

The 91st May Day Central Rally

May Day Declaration

Today, we hold the 91st May Day Central Rally, taking place in the centenary year of May Day celebration in Japan, in an unprecedented way.

May Day originated in 1886, when workers in the United States rose up to hold a general strike in demanding for an eight-hour workday. In Japan, the first May Day was held on May 2, 1920. Although it was forced into temporary bans during the wars, May Day was strongly revived after the end of World War II, and contributed deeply to the improvement of status and working conditions of workers, as well as to the establishment of human rights and basic labour rights, through the unity and solidarity of working people in this country.

This year, May Day in Japan celebrates its centenary. In this milestone year of the 100th anniversary, we would like to return to the origin of May Day, look back at the role it has played, and reaffirm the importance of strengthening unity and solidarity with all of our fellow workers.

The world is now threatened by the fear of new coronavirus infection. The virus has cast a serious impact on our society, economy and employment. However, even as we stand in the midst of this crisis, we must once again acknowledge the presence and dedication of those who continue to work diligently to protect people's lives and health and help to keep things going in our society and economy. We are truly thankful to them. Let us all share our feeling of gratitude.

During this time, we have listened earnestly to the voices of those who are facing difficult situations due to the impacts of the new corona virus. At both the central and local levels, we have urged governments, administrative organs and political parties to take bold and speedy emergency measures, such as giving top priority to preventing the spread of infection and implementing emergency measures, so that those who are affected can maintain their business and have their livelihoods protected.

Under the spirit of May Day, which is to take the standpoint of working people and consumers and to bring together the power of all fellow workers, we must fulfill our social role as trade unions in order to overcome this extremely severe and unprecedented crisis.

Now is the time for us to deepen international solidarity and to promote social change through this experience. We hereby declare to do our utmost to realise a fair society where no one is left behind, to protect peace, human rights and the environment, and to build a brighter future filled with happy, smiling faces.

April 29, 2020
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