

(Provisional Translation)

Basic Policy for the Comprehensive and Effective
Implementation of Measures to Promote Japanese
Language Education

Cabinet Decision

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Introduction

The number of foreign residents of Japan has been growing in recent years. Whereas the figure stood at approximately 1.08 million (about 0.87% of the total population) at the end of 1990, when the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act (Cabinet Order No. 319 of 1951; hereinafter the “Immigration Control Act”) was amended, it had risen to approximately 2.93 million (about 2.33% of the total population) by the end of 2019 and, as of the end of October 2019, the number of foreign nationals working in Japan stood at 1.66 million, marking a record high in both cases.

Japanese language learners within Japan have increased in number and become more diverse over this period, rising from approximately 60,000 in November 1990 to approximately 260,000 as of November 2018. Moreover, Japanese language education is taking place in a record 142 countries and regions worldwide and the preliminary results of an FY2018 survey showed that there were around 3.85 million Japanese language learners, demonstrating that demand for Japanese language education overseas remains high.

Relevant ministerial councils have put together the documents entitled *Comprehensive Measures for Acceptance and Coexistence of Foreign Nationals* (decided on December 25, 2018; revised on December 20, 2019) and *Enhancement of “Comprehensive Measures for Acceptance and Coexistence of Foreign Nationals”* (June 18, 2019), and the government is steadily implementing the measures needed for acceptance of all foreign nationals with a status of residence as members of society, thereby achieving an inclusive society with foreign nationals.

As further increases in the number of foreign residents are anticipated following the April 2019 launch of a new system for the acceptance of foreign human resources (the Specified Skilled Worker (i) and Specified Skilled Worker (ii) statuses of residence), enabling foreign residents to learn Japanese will be of paramount importance in ensuring that foreign nationals are absorbed as members of Japanese society and do not become isolated from society. It will be necessary to clarify learning goals and further enhance Japanese language education, in order to put in place an environment in which all foreign nationals in Japan can acquire the Japanese language proficiency required to lead their lives in Japanese society and communicate more smoothly at school, at work, and in daily life.

The Act on Promotion of Japanese Language Education (Act No. 48 of 2019. Hereinafter the “Japanese Language Education Promotion Act”), which is aimed at promoting Japanese language education, was promulgated and entered into force on June 28, 2019. The Act stipulates that the government has a duty to comprehensively formulate and implement measures concerning the promotion of Japanese language education, pursuant to the basic principles of the Act. This policy (hereinafter the “Basic Policy”) prescribes the basic policy for comprehensively and effectively implementing measures to promote Japanese language education, in accordance with the provisions of Article 10 of the Act.

Chapter 1 Basic Direction for Promoting Japanese Language Education

1 Purpose of Promoting Japanese Language Education

Promoting Japanese language education is important both to assist in creating an environment in which foreign nationals living in Japan can coexist and lead a normal life in society alongside Japanese citizens, and to promote a deeper understanding of and interest in Japan in other countries and regions.

Comprehensive and effective implementation of measures concerning Japanese language education will result in creating a dynamic and inclusive society that respects diverse cultures, and contribute to further exchange, and maintenance and development of friendly relations with other countries and regions.

In promoting Japanese language education, it is necessary to comprehensively formulate and implement measures concerning the promotion of Japanese language education, pursuant to the following seven basic principles of the Act.

- (1) The promotion of Japanese language education must be conducted in such a way as to secure to the greatest extent possible opportunities for foreign nationals, etc. who wish to receive Japanese language education to do so in a manner consistent with their wishes, circumstances, and ability.
- (2) The promotion of Japanese language education must be conducted in such a way as to ensure the maintenance and improvement of the level of Japanese language education.
- (3) The promotion of Japanese language education must be conducted comprehensively, ensuring organic coordination between foreign policy and measures relating to education, labor, immigration control, and other relevant measures pertaining to foreign nationals, etc.
- (4) The promotion of Japanese language education must be conducted based on the understanding that Japanese language education within Japan contributes to revitalizing local communities.
- (5) The promotion of Japanese language education must be conducted in such a way as to deepen understanding of and interest in Japan overseas through Japanese language education abroad, encourage exchange with other countries, and contribute to the maintenance and development of friendly relations with other countries.
- (6) The promotion of Japanese language education must be conducted with consideration for ensuring that foreign nationals, etc. gain a deeper understanding of and interest in the significance of learning the Japanese language.
- (7) The promotion of Japanese language education must be conducted with consideration for the importance of the languages used in education, etc. in the homes of foreign nationals, etc. who reside in Japan and are of preschool or school age (the period from the beginning of the first school year after the day following the date on which the child reaches the age of six until the end of the school year in which the date on which the child reaches the age of 15 falls).

2 National and Local Government Responsibilities

The government has a responsibility to comprehensively formulate and implement measures to promote Japanese language education in accordance with the Japanese Language Education Promotion Act, and must also take the necessary legislative, financial, and other measures. The government will prepare documents concerning the state of Japanese language education and the measures that it has taken, and will publish them on websites and via other appropriate means.

Local governments have a responsibility to formulate and implement measures to promote Japanese language education tailored to local circumstances in accordance with the Japanese Language Education Promotion Act, based on an appropriate division of roles with the government.

3 Responsibilities of Employers

Employers are required to cooperate with measures to promote Japanese language education implemented by national or local government in accordance with the Japanese Language Education Promotion Act, and also to endeavor to provide foreign nationals, etc. whom they employ and the families thereof with learning opportunities to acquire the Japanese language required for their duties or daily life and with other Japanese language learning support.

4 Strengthening Partnerships between Relevant Ministries and Agencies and Related Organizations

Undertaking initiatives to promote Japanese language education based on partnerships between relevant ministries and agencies and related organizations is important in order to ensure the appropriate conduct of Japanese language education within Japan and overseas.

Within Japan, the national and local governments will endeavor to put in place the necessary frameworks and strengthen partnerships among the relevant parties, including among the relevant ministries and agencies and with other relevant organizations, organizations providing Japanese language education, employers, and groups supporting the daily lives of foreign nationals, etc.

Japanese language education abroad needs to be conducted not only appropriately, according to the circumstances in each country and region, but also in a sustainable manner. To this end, the government will make efforts to put in place the necessary frameworks and strengthen partnerships with the Japan Foundation (JF), the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), Japanese-language educational institutions, administrative bodies and educational institutions in each country and region, associations of Japanese language teachers, Japanese companies, Japanese nationals and Japanese immigrants and descendants (the Nikkei community), and Japan alumni associations, among others.

Chapter 2 Content of the Promotion of Japanese Language Education

1 Expansion of Japanese Language Education Opportunities

(1) Expansion of Japanese language education opportunities within Japan

(i) Japanese language education for foreign schoolchildren and preschoolers

With the number of foreign nationals resident in Japan increasing, the number of foreign children enrolled in schools is also rising year on year. In addition, a growing number of children—primarily those from homes in which the parents are in an international marriage—have Japanese nationality, but lack adequate Japanese language proficiency, with more than 50,000 schoolchildren, secondary students and high school students who live in a multilingual environment requiring Japanese language instruction.¹

Furthermore, the situation concerning children needing Japanese language instruction is more complex in nature than ever before; for example, as the countries of origin of foreign nationals become increasingly diverse, the native tongues of these schoolchildren are also becoming more varied, while there is a tendency for foreign nationals to cluster in particular areas.

In addition, the results of a survey² conducted for the first time in FY2019 revealed the reality that approximately 20,000 foreign children are potentially not enrolled in school or are in a situation in which their enrollment status cannot be confirmed.

Securing appropriate educational opportunities is essential in order for children to be able to learn the basics of daily life, extend their abilities, and open up the possibilities for their future. The government will therefore take the measures required to encourage the enrollment of foreign children in school, put in place frameworks for their acceptance in schools, and enhance Japanese language instruction, educational guidance, life skills guidance, and careers guidance. In doing so, the government will also give consideration to the importance of children's native language and culture, and the need to promote understanding of education among parents and guardians. Through these measures, the government will create an environment in which Japanese and foreign children can learn together, thereby cultivating individuals capable of playing an active role in society with an international outlook, as well as contributing to the achievement of a dynamic inclusive society.

[Examples of Specific Measures]

- To enhance acceptance and support frameworks for children needing Japanese language instruction at public schools, the government will move forward with steady improvements based on the provisions of the Law Concerning Class-size and the Standard of the Number

¹ “Survey of Acceptance of Children Needing Japanese Language Instruction,” May 2018 survey, Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology.

² “Survey of Foreign Children's School Enrollment,” May 2019 survey, Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology.

of School Personnel of Public Compulsory Education Schools (Act No. 116 of 1958) in respect of the number of teaching staff required to provide Japanese language instruction, and will support the development of guidance frameworks by local governments by such means as the cultivation and use of Japanese language instruction assistants and support staff who speak children's native tongues. In addition, the government will promote initial intensive support initiatives, support that taps into multilingual translation systems and other forms of information and communications technology (ICT), the provision of classes that enable Japanese and foreign nationals to learn together and understand each other, initiatives that take children's native tongues and cultures into consideration, and partnerships with relevant local organizations.

- As well as putting in place structures for delivering systematic Japanese language instruction, the government will seek to improve the skills and abilities of teachers involved in educating children needing Japanese language instruction by promoting initiatives during the training phase and providing support for the enhancement of training provided by local governments, etc. and for training the trainers. In particular, the government will promote initiatives in the early childhood education stage aimed at enhancing instruction that gives consideration to the distinctive features of early childhood development.
- To ensure that forward-looking careers guidance is provided at junior and senior high schools, the government will provide comprehensive support for careers education aimed at foreign students. The government will also encourage all prefectures to give special consideration in their systems for selecting public high school entrants, including setting special quotas for foreign students and those who have returned after living abroad.
- To ensure that foreign children with disabilities can receive appropriate education, the government will take the measures required to enable special needs education teachers to learn about providing support to foreign children.
- With the aim of securing opportunities for all foreign children to attend school, the government will encourage local government efforts to ascertain the school enrollment status of such children, provide information to parents and guardians, and implement initiatives to encourage school attendance, working in partnership with departments within government bodies, such as those handling the basic resident register, international exchange, and welfare, as well as with relevant local organizations, such as nonprofit organizations (NPOs) and schools for foreign nationals. The government will also draw up guidelines listing the steps that local governments should take to secure opportunities for foreign children to attend school.
- The government will encourage initiatives aimed at developing school environments in which all schoolchildren, including Japanese nationals, gain an understanding not only of Japanese language and culture, but also of diverse other languages, cultures, and values, and learn from each other on the basis of mutual respect.

- Evening classes³ are educational institutions where people who have not adequately received compulsory education in their own country or Japan will be able to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary for social and economic independence; about 80% of the students are foreign nationals. Accordingly, in order to establish at least one evening class in each prefecture or designated city, in accordance with the Act on Securing Education Opportunities (Act on Securing Education Opportunities Equivalent to General Education in the Compulsory Education Stage (Act No. 105 of 2016)) and the Third Basic Plan for the Promotion of Education, support will be provided to initiatives to identify the need for preparations for the establishment of new evening classes and to establish such classes, and such initiatives will be promoted by holding training sessions for local governments and enhancing public relations activities.
- To enhance the Japanese language education environment for foreign schoolchildren and other foreign nationals including parents and guardians, etc., the government will promote the creation of a comprehensive system for Japanese language education in regional areas by prefectures and designated cities. In addition, the government will support advanced initiatives such as ICT-based remote learning and initiatives aimed at securing Japanese language study opportunities in regional areas for foreign nationals, etc., including schoolchildren, and their parents and guardians.

(ii) Japanese language education for international students

There are approximately 346,000 (as of the end of 2019)⁴ students with foreign nationality living in Japan with a “Student” status of residence (hereinafter “international students”) and their number is on the increase. Through their studies, international students become professionals equipped with advanced knowledge and skills, along with a deeper understanding of Japanese society and culture, so it is hoped that they will settle in Japan and play an active role here after completing their studies.

To enable international students who wish to find employment or conduct research in Japan to fulfill their aspirations and play an active role, the government will take the measures required to enhance support for international students, including supporting them in acquiring the Japanese language proficiency needed for their duties, as well as that needed to facilitate communication in the workplace and for daily life.

[Examples of Specific Measures]

- The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) will accredit educational programs delivered by universities working in partnership with

³ These are schools that substantially guarantee people past school age who did not complete compulsory education an opportunity to receive compulsory education; as of April 2020, there were 34 public evening junior high schools in 10 prefectures and 28 cities nationwide.

⁴ Ministry of Justice announcement, March 27, 2020.

companies and other organizations to teach international students business Japanese, which is a skill that they will require to find employment in Japan, and will undertake the nationwide rollout of a mechanism to help international students to find employment at Japanese companies.

- The government will promote and support an international student acceptance model in which specialized training colleges work with Japanese language educational institutions and the industrial sector to support Japanese language education for international students and their settlement in Japan after graduation.
- The government will provide international students, etc. who have received a preliminary offer of employment from a company with training aimed at improving the communication skills required to settle into a workplace easily, as well as teaching them about Japanese employment practices, labor laws, corporate culture, and other knowledge that is a prerequisite for communication.
- To enhance the Japanese language education environment for international students and other foreign nationals, etc., the government will promote the creation of a comprehensive system for Japanese language education in regional areas by prefectures and designated cities. In addition, the government will support advanced initiatives such as ICT-based remote learning and initiatives aimed at securing Japanese language study opportunities in regional areas for foreign nationals, etc., including international students.

(iii) Japanese language education for foreign employees

The number of foreign workers in Japan is approximately 1.66 million (2019); this figure covers a variety of situations, including individuals granted residence on the basis of personal relationship or status, individuals granted residence for work purposes, and individuals engaged in activities other than that permitted under the status of residence previously granted. Since the 1990 amendment of the Immigration Control Act, the number of foreign workers resident in Japan has continued to rise, due to such factors as the increase in the number of people of Japanese descent coming to Japan to work and the 2010 creation of the “Technical Intern Training” status of residence. In the field of nursing and nursing care, candidates for nurses and certified care workers undergo training at host facilities after entering Japan through exceptional acceptance systems established under bilateral economic partnership agreements.

To work in Japan, individuals must not only acquire the specialized Japanese required for their duties, but also the Japanese that they will need for everyday life, to enable them to communicate in Japanese in their workplaces. It is also important to enhance the environment on the host side to ensure effective communication in the workplace, etc. Accordingly, the government will take such measures as providing opportunities for individuals to acquire the Japanese required for daily life and Japanese relating to work and their field of specialism.

[Examples of Specific Measures]

- The government will conduct a survey of key elements of effective communication with foreign personnel by Japanese managers and colleagues and techniques for learning them, and will also consider the use of effective content and study methods by companies.
- Through Japanese language training in Japan based on economic partnership agreements, the government will provide opportunities for nurse and certified care worker candidates to learn Japanese related to their specialized field, so that they can live their daily lives and smoothly engage in work and training at hospitals and nursing care facilities.
- The government will support employer initiatives to enable the foreign nationals, etc. they employ to learn specialized Japanese as part of their vocational training to acquire specialist knowledge and skills related to their duties.
- In the field of nursing and nursing care, the government will provide support to host facilities with foreign nationals who are seeking to improve their Japanese language proficiency in their field of specialism, conduct training courses, etc. for such foreign nationals, and support the development and use of teaching materials to enable foreign nationals, etc. to engage in independent study of Japanese language relating to nursing care.
- The government will support the development of teaching materials, etc. to enable employers to provide technical intern trainees with opportunities to further improve their Japanese language proficiency.
- The government will provide foreign nationals who have a “Long-Term Resident” or other status of residence granted on the basis of personal relationship or status with training aimed at improving communication skills and teaching them about Japanese employment practices, labor laws, corporate culture, and other knowledge that is a prerequisite for communication, to promote their stable employment and enable them to settle into a workplace.
- To enhance the Japanese language education environment for foreign nationals, etc., including workers and their families, the government will promote the creation of a comprehensive system for Japanese language education in regional areas by prefectures and designated cities. In addition, the government will support advanced initiatives such as ICT-based remote learning and initiatives aimed at securing Japanese language study opportunities in regional areas for foreign nationals, etc., including workers and their families.

(iv) Japanese language education for refugees

With regard to refugees accepted by Japan, the government provides Convention

refugees⁵ and refugees through resettlement with Japanese language education support as part of their resettlement support.

Most notably, in FY2010, Japan became the first country in Asia to accept refugees through resettlement⁶ and the scope and number of such refugees was expanded from FY2020.⁷

The government will continue to take the necessary measures in respect of Convention refugees and refugees through resettlement, including providing Japanese language education at resettlement support facilities and responding to requests for advice about Japanese language learning after refugees have left those facilities.

[Examples of Specific Measures]

- The government will provide support to Convention refugees and refugees through resettlement, including providing Japanese language education and teaching materials to enable them to acquire the basic Japanese language proficiency required to settle in Japan and responding to requests for advice about Japanese language learning. In particular, in light of the government's policy of expanding the number of refugees through resettlement from FY2020, the government will further enhance Japanese language education programs and other aspects of the learning environment.
- To enhance the Japanese language education environment for refugees and other foreign nationals, etc., the government will promote the creation of a comprehensive system for Japanese language education in regional areas by prefectures and designated cities. In addition, the government will support advanced initiatives such as ICT-based remote learning and initiatives aimed at securing Japanese language study opportunities in regional areas for foreign nationals, etc., including refugees.

(v) Japanese language education in regional areas

Japanese language education in regional areas is aimed at all foreign nationals living in Japan, including foreign nationals, etc. resident in the country on the basis of a status or position (permanent resident, spouse or child of Japanese national, spouse or child of permanent resident, long-term resident, and dependent. As of the end of 2019, such

⁵ Convention refugees are individuals who meet the requirements(*) for a refugee as defined in the "Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees" (Convention No. 21 of 1981) and have been approved under the Immigration Control Act.

(*) A person who, owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country.

⁶ Resettlement refers to the practice of refugees who have gained temporary refuge in a refugee camp, etc. being transferred from the country where they first sought refuge to a third country that has agreed to accept them; this acceptance is referred to as the acceptance of refugees through resettlement.

⁷ "Acceptance of Refugees through Resettlement," received Cabinet approval on January 24, 2014, partially amended on June 28, 2019.

residents numbered approximately 1.39 million). While it is necessary to support foreign nationals living in regional areas to acquire the Japanese language proficiency needed to live their lives as independent language users, so that they can lead their lives while communicating in Japanese, the statuses of residence and backgrounds of foreign nationals are becoming increasingly diverse and the Japanese language education required by foreign nationals, etc. wanting to learn Japanese is therefore not uniform in nature. There are also said to be differences in the motivation of foreign nationals, etc. to study Japanese. In addition, there are substantial differences between regions in the Japanese language education situation, such as the existence of regions with a high concentration of foreign nationals, etc. and regions with a sparser foreign population, as well as regional imbalances in the availability of organizations providing Japanese language education and of Japanese language education personnel.

Furthermore, a diverse array of individuals—including Japanese language teachers, coordinators of Japanese language education in regional areas, staff of organizations including local governments, local internationalization associations, and NPOs, and volunteers—are responsible for Japanese language education in regional areas, according to their various roles, such as providing learning support and running classes. It is therefore necessary to promote partnerships and cooperation between prefectures, municipalities, companies, schools, and other relevant organizations.

Accordingly, as well as providing Japanese language education tailored to local circumstances in each region, it is imperative to present learning content of a certain level, to endeavor to guarantee the quality and secure the quantity of personnel teaching Japanese, and to strive to motivate foreign nationals, etc. to study Japanese by such means as clarifying learning objectives. In light of this situation, the government will take the measures required to enhance the Japanese language education environment in regional areas, with the aim of enabling foreign nationals, etc. to acquire the Japanese language proficiency needed to live their lives as independent language users, to further facilitate communication in education, work, and daily life.

[Examples of Specific Measures]

- The government will support the creation by prefectures and designated cities of a comprehensive system for Japanese language education in regional areas, including the establishment of general coordination committees and overall coordinators, the provision of Japanese language classes, and training government staff and local citizens in the use of plain Japanese. In addition, the government will promote Japanese language education in the regions across the country by such means as supplying know-how, ascertaining the state of Japanese language education by exchanging information with local government staff responsible for Japanese language education, and providing opportunities for local governments to exchange information with each other.

- To provide opportunities for foreign nationals, etc. living in areas without Japanese language classes to study Japanese, the government will encourage the establishment of Japanese language classes by dispatching experts in Japanese language education to serve as advisors to municipalities that have a certain number of resident foreign nationals, etc., but no Japanese language class provision (hereinafter, “areas lacking Japanese language classes”). In addition, the government will provide a forum for discussion of the establishment and operation of Japanese language classes by setting up a consultative body to introduce areas lacking Japanese language classes to advanced examples of the provision of such classes. Furthermore, the government will develop Japanese language learning materials (ICT-based teaching materials) that enable learners to engage in self-study tailored to their living situation and will make them available for foreign nationals, etc. who are unable to attend Japanese language classes regularly due to living in areas lacking Japanese language classes.
- The government will support advanced initiatives by NPOs, public interest corporations, and universities, etc. aimed at providing Japanese language education tailored to local circumstances and the situations of foreign nationals, etc. and at cultivating Japanese language education personnel.
- The government will conduct training to cultivate coordinators of Japanese language education in regional areas, who will work with government bodies and relevant local organizations (regional immigration services bureaus, economic organizations, universities, Japanese language schools, and NPOs, etc.), play a core role in planning and organizing Japanese language classes, and organize and deliver Japanese language education programs.
- To share information about examples of best practice in Japanese language education in regional areas and ensure full awareness of trends in national policy, the government will hold training for local government staff responsible for Japanese language education.

(2) Enhancement of Japanese language education overseas

(i) Japanese language education for foreign nationals overseas

Providing Japanese language education to foreign nationals, etc. overseas is important from the perspective of foreign policy, as it promotes understanding of and interest in Japan, and cultivates individuals who will play a leading role in exchange between Japan and other countries and regions. It also helps foreign nationals, etc. who find employment with Japanese companies, study abroad at Japanese universities and colleges, and settle into life in Japan more smoothly. Amid a global push by a number of major countries to popularize their own languages, there is a risk that Japan could be placed at a disadvantage both diplomatically and economically, not to mention in other ways, if Japan fails to implement initiatives aimed at promoting Japanese language education overseas. With interest in Japanese culture and reasons for studying the Japanese language overseas—

including finding employment and studying in Japan—becoming increasingly diverse, the government will strive to ensure that as many people as possible are offered opportunities for Japanese language education and that it is carried out in a sustainable, appropriate manner, tailored to the situation in each country and region. To this end, while collaborating and cooperating with relevant organizations and groups both within Japan and overseas, ministries and agencies will work together to take the measures required to improve Japanese language education systems and educational base in each country and region.

[Examples of Specific Measures]

- Through the JF, the government will dispatch experts in Japanese language education to other countries and regions, and work with administrative organizations, training institutions for Japanese language teachers and Japanese language educational institutions to train local Japanese language teachers who play a crucial role in providing Japanese language education overseas, to improve their Japanese language education skills and to provide training and advice to develop human resources to educate Japanese language teachers. The government will also provide opportunities for local Japanese language teachers to participate in training in Japan.
- Through the JF, the government will develop and make available teaching materials (including online teaching materials) that can be used according to the situation of learners who study at elementary, secondary, and higher educational institutions and Japanese language educational organizations in each country and region, who plan to live in Japan for the purposes of education and work and who live in areas without any Japanese language educational institutions nearby. At the same time, from the perspective of providing a variety of teaching materials in accordance with learners' needs, the government will support teaching material development projects by Japanese language educational institutions.
- Through the JF, from the perspective of stably supplying places where foreign nationals, etc. can learn Japanese and improving the quality of Japanese language education, the government will provide financial assistance for the activities of Japanese language teachers' associations, academic societies, elementary, secondary, and higher educational institutions and organizations providing Japanese language education to foreign nationals planning to come to Japan to work, in each country and region, by offering partial grants for necessary expenses such as hiring of teachers to continue Japanese language education, purchasing teaching materials and holding Japanese language education-related events. In addition, through the experts in Japanese language education dispatched by the JF, the government will strengthen networks of organizations and Japanese language teachers, encourage information sharing on teaching methods and materials, and promote mutual cooperation.

- To maintain and increase the motivation of foreign nationals, etc. to continue to learn Japanese, the government, through the JF, will provide cooperation for Japanese language speech contests and other events held by Japanese-language educational institutions in each country and region, and offer opportunities for learners to participate in training courses in Japan. In addition, to encourage the launch and continuation of Japanese language education in each country and region, making use of these programs to encourage learning, the government will make constant efforts for policymakers and others involved in foreign language education to provide Japanese language education via the JF, and diplomatic missions as necessary.
- To ensure that people with an affinity for and knowledge of Japan continue to be fostered in the future, the government will, through the JF, provide opportunities for foreign diplomats, civil servants, researchers, and relevant individuals who need to learn Japanese in the course of their duties to participate in training course conducted in Japan.
- Through the JF, etc., the government will conduct Japanese language training starting before departure for nurse and certified care worker candidates under economic partnership agreements, thereby providing opportunities for such individuals to learn not only the Japanese required for everyday life, but also basic Japanese related to their specialized field, so that they can smoothly engage in work and training at facilities such as hospitals and nursing care facilities.
- As interest in Japanese culture is mentioned as one of the major motivations for foreign nationals, etc. to study Japanese, the government will, through the JF, implement promotion of culture and exchange aimed at communicating the attractiveness of Japanese culture, with the objective of enhancing interest in Japanese language learning overseas, including in countries and regions where Japanese language education is not currently provided.
- To enable individuals wishing to study in Japan as international students to learn Japanese to the level required to receive education at Japanese universities and colleges, the government will provide support for Japanese language education systems in regional areas and the development of associated infrastructure, in partnership with the overseas offices of universities and other relevant organizations.
- As private sector organizations such as private companies and Japanese language educational institutions play a major role in Japanese language education overseas, the government will consider working with private sector organizations to further promote Japanese language education overseas through efforts that involve both the public and private sectors.
- At the request of developing countries, JICA will continue to dispatch Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCV) who assist in Japanese language education tailored to the needs of local organizations, to contribute to socioeconomic development and reconstruction of these countries.

(ii) Japanese language education for Japanese children resident overseas

Japanese language education for the children of Japanese nationals residing overseas is important to prepare them to attend school and find employment when they return to Japan in the future. In addition, the descendants of Japanese nationals who emigrated overseas could become promoters for exchange and cultivation of pro-Japanese people in the countries to which they have emigrated, as globally competent human resources with diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Accordingly, the government will take the measures required to support Japanese language education for these individuals, to instill in them an awareness of their roots in Japan and develop a better and deeper understanding of Japan.

[Examples of Specific Measures]

- Through the JF, the government will make efforts to grasp the actual conditions of the Japanese language education environment for the descendants of Japanese nationals who emigrated overseas and children with foreign and Japanese parents, including forms of learning Japanese, and the current status and challenges of Japanese language educational institutions, and will provide necessary support, while working with local Japanese language educational institutions.
- The government will provide Japanese children of school age living overseas with free textbooks, in accordance with the purpose of the domestic system of providing free textbooks for compulsory education. In addition, the government will seek to strengthen the functions of the educational environment at overseas educational institutions through support including the dispatch of teachers; financial support for the rent of school buildings, the salaries of locally hired teachers, and the cost of safety measures; and the development of educational materials.
- To support Japanese language education provided by groups composed of migrants to Latin America, among others, the government will strive to ascertain the status of Japanese language education provided by such groups and dispatch JOCV via JICA to assist with Japanese language education. The government will also cultivate local Japanese language teachers through training courses and provide grants to such groups.

2 Promotion of Understanding and Interest among the Populace

Foreign nationals, etc. need to acquire Japanese language proficiency and develop the ability to communicate in Japanese more smoothly, to ensure that they are accepted as members of society and can engage and coexist with society. Japanese language education is tremendously significant for Japanese society, as it lays foundations that lead to livable communities and regional revitalization. Accordingly, the government will take the measures required to promote understanding and interest among Japanese citizens.

[Examples of Specific Measures]

- Enhancing the Japanese language education environment is very important to ensuring that foreign nationals, etc. acquire the Japanese language proficiency needed for daily life. Accordingly, the government will provide opportunities for Japanese citizens to gain a deeper understanding of the importance of Japanese language education, by such means as organizing Japanese language education conferences to share the latest information and advanced examples of such education and also by holding symposiums as part of various programs for Japanese language education in regional areas.
- The government will put up a list of information on the website of the Agency for Cultural Affairs, including contact details for the departments in charge of Japanese language education at prefectures, designated cities, and core cities nationwide and details of Japanese language classes in each area.
- The government will gather content relating to Japanese language education, including teaching materials, curricula, reports, and policy documents, and make them available to the public through the government-operated cross-searchable NIHONGO Education contents Web sharing System (NEWS).

3 Maintenance and Improvement of the Level of Japanese Language Education

(1) Maintenance and improvement of Japanese language education standards at Japanese language educational institutions

As various issues have been pointed out in recent years concerning Japanese language educational institutions designated by the Minister of Justice in the Public Notice on the status of residence “student” as conforming to the Public Notice Criteria for Japanese language educational institutions, the criteria were revised in August 2019 to make them more stringent. Going forward, the Japanese language education environment will need to be ensured through the proper operation of the Public Notice Criteria. In the future, it will be crucial to provide high-quality, stable education and training for those who are to engage in Japanese language education.

Accordingly, the government will take measures to maintain and improve the educational standard of Japanese language educational institutions, both within Japan and overseas, in terms of providing fruitful learning opportunities to those who wish to learn Japanese.

[Examples of Specific Measures]

- In operating a system that requires Japanese language educational institutions to report the Japanese language proficiency examination results of their enrolled international students to the Immigration Services Agency of Japan and to report on improvement measures if they fall below a certain standard, the government will seek to maintain and improve the standard of education at Japanese language educational institutions through

the appropriate provision of guidance based on documentation submitted by those institutions and the active implementation of on-site investigations and the like.

- The government will promote the cultivation of high-quality Japanese language education personnel by introducing mandatory notification of the Agency for Cultural Affairs concerning the training courses for Japanese language teachers that are a requirement under the Public Notice Criteria for Japanese language educational institutions prescribed by the Immigration Services Agency of Japan.
- Through the JF, the government will dispatch experts in Japanese language education to overseas, and will also work with local educational administrative bodies to develop and popularize education curricula and teaching materials, as well as establishing Japanese language teacher training courses. The government will also provide financial assistance to cover part of the necessary expenses to employ teachers and procure teaching materials required to maintain and improve education standards at Japanese language educational institutions overseas, and to organize events relating to Japanese language education. The government will also encourage Japanese educational institutions to strengthen their networks, to share their teaching methods and materials, and to promote mutual cooperation.

(2) Improvement of skills and abilities of those who engage in Japanese language education

With the increased demand and necessity of Japanese language education due to progress in the acceptance of foreign nationals, etc. with diverse backgrounds in Japan and the growing interest towards Japanese society and culture overseas, the government will take measures to carry out training in order to enhance the quality and ability of those who are engaged in Japanese language education (hereinafter, “Japanese language education personnel”).

[Examples of Specific Measures]

- Based on the educational content and other matters set out in the Council for Cultural Affairs Subdivision on the Japanese Language report entitled “Revised Report on the Development and Training of Japanese Language Practitioners” the government will develop and implement specific curricula for promoting the cultivation and training of Japanese language education personnel to teach foreign nationals as residents, international students, schoolchildren, workers, and individuals supporting Japanese language learning, and will encourage widespread use thereof.
- In light of the report by the Council for Cultural Affairs Subdivision on the Japanese Language entitled “Approaches to the Qualifications of Japanese Language Teachers,” the government will design a new system of qualifications to certify the ability of Japanese language teachers and take the measures required to guarantee the quality of

Japanese language teachers.

- The government will conduct training to cultivate coordinators of Japanese language education in regional areas, who will work with government bodies and relevant local organizations (regional immigration services bureaus, economic organizations, universities, Japanese language schools, and NPOs, etc.), and organize and deliver Japanese language education programs. [Described above]
- To share information about examples of best practice in Japanese language education in regional areas and ensure full awareness of trends in national policy, the government will hold training for local government staff responsible for Japanese language education. [Described above]
- Through the JF, etc., the government will support efforts to improve the abilities and skills of Japanese language teachers who are foreign nationals, etc. by supporting workshops for local Japanese language teachers and organizing training courses in Japan for such teachers, as well as through travelling guidance by experts in Japanese language education to Japanese language educational institutions.
- Through JICA, the government will support returned JOCV in playing an active role as Japanese language education personnel in local communities of Japan.

4 Formulation of Guidelines on Curriculum

While it is necessary to support foreign nationals, etc. resident in Japan to acquire the Japanese language proficiency needed to live their lives as independent language users, so that they can lead their lives while communicating in Japanese, the places of origin, cultures, ages, statuses of residence, occupations, and purposes of residence of foreign nationals are becoming increasingly diverse and the Japanese language education desired by foreign nationals, etc. wanting to learn Japanese is therefore not uniform in nature. The government will set out a comprehensive framework for Japanese language education covering learning, teaching, and assessment, to serve as a reference for all those involved in Japanese language education, including the diverse Japanese language learners and Japanese language teachers moving between Japan and other countries, and also to facilitate the establishment of Japanese language education standards and targets tailored to the activities of foreign nationals, specifically daily life, work, and study in Japan. In addition, based on this comprehensive framework, the government will formulate criteria for judging Japanese language proficiency to make it easier for those accepting foreign nationals, etc. to ascertain their Japanese language proficiency, and will seek to ensure that these criteria are disseminated and become firmly established, as well as taking other necessary measures.

Enabling learners overseas themselves to identify their level of Japanese language acquisition is crucial, as it helps to maintain and improve their motivation to learn, as well as enabling Japanese language teachers to check their students' progress. In addition, developing and disseminating teaching methods for Japanese language education overseas, referring to

widely used frameworks of reference for teaching other foreign languages, are effective for further promotion of Japanese language education. Accordingly, the government will take measures that will assist in this.

[Examples of Specific Measures]

- Based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), the Council for Cultural Affairs Subdivision on the Japanese Language will consider and compile a Framework of Reference for Japanese Language Education covering Japanese language learning, teaching, and assessment to which everyone involved in Japanese language education can refer, in order to identify the Japanese language education content and methods required at each stage of Japanese language learning and enable foreign nationals, etc. to receive appropriate evaluation.
- Based on the Framework of Reference for Japanese Language Education, the Council for Cultural Affairs Subdivision on the Japanese Language will review and revise the Proposal for a Standard Curriculum for Japanese Language Education for Foreign Nationals as Residents (May 19, 2010; Council for Cultural Affairs Subdivision on the Japanese Language), to support foreign nationals as residents in enabling them to live their lives as independent language users and promoting communication in Japanese, based on the assumption of mutual respect for language and culture as they carry out the requisite activities of daily life in Japanese.
- To ensure that effective and appropriate Japanese language education according to learners' levels and purpose of Japanese language study, the government will, through the JF, offer the JF Standard for Japanese-Language Education, which is a framework of reference for Japanese language education developed on the basis of the CEFR, as well as develop and disseminate teaching methods and materials (including online materials).

5 Assessment of Japanese Language Proficiency

Levels and judgment criteria are set based on individual indicators in various national and international examinations measuring the Japanese language proficiency of foreign nationals, etc. At the same time, with the expansion of the activities of foreign nationals, etc. in various fields requiring Japanese language proficiency and the greater diversity of Japanese language learning and teaching methods, it is necessary to develop common indicators of Japanese language proficiency to be utilized in each examination, to make it easier for foreign nationals, etc. and those who accept foreign nationals, etc. to understand their Japanese language proficiency.

The government will therefore take the necessary measures, including formulating Criteria for Assessment of Japanese Language Proficiency based on the Framework of Reference for Japanese Language Education that can be referred to both within Japan and overseas.

[Examples of Specific Measures]

- The Council for Cultural Affairs Subdivision on the Japanese Language will consider and compile Criteria for Assessment of Japanese Language Proficiency, which set out methods of showing the relationships of the various examinations conducted within Japan and overseas to the Framework of Reference for Japanese Language Education.
- To appropriately evaluate the Japanese language proficiency of foreign nationals learning Japanese, the government will, through the JF, implement the Japanese-Language Proficiency Test (JLPT) in accordance with local circumstances in each country and region. In addition, it will implement the Japan Foundation Test for Basic Japanese (JFT-Basic) in accordance with needs for foreign human resources, in order to facilitate the smooth acceptance of foreign nationals under the Specified Skilled Worker status of residence.

6 Research and Provision of Information on Japanese Language Education

(1) Research on Japanese language education

Due to an increase in the number of foreign nationals, etc. resident in Japan and rising interest in Japanese society and culture overseas, the number of Japanese language learners is growing, while the Japanese language proficiency and purposes of study of foreign nationals, etc. wishing to learn Japanese are becoming more diverse. Accordingly, the government will conduct a survey of the reality of Japanese language education and take the measures required to ascertain the information needed to solve any issues, in order to further promote Japanese language education.

[Examples of Specific Measures]

- The government will conduct a fact-finding survey concerning Japanese language education in Japan and undertake research tailored to issues involved in promoting Japanese language education, including the Japanese language education content required for considering, compiling, and using the Framework of Reference for Japanese Language Education, and effective Japanese language education methods, such as ICT-based remote learning.
- About once every three years, the JF will conduct a survey of Japanese language educational intuitions overseas to ascertain the reality of Japanese language education in each country and the purposes of study of Japanese language learners, so that the results can assist in deliberations on and improvements to Japanese language education programs conducted overseas. The results will also provide researchers and others with basic data when conducting surveys and research concerning Japanese language education, and serve as reference materials when Japanese language educational institutions and international exchange groups implement programs relating to Japanese education, and for assisting such organizations in exchanging information and engaging in network-building and interaction.

(2) Provision of information on Japanese language education

While information that can be used by foreign nationals, etc. who wish to learn Japanese within Japan and overseas is available—for example, content for study purposes published on the website, etc. of administrative bodies that produced it—the government will take the measures required to provide information about Japanese language education intensively, so that those who wish to learn Japanese, Japanese language teachers, and those at workplaces accepting Japanese language learners can access the information they need about Japanese language education in an effective manner.

[Examples of Specific Measures]

- Enhancing the Japanese language education environment is very important to ensuring that foreign nationals, etc. acquire the Japanese language proficiency needed for daily life. Accordingly, the government will provide opportunities for Japanese citizens to gain a deeper understanding of the importance of Japanese language education, by such means as organizing Japanese language education conferences to share the latest information and advanced examples of such education and also by holding symposiums as part of various programs in Japanese language education in regional areas. [Described above]
- The government will put up a list of information on the website of the Agency for Cultural Affairs, including contact details for the departments in charge of Japanese language education at prefectures, designated cities, and core cities nationwide and details of Japanese language classes in each area. [Described above]
- The government will gather content relating to Japanese language education, including teaching materials, curricula, reports, and policy documents, and make them available to the public through the government-operated cross-searchable NIHONGO Education contents Web sharing System (NEWS). [Described above]
- The government will consider ensuring widespread awareness of information about Japanese language education and the like among companies, etc., so that they provide opportunities to learn Japanese to foreign nationals, etc. employed at their workplaces.
- To enable foreign nationals, etc. to access the information they require concerning Japanese language education, the government will publish, as needed, information on the JF website that will be of assistance to those engaging in Japanese language education overseas. This information will include teaching materials developed with reference to the CEFR; e-learning and other online content; materials, ideas, and other useful lesson content for Japanese language teachers; the results of surveys concerning education systems and the implementation status of Japanese and other foreign language education in each country and concerning organizations providing Japanese language education; and information about Japanese language examinations.

Chapter 3 Other Important Matters Concerning the Promotion of Japanese Language Education

1 Promotion Frameworks

(1) Council for the Promotion of Japanese Language Education

In accordance with Article 26 of the Japanese Language Education Promotion Act, the government will establish the Council for the Promotion of Japanese Language Education, to facilitate coordination between MEXT, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and other relevant administrative bodies, and to implement measures concerning the promotion of Japanese language education in a comprehensive, integrated, and effective manner.

The Council for the Promotion of Japanese Language Education will undertake coordination among the relevant administrative bodies; in doing so, it will listen to the views of experts in Japanese language education, those working in or receiving Japanese language education, and other relevant parties at meetings of the Committee of Parties Involved in Promoting Japanese Language Education established in accordance with Article 27 of the Japanese Language Education Promotion Act.

(2) Local government promotion frameworks

Local governments shall strive to strengthen partnerships with relevant organizations and stakeholders (such as organizations providing Japanese language education, companies, local internationalization associations, and NPOs), and, taking into account the Basic Policy, shall formulate a basic policy for comprehensively and effectively implementing measures to promote Japanese Language Education tailored to local circumstances. In addition, they shall strive to implement the necessary Japanese Language Education promotion measures tailored to local circumstances, taking national measures into consideration. Moreover, local governments may establish organizations with a council system pursuant to the provisions of local ordinances, in order to study and deliberate on their basic policy and other important matters.

2 Development of Systems Concerning Organizations Providing Japanese Language Education

Article 8 of the Japanese Language Education Promotion Act states that the government must take the legislative, financial, and other measures required to implement measures to promote Japanese language education after deliberations concerning the development of a system regarding those organizations providing Japanese language education (including schools providing Japanese language education (schools as provided in Article 1 of the School Education Act (Act No. 26 of 1947), specialized training colleges as provided in Article 124 of the Act, and miscellaneous schools as provided in Article 134 (1) of the Act)) that have the proficiency required to maintain and improve the level of Japanese language education, taking into account Article 2 of the Supplementary Provisions of the Japanese Language Education

Promotion Act. Accordingly, the government will take the necessary measures based on the results of those deliberations.

3 Review of the Basic Policy

In accordance with Article 10 (6) of the Japanese Language Education Promotion Act, the government will examine the Basic Policy every five years or so, taking into account changes in the environment around Japanese language education and the implementation status of Japanese language education measures, and will make changes to the Basic Policy if deemed necessary.

In reviewing the Basic Policy, the government will undertake coordination among the relevant administrative bodies regarding the draft Basic Policy via the Council for the Promotion of Japanese Language Education, in accordance with Article 10 (7) of the Japanese Language Education Promotion Act; in doing so, it will listen to the views of the Committee of Parties Involved in Promoting Japanese Language Education.