

**Fourth Periodic Report by the Government of
Japan under Articles 16 and 17 of the
International Covenant on Economic, Social and
Cultural Rights**

June, 2026

Contents

Part 1: Responses to the Concluding Observations on the Third Periodic Report	3
Part 2: Report on the General Provisions of the Covenant	21
1. Right of Self-Determination	21
2. Provisions Prohibiting Discrimination in Domestic Law	21
3. Status and Rights of Foreigners	21
4. Employment of Foreigners as Civil Servants	21
5. Development Assistance to Other Countries	21
6. Public Welfare	22
7. Enjoyment of Equal Rights by the Socially Disadvantaged	22
8. Measures for the Creation of a Gender-Equal Society	24
9. Promotion of Ainu Policy	25
Part 3: Report on Specific Provisions of the Covenant	26
1. Article 6	26
(1) Basic Data Related to Employment and Unemployment	26
(2) Policies and Measures to Guarantee the Right to Work	26
(3) Measures for Unemployment and Securing Equal Employment Opportunities	26
2. Article 7	28
(1) Minimum Wage	28
(2) Working Conditions	28
(3) Equal Treatment	28
(4) Measures against Sexual Harassment	28
(5) Safety and Health Measures	29
3. Article 8	29
4. Article 9	29
(1) Social Security System	29
(2) Medical Care, Sickness and Injury Benefits, and Maternity Benefits	30
(3) Old-age Benefits, Disability Benefits, and Survivor's Benefits	32
(4) Family Benefits	33
(5) Employment Injury Benefits	34
(6) Unemployment Benefits	34
(7) Trend of Costs Related to Social Security	35
5. Article 10	35
(1) Protection of the Family	35
(2) Protection of Mothers	38
(3) Protection of Children	39

6.	Article 11	41
(1)	Data Related to an Adequate Standard of Living.....	41
(2)	Poverty Measures	41
(3)	Right to Adequate Food.....	42
(4)	Right to Adequate Housing.....	43
7.	Article 12.....	45
(1)	Data on Health Condition	45
(2)	Health Policy	45
8.	Article 13.....	50
(1)	Elementary and Lower Secondary Education.....	50
(2)	Upper Secondary Education	50
(3)	Higher Education.....	50
(4)	Basic Education and Equal Access	51
9.	Article 15.....	51
(1)	Right to Take Part in Cultural Life	51
(2)	Protection of Cultural Diversity.....	52
(3)	Right to Enjoy the Benefits of Scientific Progress and its Application	52
(4)	Protection of the Rights of Authors	54
(5)	Encouragement and Development of International Exchanges and Cooperation	54

Note: The contents of this report basically date from December 2009, following the submission of the third periodic report, to the end of August 2025. This report was prepared with reference to the guidelines dated March 24, 2009 (E/C.12/2008/2).

Part 1: Responses to the Concluding Observations on the Third Periodic Report

1. The Government of Japan conveys its responses to each paragraph of the concluding observations (E/C.12/JPN/CO/3) adopted by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on May 17, 2013 (those relating to “principal subjects of concern and recommendations”) as follows.

(Paragraph 7)

2. The Constitution of Japan in Article 98 paragraph 2 stipulates that “the treaties concluded by Japan and established laws of nations shall be faithfully observed,” thus the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (hereinafter “the Covenant”) has legal effect as a domestic law upon its promulgation. On the other hand, the rights referred to in the Covenant allow for progressive realization, and the States Parties are required to realize the rights through legislative and other measures. Therefore, it is understood that the provisions of the Covenant do not stipulate that specific rights should be immediately granted to individuals. In Japan, the rights referred to in the Covenant are guaranteed by the Constitution of Japan and various laws and regulations.

3. All those who become judges, public prosecutors, or lawyers obtain legal qualifications after completing legal training at the Legal Training and Research Institute, and this training curriculum contains lectures and other programs designed to deepen their understanding of human rights issues, including the Covenant and other human rights treaties.

4. As for judges, various training programs that they take after their appointment cover human rights issues, including human rights treaties.

5. For public prosecutors, in addition to their legal training, lectures on human rights treaties are being conducted in various training sessions according to their years of experience, and the Ministry of Justice (hereinafter “MOJ”) will continue to make efforts to conduct them in the future.

6. The Government understands that as for lawyers, the Japan Federation of Bar Associations, 52 local bar associations, and 8 regional federations of bar associations utilize various training sessions and other appropriate opportunities to provide lectures and other programs based on the purpose of international human rights treaties, including the Covenant.

(Paragraph 8)

7. Regarding the framework of the human rights remedy system, continuous review is being conducted, considering the discussions that have been made so far.

8. In addition, the Human Rights Bureau has been established within MOJ as an administrative organ engaged in promotion and protection of human rights, and under it, Human Rights Departments of Legal Affairs Bureaus (8 locations nationwide), Human Rights Divisions of District Legal Affairs Bureaus (42 locations nationwide), and their Branches (261 locations nationwide) have been established. Furthermore, in Japan, approximately 14,000 Human Rights Volunteers (private citizens appointed by the Minister of

Justice) are engaged in human rights promotion and protection activities in cooperation with the Human Rights Bureau of MOJ, the Legal Affairs Bureaus, and District Legal Affairs Bureaus.

(Paragraph 9)

9. Currently, with the advancement of aging, social security benefits are increasing. Nevertheless, to enhance the sustainability of the social security system and ensure the long-term security of the public, the meeting on building a social security system for all generations was established, and based on the reform process compiled as a result of the meeting, the Government is working on reforms aimed at building a social security system for all generations that seeks to appropriately support one another regardless of age.

10. Regarding the overall discussions on social security, at the same meeting, the Government will persist in efforts to establish a social security system for all generations that ensures security for all generations, from young people to older persons, while maintaining a balance between benefits and contributions.

11. Furthermore, when considering revisions to the system and the balance between benefits and contributions, revisions are being conducted through fair and impartial deliberation in the Diet, while widely listening to the opinions of stakeholders and council members.

(Paragraph 10)

12. In December 2013, the Act for Partial Revision of the Civil Code, which deleted the part of the Civil Code's provisions, including those on intestate shares, that stipulated the intestate shares of children born out of wedlock to be half that of children born in wedlock, was enacted and came into effect in the same month, and the intestate shares of children both born in and out of wedlock were made equal.

13. In June 2018, the Act for Partial Revision of the Civil Code was enacted, which lowered the age of adulthood in the Civil Code to 18 and set the age of marriage for both men and women at 18. The Act came into effect in April 2022.

14. In June 2016, the Act for Partial Revision of the Civil Code was enacted and enforced, shortening the prohibition period for women's remarriage from six months to 100 days. Subsequently, in December 2022, the Act Partially Amending the Civil Code and Related Acts was enacted, abolishing the prohibition period for women's remarriage. This Act came into effect in April 2024.

15. The issue of introducing same-sex marriage system is a fundamental issue concerning the nature of families in Japan, and the Government is of the view that it cannot be advanced without national consensus and understanding.

16. Therefore, the Government considers that it is necessary to closely monitor the opinions of various segments of the public, the status of discussions in the Diet, trends in lawsuits concerning same-sex marriage, and the introduction and operation of partnership systems in local governments.

17. Furthermore, regarding individuals who feel a discrepancy with their physical sex, as of July 2004, by receiving a judgment ruling of a change in the recognition of the gender status under Article 3, paragraph

1 of the Act on Special Cases in Handling Gender Status for Persons with Gender Identity Disorder, they are deemed to have changed to the other gender for the application of the Civil Code and other laws and regulations.

(Paragraph 11)

18. As described in paragraph 121 of the third periodic report and below, the Government prohibits discrimination in its domestic laws.

19. The Act on the Promotion of Efforts to Eliminate Unfair Discriminatory Speech and Behavior against Persons with Countries of Origin other than Japan (Hate Speech Elimination Act), which came into effect in June 2016, declares that unfair discriminatory speech and behavior against persons with countries of origin other than Japan shall not be tolerated, establishes basic principles for efforts to eliminate such speech and behavior, clarifies the responsibilities of the national government and other entities, and aims to establish and promote basic policies.

20. The Act on the Promotion of the Elimination of Buraku Discrimination, which came into effect in December 2016, aims to promote the elimination of Buraku discrimination and realize a society free of Buraku discrimination by establishing basic principles for the elimination of Buraku discrimination, clarifying the responsibilities of the national and local governments, and stipulating the enhancement of consultation systems, among other things.

21. Article 4 of the Act on Promoting Measures to Achieve a Society in which the Pride of Ainu People is Respected (hereinafter “the Ainu Policy Promotion Act”), which came into effect in May 2019, stipulates that “it is prohibited for any person to discriminate against Ainu people or commit any other act that infringes upon the rights or interests of an Ainu person for being Ainu.”

22. The Act for Eliminating Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities, which came into effect in April 2016 and was partially revised in April 2024, prohibits administrative organs and businesses from unfairly discriminating against persons with disabilities in their operations and obliges them to provide reasonable accommodation. For administrative organs, the Act stipulates that each organ must create guidelines for employees on appropriate responses. For businesses, the Act stipulates measures to promote their voluntary efforts, such as the competent minister creating response guidelines, hearing reports, and providing advice, guidance, and recommendations.

23. The Basic Act for Gender-Equal Society, which came into effect in June 1999, stipulates the following regarding respect for the human rights of women and men: “the Formation of Gender Equal Society shall be carried out, aiming at respect for the dignity of men and women as individuals, not treating men and women in a way that discriminates against them based on gender, securing opportunities for men and women as individuals to exercise their abilities and respect for other human rights of men and women.”

24. As has been the case, Article 27 of the National Public Service Act stipulates that “in the application of this Act, all citizens are accorded equal treatment and must not be discriminated against due to race,

creed, sex, social status, family origin; or due to political opinions or affiliations other than those which fall under Article 38, item (iv).” In addition, Article 13 of the Local Public Service Act stipulates that “in the application of this Act, all citizens must be accorded equal treatment and must not be discriminated against due to race, creed, sex, social status, or family origin; or due to political opinions or affiliations other than those which fall under Article 16, item (iv).”

(Paragraph 12)

25. Refer to paragraph 12 in Japan’s comments on the concluding observations regarding the third periodic report and paragraph 127 of this report.

(Paragraph 13)

26. Regarding (a), surveys were conducted in Fiscal Year (hereinafter “FY”) 2021 and FY2022 on fixed gender role stereotypes and unconscious bias, to assess the actual situation in workplaces, homes, educational settings, and other areas.

27. In addition to this, awareness-raising activities through poster displays, social media, and other means are being conducted through the annual “Gender Equality Week” and other initiatives. Furthermore, based on the results of past surveys, among other sources, training sessions and workshops focusing on unconscious bias are being held for local governments and companies, promoting awareness.

28. Regarding (b), in elementary, junior high, and high schools, career education is being implemented to enable students to independently choose their career paths, considering their individual abilities and aptitudes, regardless of gender. While female students in Japan have high science and mathematics literacy, the proportion who choose science and engineering fields is low compared to other countries. Therefore, it is recognized as necessary to provide information on future careers and to eliminate gender role stereotypes that suggest “women are not suited for careers in science and engineering fields” in order to promote female students’ choice of science and engineering fields. For this reason, in cooperation with universities and companies, support is being provided to increase female students’ interest and curiosity in science and engineering fields and to promote their advancement into these fields. This support includes presenting role models, holding workshops, offering outreach lectures, and engaging with parents and teachers. Furthermore, training programs for teachers have been created, and their utilization is being encouraged, to help teachers themselves become aware of their unconscious biases and review their own words and actions.

29. Regarding (c), on December 13, 2024, upon receiving an inquiry from the Prime Minister regarding the “Basic Principles” for the formulation of the next Basic Plan for Gender Equality, a council is currently reviewing the next plan.

30. Regarding the political sphere, in May 2018, the Act on Promotion of Gender Equality in the Political Field was enacted and came into effect in the same month. This Act set as its fundamental principle the aim of making the numbers of male and female candidates as even as possible in the elections for the House of

Representatives, the House of Councillors, and the councils of local governments. Furthermore, the Act was revised in June 2021, and came into effect in the same month, stipulating that relevant organizations are to work together positively on gender equality in the political sphere under an appropriate division of roles.

31. As for the Government, in line with the purpose of the Act, it requests each political party to implement voluntary initiatives, including setting numerical targets and affirmative action, such as quota systems. Additionally, through providing information to each political party on examples of initiatives in other countries, such as quota systems, it supports discussions within each party.

32. Regarding (d), the career tracking system is an employment management system wherein multiple career tracks are set, depending on the type of job, qualification, etc. of workers, to provide assignments, promotions, and educational training separately for each track. This system is not itself illegal if it is operated in a gender-neutral manner. In accordance with the Matters to be Noted Regarding Employment Management Differentiated by Career Track, Etc., the Government advises companies on how they can ensure that this system does not operate as a de facto gender-based employment management system.

33. Furthermore, Article 9 of the Act on Equal Opportunity and Treatment between Men and Women in Employment (hereinafter “the Equal Employment Opportunity Law”) prohibits stipulating pregnancy, etc., as a reason for retirement (effective April 1986). It also prohibits dismissal or other disadvantageous treatment for reasons of pregnancy, etc. (effective April 2007). Regarding treatment in violation of the law, corrective guidance is provided.

34. Regarding (e), refer to paragraphs 197–201 of this report.

(Paragraph 14, former part)

35. In Japan, through the Act Partially Amending the Penal Code and Related Acts, enacted in June 2022 and enforced in June 2025, imprisonment with work and imprisonment without work were abolished, and in place of them, the term “imprisonment” was newly introduced. Unlike imprisonment with work, the newly introduced imprisonment does not presuppose the implementation of work. Instead, it offers a framework that allows for treatment in which beneficial work and guidance tailored to the characteristics of individual sentenced persons are combined appropriately and flexibly, aiming to facilitate their reformation and rehabilitation and to prevent recidivism. This approach has made it possible to more effectively promote reformation and rehabilitation of the sentenced persons and their smooth reintegration into society. Work under the newly introduced imprisonment, similar to guidance, is a means to achieve the purpose of the reformation and rehabilitation of sentenced persons and their smooth reintegration into society. When implementing work, after clarifying the necessity of it, efforts are made to motivate sentenced persons to engage in work independently and proactively. Work assignments are selected in accordance with the individual characteristics of sentenced persons, so that through the work, their motivation toward work is fostered and their ability to adapt to social life is developed.

(Paragraph 14, latter part and Paragraph 15)

36. Japan ratified the Abolition of Forced Labour Convention (ILO Convention No. 105) in July 2022 and, submitted its report on the implementation of this Convention to the International Labour Organization (hereinafter “the ILO”) in 2024.

37. Regarding the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention (ILO Convention No. 111), in Japan, the Constitution stipulates equality under the law, and measures against discrimination in the fields of employment and occupation are implemented under the Labor Standards Act and other relevant legislation. However, in ratifying this Convention, Japan considers it necessary to carefully examine consistency between domestic legislation and the Convention.

(Paragraph 16)

38. The revised Labor Contract Act, which came into effect as of April 2013, is a law that established a new rule (hereinafter “the conversion to an indefinite-term rule”) for converting fixed-term labor contracts into indefinite-term labor contracts to prevent the abusive use of fixed-term labor contracts, based on a proposal (Dec 2011) by the Labor Policy Council (a tripartite advisory council). Additionally, the Government has to pay heed to the fact that, in its aforementioned proposal, the Council did not come to the conclusion that the Government should regulate grounds for the conclusion of fixed-term labor contracts, considering concerns such as frequent occurrence of disputes and the decline of employment opportunities.

39. Furthermore, a survey on the status of implementation of the conversion to an indefinite-term rule was conducted. It is estimated that in workplaces with five or more workers, approximately 1.18 million people out of those who acquired the right to apply for conversion to an indefinite-term contract under the conversion to an indefinite-term rule, exercised their right to apply for conversion within two years from FY2018, which was five years after the enforcement of the rule. Based on this, the Government believes that the purpose of introducing the conversion to an indefinite-term rule, which is to stabilize the employment of fixed-term contract workers, has been achieved to a certain extent, and will continue to disseminate information and raise awareness to ensure that the rule is properly applied.

(Paragraph 17)

40. In Japan, the overall percentage of workers who work over 60 hours per week has shown a downward trend (4.6% in 2024 versus 9.1% in 2012), but the percentage of male workers in their 40s who work over 60 hours per week has remained at relatively high levels (9.2% in 2024 versus 17.5% in 2012).

41. Also, the number of people who died of brain or heart disease and were recognized as workplace fatalities was 70 in FY2024 (versus 106 in FY2009), and the number of people who committed suicide (including attempted suicide) due to mental disorder and were recognized as workplace fatalities was 89 in FY2024 (versus 63 in FY2009).

42. The Government considers this situation as problematic, and in order to prevent damage to health due

to overwork, it revised the Labor Standards Act through the Work Style Reform Related Acts and introduced caps on overtime work from April 2019 (April 2020 for small and medium-sized enterprises), and has also made it obligatory by law for employers to take measures such as providing medical checkups for workers and providing consultation by medical doctors to workers who have engaged in long periods of overtime work or worked on their days off. Furthermore, the labor standards inspection office conduct inspections and offer guidance for workplaces suspected of long working hours to ensure thorough compliance with the laws and regulations.

43. In addition, the Government revised the Labor Standards Act and raised the rate of increased wages for overtime work exceeding a certain amount from April 2010 (from no less than 25% to no less than 50%).

(Paragraph 18)

44. In view of the fact that the average level of the minimum wage falls short of the standards of public assistance in some areas of Japan, the Government revised the Minimum Wages Act in 2007 in order to ensure that workers can maintain the minimum standards of wholesome and cultured living. The revised Act clearly provides that when deciding the minimum wage, consideration should be given to consistency with public welfare benefits.

45. In accordance with this provision, the Government has systematically raised the minimum wage in cases where it falls below the standards of public assistance. As of October of 2014, the gaps between the minimum wage and the standards of public assistance were eliminated in every prefecture of Japan.

46. Subsequently, in the discussions for the annual minimum wage revisions, it has been continuously confirmed that the minimum wage in each prefecture exceeds the standards of public assistance.

(Paragraph 19)

47. The Government aims to ensure compliance with Article 4 of the Labor Standards Act, which provides for the principle of equal wages for men and women, as well as the Equal Employment Opportunity Law, which prohibits discrimination due to gender in each phase of employment management.

48. In addition, regarding publication of information based on the Act on the Promotion of Women's Active Engagement in Professional Life, it has been mandated that companies employing 301 or more regular workers publicize gender pay differences (effective July 2022). Furthermore, with the revised Act on the Promotion of Women's Active Engagement in Professional Life enacted in June 2025, the scope of companies subject to the publication obligation has been expanded to include those employing 101 or more regular workers (effective April 2026). As the creation of gender pay differences is considered to be significantly attributable to the disparity between men and women in terms of job classification and length of continuous employment, the Government are promoting initiatives to develop a favorable working environment for women to continue to work by promoting the implementation of positive actions and supporting a balance between work and family life.

49. Moreover, the Government implements measures to raise awareness of the Guidelines on the Improvement Measures of Wage and Employment Management for Eliminating Wage Disparity between Men and Women, which incorporates practical support tools for companies, such as a form for a fact-finding survey to ascertain gender pay differences.

50. In addition, targeting employers, especially small and medium-sized enterprises, the Government provides consulting services tailored to each company's specific employment management situation. These services address matters such as how to design initiatives based on the company's challenges in promoting women's participation in the workforce, as well as the analysis of factors contributing to gender pay differences. The Government also provides support through the provision and promotion of the utilization of various support tools and manuals, such as tools that can easily analyze gender pay differences.

51. In the public sector as well, by providing information to the national government and local governments on awareness-raising and advice for appropriate publication of information, as well as examples of excellent analysis, this promotes the understanding and analysis of factors contributing to differences within these organizations.

(Paragraph 20)

52. Regarding punishment for sexual harassment under the Penal Code, refer to paragraph 20 of Japan's comments on the concluding observations regarding the third periodic report. In addition, due to the amendment of the Penal Code in June 2023 (enforced in July 2023), indecency through compulsion was revised to indecent assault, and it was explicitly stipulated that the social relationship between the perpetrator and the victim should be considered when determining whether the offence is established.

53. In relation to sexual harassment in the field of employment, based on the Equal Employment Opportunity Law, it is obligatory for employers to take employment management measures, and the law includes sexual harassment in the scope of a subject regarding which conciliation is sought, and allows the disclosure of the name of a company that does not take any preventive or corrective measures. In addition, the guidelines under this law stipulate that employers must not mete out disadvantageous treatment to workers by reason that they have sought consultation concerning sexual harassment, etc., and require employers to raise awareness among workers.

54. Furthermore, the Act on the Comprehensive Promotion of Labour Policies, and the Employment Security and the productive Working Lives of Workers, which was enacted in June 2025, as a reinforcement of measures against workplace harassment, explicitly clarifies in the text of the law that workplace harassment must not be committed (enforced in June 2025). In addition, to prevent sexual harassment of job applicants and others, it obligates employers to take necessary employment management measures (to be enforced on a date stipulated by Cabinet Order within one year and six months from the date of promulgation).

(Paragraph 21)

55. Refer to paragraph 21 of Japan's comments on the concluding observations regarding the third periodic report.

(Paragraph 22)

56. The Japanese pension scheme adopts a universal pension system, and within the fixed-benefit national pension a premium exemption system for low-income individuals is provided, serving as a mechanism to prevent a situation where there are people with either no pension or a low pension. Moreover, regarding pensions for older persons, due to the 2012 pension system reform, the Pension Beneficiaries Support Payment was established, and the eligibility period for pension receipt was shortened from 25 years to 10 years. As a result, benefits are now provided as an additional payment to those with low pensions, and a path has been opened for receiving pensions, including for elderly people who previously had no right to receive them.

57. Furthermore, the 2025 system reform includes measures to raise the future benefit level of the basic pension. If the economy does not perform favorably and a decline in the basic pension benefit level is anticipated, measures will be taken to terminate the modified indexation for the basic pension early, thereby ensuring a broad future benefit level for the basic pension. In addition, since the 2012 system revision, the expansion of coverage for employees' insurance has been progressively promoted so that even part-time workers can receive substantial pensions in the future.

58. In this way, while system reforms have been carried out to secure pension benefit levels up to now, the Government believes that establishing a minimum guaranteed pension would entail difficult challenges, such as the need for a large amount of tax revenue and a lack of fairness between those who have paid premiums and those who have not.

59. Regarding the situation of elderly persons, statistical data by sex, type of income, and income level are created and published in the Comprehensive Survey of Living Conditions and the Survey on Living Conditions of Old-Age Pensioners. Refer to Annex Tables 1–8 for these statistical data. For atomic bomb survivors (Hibakusha), considering that the health damage they suffered from radiation exposure is a special type of damage different from that of other war victims, comprehensive relief measures are taken, such as the provision of medical care and the payment of allowances. Refer to Annex Tables 9–10 for data regarding relief measures for atomic bomb survivors.

60. Regarding public welfare benefits, the public assistance system is the last safety net in Japan, and the Government believe it is important to reliably and promptly provide assistance to those who need it, including the elderly. For this reason, to strictly refrain from acts that infringe upon or are suspected of infringing upon the right to apply for public assistance, the Government are thoroughly disseminating information to municipalities responsible for on-site practical operations through national conferences and training sessions. The Government is also informing the public via the Ministry of Health, Labour and

Welfare's website and other channels that applying for public assistance is a right recognized for citizens and will continue to ensure its appropriate operation.

61. In addition, there are procedures, such as asset investigations, that have to be followed when applying for public assistance. This is considered a necessary procedure for the proper implementation of public assistance, as the basic principle of the public assistance system based on the Public Assistance Act requires the utilization of all available assets, abilities, and other resources as a condition for receiving assistance.

(Paragraph 23)

Criminal provisions applicable to violence between spouses

62. Indecency through compulsion and forcible sexual intercourse stipulated in the Penal Code were revised to indecent assault (Article 176 of the Penal Code) and penetrative sexual assault (Article 177 of the Penal Code) by the Act Partially Amending the Penal Code and the Code of Criminal Procedure, which was enacted in June 2023 and came into effect in July of the same year. In both cases, the provisions explicitly confirm their applicability between spouses.

63. In addition, violent offenses stipulated in the Penal Code, such as assault, are subject to punishment even if they are committed against a spouse.

64. The prosecutorial authority carries out investigation based on the applicable laws and evidence and prosecutes the perpetrator who deserves criminal justice, including in cases where a spouse is the victim.

Act on the Prevention of Spousal Violence and the Protection of Victims

65. The Act on the Prevention of Spousal Violence and the Protection of Victims (hereinafter "the Act on the Prevention of Spousal Violence"), which was enacted in April 2001, stipulates provisions concerning Spousal Violence Counseling and Support Centers, which provide services such as consultation, counseling and temporary protection, and various types of information, to victims. The above Act also stipulates provisions concerning protection orders issued by courts against perpetrators based on a victim's petition. These protection orders include "Stay-away Orders," which prohibit the perpetrator from stalking the victim, etc., and "Eviction Orders," which order the perpetrator to leave the residence shared with the victim as a principal place of daily activity and prohibits loitering around the residence. Violators of protection orders are punished with imprisonment not exceeding two years or a fine not exceeding two million yen.

66. In May 2023, the Act on the Prevention of Spousal Violence was revised and entered into force in April 2024. The main revisions included the following expansions of the protection order system:

- Expansion of the scope and requirements for victims who can file for stay-away orders, etc.
- Extension of stay-away orders, etc. from six months to one year
- Addition of continuous sending of documents/SNS messages, etc. other than in emergencies, and unauthorized acquisition of location information via GPS, etc. to the acts subject to orders prohibiting telephone calls etc.

- Establishment of orders prohibiting telephone calls, etc. to minor children living with the victim
- Establishment of a special exception of six months for the period of eviction orders, which is generally two months
- Stricter penalties for violations of protection orders
- As reinforcement of multi-agency collaboration to provide seamless support, the “basic policy concerning measures for the prevention of spousal violence and the protection of victims” established by the Government and Prefectural Basic Plans shall include measures for victims’ self-reliance support and necessary matters regarding collaboration and cooperation among the national and local governments, and private organizations

Moreover, based on this revision, the scope of protection orders, etc. has been expanded to include cases where severe psychological harm has been suffered, in addition to physical violence and threats to life and body.

67. In December 2025, a revision was made to add acts using so-called “loss-prevention tags” to the prohibited acts under stay-away orders, etc., in addition to the acquisition of victims’ location information by perpetrators using GPS devices (enforced in the same month).

Number of requests for advice at Spousal Violence Counseling and Support Centers

68. Each prefecture and municipality operate Spousal Violence Counseling and Support Centers at Women’s Consulting and Support Centers or other appropriate facilities. As of October 1, 2025, 324 facilities nationwide have been operating as Spousal Violence Counseling and Support Centers, providing consultations, counseling, temporary protection for victims and their accompanying family members, and various types of information. During FY2023, the Centers nationwide received 126,743 requests for advice, with the number reaching a record high in FY2020 and remaining at a high level.

69. Women’s Consulting and Support Centers established by each prefecture, as well as facilities that meet the criteria specified by the Minister for Health, Labour and Welfare and are entrusted by these centers (such as Mother and Child Living Support Facilities and private shelters), provide temporary protection to individuals who have experienced spousal violence.

70. In FY2023, 2,032 persons received temporary protection, mainly due to violence by a husband or male partner.

71. The police broadly accept cases involving spousal violence, including not only physical violence but also cases where a threat to life, body, freedom, honor, or property is suspected, as spousal violence consultations, etc. They prioritize the safety and security of victims and promote an organized response, which may include preventing harmful acts by arresting perpetrators through the full application of relevant laws and regulations, and implementing protection measures for victims in collaboration with relevant organizations.

72. Refer to Annex Table 11 for the number of consultations relating to spousal violence cases, etc.

73. Refer to Annex Table 12 for the number of arrests in cases of spousal violence, etc.

(Paragraph 24)

Reconstruction Assistance and Disaster Prevention

74. The Reconstruction Agency has been compiling and publishing case studies (122 cases as of August 2025) of initiatives in which women and persons with disabilities are active and initiatives that support them, in the reconstruction from the Great East Japan Earthquake that occurred on March 11, 2011, and has been conducting a Survey on Reconstruction and Gender Equality targeting municipalities in the three disaster-affected prefectures (Iwate, Miyagi, and Fukushima). Through these initiatives, the Agency aims to promote the integration of gender equality and support for persons with disabilities into reconstruction activities following the Great East Japan Earthquake. Furthermore, through the Comprehensive Grant for Support of Disaster Victims, the Agency has comprehensively and integrally supported initiatives by municipalities and other organizations related to: mental and physical care as well as community building support; monitoring and consultation support for elderly persons and others; and support for children affected by the disaster.

75. In the Basic Act on Disaster Management, which is the legal basis for disaster risk reduction in Japan, the following provisions have been added through revisions made after the Great East Japan Earthquake:

- Mayors of municipalities shall, in principle, endeavor to create individual evacuation plans for each person requiring assistance in evacuation, such as elderly persons and persons with disabilities, who have difficulty evacuating on their own, to implement evacuation support and other measures (Article 49-14, enforced in May 2021)
- It shall be an obligation for “persons responsible for emergency disaster response measures” (Article 51, paragraph 1) to endeavor to provide welfare services to disaster victims (Articles 86-6 and 7, enforced in July 2025)

76. In addition, the national and local governments have an obligation to endeavor to implement necessary disaster risk reduction measures for elderly persons, persons with disabilities, infants, and other persons requiring special consideration.

77. Based on the aforementioned points, the Basic Disaster Management Plan includes the following as part of its guiding principles: □

- To respond flexibly and promptly to the needs of disaster victims, and to appropriately address the diverse needs arising from the circumstances of disaster victims, such as age, sex, and presence of disability, including consideration for elderly persons, persons with disabilities, and other persons requiring special consideration.

78. The Guidelines for Ensuring Satisfactory Living Conditions at Shelters, formulated after the Great East Japan Earthquake, call for the operation of evacuation shelters in line with the Sphere standards and provide clear guidance on support for persons requiring special consideration.

79. For reconstruction-related data, refer to Annex Tables 13-15.

Legal Support

80. The Act Concerning the Special Provisions for the Legal Aid of the Japan Legal Support Center for Victims of the Great East Japan Earthquake was enacted in March and came into effect in April 2012, with the aim of enhancing legal support tailored to the actual circumstances of the victims.

81. The new system under the Act had distinctive features such as providing assistance and deferring repayment of advances while the case was ongoing regardless of financial means to those who had residences or business establishments in the affected areas at the time of the earthquake.

82. In addition, the Japan Legal Support Center (Houterasu) established a total of seven branch offices in the affected areas across Iwate, Miyagi, and Fukushima prefectures, and carried out various activities as bases for improving access to justice in the affected regions.

83. Although the Act expired in March 2021 after its term was extended twice through amendments, legal services will continue to be provided to the affected areas and their residents through civil legal aid services and other means.

(Paragraph 25)

84. Based on the lessons learned from the severe accident at the Tokyo Electric Power Company's Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station that occurred in March 2011, the Nuclear Regulation Authority (hereinafter "the NRA") was established in September 2012 as an independent organization responsible for integrally governing technical and professional affairs related to nuclear regulation and nuclear emergency preparedness. This had previously been handled separately by relevant agencies, including one that promoted nuclear energy use.

85. Subsequently, the NRA formulated New Regulatory Requirements in 2013, along with strengthening measures against severe accidents, incorporating the latest technical knowledge, and introducing a system obligating existing facilities to conform to the regulatory requirements. These New Regulatory Requirements, based on the lessons learned from the accident at the Tokyo Electric Power Company's Fukushima Dai-ichi Nuclear Power Station, not only strengthen performance to withstand earthquakes and tsunamis but also incorporate preparations for a severe accident in the unlikely event of a massive earthquake or tsunami.

86. Furthermore, as part of its Core Values and Principles, the NRA ensures transparency and appropriate information disclosure on regulations, including the decision-making process. The fundamental means of public disclosure employed by the NRA are: live streaming of NRA meetings and various review meetings on internet video sites, including those assessing compliance with the aforementioned regulatory requirements; the publication of meeting proceedings, minutes, and materials; and summaries of meetings with regulated entities, including the Review Meeting on Conformity to the New Regulatory Requirements.

In addition, the NRA strives to ensure transparency by proactively disclosing administrative documents, holding proactive press conferences for a wide range of media outlets, including during disasters, and disseminating information via social media and other means.

87. With regarding to the Report of the former Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, Mr. Anand Grover, as stated in Japan's comments on the previous concluding observations, it is not appropriate to accept all of his recommendations because there are parts that are not based on scientific or medical knowledge.

88. According to the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation, the Government understands that it has been assessed that "future health effects directly related to radiation exposure are unlikely to be discernible." However, the Government recognizes that the health management and measures to address the health concerns of the residents affected by the Fukushima Dai-ichi Nuclear Power Station are highly important, and it has been working on providing support for the Fukushima Health Management Survey implemented by Fukushima Prefecture while respecting the opinions of the latest medical experts.

89. The Government will continue to carry out measures so that suitable support in health management and measures against health concerns will be provided to the people who truly need it.

(Paragraph 26)

90. Since the ICESCR does not apply to issues that occurred before Japan ratified the Covenant in 1979, it is not appropriate for the "comfort women" issue to be brought up in this report.

91. With that as a caveat, our response is as follows. The Government has sincerely dealt with issues of reparations, property and claims pertaining to the Second World War, including the comfort women issue, under the San Francisco Peace Treaty and through other bilateral treaties, agreements, and instruments. While these issues, including those of claims of individuals, have already been legally settled with the parties to these treaties, agreements, and instruments, the Government has actively taken measures to recover the honor of former comfort women and to provide remedies for them. In 1995, the people and the Government of Japan cooperated to establish the Asian Women's Fund. With 4.8 billion yen provided by the Government and approximately 600 million yen donated by the general public, the fund provided "atonement money" and medical and welfare support to former comfort women, and delivered letters expressing "apology and remorse" to former comfort women signed by successive Prime Ministers. The Government has made every effort to address this issue as mentioned above (refer to paragraph 26 of Japan's comments on the concluding observations on the third periodic report).

92. Furthermore, as a result of great diplomatic efforts, the Government of Japan and the Republic of Korea confirmed that the issue of comfort women was "resolved finally and irreversibly" with the agreement reached at the Japan-ROK Foreign Ministers' Meeting in December 2015. This agreement was welcomed by the international community, including then-Secretary-General of the United Nations Ban Ki-

moon. In accordance with this agreement, in August 2016, the Government contributed 1 billion yen to the Reconciliation and Healing Foundation established by the Government of the Republic of Korea. The Foundation provided financial support to 35 out of the 47 former comfort women who were alive at the time of the agreement, and to the bereaved families of 65 out of the 199 former comfort women who were deceased at the time. The agreement has been received positively by many former comfort women.

93. The Government is determined to keep firmly in mind the past, when the dignity and honor of many women were severely injured during wars in the 20th century, and to lead the world in making the 21st century an era in which women's human rights are not infringed upon, as stated in the Prime Minister's Statement in 2015.

(Paragraph 27)

94. Under the High School Tuition Support Fund System at the time of the review, Korean schools were not designated as eligible for the system because it was not confirmed that they conform with one of the criteria for designation, "proper school management based on laws and regulation." This was a determination consistent with the intent of the laws and regulations in force at the time of the review, and the Government does not exclude Korean schools on the grounds that Korean students are enrolled in these schools.

(Paragraph 28)

95. Regarding the opportunity for foreign children to receive primary education and lower secondary education, according to the School Basic Survey by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, the number of foreign students enrolled in public schools as of FY2024 is 128,714.

96. As it is necessary to work to ensure that all foreign children are provided with educational opportunities, the Survey on the Schooling Status of Foreign Children is being conducted. The results of this survey for FY2023 are as follows:

- Number of foreign children of compulsory education age enrolled in compulsory education schools: 127,239
- Number of foreign children of compulsory education age enrolled in foreign nationals' schools: 10,993
- Not enrolled in school: 970
- Moved or left Japan (including those planning to do so): 3,833

97. In addition, regarding the schooling of foreign children of school age residing in Japan, based on the Covenant and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the opportunity to receive the same education as Japanese nationals is guaranteed. Furthermore, the Government has implemented measures such as institutionalizing a "special curriculum" for Japanese language instruction, steadily improving the number of teachers required for Japanese language instruction, and providing support to municipalities that engage

in Japanese language instruction for foreign students. The Government will continue to enhance and support the education of foreign children.

(Paragraph 29)

98. The Government of Japan, in applying the provisions of Article 13(2)(b) and (c) of the Covenant, had reserved the right not to be bound by the phrase “in particular by the progressive introduction of free education” used in these provisions; however, after the third periodic report, it notified the Secretary-General of the United Nations on September 11, 2012, of the withdrawal of that reservation.

99. Specifically, to defray tuition, the High School Tuition Support Fund has been provided since FY2014, and tuition at private high schools has been effectively made free for households with annual incomes of less than 5.9 million yen from FY2020. In addition, in FY2025, as a budgetary measure limited to that FY, an amount equivalent to the tuition of public high schools was provided regardless of household income.

100. Furthermore, for low-income households, the High School Supplemental Scholarship Fund, which supports educational expenses other than tuition, such as textbook and teaching material costs, was established in FY2014, and the benefit amounts have been increased annually.

(Paragraph 30)

Efforts to improve the living standards of the Ainu people

101. In the area of employment, detailed vocational counseling and job placement services are provided to Ainu people who have difficulty finding or retaining employment, and measures to assist in employment are promoted to stabilize employment and promote job creation.

102. In the area of education, scholarship and school supply assistance programs are implemented for Ainu children who have difficulty continuing their studies due to economic reasons.

Measures to preserve and promote the Ainu language

103. Efforts are being made based on the framework shared among researchers of endangered languages, which focuses on the areas of “Status,” “Corpus,” and “Prestige.”

104. In the area of “Status,” the Ainu Policy Promotion Act, which came into effect in May 2019, positions the Ainu language as an indigenous language.

105. In the area of “Corpus,” the Ainu Culture Foundation conducts Ainu language courses, instructor training courses, and Ainu language radio courses. The Agency for Cultural Affairs is undertaking projects to digitize analog Ainu language materials and support the creation of Ainu language archives at institutions possessing Ainu language audio materials, to create an environment where anyone can access traditional Ainu language anytime, anywhere. Over 6,000 digitized materials have been completed, and because of archive creation support, the Ainu Language Archive of the National Ainu Museum has been made public, with annual access exceeding 100,000 times, including from overseas, in 2024. Furthermore, from FY2025,

the Agency for Cultural Affairs will also begin a project to train Ainu language speakers, fostering speakers who can engage in daily conversations in Ainu.

106. In the area of “Prestige,” the Agency for Cultural Affairs organizes the Languages and Dialects in Danger Convention to raise awareness of the critical situation of the Ainu language and provide opportunities for people to experience the Ainu language itself. In addition, the Ainu Culture Foundation holds Ainu language speech contests, among other initiatives, to improve the social image of the Ainu language.

(Paragraph 31)

107. Refer to paragraphs 298–303 of this report.

(Paragraph 32)

108. In Japan’s Development Cooperation Charter, being mindful of the internationally-agreed target of increasing ODA to 0.7% of GNI and fully recognizing Japan’s extremely severe fiscal situation, Japan will expand its ODA in various ways and make necessary efforts to enhance the foundation for the implementation of development cooperation.

109. Moreover, in implementing development cooperation, while paying close attention to the human rights situation in developing countries, full consideration will be given to ensuring fairness in order to promote diverse and inclusive societies where all people, including those in socially vulnerable positions, can participate in and benefit from development.

(Paragraph 33)

110. Refer to the Annex for statistical data on the implementation of the obligations under the Covenant.

(Paragraph 34)

111. Refer to paragraph 3 of the third periodic report.

112. Refer to paragraphs 4–5 of the third periodic report.

(Paragraph 35)

113. The Government recognizes the individual communications procedures set forth in the Optional Protocol to the Covenant to be noteworthy in the sense that they effectively guarantee the implementation of the Covenant. Regarding the acceptance of the procedure, the Government is aware that there are various issues to consider—including whether it could pose any problems in relation to Japan’s judicial system or legislative policy, and what possible organizational frameworks would be required to implement the procedures in the case that Japan is to accept it. The Government will further consider whether or not to accept such procedures in good faith, while taking into consideration opinions from various sectors.

(Paragraph 36)

114. The concluding observations to the third periodic report have been widely distributed to people in legislative, administrative, and judicial circles, and are also provided on the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (hereinafter “MOFA”). In the process of preparing the fourth periodic report, a wide range of opinions from the public was collected through the website of MOFA, and a meeting with NGO members and the public was organized for consultations.

Part 2: Report on the General Provisions of the Covenant

115. The Constitution of Japan is based on “individual dignity” and stipulates that “all of the people are equal under the law and there shall be no discrimination in political, economic or social relations because of race, creed, sex, social status or family origin” in Article 14, paragraph 1. This article serves to guarantee equality under the law. “Equality under the law” is the general principle that binds the legislature, the executive, and the judicature, and this principle is the supreme consideration in all affairs of state.

1. Right of Self-Determination

116. Refer to paragraph 37 of the fifth periodic report on the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

2. Provisions Prohibiting Discrimination in Domestic Law

117. Refer to paragraphs 18–24 of this report.

3. Status and Rights of Foreigners

(1) Right to work and freedom to choose and change one’s occupation

118. Based on the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act, the Government authorizes the entry and residence of foreigners who fall within any status of residence stipulated by the Act and meet the requirements (criteria) related to applicable status of residence. Consequently, the types of jobs and periods etc. for which foreign nationals can work in Japan are effectively restricted; however, this is the rational result of foreigners not being guaranteed the right to reside in Japan. These restrictions do not apply to foreigners who possess permanent residency status in Japan.

(2) Right to education

119. When foreigners wish their children to attend public compulsory education schools, the Government of Japan guarantees them the same opportunity to receive education as Japanese nationals, based on the Covenant and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Brochures concerning school entrance are issued to parents of foreign children of school age, so that these children will not be deprived of the opportunity of education. Furthermore, when foreign students are admitted, they receive the same treatment as Japanese students with respect to free tuition, free textbooks, and school attendance assistance measures, etc.

120. Regarding other items, refer to paragraphs 3 and 5–6 of the second periodic report.

4. Employment of Foreigners as Civil Servants

121. Refer to paragraph 8 of the second periodic report.

5. Development Assistance to Other Countries

(1) Assistance to make the right to work a reality

122. In Japan's Development Cooperation Charter, revised in June 2023, "quality growth" through fine-tuned human resource development and other initiatives is positioned as one of the priority policies. As initiatives contributing to the protection and capacity building of workers, Japan provides support for human resource development and the improvement of the working environment. In addition, through contributions to the ILO, Japan provides support for the realization of decent work in various regions around the world.

(2) Assistance to make the right to education a reality

123. Japan recognizes education as extremely important as an "investment in people" essential for promoting human security in the context of efforts to address global issues, and continues to promote initiatives, considering the perspectives of quality education for all, the empowerment of women, children, and youth, and ensuring educational opportunities in situations of conflict and disaster. Japan also promotes the acceptance of international students from diverse backgrounds at institutions for higher education, to contribute to the development of human resources in developing countries. Japan comprehensively promotes various measures such as the Japanese Government Scholarship System to provide high-quality higher education to students around the world. In FY2001, a special system, the In-Service Teacher Special Participation System was established within the JICA Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers to enable teachers with practical education experience and abilities to participate actively in international cooperation activities. A cumulative total of 1,631 teachers have been dispatched from 2002 to 2025.

(3) Support for fulfilling the right to health

124. Japan has contributed to the development of a global health architecture, strengthened prevention, preparedness, and responses to future public health emergencies, and promoted more resilient, more equitable, and more sustainable universal health coverage (UHC) through strengthening health systems in developing countries, including the development of human resources for health. Furthermore, in addition to bilateral assistance, Japan has played an active role in multilateral cooperation through collaboration with international organizations, such as WHO, and with global health initiatives (GHIs), such as Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance and the Global Fund.

6. Public Welfare

125. Refer to paragraph 11 of the second periodic report.

7. Enjoyment of Equal Rights by the Socially Disadvantaged

(1) Persons with disabilities

126. Japan's policies for persons with disabilities are based on the Basic Act for Persons with Disabilities,

and the Basic Programme for Persons with Disabilities is formulated based on discussions by the Commission on Policy for Persons with Disabilities, where representatives of persons with disabilities and their families account for half of the members, and promoted under the supervision of the Commission.

127. In 2014, Japan ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Prior to the ratification, the Basic Act for Persons with Disabilities was revised in 2011 to include provisions on the prohibition of discrimination, including the failure to provide reasonable accommodation (enforced in August of the same year). Specific measures to prohibit discrimination were stipulated in the Act for Eliminating Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities enacted in 2013 (enforced in April 2016) and the Act Partially Amending the Act to Facilitate the Employment of Persons with Disabilities (the part concerning the prohibition of discrimination was enforced in April 2016). In 2021, the Act for Eliminating Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities was revised (enforced in April 2024), obligating all businesses to provide reasonable accommodation when providing goods and services. Consultations regarding discrimination based on disability are handled by national and local governments, and to improve the system, efforts are being made to eliminate discrimination on the basis of disability through developing and disseminating laws and manuals, collecting cases, and sharing these with businesses and the public.

128. In the area of employment, the Act Partially Amending the Act to Facilitate the Employment of Persons with Disabilities stipulates the prohibition of discrimination against persons with disabilities in employment and mandates measures to remove obstacles for persons with disabilities in the workplace (obligation to provide reasonable accommodation) (enforced in April 2016) and awareness-raising activities for employers will continue to be carried out.

(2) Elderly persons

129. With the progress of population aging, increases in the number of elderly people requiring care, as well as the prolongation of periods when care is required, mean that care needs are increasingly expanding. At the same time, the situation surrounding families who have supported elderly people requiring care has also changed, with an increasing trend toward nuclear families and the aging of family caregivers. In this context, the long-term care insurance system exists as a mechanism for society as a whole to support the care of the elderly, moving away from responses by the conventional elderly welfare and medical care systems.

130. Under the long-term care insurance system, based on the basic philosophy of promoting independence and respecting the dignity of the elderly, long-term care services, which had previously been divided into both elderly welfare services and elderly medical services, were integrated into a single system. In addition, various entities—such as social welfare corporations, medical corporations, private companies, agricultural cooperatives, consumer cooperatives, and NPOs—are allowed to participate as service providers, creating a system where users can comprehensively receive health and medical services and welfare services from diverse entities of their own choosing. Furthermore, the long-term care insurance

system adopts a social insurance method with a clear relationship between benefits and contributions, whereby individuals become insured persons and join the long-term care insurance at age 40, paying long-term care insurance premiums monthly. Long-term care insurance services are operated with these premiums as part of their funding. Persons aged 65 or older can receive services at any time if they are certified as requiring care through a care needs assessment conducted by municipalities (insurers). In addition, persons aged 40 to 64 are structured to receive long-term care services if they are certified as requiring care due to specific diseases covered by long-term care insurance.

131. Furthermore, to ensure that elderly people can maintain their dignity, it is important to prevent them from being subjected to abuse. Since the Act on the Prevention of Abuse of Elderly Persons and Support for Persons Giving Care to Elderly Persons came into effect in April 2006, municipalities have been working to ensure that they can address abuse by establishing points of contact for abuse-related matters and responding to consultations and reports concerning abuse, and efforts are being made toward preventing the occurrence, worsening, and recurrence of abuse.

8. Measures for the Creation of a Gender-Equal Society

132. In 1996, the Basic Act for Gender-Equal Society was enacted. This act prescribes fundamental principles relating to the formation of a gender-equal society and clarifies the respective duties of the national government, local governments, and the people.

133. Since December 2000, the Basic Plan for Gender Equality has been formulated pursuant to the Act. In 2020, the 5th Basic Plan for Gender Equality was formulated, and the whole Government is steadily implementing it. Furthermore, the Council is currently deliberating on the next plan, taking into consideration a consultation from the Prime Minister on December 13, 2024, regarding the “Basic Principles” for its formulation.

134. In addition, pursuant to the Act, the Council for Gender Equality has been established in the Cabinet Office. This Council, chaired by the Chief Cabinet Secretary, and joined by the Minister of State for Gender Equality and other Ministers responsible for the implementation of policies related to gender equality, fulfills its role as one of the important policy councils while promoting cooperation among ministries and agencies. The Council investigates and deliberates on basic policies etc. for promoting the formation of a gender-equal society, and also performs the functions of monitoring the implementation status of government policies and surveying the impact of government policies on the formation of a gender-equal society.

135. Furthermore, to promote the smooth and effective implementation of measures concerning the promotion of a gender-equal society, the Headquarters for the Promotion of Gender Equality, with the Prime Minister as its head and all Cabinet Ministers as its members, has been established by Cabinet decision. Annually, the Headquarters decides on priority policies for women’s active participation and gender equality, and in conjunction with the Basic Plan for Gender Equality, continuously works toward gender

equality.

9. Promotion of Ainu Policy

136. The Act on the Promotion of Ainu Policies was enacted in May 2019. This indicates recognition that the Ainu people are an indigenous people residing in and around the northern part of the Japanese archipelago, especially Hokkaido. It aims to contribute to the realization of a society where all citizens coexist while mutually respecting each other's personality and individuality, by promoting comprehensive and effective Ainu policies, including regional development and industrial promotion, in addition to traditional welfare policies and cultural promotion, thereby enabling the Ainu people to live with ethnic pride and to have that pride respected.

137. Based on the aforementioned Act and the Basic Principles for the Comprehensive and Effective Promotion of Ainu Policies, the Government is promoting comprehensive and effective Ainu policies, considering the opinions of the Ainu people. Specifically, it provides grants for various projects, such as cultural promotion and welfare measures described in the Ainu Policy Promotion Regional Plans, which municipalities are to create after hearing the opinions of local Ainu people, and conducts activities for the promotion and dissemination of Ainu culture. To facilitate this, the government convenes the Council for Ainu Policy Promotion, chaired by the Minister of State for Ainu-Related Policies. Multiple representatives of the Ainu participate in this Council.

Part 3: Report on Specific Provisions of the Covenant

1. Article 6

(1) Basic Data Related to Employment and Unemployment

138. Refer to Annex Table 16 for changes in the unemployment rate based on sex and age.

139. Refer to Annex Table 17 for changes in the ratio of effective job offers to effective job applications and the unemployment rate based on region.

140. Refer to Annex Table 18 for employment placement of disabled persons registered at public employment security offices.

(2) Policies and Measures to Guarantee the Right to Work

141. Since the submission of the Third Government Report, the Government has adopted the Basic Policy on Labor Measures as a major measure concerning labor policies in Japan. This policy was formulated in December 2018 based on Article 10, paragraph 1 of the Act on Comprehensively Advancing Labor Measures, and Stabilizing the Employment of Workers, and Enriching Workers' Occupational Lives (hereinafter "the Comprehensive Labor Measures Act"),¹ which was revised in July 2018, and outlines basic matters concerning national measures based on the significance and intent of work style reform.

142. This policy systematically organizes the directions to be pursued in a wide range of areas, such as "improvement of the working environment including reduction of working hours," "securing balanced treatment among workers with different employment or work styles, popularization of diverse work styles, and improvement of employment and work styles," "promotion of active participation of diverse human resources," "support for balancing childcare/family care or medical treatment with work," "improvement of human capital quality and enhancement of vocational ability evaluation," "enhancement of measures related to job change/re-employment support and job placement," and "initiatives toward smooth implementation of work style reform." These measures promote the stabilization of employment and enrichment of occupational lives in accordance with the diverse circumstances of workers, as well as the improvement of labor productivity.

(3) Measures for Unemployment and Securing Equal Employment Opportunities

143. In Japan, based on the Vocational Abilities Development Promotion Act, "public vocational training" is implemented to enable workers to acquire the skills necessary for their occupations and related knowledge in a gradual and systematic manner. Under this system, the national and prefectural governments establish public institutions for the development of vocational abilities, primarily focusing on manufacturing, and work to support the re-employment of job seekers, mainly those receiving

¹ The Comprehensive Labor Measures Act, Article 10, Paragraph 1: The national government must establish a basic policy for the comprehensive implementation of labor-related measures that are necessary in enabling workers to make effective use of their abilities.

unemployment insurance benefits. In addition, prefectures commission private educational training institutions to provide diverse vocational training that meets local needs.

144. Furthermore, based on the Act on Support for Employment of Specific Job Seekers through Implementation of Vocational Training, Etc., the Job Seeker Support System has been implemented since October 2011. This system provides opportunities for free vocational training as a safety net primarily for job seekers who are not eligible for unemployment insurance benefits, and supports their early re-employment by providing benefits to facilitate vocational training (job seeker support training) if certain requirements are met.

145. In FY2023, approximately 95,000 job seekers received training through public vocational training, and approximately 45,000 through job seeker support training.

146. Furthermore, Article 3 of the Employment Security Act stipulates that no one shall be discriminated against in employment placement, vocational guidance, or the like, for reasons of race, nationality, creed, sex, social status, or family origin, etc. The Government implements the following measures to guarantee substantially equal employment opportunities.

Male and female workers

a. Ensuring Compliance with the Equal Employment Opportunity Law

147. Efforts are being made to ensure compliance with the Equal Employment Opportunity Law, which prohibits discriminatory treatment based on sex in recruitment, hiring, assignment, promotion, etc., and disadvantageous treatment due to marriage, pregnancy, and childbirth. When violations of the Law are found, corrective guidance is provided, and in the event of labor-management disputes, the dispute resolution assistance system and conciliation are used to facilitate smooth resolution. For other specific efforts, refer to paragraph 156 (ii)–(v) of the third periodic report.

b. Assistance with improving employment management

148. Since the last periodic report, the Employment Environment and Equal Opportunity Departments (Divisions) of each Prefectural Labor Bureau have continued to address issues related to employment management, such as recruitment, hiring, assignment, and promotion, by working to ensure compliance with the Equal Employment Opportunity Law. They do so by providing corrective guidance when violations of the law are found regarding sex-based discrimination and disadvantageous treatment due to marriage, pregnancy, and childbirth at various stages of employment management. Furthermore, in the event of labor-management disputes, they utilize the dispute resolution assistance system and conciliation to achieve smooth resolution of disputes.

c. Exceptions from the application of the Equal Employment Opportunity Law

149. Refer to paragraph 159 (i)–(v) of the third periodic report regarding exceptions recognized in the Guidelines for Employers to Appropriately Address Matters Stipulated in Provisions Prohibiting Discrimination Based on Sex against Workers, Etc., which were established based on the Equal

Employment Opportunity Law to enable employers to appropriately address matters concerning recruitment, hiring, assignment, promotion, etc., as measures prohibited and deemed necessary to be specifically clarified.

Foreigners entering Japan

150. Refer to paragraph 162 of the third periodic report.

2. Article 7

(1) Minimum Wage

151. Refer to paragraphs 44–46 of this report.

(2) Working Conditions

152. Refer to paragraphs 40–43 of this report.

(3) Equal Treatment

153. Refer to paragraphs 180–181 of the third periodic report. Japan submitted its report on the implementation of the Equal Remuneration Convention (ILO Convention No. 100) to the ILO in 2023.

154. Additionally, according to the Basic Survey on Equal Employment, the percentage of women holding management positions equivalent to or higher than a subsection chief role in companies rose to 15.8% as of 2024 (women made up 8.7% of employees with positions equivalent of the director of a department, 12.3% of employees with positions equivalent of the section manager of a department, and 21.1% of employees with positions equivalent of a subsection chief).

(4) Measures against Sexual Harassment

155. Violence—including sexual harassment, spousal violence, sexual crimes and sexual violence, prostitution, trafficking in persons, and stalking behavior—constitutes a serious violation of human rights and is an important issue to be overcome in forming a gender-equal society. In alignment with the United Nations designation of November 25 as International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, the Headquarters for the Promotion of Gender Equality launched a campaign for the elimination of violence against women for a two-week period from November 12 to 25. In this connection, the Headquarters has been collaborating with local public authorities, women’s groups, and other related organizations to further strengthen efforts to address violence against women, including raising social awareness.

156. According to the results of the Basic Survey on Equal Employment conducted in 2024, 6.0% of companies had received requests for advice or reports on sexual harassment from their workers over the preceding three years. By size, for companies with 5,000 or more employees, the figure was 85.4%; for those with 1,000–4,999 employees, it was 65.0%; for those with 300–999 employees, it was 37.3%; for

those with 100–299 employees, it was 16.7%; and for those with 30–99 employees, it was 6.1%.

157. In addition, in 2025, the revised Equal Employment Opportunity Law—which incorporates measures to prevent sexual harassment against job applicants, among others—was enacted (to be enforced from the date specified by cabinet order within one year and six months from the date of its promulgation).

(5) Safety and Health Measures

Key laws, regulations, etc.

158. Refer to paragraph 182 of the third periodic report. Japan submitted its report on the implementation of the Labour Inspection Convention (ILO Convention No.81) to the ILO in 2024.

Industrial accidents

159. For the trend in the number of deaths and casualties (four days or more of absence from work) due to industrial accidents, refer to Annex Table 19.

Occupational diseases

160. For changes in the number of occupational disease cases, and relevant information, refer to Annex Table 20.

3. Article 8

Right to form and join labor unions

161. The number of labor unions and their members by industry in Japan are as indicated in Annex Table 21.

162. For the privatization of postal services, refer to paragraph 191 of the third periodic report.

4. Article 9

(1) Social Security System

163. Japan's social security system provides benefits such as medical care, injury and sickness benefits, maternity benefits, old-age pension benefits, disability benefits, survivor benefits, family benefits, industrial accident benefits, and unemployment benefits.

164. The changes in domestic law, court judgments, administrative regulations, and procedures that affect rights concerning social security since the submission of the third periodic report are as follows.

165. Regarding the employment insurance system, considering the impact on employment due to the financial crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic, the Government has taken measures such as raising the lower limit of the daily wage amount used as the basis for calculating unemployment benefits (in 2011 and 2017) and extending the number of days for which unemployment benefits are paid (in 2020). In the most recent revision of the Employment Insurance Act in 2024, recognizing the diversification of working styles and

livelihood maintenance among employed workers, the Government revised the scope of application of employment insurance from those with “20 hours or more” of prescribed weekly working hours to those with “10 hours or more” of such hours, from the perspective of expanding the employment safety net (to be enforced in October 2028).

166. Regarding the pension system, the 2012 revision involved the permanent establishment of the National Treasury ratio of one-half for the basic pension, as well as the shortening of the eligibility period from 25 years to 10 years and the establishment of the Pension Recipient Support Benefit System. The 2016 revision thoroughly implemented measures to revise the pension amount in line with wage fluctuations when wage fluctuations fell below price fluctuations. The 2020 revision introduced a system to revise the pension amount for recipients of employees’ old-age pension benefits who are still employed, at regular intervals each year, to reflect continued employment in old age in the pension amount earlier. Furthermore, the 2025 revision included measures to raise the benefit level of the basic pension in the future. In addition, since the 2012 revision, the expansion of coverage for employees’ insurance for part-time workers and others has been progressively implemented.

167. Regarding the medical insurance system, with the aim of building a social security system for all generations where all generations support each other according to their ability in a super-aging society, the Act for Partial Revision of the Health Insurance Act and Other Acts to Establish a Sustainable Social Security System for All Generations was enacted in 2023. From April 2024, measures such as the introduction of support payments from the Latter-Stage Elderly Medical Insurance System for the lump-sum birth and nursing grant, and a review of the Latter-Stage Elderly Persons’ Burden Ratio in the Latter-Stage Elderly Medical Insurance System were implemented.

168. Japan submitted its report on the implementation of the Employment Injury Benefits Convention (ILO Convention No. 121) and the Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention (ILO Convention No. 102) to the ILO in 2024.

(2) Medical Care, Sickness and Injury Benefits, and Maternity Benefits

169. Japan’s medical insurance system is a mechanism for providing necessary benefits in cases of medical care, sickness/injury, childbirth, etc. In addition, there is also a public assistance (public assistance) scheme funded by the general budgets of the national and local governments.

Contents of the medical insurance system

170. As stated in paragraph 202 of the third periodic report, a universal health insurance system has been realized in which all citizens join one of the public medical insurance schemes, allowing anyone to receive appropriate medical care anytime, anywhere.

a. Medical care

171. Medical care provided under the public medical insurance scheme includes medical treatment,

surgery, hospitalization in hospitals and clinics, nursing care, dental treatment, and medication, etc. Following a 2006 law revision, the patient co-payment rates for medical expenses are as follows: 20% for preschool children; 30% for school-age children up to persons under 70 years of age; 20% for persons aged 70 to under 75; and 10% for persons aged 75 and over (however, the rate is 30% for persons aged 70 and over who are high-income earners comparable to the working generation). Furthermore, a law revision in June 2021 introduced a 20% co-payment for persons aged 75 and over with a certain level of income (effective October 2022). In addition, if a patient's monthly out-of-pocket medical expenses exceed the co-payment limit (which varies depending on income and age), the excess amount is paid as high-cost medical care benefits.

b. Sickness and injury benefits

172. Under health insurance, sickness and injury benefits are provided to safeguard the livelihoods of people who become unable to work due to sickness or injury. Currently, the amount of sickness and injury benefits is two-thirds of the standard daily remuneration (an amount equivalent to 1/30th of the standard monthly remuneration, determined by the applicable grade within a 50-grade system), and the maximum payment period is one year and six months in total from the start of payment. Under national health insurance, sickness and injury benefit is optional by law, and as of the end of March 2024, approximately 87% of national health insurance societies provide it.

c. Maternity benefits

173. If an insured person is absent from work due to childbirth and does not receive salary, two-thirds of the standard daily remuneration is paid as maternity benefits under health insurance for a period of 42 days before and 56 days after childbirth. In addition, to help ease the financial burden of expenses related to childbirth, a lump-sum birth and nursing grant (for dependents such as spouses of the insured, a family lump-sum birth and nursing grant) of 500,000 yen (488,000 yen in cases of childbirth at medical institutions etc. not enrolled in the Obstetric Compensation System) is provided. Under the national health insurance scheme, the details of the benefits are determined by municipal ordinances, but in many municipalities, a lump-sum birth and nursing grant of 500,000 yen (488,000 yen in cases of childbirth at medical institutions etc. not enrolled in the Obstetric Compensation System) is provided.

Financial structure of the medical insurance system

a. Health insurance

174. The amount of an individual insurance premium is calculated by multiplying the standard monthly remuneration of the insured person by the premium rate, and, in principle, is split equally between the insured and his/her employer. The average premium rate for the Japan Health Insurance Association-administered health insurance in FY2023 was 10.00%, and the average premium rate for the association-administered health insurance scheme in FY2023 was 9.27%. Under the Japan Health Insurance Association, 16.4% of the costs required for insurance benefits such as medical care benefits, medical

expenses, family medical care benefits, sickness and injury benefits, maternity benefits, and high-cost medical care benefits (including similar benefits for families) are covered by the National Treasury.

b. National health insurance

175. Refer to paragraphs 209–210 of the third periodic report; however, the national health insurance premium cannot exceed 660,000 yen per household per year.

c. Medical care system for the elderly in the latter stage of life

176. The medical care system for the elderly in the latter stage of life is a scheme targeting elderly persons aged 75 and over, and premiums are paid on an individual basis. The amount consists of a portion assessed according to the insured person's ability to pay the premium (based on income), and a portion assessed equally to the insured person according to the benefits received (per capita levy for insured persons), but it cannot exceed 800,000 yen per year. Approximately 50% of the benefits costs for the medical care system are covered by public funds, approximately 40% by contributions from the working generation, and approximately 10% by premiums paid by the elderly.

(3) Old-age Benefits, Disability Benefits, and Survivor's Benefits

177. Old-age benefits, disability benefits, and survivor's benefits are covered by public pension schemes that apply to all residents of Japan. Public pension schemes include the national pension, which provides a basic pension common to all beneficiaries, and the employees' pension insurance, which provides salary-proportional pensions in addition to the national pension. Following the third periodic report, revisions were made to the pension system in 2012, 2016, 2020, and 2025 to ensure the long-term balance between benefits and contributions and to make the system sustainable, even amid the declining birthrate and aging population.

The national pension scheme

178. This scheme applies to all residents of Japan aged 20 to 59 years old. Spouses (e.g., housewives) of those insured under the Employees' Pension Insurance are also independently insured.

179. The benefits include the following:

- Old-age basic pension, which is provided to those aged 65 or older who have contributed for 10 years or more (69,308 yen monthly from April 2025, for those born on or after April 2, 1956)
- Disability basic pension, which is provided according to the degree of disability (86,635 yen monthly for Class 1 and 69,308 yen for Class 2 from April 2025, for those born on or after April 2, 1956)
- Survivor's basic pension, which is provided to the family when an insured person or a person eligible for his/her old-age basic pension dies (69,308 yen monthly from April 2025, for those born on or after April 2, 1956, plus an additional amount depending on the number of children)

180. Financial resources are covered by individual national pension contributions (17,510 yen monthly

in FY2025), contributions from the Employees' Pension Insurance scheme, and National Treasury subsidy (half of the basic pension benefit costs).

The employees' pension insurance scheme

181. This scheme applies to company employees under 70 years of age (those working at workplaces subject to Employees' Pension Insurance), national and local government officials, and teachers and staff of private schools.

182. Benefits include the following:

- Employees' old-age pension, which is provided to those aged 65 or older who are eligible for the old-age basic pension and have contributed for one month or more (the amount is determined by age, the average standardized amount of remuneration, number of months of contribution, and the existence of a spouse and/or children)
- Employees' disability pension, which is provided for disabilities resulting from sickness or injury that originated during the period of being insured (the amount is determined by the average standardized amount of remuneration, number of months of contribution, and degree of disability)
- Employees' pension for surviving family, which is provided to the family when an insured person or a person eligible for his/her old-age basic pension dies (the amount is determined by the average standardized amount of remuneration and the number of months of contribution)

183. Financial resources are covered by contributions paid equally by employees and employers. The premium rate is 18.3% (fixed since September 2017).

(4) Family Benefits

184. Child allowance is provided to contribute to stable family life and to promote the healthy growth of children who will lead the next generation of society. The number of beneficiaries in February 2024 was 8.66 million. In 2024, the child allowance system was drastically expanded as part of the Acceleration Plan for Supporting Children and Child-Rearing. The enhanced child allowance was clarified as fundamental economic support for the upbringing of all children who will lead the next generation and fundamentally expanded, including support for the first child. The main ways in which it has been expanded are as follows:

- The income cap has now been abolished
- The period of benefit payments has now been extended until high school age

The benefit amount was raised from 15,000 yen to 30,000 yen per month per child, from the third child on, considering the significant decrease in the proportion of households with three or more children and the higher need for economic support in households with three or more children.

185. Furthermore, in terms of financial resources, a part of the Child and Child-rearing Support Levy (CCSL, *kodomo kosodate shienkin*) that has been newly introduced is allocated to child allowance. This is because child allowance provides broad and seamless support to beneficiaries. The financial resources for

child allowance differ by the employment types and ages of children. For employees whose children are under 3 years old, Child and Childcare Contributions (CCC, *kodomo kosodate kyoshutsu-kin*) cover 2/5 and the CCSL covers 3/5. For non-employees whose children are under 3 years old, the government covers 4/15, local governments cover 2/15, and the CCSL covers 3/5. For those with children aged 3 years or older, the government covers 4/9, local governments cover 2/9, and the CCSL covers 1/3.

(5) Employment Injury Benefits

186. Benefits for an occupational accident (including commuting accidents) incurred by workers are paid in accordance with the Industrial Accident Compensation Insurance Act.

187. The Industrial Accident Compensation Insurance aims at all workers (hired by employers and receiving wages) regardless of nationality, and applies to all businesses that employ workers. As of March 2023, the number of applicable businesses was approximately 2.97 million with approximately 61.46 million workers.

188. New measures adopted since the third periodic report include the expansion of insurance benefits for multiple business workers (establishment of insurance benefits related to multiple employment factor injuries and inclusion of wages from non-accident businesses in the basic daily payment amount).

189. The industrial accident compensation insurance is run by the Government. In principle, the expenses required by the insurance are covered by premiums paid by employers. The premium is calculated by multiplying the total amount of wages paid by the employer by the insurance premium rate. The insurance premium rate is determined for each industry, considering the injury rate in the past and other factors. Currently, the lowest rate is 0.25% and the highest is 8.8%.

(6) Unemployment Benefits

190. Unemployment and other benefits are paid to workers who are unemployed or have trouble in continuing their employment, in accordance with the Employment Insurance Act, to stabilize workers' livelihoods and employment as well as to promote employment.

191. The Employment Insurance Scheme applies to businesses where workers are employed. All persons employed in such businesses are insured and covered, except for certain persons (e.g., those whose prescribed working hours per week are less than 20 hours). At the end of March 2025, the number of applicable businesses was approximately 2.38 million, and the number of insured persons was approximately 44.99 million.

192. Unemployment benefits include the following:

- Job applicant benefits, which primarily aim to stabilize the livelihood of unemployed workers.
- Employment promotion benefits, which primarily aim to promote the re-employment of unemployed workers.
- Continuous employment benefits, which aim to stabilize employment by providing necessary

benefits when workers face difficulties in continuing their employment. Among job applicant benefits, the level of basic allowance provided to general insured persons is determined by the daily wage before unemployment, age, and the period of being insured. As of August 1, 2025, the minimum daily amount is 2,411 yen, and the maximum is 8,870 yen. The minimum duration for benefit payment is 90 days, and the maximum is 360 days.

193. The financial resources for unemployment benefits are covered by employment insurance premiums paid by employees and employers (as of FY2025, they equally bear half of the amount equivalent to 0.7% of total wages) and by the National Treasury.

(7) Trend of Costs Related to Social Security

194. Refer to paragraphs 9–11 of this report.

5. Article 10

195. Japan submitted its report on the implementation of the Minimum Age Convention (ILO Convention No. 138) to the ILO in 2022.

(1) Protection of the Family

Assistance for families

a. Financial assistance for child rearing

196. As was stated in the third periodic report, financial assistance for parents and others raising children includes the child allowance based on the Child Allowance Act, the child-rearing allowance based on the Child Rearing Allowance Act, and the special child-rearing allowance based on the Act on Special Child-Rearing Allowance. The latest amounts for the relevant benefits and numbers of recipients are as follows:

- Regarding child allowance, refer to paragraphs 184–185 of this report.
- As of April 2025, the child-rearing allowance for the full amount is 46,690 yen per month with a partial amount ranging between 11,010 yen and 46,680 yen (an additional amount is provided based on the number of children). The number of recipients totaled 779,222 (approximate) at the end of March 2025.

As of April 2025, the special child-rearing allowance is 56,800 yen per month for a child with a Class 1 disability, and 37,830 yen per month for a child with a Class 2 disability. The number of recipients totaled 299,028 at the end of March 2024.

b. Nursery care

197. Infants and toddlers whose guardians require childcare due to their work, illness or other reasons are provided with nursery care based on the Child Welfare Act by municipalities (including special wards). In April 2015, the Act on Supporting Children and Child-Rearing was enforced, and municipalities were stipulated to comprehensively and systematically provide childcare, etc. The national government and

prefectures are obligated to take all necessary measures to ensure that childcare, etc. by municipalities is conducted appropriately and smoothly.

198. Furthermore, in light of the further advancement of women's employment and the increase in applicants for childcare facilities, etc. due to the enforcement of the Act on Supporting Children and Child-Rearing, etc., the government has developed childcare facilities for approximately 428,000 children over the four years from FY2013 to FY2016, based on the Accelerated Plan to Eliminate Children on Waiting Lists for Childcare announced in April 2013, to eliminate waiting lists for childcare. In addition, based on the Child-Rearing Relief Plan announced in June 2017, it was decided to further develop childcare facilities for approximately 320,000 children by the end of FY2020, and based on the New Child-Rearing Relief Plan announced in December 2020, it was decided to further develop childcare facilities for approximately 140,000 children by March 2025. As a result of these initiatives, the number of children on waiting lists for childcare as of April 1, 2025, is 2,254, the lowest since the survey began.

199. In 2025, regarding childcare policy from April of that year onwards, it was decided to shift from "quantity expansion" to "quality improvement." The New Direction for Childcare Policy was compiled, centered on three pillars: "securing and enhancing high-quality childcare that responds to local needs," "promoting initiatives that support the growth of all children and child-rearing households," and "improving operations through securing childcare personnel and utilizing technology."

200. The costs of providing day care for infants and toddlers at day care centers are covered by public expense borne by the national government or local governments, employer contributions from companies, etc., and user fees collected from custodians based on their financial capacities. Furthermore, from the perspective of the importance of early childhood education in fostering the foundations of lifelong character building, and alleviating the burden on custodians, user fees for early childhood education and childcare facilities such as kindergartens, day care centers, and centers for early childhood education and care have been made free of charge for all children between the ages of 3 and 5 and children under the age of 2 in households with exemptions from municipal residence tax, since October 1, 2019, based on the New Economic Policy Package (Dec. 8, 2017), the Basic Policy on Economic and Fiscal Management and Reform 2018, and the Policy for the Realization of a Free Early Childhood Education System.

201. In FY2026, the Connecting All Children to ECEC (Early Childhood Education and Care) System—a new childcare system that can be used flexibly in hourly units, etc., regardless of employment requirements, within a monthly available usage limit—will be fully implemented in order to support the growth of all children, create a high-quality environment for children's upbringing, and strengthen support for all child-rearing households in a way that is independent of diverse working styles and lifestyles.

c. Childcare leave, etc.

202. Regarding childcare leave stipulated in the Child Care and Family Care Leave Law, the eligibility requirements for fixed-term contract workers were relaxed in January 2017 and April 2022, and it was decided that the only requirement is that "it is not clear that the labor contract (or the renewed contract, if

renewed) will expire by the day the child reaches 1 year and 6 months of age.”

203. Additionally, from October 2017, exceptions to the eligible period, which is generally until the child reaches 1 year of age, were extended to allow re-extension up to 2 years of age, but only in cases, inter alia, where the child cannot enter a childcare facility even if childcare leave is extended until the child reaches 1 year and 6 months of age.

204. Moreover, to promote the acquisition of childcare leave by men, whose acquisition rate is low compared to women, from October 2022, it was made possible for childcare leave, which can be taken for up to 4 weeks within 8 weeks after the child’s birth, to be taken in two separate periods, and a flexible childcare leave framework (parental leave) for the period immediately after the child’s birth was established. Furthermore, from the perspective of promoting dual-income and co-parenting, in April 2025, a system of coparenting-leave support benefits was established, which provides 13% of the daily wage at the start of leave for up to 28 days if both a person with employment insurance and their spouse take childcare leave for 14 days or more within a certain period immediately after the child’s birth (within 8 weeks after the child’s birth for men, and within 8 weeks after maternity leave for women) (equivalent to 100% of take-home pay when combined with childcare leave benefits).

205. From June 2010, employers were obligated to exempt workers raising a child under 3 years of age from working outside scheduled working hours upon request, and from April 2025, the target age of children was raised to before elementary school enrollment.

206. Furthermore, while employers are required to take measures such as shortening working hours for workers raising children under 3 years of age, from October 2025, employers are obligated to take multiple measures to enable flexible working styles, such as flextime systems, telework, and shortened working hours, for workers raising children aged 3 to before elementary school enrollment.

d. Family care leave, etc.

207. Regarding family care leave stipulated in the Child Care and Family Care Leave Law, the eligibility requirements for fixed-term contract workers were relaxed in January 2017 and April 2022, and it was decided that the only requirement is that “it is not clear that the labor contract (or the renewed contract, if renewed) will expire by the day that falls six months after the end of the 93-day period calculated from the scheduled start date of family care leave.”

208. Additionally, while employers are required to take measures such as shortening working hours for workers caring for family members requiring care, from January 2017, the available period for these measures was extended to 3 years from the start of use, and it was made possible to use them in two separate periods.

e. Sick/injured child care leave, etc. and Family care leave

209. Regarding sick/injured child care leave stipulated in the Child Care and Family Care Leave Law, workers raising children before elementary school enrollment were allowed to take 5 days per year. From June 2010, if there are two or more children who are not yet enrolled in elementary school, 10 days per

year can be taken. From April 2025, the target age of children was expanded to the end of third grade of elementary school, and it was also made possible to take leave in cases of class closures due to infectious diseases or participation in children's events, etc.

210. From the perspective of supporting work-life balance for caregiving, from June 2010, a system allowing workers to take short-term leave for caregiving (family care leave) when caring for family members was established in the Child Care and Family Care Leave Law (5 days per year if there is one family member requiring care, and 10 days per year if there are two or more).

211. It was made possible to take sick/injured child care leave and family care leave in half-day units in January 2017 and in hourly units in January 2021.

(2) Protection of Mothers

Ensuring the health of expectant and nursing mothers, infants and toddlers

212. Under the Maternal and Child Health Act, the Government provides health checkups for expectant and nursing mothers and infants and toddlers, health guidance for expectant and nursing mothers and parents of infants and toddlers, postpartum care, medical care benefits for premature infants, and various kinds of consultation services relating to maternal and child health.

213. In addition, under the Act on Comprehensive Support for Persons with Disabilities, the Government provides financial assistance to cover the medical costs incurred in ensuring that children with physical disabilities can develop healthily and acquire the ability to live independently, and to cover the costs of prosthetic devices.

Support for Pregnant Women

214. Refer to paragraph 173 of this report. Additionally, in April 2025, the Government established the support benefit for pregnant women based on the Child and Childcare Support Act, which provides 50,000 yen to pregnant women in early pregnancy, and an amount equal to 50,000 yen multiplied by the number of children a woman is expecting from late pregnancy onwards. In order to provide continuous support from early pregnancy, since April 2025, the Government has also been implementing accompanied consultation support based on the Child Welfare Act, combining with financial benefits based on the Child and Childcare Support Act. Physical, mental, and financial support will be provided to pregnant women by steady implementation of both of the above forms of support.

Assistance for single parents and other families

215. Regarding measures for single parent families and others, comprehensive self-reliance support measures, such as (1) child-rearing and living support, (2) employment support, (3) support for securing child support and so on, and (4) financial support, are being developed based on, inter alia, the Basic Policy on Measures for the Stabilization and Improvement of Living for Fatherless Families and Widows.

Furthermore, based on the Acceleration Plan for Supporting Children and Child-Rearing, the promotion of self-reliance for fatherless families, etc. is being pursued through the expansion of child-rearing allowances (increase in income limits, increase in additional benefits for multiple children) and the expansion of the range of eligible qualifications and of the benefit rates for grants for single-parent families aiming to acquire qualifications.

Protection of mothers under the Labor Standards Law and Equal Employment Opportunity Law, etc.

216. Refer to paragraphs 252–255 of the third periodic report.

(3) Protection of Children

Protection from economic exploitation

217. Refer to paragraph 257 of the third periodic report. From January to December 2024, the number of permits for the exceptional employment of children as workers was 452.

Penalties for trafficking in children

218. Refer to paragraph 259 of the third periodic report.

219. Since the submission of the third periodic report, in June 2014, the Act on Regulation and Punishment of Acts Relating to Child Prostitution and Child Pornography, and the Protection of Children was amended. The amendment newly introduced a provision declaring the principle that no person shall engage in acts related to sexual exploitation or sexual abuse (Article 3-2, enforced in July 2014). Furthermore, with the aim of penalizing the demand side of child pornography, the possession of child pornography for the purpose of satisfying one's sexual curiosity was criminalized (Article 7, paragraph 1, enforced in July 2015), and the crime of producing child pornography through secretly depicting children in photographs or videos etc. was also newly established as a penalty (Article 7, paragraph 5, enforced in July 2014).

Protection from violence

220. Child abuse is prohibited by the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act. The national government and local governments are obligated to prevent child abuse, and measures for the protection and self-reliance support of abused children are stipulated. Through these provisions, measures concerning the prevention, etc. of child abuse are promoted.

221. In June 2024, the Act on Measures for the Prevention of Sexual Violence against Children by School Operators and Private Education and Childcare Providers was enacted. After the enforcement of this act in December 2026, operators providing education or childcare services to children, including schools and childcare facilities, will be required to take daily safety measures, such as interviews, consultations, and training, and to confirm the criminal records of their staff regarding sex crimes, to prevent sexual violence

against children by their staff. The specific content and other aspects of these measures will be considered in consultation with experts and in cooperation with relevant ministries.

Protection of the Rights of the Child

222. The Children and Families Agency was established on April 1, 2023, as a new command center to always prioritize the best interests of children, place child-related initiatives and policies at the center of society, guarantee children's rights from a child's perspective, considering all environments surrounding children, leave no child behind, and support healthy development of children by society as a whole. As a broad action plan for child policy, the Action Plan for Achieving a Children-Centered Society is formulated annually with the aim of realizing a "children-centered society" where all children and young people benefit from equal protection of their rights and can live their lives with a sense of well-being. This action plan is formulated under the Basic Act on Children's Policy (enforced in April 2023) and the General Principles for Child-Related Measures (Cabinet Decision, December 22, 2023), in accordance with the spirit of the Constitution of Japan and the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

223. The human rights bodies of MOJ, in addition to holding lectures, distributing awareness-raising brochures, etc., promote "Protecting Children's Human Rights" as one of the priority targets of their human rights awareness-raising activities. They also conduct various human rights awareness-raising activities, such as human rights lectures, for the purpose of helping children to acquire empathy for others and awareness of the preciousness of life.

224. Furthermore, in addition to establishing the Children's Rights Hotline at Legal Affairs Bureaus and District Legal Affairs Bureaus nationwide, a user-friendly system for easy consultation by children and young people has been put in place, including online human rights counseling services² ("Children's Rights SOS Email" and "Children's Rights SOS Chat"). Moreover, "Children's Rights SOS Mini-Letters" (letter paper with a pre-stamped envelope for which postage is paid by the addressee) are distributed to all elementary and junior high school students nationwide. Various means such as these are provided to make it easier for children to access consultation, and efforts are made to detect human rights violation cases involving children at an early stage.

225. When suspected cases of potential human rights violations—, such as bullying, corporal punishment, child abuse, child prostitution, and child pornography—are recognized through the above means of human rights counseling, etc., investigations are conducted as human rights violation cases, and appropriate measures are taken depending on the case.

Changes in legislation, etc. that affect the rights described in this article

226. In June 2022, the Child Welfare Act was revised to introduce "court investigations for decisions to place a child into temporary care," which require court review in certain cases, such as when parental

² https://www.jinken.go.jp/goriyouannai_en/

consent cannot be obtained, when temporary care begins, to ensure the appropriateness and transparency of temporary care procedures (enforced in June 2025). In addition, this revision mandated that children's intentions be heard when making decisions on temporary care, institutional placement, and other measures, and made the development of an environment for the protection of children's rights a duty of prefectures, etc. (enforced in April 2025).

227. Regarding the Act on Regulation and Punishment of Acts Relating to Child Prostitution and Child Pornography, and the Protection of Children, refer to paragraphs 218–219 of this report.

228. In December 2022, the Act Partially Amending the Civil Code and Related Acts was enacted (and partially enforced in the same month). The provisions of the former Civil Code that stipulated the right of the person having parental authority to discipline their children, which could be used as a pretext to justify child abuse, were deleted. At the same time, as a code of conduct for parents when providing care and education, parents were obligated to respect the individuality of the child and prohibited from engaging in corporal punishment or other behaviors that have harmful effects on the child's healthy physical and mental development, including verbal abuse.

229. Regarding the inheritance share of children born out of wedlock and the age of marriage, refer to paragraphs 12–13 of this report.

230. Regarding the Act on Measures for the Prevention of Sexual Violence against Children by School Operators and Private Education and Childcare Providers, refer to paragraph 221 of this report.

231. In 2012, the Child and Child Care Support Act and related acts were enacted with the aim of contributing to the realization of a society where every child can grow up healthy, and these acts have been enforced since April 2015.

6. Article 11

(1) Data Related to an Adequate Standard of Living

232. For changes in the annual income and consumption expenditure by income quintile group, refer to Annex Table 22.

(2) Poverty Measures

233. Under the Public Assistance Act, Japanese citizens who are struggling to make ends meet are provided with livelihood assistance, education assistance, housing assistance, medical assistance, long-term care assistance, maternity assistance, occupational assistance, and funeral assistance. For the transition of the standard amount of monthly livelihood assistance provided to a standard three-member household (husband, 33 years old; wife, 29 years old; and one child, 4 years old) in the highest price-index areas (in large cities, such as Tokyo and Osaka) between FY2009 and FY2025, refer to Annex Table 23.

234. Under the Act on the Promotion of Policy on Child Poverty, which came into effect in January 2014, various measures have been implemented to address child poverty. In 2023, the Children and Families

Agency was established, and the Cabinet included child poverty measures as an important matter in the General Principles for Child-Related Measures decided by the Cabinet in the same year. This Act was revised in 2024 to include the aim of eliminating child poverty and other goals and basic principles, becoming the Act on the Promotion of Measures for the Elimination of Child Poverty (enforced in September 2024). Furthermore, the Action Plan for Achieving a Children-Centered Society 2025, decided in June 2025, also positions support for children and young people facing difficulties as one of its important pillars, and through this, the Government will actively pursue measures to eliminate child poverty.

(3) Right to Adequate Food

Outline

235. Since food is the most basic commodity that people need, assuring a stable supply of food and guaranteeing its security are objectives of fundamental importance for national policy. Therefore, the Government is comprehensively implementing necessary measures for the improvement of agricultural productivity and structure, rationalization of food distribution and processing, and stabilization of agricultural product prices, to ensure a stable supply of food. In addition, the Government has pursued measures for ensuring a stable supply of those agricultural imports that Japan depends upon from overseas sources, and appropriate provisions have been stored for emergencies. Furthermore, shokuiku (meaning “food and nutrition education”) has been promoted from the perspective of encouraging healthy dietary habits. As a result, an appropriate food supply has been achieved in Japan, and the rights of certain deprived groups to receive an adequate supply of food are not being infringed.

Agricultural policy for maintaining an appropriate food supply in Japan

236. Refer to paragraphs 267–275 of the third periodic report.

Ensuring food safety

237. In order to ensure food safety, the following measures have been taken based on the Food Sanitation Act:

- Establishment of standards for food, food additives, apparatus, and containers and packaging
- Monitoring and guidance by food sanitation inspectors
- Implementation of sanitation management by a business
- Business license system of 32 business categories, including restaurants, and a business notification system

Consideration of national nutrition

238. Based on the Health Promotion Act, “Health Japan 21 (the third term),” which is a national health promotion movement launched in FY2024, sets objectives in the area of nutrition and dietary habits, such

as “increasing the number of people consuming a well-balanced diet” with specific target values, and promotes efforts in collaboration with businesses, organizations, and local governments. In addition, shokuiku is promoted as a national campaign; based on the Basic Act on Shokuiku (Food and Nutrition Education) (enforced in July 2005). In addition, in March 2021, the Fourth Basic Plan for the Promotion of Shokuiku was formulated to comprehensively and systematically promote measures related to the promotion of shokuiku, setting 16 goals, such as “increase the number of citizens who are interested in shokuiku,” and 24 detailed target values.

239. Furthermore, to help each citizen to work on improving their dietary habits, the Dietary Guidelines for Japanese were formulated, outlining 10 key recommendations. As a tool to translate these guidelines into specific actions, the Government developed the Japanese Food Guide Spinning Top, which visually illustrates desirable combinations of food and approximate quantities of daily meals. Through awareness-raising activities promoting the use of these tools, a community-wide approach (population approach) for promoting health is being implemented, including the creation of healthier food environments. Every September, the Dietary Improvement Promotion Campaign is also conducted, serving as an opportunity to further promote the improvement of nutrition and dietary habits.

240. In addition, based on the Health Promotion Act, the National Health and Nutrition Survey is conducted annually to describe the physical conditions, nutrient intake, and lifestyle habits of citizens, and the results are made widely available to the public. Furthermore, based on the same Act, the Dietary Reference Intakes for Japanese have been established as standards for energy and nutrient intake for the maintenance and promotion of health and the prevention of the onset and progression of lifestyle-related diseases. The Dietary Reference Intakes are revised every five years, and in October 2024, the Dietary Reference Intakes for Japanese (2025 Edition) were formulated.

Measures to ensure globally fair food distribution

241. Refer to paragraphs 286–288 of the third periodic report.

(4) Right to Adequate Housing

Statistical data on housing

242. Refer to Annex Tables 24–26.

243. Regarding the actual conditions of homeless persons, the National Survey on the Actual Conditions of Homelessness is carried out based on the Act on Special Measures concerning Assistance in Self-Support of the Homeless and other relevant laws, with the aim of continuously assessing the effectiveness of policies related to the self-support of homeless people. On the other hand, there are no statistical data on illegal residents and evictions. In addition, there is no payment capacity limit on housing costs determined by the Government.

Measures concerning housing and living standards

a. Laws stipulating the rights concerning living standards

244. The Civil Code stipulates conditions of ownership and leases. The Land-Lease and House-Lease Law provides specific provisions concerning the leasing of buildings (The Land-Lease and House-Lease Law unifies the former Lease Land Law, Lease House Law, and Law Concerning Building Protection, and came into force in August 1992.)

245. The revised Civil Code (Revision of the Law of Obligations) enacted in 2017 featured revisions, such as codifying basic rules regarding leases, from the perspective of making the Civil Code easily understandable to the public (enforced in April 2020). Furthermore, the revised Civil Code (Revision of Inheritance Law) enacted in 2018 (enforced in April 2020) stipulates the following from the perspective of considering the livelihood of a spouse left behind after the death of their partner:

- In cases where a spouse resided in a building owned by the decedent prior to the death of the decedent, the spouse can acquire the right to continue residing in that building free of charge (Spouse's Right of Residence) through the division of the estate or the legacy.
- In cases where a spouse resided in a building owned by the decedent free of charge prior to the death of the decedent, the spouse can acquire the right to continue residing in that building free of charge for a certain period even after the death of the decedent (Spouse's Right of Short-Term Residence), except in cases where the Spouse's Right of Residence has been acquired.

b. Laws concerning housing

246. Refer to paragraph 292 of the third periodic report. Regarding (vii), the Act for Specified Good Quality Rental Housing is also stipulated, which aims to promote the supply of rental housing with good living environments for middle-income earners, etc. by implementing measures such as rent subsidies for high-quality rental housing.

c. Laws concerning land usage

247. Refer to paragraph 293 of the third periodic report.

d. Laws concerning the rights of tenants

248. Refer to paragraph 294 of the third periodic report.

e. Laws restricting speculation on land

249. The Basic Land Law stipulates that land shall be smoothly traded from the perspective of promoting appropriate use and management by landowners, etc., and shall not be subject to speculative transactions. Furthermore, the Act for Planning the Utilization of National Land stipulates measures to be taken regarding the regulation of land transactions to eliminate the adverse effects of speculative land transactions and soaring land prices on people's lives.

f. Law on standards and regulations for building

250. The Building Standards Act provides the minimum standards to be ensured for the sites, structures, equipment, and uses of buildings, with the aim of safeguarding the lives, health, and property of the public,

and contributing to the promotion of public welfare.

Other measures adopted with the aim of securing rights concerning residence

a. Subsidies for organizations established by community residents

251. Refer to paragraph 298 of the third periodic report.

b. Measures adopted to promote the construction of housing

252. Based on the Basic Plan for Housing decided by the Cabinet in March 2021, measures are being promoted concerning securing good quality housing where it is easy to give birth and raise children, and securing housing where elderly people can live healthily and with peace of mind. Measures include developing a housing finance market where diverse housing loans, such as long-term and fixed-rate loans, are stably supplied, implementing tax measures, and promoting the supply of high-quality rental housing. Furthermore, to secure housing for persons requiring housing support, planned reconstruction and stock improvement of public housing are being promoted, and the utilization of safety-net registered housing that does not refuse entry to persons requiring housing support is being advanced. In addition, the Government is making efforts to develop a living environment where everyone can live with peace of mind. This includes developing a market environment that both landlords and persons requiring housing support can use with peace of mind, promoting the supply of rental housing (housing with residential support) where Housing Support Corporations cooperate with landlords to provide support during tenancy, and further strengthening local housing support systems that coordinate housing and welfare measures through promoting the establishment of Housing Support Councils by local governments in collaboration with various local stakeholders.

c. Measures for residents facing housing problems

253. Refer to paragraph 300 of the third periodic report.

d. National budget for housing

254. The budget for housing measures in FY2025 was 155.754 billion yen, which accounted for approximately 0.1% of the overall national budget.

7. Article 12

(1) Data on Health Condition

255. Refer to regional databases on health indicators managed by the WHO Regional Office for the Western Pacific.³

256. Refer to Annex Tables 27–28 for infant mortality rates and infant deaths.

257. Refer to Annex Table 29 for life expectancy at birth by sex and prefectures.

(2) Health Policy

³ <https://www.who.int/westernpacific/our-work/resources/data>

Prevention, treatment, and control of disease

a. Infectious disease control

258. Refer to paragraphs 306–309 of the third periodic report. Meanwhile, according to the trend survey of AIDS incidence, the number of new HIV infections and reported new AIDS patients has been on a downward trend since reaching its peak in 2013. The Government, based on the AIDS Prevention Guidelines amended in 2025, is taking measures such as disseminating accurate knowledge and making efforts to prevent the spread of infection.

b. Prevention of lifestyle-related diseases

259. In 2000, the “National Health Promotion Movement in the 21st Century (Health Japan 21)” was launched as a new national health promotion measure that citizens can proactively undertake regarding issues such as the improvement of lifestyle-related diseases and lifestyle habits that cause them. From FY2013, the “second term of National Health Promotion Movement in the 21st Century (Health Japan 21 (the second term))” was launched, setting the extension of healthy life expectancy and the reduction of health disparities as ultimate goals. Based on the results of the final evaluation of “Health Japan 21 (the second term)” and other factors, a plan for the next national health promotion movement was examined, and the “Third National Health Promotion Movement in the 21st Century (Health Japan 21 (the third term))” was launched from FY2024. In “Health Japan 21 (the third term),” efforts are being promoted with the following points as basic directions toward “the realization of a sustainable society where all citizens can live healthy and fulfilling lives”:

- Focusing on extension of healthy life expectancy and reduction of health disparity
- Improving personal behavior and health conditions
- Improving the quality of the social environment
- Health promotion based on a life course approach

c. Health promotion act

260. The Health Promotion Act was enforced in May 2003 to establish a legal foundation for more actively encouraging people to improve their health, with “Health Japan 21” at its core. Of the projects implemented based on the former Act on Assurance of Medical Care for Elderly People, those other than basic health checkups are implemented by municipalities (including special wards) as health promotion projects based on the Health Promotion Act.

261. In July 2018, the Act for Partial Revision of the Health Promotion Act was enacted to prevent unwanted exposure to second-hand smoke, stipulating the responsibilities of the national and local governments and prohibiting smoking in facilities used by many people. It came into effect in April 2020.

d. Health services based on the Act on Assurance of Medical Care for Elderly People

262. To intensively promote measures against lifestyle-related diseases, basic health checkups based on the Health and Medical Service Law for the Elderly were reorganized into specific health checkups and specific health guidance based on the Act on Assurance of Medical Care for Elderly People, and medical

insurers are implementing them for their subscribers.

263. By promoting measures for the prevention of lifestyle-related diseases, such as diabetes, through lifestyle improvements, it is possible to reduce the number of outpatients and further suppress the progression of severe conditions and the onset of complications, thereby reducing the number of inpatients. As a result, it becomes possible to curb the growth of medical expenses while maintaining and improving the quality of life of citizens. For this reason, in specific health checkups, it is possible to identify individuals who need lifestyle improvements, and through specific health guidance, it is possible to enable target individuals to recognize issues in their own lifestyle habits, change their behavior, self-manage, and maintain a healthy life, thereby preventing lifestyle-related diseases, such as diabetes.

e. Health services provided by medical insurance providers

264. Each medical insurance provider, including those providing health insurance, is implementing health services necessary for maintaining and improving the health of insured persons and preventing diseases and severe conditions by introducing “Data Health Plans” and strengthening specific health checkups and specific health guidance.

Measures against diseases

265. For cancer control, based on the Cancer Control Act (enforced April 2007), which was enacted in 2006, the Basic Plan to Promote Cancer Control Programs was formulated. Currently, based on the 4th Basic Plan to Promote Cancer Control Programs (Cabinet decision in March 2023), the overall goal is “Overcome cancer with all, cancer control leaving no one behind,” and comprehensive cancer control is being promoted along three pillars: “Prevention,” “Fulfilling treatment,” and “Living with cancer.”

266. For stroke and cardiovascular diseases control, based on the Stroke and Cardiovascular Diseases Control Act, which was enacted in 2018 and enforced in December 2019, the Japanese National Plan for Promotion of Measures Against Stroke and Cardiovascular Diseases was formulated. Currently, based on the Second Basic Plan for Stroke and Cardiovascular Disease Control Programs (Cabinet decision of March 2023), the overall goal is “to extend healthy life expectancy by three years or more and reduce the age-adjusted mortality rate of stroke and cardiovascular diseases by 2040,” and to this end individual measures are being implemented in the following three areas:

- Prevention of stroke and cardiovascular diseases and dissemination of correct knowledge
- Enhancement of the service provision system related to health, medical care, and welfare
- Promotion of research on stroke and cardiovascular diseases

267. For kidney disease control, based on the report of the Kidney Disease Measures Study Group compiled in 2018, measures such as public awareness and the development of a medical care provision system are being implemented.

Measures for the prevention of occupational diseases

268. To prevent occupational diseases, the Government has been formulating Industrial Accident Prevention Plans since 1958 and promoting various measures for the prevention of occupational diseases. The 14th Industrial Accident Prevention Plan (covering FY2023 through FY2027) sets eight items as priority issues, and specific initiatives are being promoted for each priority item. Among the priority items, initiatives for occupational diseases are as follows:

- Raising awareness to voluntarily engage in safety and health measures
- Promotion of measures to ensure the health of workers
- Promotion of measures to prevent health disorders due to chemical substances, etc.

Guarantee of adequate medical services

a. Medical care supply system

269. Japan's medical care supply system has been arranged to ensure the effective provision of high-quality and appropriate medical care responding to the patient's physical and mental condition. In particular, comprehensive efforts are being promoted to ensure adequate numbers of doctors based on the Comprehensive Measures Package for Correcting Doctor Maldistribution.

270. In addition, in order to secure a medical care provision system in each prefecture, prefectures formulate medical plans in accordance with national basic policies and taking into consideration regional circumstances. Furthermore, toward 2025, when the baby boomer generation will be 75 years or older and the elderly population will rapidly increase, the necessary number of beds has been identified as part of a regional medical care vision, and efforts to differentiate and cooperate hospital functions have been promoted.

271. Moving forward, toward 2040, as the number of elderly people with complex medical and nursing care needs is expected to increase and the working-age population is projected to decrease, the new regional medical care vision positions solving challenges across the entire medical care provision system, including not only inpatient medical care but also outpatient and home medical care, and cooperation with nursing care. Efforts to strengthen collaboration, reorganize, and consolidate medical institutions are planned.

272. The Government provides the necessary subsidies to hospitals providing unprofitable or advanced medical services such as those in remote rural areas and those providing emergency care, cancer treatment, perinatal care, and pediatric care.

b. Medical care security system

273. Refer to paragraph 320 of the third periodic report. In addition, (b) to (d) are as follows:

- Regarding (b) medical assistance for intractable diseases, for diseases that are rare, whose onset mechanism is unclear, whose treatment methods are not established, and that require long-term care, partial medical expenses are subsidized based on the Act on Medical Care for Patients with Intractable Diseases (Act on Intractable Diseases) to reduce the burden on patients and to efficiently collect patient data and promote treatment research, provided certain requirements are

met, such as the number of patients. Furthermore, for children who suffer from specified chronic pediatric diseases and whose condition is designated by the Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare, partial medical expenses are subsidized based on the Child Welfare Act to reduce the financial burden on the patients' families and to efficiently collect patient data and promote treatment research, from the perspective of sound development.

- Regarding (c) mental health and welfare measures, all or part of the medical expenses for patients hospitalized under official orders are publicly funded based on the Mental Health and Welfare Act for Persons with Mental Disabilities (hereinafter “the Mental Health and Welfare Act”). Furthermore, Japan’s mental health and welfare measures are being developed in line with a shift “from hospital-centered care to community-centered care.” In 2022, the Mental Health and Welfare Act was partially revised, and securing of comprehensive support for persons with mental disabilities was made explicit. Also, from the perspective of human rights protection, the hospitalization period under the medical protection hospitalization system was legalized, the obligation to take measures to prevent abuse in psychiatric hospitals and to report abuse to prefectures etc. if discovered was made mandatory, and the Inpatient Visit Support Project was established.
- Regarding (d) tuberculosis, Japan has implemented measures centered on health checkups, hospitalization, and patient care, in accordance with the Act on the Prevention of Infectious Diseases and Medical Care for Patients with Infectious Diseases. Since 2021, Japan has maintained an incidence rate below 10 per 100,000, meeting the criteria for a low tuberculosis prevalence country.

Improvement of environmental hygiene

a. Waste management

274. Under the Waste Management and Public Cleansing Act, waste refers to “filth or unnecessary matter, in solid or liquid form (excluding radioactive substances and matters contaminated thereby).” It is classified into two categories: municipal solid waste and industrial waste.

275. Municipalities must process municipal solid waste, including human waste, within their areas without hindering the preservation of the living environment. On the other hand, businesses must process their industrial waste themselves, and prefectures conduct necessary guidance and supervision for businesses.

276. The processing of municipal solid waste and industrial waste must be carried out in accordance with standards stipulated by law. The Government endeavors to provide necessary technical and financial assistance to municipalities and prefectures.

b. Waterworks

277. Water utility companies authorized under the Water Supply Act supply water that meets the standards

for drinking water quality set forth in the same act. As of the end of FY2023, the coverage rate reached 98.2% of Japan's total population.

278. Since the development and management of waterworks require a large amount of funds, the Government provides financial and technical assistance to those who operate water supply services and related businesses.

c. Sewerage

279. Under the Sewerage Act, local governments such as municipalities and prefectures are responsible for the development and maintenance of sewerage facilities. The percentage of the population with access to public sewerage is expected to reach 81.8% by the end of FY2024.

280. To ensure environmental hygiene, wastewater generated from daily life and industrial activities is promptly treated by sewerage. Furthermore, sewerage plays a role in discharging internal water and protecting cities from damage caused by flooding.

281. Since the development of sewerage requires a large amount of funds, the Government provides financial and technical assistance to local governments that operate sewerage projects.

Improvement of industrial sanitation

282. Refer to paragraph 348 of the third periodic report.

8. Article 13

(1) Elementary and Lower Secondary Education

283. Refer to paragraphs 350–354 of the third periodic report.

(2) Upper Secondary Education

284. Refer to paragraphs 358–359 of the third periodic report and paragraphs 98–100 of this report.

(3) Higher Education

285. Entrance qualifications for universities in Japan are granted to graduates of high schools and equivalent institutions in Japan or to those recognized as having academic abilities equivalent to or higher than such graduates, regardless of their nationality.

286. Furthermore, the Open University of Japan, which provides higher education effectively utilizing various media, mainly television and radio, offers opportunities for university education to a wide range of citizens.

287. In addition, universities provide diverse learning opportunities to citizens, for example, by offering extension courses to non-regular students.

288. Regarding the free provision of higher education, since April 2020, exemptions and reductions of tuition and admission fees, along with the provision of grant-type scholarships, have been implemented for

students from low-income households. From the 2024 academic year, the scope of support has been expanded to include middle-income families with three or more dependent children and students enrolled in undergraduate programs at private universities in STEM fields. Furthermore, from the 2025 academic year, tuition exemptions and reductions for multi-child household students have been provided without income limitations. Efforts are being made toward the gradual achievement of free higher education.

(4) Basic Education and Equal Access

Basic education

289. Refer to paragraph 366 of the third periodic report.

Measures to improve the literacy rate and provide equal access

290. In Japan, under the compulsory education system, all children and students are educated to acquire the basic ability to correctly understand and use the Japanese language necessary for daily life. Furthermore, if foreign nationals wish to enroll their children in public compulsory education schools, the opportunity to receive the same education as Japanese children is guaranteed, based on the Covenant and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. As of 2024, the number of foreign children and students enrolled in compulsory education schools nationwide is 129,515, of whom 128,714 are receiving education at public schools.

291. According to a 2023 survey, the number of foreign children and students requiring Japanese language instruction in public compulsory education schools nationwide is 57,718, indicating a need for enhanced support. Up to now, the Government has, inter alia, institutionalized special curricula for Japanese language instruction, steadily increased the number of teachers allocated for Japanese language instruction, and provided support for local governments that are engaged in Japanese language instruction for foreign children and students.

Status of school attendance and progression

292. Regarding the status of school attendance and progression, refer to Annex Tables 30–31 for the percentages of school attendance and progression to elementary, lower secondary, upper secondary, and university, as well as the progression rates to upper secondary and university by sex.

9. Article 15

(1) Right to Take Part in Cultural Life

293. Refer to paragraphs 379–381 of the third periodic report. Regarding (e) specialized education in culture and art, various forms of specialized education in arts are provided at universities and junior colleges. As of May 1, 2025, the number of art-related departments at universities is 230, with approximately 78,000 students enrolled in them. The number of art-related departments at junior colleges is 26, with approximately 4,100 students enrolled.

(2) Protection of Cultural Diversity

Protection of cultural property

294. Japan has 21 Cultural Heritage sites inscribed on the World Heritage List based on the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (hereinafter “the World Heritage Convention”), concluded in 1992, and has taken necessary measures for their protection.

295. Other measures taken for the protection, development, and dissemination of culture are as follows:

- A scheme for enabling up-and-coming artists to study overseas is being implemented.
- The Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology Award for Fine Arts is presented to those who have achieved outstanding results in various fields of art.
- To enhance the promotion of Ainu culture and disseminate knowledge about Ainu traditions, subsidies are provided for projects promoting Ainu culture, and Upopoy (the National Ainu Museum and Park) has been established to promote a correct understanding and recognition of Ainu history and culture, contributing to the creation and development of Ainu culture.

Protection of languages and dialects

296. Refer to paragraphs 103–106 of this report for measures taken to preserve and promote the Ainu language, which is an indigenous language.

297. To preserve and promote dialects, which form the foundation of regional cultures, efforts are being made based on a framework similar to that for the Ainu language (“Status,” “Corpus,” and “Prestige”). In the area of “Status,” the Commentary on the National Curriculum Standard for Junior High School (promulgated in 2017) – Japanese Language Edition describes the role and importance of dialects. In the area of “Corpus,” the Agency for Cultural Affairs commissions projects annually to record and preserve dialects, primarily in regions where few survey records remain. In the area of “Prestige,” the Languages and Dialects in Danger Convention is held to raise awareness about the endangered status of dialects and their value, alongside the Ainu language, and to improve their social image.

(3) Right to Enjoy the Benefits of Scientific Progress and its Application

Promotion of scientific research

298. Refer to paragraphs 386–390 of the third periodic report. Additionally, in accordance with the Basic Act on Science, Technology, and Innovation, which was revised in June 2020 and came into effect in April 2021, the Science, Technology, and Innovation Basic Plan is formulated every five years (6th STI Basic Plan started in FY2021), aiming for the comprehensive and strategic promotion of policies for fostering science, technology, and innovation. In addition, the Government implements multi-faceted measures aimed at advancing scientific research, including expanding and improving the Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research programs, which are core research funds for the promotion of scientific research; radically strengthening graduate school education to foster highly skilled human resources who can play active roles

not only as researchers but also in various fields of society, including industry; prioritizing basic research; developing and enhancing research facilities and equipment; and promoting international academic exchanges, including researcher exchanges.

Dissemination of related information

299. The results of academic research are published by academic societies and therefore enjoy wide practical application in industry and other fields. Furthermore, to promote Open Science, Japan is advancing the management and utilization of research data funded by public sources based on the Principle on Management and Utilization of Publicly Funded Research Data (decided by the Integrated Innovation Strategy Promotion Council on April 27, 2021), and the open access of academic papers based on the National Policy on Promoting Open Access to Publicly Funded Scholarly Publications and Scientific Data (decided by the Integrated Innovation Strategy Promotion Council on February 16, 2024). This aims to promote the utilization of research outcomes generated by public funds and their return to the public.

300. Through the Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research programs, the Government subsidizes the public release of research findings, the publication of important findings from scientific research, and the construction of databases. It therefore contributes to advancing and disseminating academic knowledge and encouraging international academic exchanges and promotes the public dissemination of outstanding research achievements. The Japan Science and Technology Agency (JST), a national research and development agency, as the central institution for science and technology information in Japan, carries out operations related to the dissemination of science and technology information, including the provision of the Japan Science and Technology Information Aggregator, Electronic (J-STAGE) platform. In light of the global trend of Open Science, JST promotes the efficiency and revitalization of research and development activities through effective dissemination, linkage, and utilization of science and technology information, including papers and research data.

301. In addition, the National Institute of Informatics (NII), an inter-university research institute corporation, provides essential services for the academic community. It has started operating a research data infrastructure system to promote Open Science. It is also working to develop and enhance the Scientific Research Digital Platform for collecting, organizing, and adding value to the results of education and research generated by universities and research organizations, etc., and disseminating these findings widely to society, thereby promoting the dissemination of academic information.

302. Moreover, the National Museum of Nature and Science, the National Museum of Ethnology, and the National Museum of Japanese History are also working to facilitate the dissemination of information by conducting surveys and research in their respective fields, as well as collecting, storing, and exhibiting related materials for public viewing.

Measures taken to promote the learning of and dissemination of scientific and technological knowledge

303. Measures include the following initiatives:

- Support for learning about science and technology, promotion of multi-layered science communication activities, and development and operation of the National Museum of Emerging Science and Innovation by the Japan Science and Technology Agency, a national research and development agency
- Endorsement of activities contributing to the dissemination and awareness of science and technology
- Preferential tax measures for public interest corporations involved in the dissemination and awareness of science and technology
- Honoring those who have made outstanding achievements in science and technology (decorations and medals of honor, the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology Prize)

(4) Protection of the Rights of Authors

Protection of moral and material interests in the scientific field

304. Refer to paragraph 404 of the third periodic report.

Protection of moral and material interests in literature and art

305. In Japan, the Copyright Act and other related acts and regulations protect the moral and material interests of authors. Japan has also concluded such treaties as the Berne Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works (Berne Convention), the Universal Copyright Convention, the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS Agreement), and the WIPO Copyright Treaty (WCT), and the level of protection provided in Japan exceeds the obligations under these treaties.

306. In addition, Japan enacted the Act on Management Business of Copyright and Neighboring Rights and aims to promote the smooth and lawful use of copyrighted works through collective management organizations for copyrights and related rights.

307. Furthermore, to ensure that copyrights and the moral rights of authors are adequately safeguarded, it is essential for the public to acquire sufficient knowledge and understanding of these rights. Therefore, to foster greater awareness of the idea of copyrights, the Government organizes various types of seminars and other opportunities for teachers, prefectural government workers, and librarians, among others, and produces publications that explain the key aspects of the Copyright Act in an easy-to-understand manner.

(5) Encouragement and Development of International Exchanges and Cooperation

International exchanges and cooperation in the scientific field

308. Refer to paragraphs 408–411 of the third periodic report.

International exchanges and cooperation in the cultural field

309. Regarding support through the Japan Foundation, refer to paragraph 412 of the third periodic report.

310. Since FY1975, the Government has provided grants under the Cultural Grant Assistance program to developing countries to facilitate the purchase of equipment and materials, as well as the development of facilities aimed at promoting culture and higher education. As of FY2024, Japan has carried out a total of 1,462 projects, amounting to approximately 76 billion yen.

311. Japan concluded the UNESCO World Heritage Convention in 1992 and has since taken measures for the protection of World Heritage, while also contributing to the World Heritage Fund established under the Convention.

312. Furthermore, with the objective of international cooperation for the preservation and restoration of cultural heritage sites around the world, which are valuable assets common to all humankind, the Government established the Japanese Funds-in-Trust for the Preservation of the World Cultural Heritage within UNESCO in 1989. In 2018, this fund was integrated into a new Japanese Funds-in-Trust to meet more diverse needs. Japan has contributed approximately \$75 million to these two Japanese Trust Funds from 1989 to 2022, and through these funds, various activities such as cultural heritage preservation and restoration projects have been carried out worldwide, including at the Angkor (Cambodia) and Bamiyan (Afghanistan) sites. In addition, as a base for promoting international cooperation in the field of cultural property preservation, the Japan Center for International Cooperation in Conservation (within the Tokyo National Research Institute for Cultural Properties, National Institutes for Cultural Heritage) was established. This center conducts international research and exchanges related to the preservation and restoration of cultural properties worldwide, cooperates in preservation and restoration projects, trains experts, and collects and utilizes information, with the aim of fulfilling Japan's international responsibility in cultural property protection. Moreover, from June 2006, the Act on the Promotion of International Cooperation for the Protection of Cultural Heritage Abroad was enforced, and concurrently, the Japan Consortium for International Cooperation in Cultural Heritage was launched, establishing a system for further promoting cultural cooperation with the government, private sector, and academia working together to build a cooperative foundation.

313. In addition, regarding intangible cultural heritage, Japan enacted the Law for the Protection of Cultural Properties in 1950 and, as a leading country in this area, has since been working on the protection of such heritage. Japan has served as a member state of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage three times—from 2006 to 2010, 2010 to 2014, and 2018 to 2022—and contributes to the operational aspects of the convention by utilizing its extensive knowledge of intangible cultural heritage protection. Also, for the preservation and promotion of international intangible cultural properties, Japan established the Japanese Funds-in-Trust for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage within UNESCO in 1993 and contributed \$16.69 million by 2017. Subsequently, in 2018, this Funds-in-Trust was integrated into a new Japanese Funds-in-Trust to meet more diverse needs, and to date, over 100 projects have been implemented worldwide through this fund.