr. Masao Watanabe, the owner of a small printing company and it has developed to the largest umbrella body in the PBC sector of Japan with 1,500 dominant organizations in membership at present, and is fulfilling its mission by undertaking a wide variety of activities covering a diverse range of civil society organizations.

In the history of 37 years, J ACO has been a highly effective advocate representing not only the view of its members but also whole the PBC sector to government and other sectors and also has been at the leading edge of research and analysis on the PBC sector of Japan.
At this memorable moment of the firstly registered PBC in Japan with reformed status from this April, we can say that JACO will step into the second stage of operation.

Our new goal is to promote and support public benefit activities operated by PBCs and contribute further development of whole the third sector in Japan. To achieve this goal, we are going to have three main programs as shown below.

1. Dissemination and enlightenment program on civil public benefit activities
2. Operational Support and capacity development program for civil public benefit activities
3. Promotion of research and advocacy campaign program on civil public benefit activities, organizations and systems

JACO will continue to develop new areas of work, because the number of SNPOs is still growing quickly but the number of traditional PBCs has been slow in progress these days. We expect that with the effectiveness of new PBC laws, chance will come again to the growth of PBCs and the stability and prosperity of the civil society in Japan and abroad.