



## Chapter 1 Promotion of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The “2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” was adopted at the UN Summit held in September 2015. This Agenda, formulated as the successor to the Millennium Development Goals (MDG), sets out 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that both developing countries and developed countries should work together to achieve, as well as 169 accompanying targets. The Government of Japan also attaches great importance to the SDGs, which reflect the philosophy of human security that Japan values heavily. As the first step in establishing a foundation in Japan towards the attainment of the SDGs, the “SDGs Promotion Headquarters” was set up in May 2016, headed by the Prime Minister and with all Cabinet Ministers as the members. It is decided to draw up the “SDGs Implementation Guiding Principles” in December of the same year. These guidelines could also be described as a national strategy under which the relevant ministries and agencies would work together towards the achievement of the SDGs.

It is important to further accelerate initiatives towards the achievement of the SDGs, in order to bring about the realization of a diverse and inclusive society where “no one will be left behind.”

### SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

世界を変えるための17の目標



## Section 1 All-Japan Initiatives on the SDGs

As the SDGs are spread out across a wide range of areas, it is necessary to take action rallying the collective wisdom not only of the government, but also of civil society, private-sector corporations, and local public entities in order to achieve the goals. The SDGs Promotion Headquarters has focused on collaboration with various stakeholders from the start, and the “First Roundtable Meeting on the promotion of SDGs” was held in September 2016. The participants in this Roundtable Meeting included members from the financial circles, NGOs/NPOs, international organizations, and the relevant ministries and agencies. To date, a total of four meetings have been held, which saw the exchange of views on subjects such as the dissemination of the SDGs to the local provinces, and the relationship of SDGs with businesses.



Prime Minister Shinzo Abe speaking at the third meeting of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Promotion Headquarters held at the Prime Minister's Office in June 2017. (Photo: Cabinet Public Relations Office)

In July 2017, then Foreign Minister Kishida participated in the Voluntary National Reviews session of the UN High-level Political Forum (HLPF) for sustainable development, where he called attention to Japan's initiatives towards the realization of a diverse and inclusive society where “no one will be left behind.” At the same Forum, he also advocated the Public Private Action for Partnership (PPAP), which involves various actors of society working together hand-in-hand, and disseminated information about Japan's initiatives. Furthermore, he

expressed the determination that “combining the wisdom of various stakeholders including civil society, private enterprises and the government, Japan will take concrete actions, both at home and abroad” based on the concept of the PPAP. The SDGs are an initiative for creating the future by 2030 and beyond, and the empowerment of the children and youths who will be the leaders of future generations is key to the realization of the SDGs. From this perspective, he announced that Japan will be placing its focus on the future generations (children and youths) of developing countries; to that end, Japan will put in place support measures worth \$1 billion over two years, based on the philosophy of human security, and mainly in areas such as education, environment, disaster prevention, and gender.

At the fourth meeting of the SDGs Promotion Headquarters held in December 2017, the SDGs Action Plan 2018 was unveiled. Alongside with setting out the basic direction for promoting SDGs— promotion of “Society 5.0” in connection with the SDGs under public-private cooperation, local revitalization driven by the SDGs, and empowerment of women and future generations who will take responsibility for the SDGs in the future—the Action Plan also established key initiatives for 2018 the Japanese government as a whole, towards the achievement of the SDGs.



Then Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida in attendance and speaking at the UN High-level Political Forum (HLPF) for sustainable development, held at the UN Headquarters in New York in July 2017.

## Section 2 Initiatives for Making the SDGs a Mainstream Trend

There are 17 SDGs, and the items to be attained span a wide range of areas. At the same time, in order to realize the vision of a society where “no one will be left behind,” it is necessary to tackle the SDGs not only through efforts by the government, but also jointly with private-sector corporations, NGOs/NPOs, and local public entities. To that end, it is important to raise awareness of the SDGs among the Japanese people, and to create a wave

of action, resembling a “national movement,” towards achieving the SDGs. From this perspective, efforts were made in 2017 to propagate the concept of the SDGs to the citizens, in cooperation with the media and entertainment sector. Yoshimoto Kogyo Co., Ltd., which is one of the most popular entertainment companies in Japan is dedicated to promote SDGs by appointing the entertainers and creating panels and posters corresponding to the 17 goals,

using them for various events and stamp rallies. At the reception hosted by the Government of Japan at the HLPF mentioned previously, PIKOTARO, a Japanese entertainer, performed an original song composed specifically for promoting the SDGs, titled “PPAP for SDGs.” This song has also been distributed on the official YouTube channel of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In keeping with such initiatives to promote the SDGs, in September 2017, PIKOTARO was appointed as the “Goodwill Ambassador for the Promotion of SDGs” at “Global Festa 2017,” an international cooperation event held in Tokyo.



Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs Mitsunari Okamoto appointed PIKOTARO as the goodwill ambassador for the promotion of SDGs at Global Festa 2017.

To encourage corporations and organizations in their efforts and to promote all-Japan initiatives towards the achievement of the SDGs, the SDGs Promotion Headquarters decided, at their third meeting held in June 2017, to launch the Japan SDGs Award in recognition of Japanese corporations and organizations which have put in place excellent initiatives that contribute to the achievement of the SDGs. The Japan SDGs Award draws attention to leading initiatives by the private sector and citizen groups in Japan, as well as public-private partnerships, and also helps other organizations in their SDGs initiatives by presenting them with specific examples of good practices. The recipients of the Award were selected based on the views of a selection committee comprising members of the SDGs Promotion Roundtable Meeting. In the first awards ceremony held in December last year, the town of Shimokawa in Hokkaido was selected, from a large number of submissions, to receive the SDGs Promotion Headquarters Chair’s (Prime Minister’s) Award. Recipients of the Japan SDGs Award include



Presentation ceremony for the Japan SDGs Award (Photo: Cabinet Public Relations Office), and Japanese government’s SDGs logo

organizations from a wide range of sectors, such as local public entities, NPOs, private enterprises, citizen groups, and the education sector, highlighting the fact that diverse initiatives are being implemented across Japan. In addition, to provide strong backing for initiatives by the private sector and citizen groups towards the implementation of SDGs, the official logo was provided to corporations and organizations that are committed to the SDGs.

In the business circles as well, Keidanren (Japan Business Federation) revised its “Charter of Corporate Behavior” for the first time in seven years early in November. This Charter sets out the behavioral guidelines that corporations should comply with, and the revised Charter establishes the achievement of SDGs through the realization of Society 5.0 as its own pillar. In the securities industry, the Japan Securities Dealers Association established the “Council for Promoting the SDGs in the Securities Industry,” and declared that the securities industry will also address the social issues raised as a part of the SDGs. The Government Pension Investment Fund (GPIF) is also promoting SDGs initiatives by corporations, announcing that efforts by corporations to incorporate SDGs into their business strategies and initiatives to address social issues can create investment opportunities.



## Section 3 Climate Change Measures and SDGs

There is a tendency to regard climate change as an environmental issue, but it also has significant impact on economic development and security on a global scale. It is closely related to many targets set out under the SDGs, including stable supplies of water, energy and food. Hence, it would be extremely challenging to achieve the SDG targets in these related fields without the steady and quick implementation of climate change measures. The Paris Agreement was adopted as an international framework for climate change measures after 2020. To date, more than 170 countries have ratified the agreement, and set out their individual emissions reduction targets with the aim of limiting temperature rise to 1.5 degree Celsius, based on the goal of keeping the rise in global temperature below 2 degrees Celsius after the industrial revolution. Climate change actions are broadly categorized as: (i) “mitigation” measures aimed at reducing and absorbing greenhouse gas emissions (such as carbon dioxide), and (ii) “adaptation” measures that involve the use of new climate conditions as well as readiness in order to prevent and alleviate the adverse impact of climate change that is already occurring gradually. With regard to “adaptation” measures, the application of the SDGs Index, apart from the climate changes described at the beginning of this section, is also considered to be an effective means of evaluating initiatives and outcome of the initiatives.

To reach the 2-degree Celsius-target set out under the Paris Agreement, it is vital to have the active involvement not only of the governments of the countries involved, but also of various entities such as corporations, local governments, and NGOs. Many global corporations perceive the implementation of such actions as an excellent opportunity for expanding their businesses through the resolution of social issues, not considering such measures as an element that damages their international competitiveness due to the additional cost that is imposed on the company. Furthermore, the momentum for attracting even more “green” investments through the disclosure of the

risks related to climate change in the company’s financial information is now expanding across all regions of the world, coupled with the recent growth in ESG investments, which encourages investment that contributes to reforming and improving the environment, social issues and governance. This proactive approach by corporations and investors suggests that climate change is not just an environmental issue, but is increasingly becoming a business issue.

In view of such trends in the business circles, the One Planet Summit, a conference on climate change, was held in Paris in December 2017 to commemorate the second anniversary of the adoption of the Paris Agreement, as well as to reaffirm the importance of climate funding while encouraging public and private funds to “go green.” Foreign Minister Kono, who participated in this Summit as a panelist, expressed Japan’s resolve to lead the world in applying the power of innovation, which harnesses its advanced technological prowess, to the scaling-up of climate financing. He also described the need to strengthen public-private partnerships in order to achieve that. As one of these initiatives, he declared the government’s support for the registration of Japanese corporations with Science Based Targets (SBT), described as the corporate version of the 2 degree Celsius-target, and established the goal of having 100 Japanese companies certified under the program by March 2020.

With the aim of establishing a new direction for climate change policies, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has also launched new initiatives that include the setting up of an “Advisory Panel of Experts on Climate Change,” and the introduction of a climate change specialist system at Japanese embassies abroad to work on the dissemination and collection of various information outside of Japan. The steady enforcement of the Paris Agreement through such initiatives within and outside Japan, as well as collaboration with corporations and other entities, is an issue of vital importance towards the achievement of the SDGs.



One Planet Summit held in Paris in December 2017



Foreign Minister Taro Kono speaking at the summit