

**ANDERSON MŌRI & TOMOTSUNE**  
IZUMI GARDEN TOWER, 6-1, ROPPONGI 1-CHOME, MINATO-KU  
TOKYO 106-6036, JAPAN

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**Next Generation Education and Support Promotion Act**

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The Next Generation Education and Support Promotion Act (“**Act**”) was enacted in 2003 and will be in force only until March 31, 2015. The Act requires companies to prepare plans (“**Private Sector Employer Action Plan**”) to assist in the education and support of the general population of Japan who are now children or who will be born in the future, and to submit the Private Sector Employer Action Plan to the Prefectural Labor Bureau, on or after April 1, 2005. The background to this Act is that the birthrate in Japan is now plunging and the Government is eager to raise it. One of the purposes of the Act is to encourage companies to establish good systems which will encourage employees of these companies to think about having a baby and raising children, in order to increase the Japanese population in the future.

The Private Sector Employer Action Plan is a compulsory obligation imposed upon those companies that have 301 or more regular employees, and is imposed as an obligation to make efforts in good faith upon those companies that have 300 or less regular employees.

If a company implements its Private Sector Employer Action Plan, then it is supposed to notify the Prefectural Labor Bureau of such implementation. If the Prefectural Labor Bureau inspects the company’s implementation of its Private Sector Employer Action Plan and certifies such implementation, the company will be permitted to mention this official certification by including a representation of such certification in its advertisements, on its goods, and in its help-wanted ads. This is expected to promote the good reputation of the company, create good morale among its employees, and enable the company to have a selection of good candidates for employment.

2015年3月31日までの時限立法である次世代育成支援対策推進法によれば、次世代支援育成に関する計画(以下、「**一般事業主行動計画**」といいます)を策定し厚生労働大臣(具体的には都道府県労働局)に届け出ることとなります。これは、**2005年4月1日以降**、301人以上の常時雇用労働者がいる会社に義務として課されるとともに、300人以下の常時雇用労働者がいる会社には努力義務として課されます。

一般事業主行動計画を実行に移した会社は、その旨を厚生労働大臣に申請します。申請に基づき厚生労働大臣から認定を受けた事業主は、その旨を示す表示を会社宣伝・商品・求人広告などにつけることができます。これにより、企業に対する印象の向上、労働者の士気の向上、優秀な人材の確保、がもたらされることが期待されています。

Should you wish to receive further information regarding the above-mentioned, and/or on whether your company is in compliance with labor/employment law, contact your regular attorney or **Hideki Thurgood Kano** (tel: 81-3-6888-1061, e-mail: [hidekithurgood.kano@amt-law.com](mailto:hidekithurgood.kano@amt-law.com)).