negotiation or requests for the NPA recommendation, 97 (45.5%) were on revisions of the fixed number of officials in each grade of salary schedules, 5 (2.3%) on gender equality, 1 (0.5%) on various allowances.

Chapter 7. Equity Process

The NPA starts an equity process, as soon and as appropriately as possible, in accordance with prescribed quasi-judicial procedures of review whenever an employee files with the NPA an appeal against disadvantageous disposition, a request for administrative action concerning working conditions, an appeal for review concerning implementation of the accident compensation, or an appeal for review on a remuneration decision. In conducting such a process, the NPA sets the target for each case's review process, grasps the situation of progress periodically, and streamlines procedures, so that early processing of each case can be achieved. In addition, the NPA widely offers complaint counseling, and takes necessary measures including necessary actions to each ministry.

The NPA, as a neutral third-party organization, is to protect the welfare of employees, ensure the fairness of the personnel administration, and contribute to efficient operation of the public service through the equity process. Along with the system of remuneration recommendations and reports, the system of the request for administrative action regarding working conditions is also positioned as one of the compensatory measures for the restriction of basic labor rights of employees. This system is significant to improve and optimize the working conditions.

Section 1. Appeals against Disadvantageous Disposition

Based on the review system associated with disadvantageous dispositions (Article 90 of the National Public Service Act), the NPA sets up a Board of Equity for each case to review the case and, based on a report prepared by the board, the NPA approves, revises or rescinds the original disposition when an employee requests a review of a disadvantageous disposition such as reduction in pay, demotion, administrative leave, or dismissal against his/her will.

The NPA itself takes measures to restore the employee's damage caused by the disposition or instructs the person who took the disposition to take necessary measures when the NPA revises or rescinds the disposition. The determination made by the NPA is the final one in the administrative organization.

The NPA reviews appeals against disadvantageous dispositions in accordance with the procedures specified in Rule 13-1 (Appeal against Disadvantageous Disposition). When reviewing cases, the NPA tries to process each case in an expeditious way by proactively using an intensive hearing method.

In FY2018, a total of 19 cases, including 11 cases carried over from FY2017, were on the table. Among them, 9 cases were determined (7 approvals, 2 rescissions), 4 cases were withdrawn or rejected, and 6 cases were carried over to FY2019.

Section 2. Requests for Administrative Action on Working Conditions

The system for requesting administrative action (Article 86 of the National Public Service Act) is designed

to allow the NPA to make a determination after conducting a necessary review or to resolve a case through mediation or by using an equivalent measure when an employee submits a request for an administrative action on working conditions. Under the system, employees are guaranteed to actively request improvement and optimization of their working conditions.

Requests for administrative action are reviewed in accordance with the procedure specified in Rule 13-2 (Requests for Administrative Action on Working Conditions).

In FY2018, a total of 15 requests, including 6 requests carried over from FY2017, were on the table. Of these requests, 2 were determined, 8 were withdrawn or rejected, and 5 were carried over to FY2019.

Section 3. Appeals for Review Related to Implementation of Accident Compensation and Appeals for Measures Related to Welfare Services

The NPA forwards an appeal for review to the Accident Compensation Review Committee for deliberation and decides the case based on the committee's report when an employee files an appeal related to a decision on an accident on duty, an accident while commuting, recognition of healing, a decision on the grade of disability, and other implementations of compensation made by Implementing Organizations under the accident compensation review system (Article 24 of the National Public Service Accident Compensation Act) and when an employee files an appeal on operation of welfare services under the appeal system for measures related to welfare services (Article 25 of the said Act).

Reviews of accident compensation are conducted in accordance with the procedure specified in Rule 13-3 (Appeals for Reviews Related to Accident Compensation).

In FY2018, a total of 20 cases, including 14 cases carried over from FY2017, were on the table. Of these cases, 11 were determined, 3 were withdrawn or rejected, and 6 were carried over to FY2019.

Section 4. Appeals for Reviews Related to Remuneration Decisions

The review system for a decision on remuneration (Article 21 of the Remuneration Act) is designed to allow the NPA to take a decision after reviewing the case when an employee who has an objection against a decision on his/her remuneration (including decisions on salary corrections) files an appeal for review. The NPA reviews such cases in accordance with the procedure specified in Rule 13-4 (Appeals for Reviews Related to Remuneration Decisions).

In FY2018, a total of 22 cases, including 10 cases carried over from FY2017, were on the table. Of these cases, 7 were determined, 3 were withdrawn or rejected, and 12 were carried over to FY2019.

Section 5. Consultation on Complaints

When the NPA receives complaints or requests for advice from employees regarding working conditions or other matters related to personnel management, it appoints a counselor to provide the employee concerned with advice and carry out any necessary measures such as the provision of guidance and mediation for the persons

concerned. This system is implemented in accordance with the procedure specified in Rule 13-5 (Complaints Counseling).

In FY2018, the NPA received 1,443 complaints, an increase of 332 from that in FY2017.

Also, the NPA held "Liaison Conference concerning Complaint Counseling," and "Training for Officers in Charge of Complaint Counseling," at the HQ, regional bureaus and local office.

Chapter 8. International Cooperation

Section 1. Status of Personnel Dispatches Based on the Employee Dispatching Act

As part of international cooperation based on the Employee Dispatching Act, each ministry dispatches personnel to international organizations of which Japan is a member or with which Japan has international commitments such as treaty obligations, as well as to foreign government agencies. This occurs upon the receipt of a request from such organizations and is subject to the consent of the personnel chosen to be dispatched.

In FY2017, 167 persons were newly dispatched to international organizations, an increase of 29 persons from that in FY2016. Meanwhile, 126 persons returned to Japan in FY2017. As a result, the total number of dispatched personnel was 411 as of the end of FY2017, an increase of 28 from that in FY2016.

The status of such dispatches by organization and by area at the end of FY2017 are shown in Figures 16 and 17.
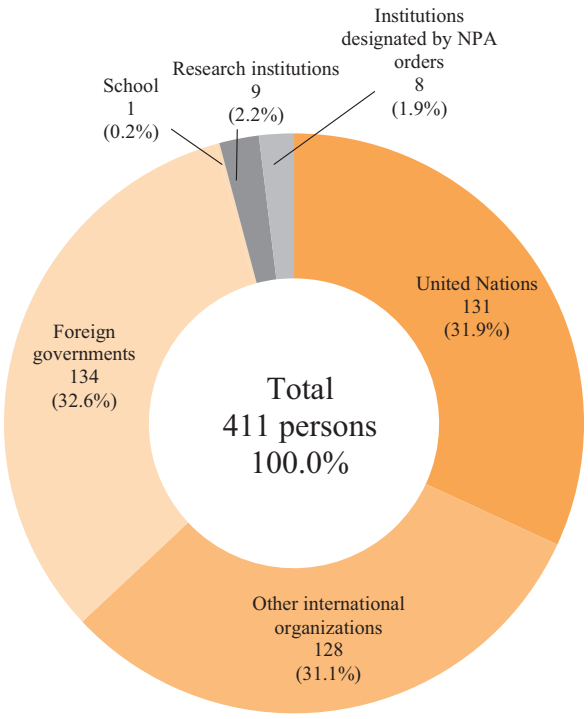
Figure 16 International Dispatch by Organization in FY2017