

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Implementation Guiding Principles

I. Introduction

(1) Background on the adoption of the 2030 Agenda and its implications for Japan

Today's global economy is driven by the worldwide movement of people, goods and currency, and an economic crisis in one country can have immediate impact on other countries. In addition, climate change, natural disasters, infectious diseases and other global issues can set off chain reactions, hampering social and economic growth and causing serious impacts across the globe. In light of these facts, the United Nations adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (the 2030 Agenda) in September 2015 to not only address the issues faced by developing countries, but also to encompass global agendas that are integrated and indivisible, harmonizing the three dimensions of sustainability—economic, social and environmental sustainability. The 2030 Agenda was thus adopted to describe the universal goals of the entire international community, both developed and developing countries, should achieve together. It comprises 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets.

Accordingly, in order to implement the 2030 Agenda, it is not enough for developed countries to merely support developing countries. The 2030 Agenda begins with “transforming our world” and further states in its preamble that “We are determined to take the bold and transformative steps which are urgently needed to shift the world on to a sustainable and resilient path.” We renew our resolution to further accelerate our efforts based on the principle of international cooperation. We also bear in mind that our work to bolster domestic efforts on economic, social and environmental sustainability as well as cross-dimensional issues are part of global efforts to tackle the challenges to sustainable development.

(2) Establishment of the SDGs Promotion Headquarters and the SDGs Implementation Guiding Principles

The Government of Japan has established a Cabinet body, the SDGs Promotion Headquarters, headed by the Prime Minister and composed of all ministers on May 20, 2016, in order to ensure a whole-of-government approach to implementing the 2030 Agenda in a comprehensive and effective manner. At the first meeting of the Headquarters on the day of its establishment, the decision was made to set Japan's SDGs Implementation Guiding Principles. Following this decision, the government has widely sought the opinions of citizens

and has held dialogues with a range of stakeholders to draft the Implementation Guiding Principles.

The Implementation Guiding Principles represent Japan's national strategy to address the major challenges for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The document sets out Japan's vision, priority areas, implementation principles, implementation framework and approach to the follow-up and review processes, as well as concrete measures clustered under priority areas. It aims to mobilize all ministries and government agencies by partnering with all relevant stakeholders to implement a wide variety of measures and resources in an effective and coherent manner, based on an analysis of the present situation in Japan and abroad.

II. Analysis of the Present Situation

(1) Japan's efforts to date

In the years since World War II, Japan has steadily achieved economic growth and built a highly advanced society. The Basic Environment Act was enacted and the Basic Environment Plan was formulated in accordance with the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development held in 1992, and the government has been implementing measures in an integrated manner to build a sustainable society through environmental, economic and social improvements. In addition, the Government of Japan has been working to prepare for large-scale natural disasters under the Basic Act for National Resilience. Moreover, Japan has embarked on creating an inclusive and participatory society in which every individual can achieve his or her full potential. In line with this ideal, Japan has forged ahead by reforming the relevant systems by enforcing the Basic Act for Gender Equal Society, the Act on Promotion of Women's Participation and Advancement in the Workplace, and the Basic Act for Persons with Disabilities.

On international cooperation, the Government of Japan began its Official Development Assistance (ODA) in 1954, soon after the end of World War II, and 35 years later was the world's top ODA donor country in 1989. Japan has proactively contributed to the peace, stability and prosperity of the entire international community for over 60 years. Since 2000, Japan has set human security as the guiding principle that lies at the foundation of its diplomacy and development cooperation, and has extended support for people who have been left behind, such as refugees or persons displaced due to conflicts. Japan has placed issues such as health, disaster risk reduction and gender equality, which are listed in the SDGs as major challenges to be addressed, at the core of its international cooperation.

Based on this experience, Japan has played a leading role in formulation of the 2030 Agenda, including the individual goals and targets. In February 2015, prior to the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, the Government of Japan established the Development Cooperation Charter to define its development cooperation philosophy and principles, which also serves as its basic policies to implement the 2030 Agenda.

(2) Assessment of the present situation

As a result of its past efforts, Japan has continued to achieve an extremely high level of development. However, some areas in which Japan must continue its efforts have also been noted. For example, in the 2016 joint report by the Bertelsmann Foundation of Germany and the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN), Japan received low achievement scores regarding some of the indicators for Goal 1 (Poverty), Goal 5 (Gender Equality), Goal 7 (Energy), Goal 13 (Climate Change), Goal 14 (Marine Resources), Goal 15 (Terrestrial Resources) and Goal 17 (Means of Implementation).

Japan has already begun addressing many of the aforementioned issues in its policy agenda, but there still remain areas in which Japan should further strengthen its efforts. It is indeed necessary for Japan to re-identify the issues to be tackled in relation to the SDGs and make better use of its past experiences, both domestically and internationally, to forge a sustainable future for Japan as well as for the international community.

For example, the key principle of the 2030 Agenda that “no one will be left behind” is embodied in the goals of the entire international community, and reflects the concept of human security, for which Japan has been a leading advocate. This notion is in line with Japan’s domestic policies that promote a society where all citizens can participate and play an active role through its Plan for Dynamic Engagement of All Citizens decided by the Cabinet in June 2016. Under the plan, the government is implementing measures to create virtuous cycles of growth and distribution, i.e. to build a new economic system where we enhance childcare support and social security as a broader economic policy which will lead to a more robust economy. Many countries across the world are now confronted with aging populations, and Japan is striving to provide a “Japan model” for a sustainable economy and society ahead of other developed countries.

In the environmental field, the Government of Japan clarified its stance in the Basic Environment Plan to aim for integrated environmental, economic and social improvements. Similarly, through the Paris Agreement adopted at the 21st session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (held in December 2015) and the Plan for Global Warming Countermeasures developed in line with Japan’s

Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (INDC), the Government of Japan is committed to fostering measures for integrated environmental, economic and social improvements. In addition, the Fundamental Plan for Establishing a Sound Material-Cycle Society and the National Biodiversity Strategy of Japan 2012-2020 are already developed and serving as the basis for various policy measures which are underway. These Plans and Strategy are consistent with the spirit of the 2030 Agenda.

Moreover, in the area of global health, Universal Health Coverage (UHC) was included in the SDGs targets. Japan attaches great importance to UHC as a country that established its own universal health insurance coverage (*Kokuminkaihoken*) as early as 1961 and has maintained the system for more than 50 years. Japan will demonstrate leadership in this field as a clear testimony to its commitment to human security in the context of international cooperation.

III. Vision and Priority Areas

(1) Vision

In regard to our efforts to implement the SDGs, the 2030 Agenda states the following:

“We resolve, between now and 2030, to end poverty and hunger everywhere; to combat inequalities within and among countries; to build peaceful, just and inclusive societies; to protect human rights and promote gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls; and to ensure the lasting protection of the planet and its natural resources. We resolve also to create conditions for sustainable, inclusive and sustained economic growth, shared prosperity and decent work for all”

Japan wishes to contribute to the world as a leading solution provider by sharing its successes and lessons learned in building a sustainable economy and society at home. Japan aims to become a role model for the world in the implementation of measures to achieve the SDGs and will make efforts both in Japan and in cooperation with other countries to achieve sustainable societies worldwide where no one will be left behind.

With the above in mind, Japan has established the following vision: “Become a leader toward a future where economic, social and environmental improvements are attained in an integrated, sustainable and resilient manner while leaving no one behind.”

(2) Priority areas

In order to achieve the aforementioned vision, Japan has set out eight priority areas. While Japan has already achieved some of the targets of the SDGs domestically, there still remains a range of issues to address in cooperation with other countries to achieve all the goals and targets on a global scale. The eight priority areas outline what areas among the goals and targets of the SDGs Japan should focus on, in light of the national context. These priority areas include both domestic measures and those to be implemented through international cooperation. The priority areas are clustered into the “Five Ps,” upheld in the 2030 Agenda: People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace and Partnership. All SDGs and targets are indivisible and should therefore be attained in an integrated manner; similarly, the eight priority issues are closely related and inseparable. Based on the recognition that the aforementioned national vision will not be achieved if any one of the priority issues is not successfully addressed, Japan will implement related measures under the priority areas in an integrated manner. Specific measures to be implemented to this end and other related information are described in the Annex.

(People)

1. Empowerment of All People
2. Achievement of Good Health and Longevity

(Prosperity)

3. Creating Growth Markets, Revitalization of Rural Areas, and Promoting Science Technology and Innovation
4. Sustainable and Resilient Land Use, Promoting Quality Infrastructure

(Planet)

5. Energy Conservation, Renewable Energy, Climate Change Countermeasures, and Sound Material-Cycle Society
6. Conservation of Environment, including Biodiversity, Forests and the Oceans

(Peace)

7. Achieving Peaceful, Safe and Secure Societies

(Partnership)

8. Strengthening the Means and Frameworks for the Implementation of the SDGs

IV. Major Principles for Implementation

Japan will implement the measures for the priority areas in accordance with the following principles, which are directly described in or derived from the 2030 Agenda. These principles should be taken into account in all priority areas in the course of implementation.

The eight priority areas and the concrete measures listed in the Annex will be appraised based on the principles in the course of action, as well as in considering the necessity of new measures or revising measures.

(1) Universality

Japan will take further steps domestically and internationally in order to fully implement the 2030 Agenda. Domestic efforts have multifaceted effects that will help achieve international goals at the same time. Likewise, international cooperation is not merely a form of assistance abroad, but also has positive impacts on Japan's domestic prosperity. We should also note the significance of linking domestic measures with international cooperation to effectively address individual priorities.

(2) Inclusiveness

The key phrase, "no one will be left behind," encapsulates the philosophy that underpins the 2030 Agenda, demanding actions for all people, including children, youth, persons with disabilities, people living with HIV/AIDS, older persons, indigenous peoples, refugees, internally displaced persons, and migrants. Japan will pay due attention to the most vulnerable individuals in all of its efforts, both domestic and those implemented through international cooperation. In addition, the concept of human security will continue to be a guiding principle for Japan's development cooperation on the implementation of the SDGs.

Additionally, respect for human rights as a universally accepted value in the international community, as well as gender equality and mainstreaming a gender perspective, are indispensable as cross-sectorial values in attaining all goals. They should be included and reflected in all measures. In connection with the advancement of gender equality and mainstreaming a gender perspective, well-developed gender statistics are crucially important, and efforts shall be made to collect as much gender disaggregated data as possible in the implementation of the SDGs.

(3) Participatory approach

In addition to ensuring that no vulnerable people will be left behind in any of the measures, the Government of Japan will foster a participatory approach in which all stakeholders play a role in our efforts to build a sustainable society.

(4) Integrated approach

As emphasized in the 2030 Agenda, the goals and targets of the SDGs are indivisible and their implementation should be carried out in an integrated manner. Accordingly, the Government of Japan will take an integrated approach to solve the issues related to the three

dimensions of economy, society and the environment, while attaching importance to fostering interactions and synergies among various issues in each priority area. Measures shall be carried out in an integrated and organic manner, bearing in mind the significance of linking different priority areas.

(5) Transparency and accountability

Transparency and accountability are important in ensuring the participation of all stakeholders. The Government of Japan will therefore ensure high transparency in the implementation of its measures and will publicly disclose assessments on the progress made on a regular basis to promote accountability. A list of concrete measures will be revised and updated based on the findings of these assessments.

V. Implementation framework

(1) Governmental system

The SDGs Promotion Headquarters established within the Cabinet will foster close cooperation among relevant governmental agencies and lead the comprehensive and effective implementation of related measures. The Headquarters will focus in particular on the following items, while cooperating closely with the relevant governmental agencies that are individually implementing the related initiatives:

- Monitor the progress of measures taken in line with the SDGs Implementation Guiding Principles and review the Guiding Principles, including adjustments of and addition to the current indicators, based on the monitoring results (follow-up and review)
- Promote exchange of opinions and cooperation/collaboration with stakeholders
- Conduct awareness raising PR activities for the 2030 Agenda and the Implementation Guiding Principles.

(2) Mainstreaming the SDGs

The 2030 Agenda states that “Each government will also decide how these aspirational and global targets should be incorporated into national planning processes, policies and strategies.” Accordingly, the Government of Japan and related governmental agencies will incorporate the SDGs into their plans, strategies and policies as much as possible. At the same time, the government will explore means to achieve necessary systemic reforms and endeavor to appropriately secure financial resources as policy incentives to foster both individual and collective efforts of the ministries and other government offices to implement measures in achieving the SDGs.

(3) Cooperation with stakeholders

The 2030 Agenda also states as follows:

“It is ‘we the peoples’ who are embarking today on the road to 2030. Our journey will involve Governments as well as parliaments, the United Nations system and other international institutions, local authorities, indigenous peoples, civil society, business and the private sector, the scientific and academic community—and all people.”

As described above, the Government of Japan needs to implement measures for the 2030 Agenda, monitor progress, and conduct follow-up and review activities across agency boundaries and through public-private partnerships. It will do this in cooperation with a wide range of stakeholders, including local governments, NGOs/NPOs, academia, the private sector, international organizations and other entities, parliamentarians, scientists and cooperatives. To this end, the Government of Japan holds roundtable meetings on the items related to the promotion and implementation of the 2030 Agenda. These SDGs Promotion Roundtable Meetings are attended by representatives from the related governmental agencies and other stakeholders. Through these meetings, the Government of Japan aims to cooperate more closely with all stakeholders.

The Government of Japan will also pursue efforts to establish platforms to exchange views and to foster partnerships with relevant stakeholders by linking them with the SDGs Promotion Round Table Meetings established under the auspices of the SDGs Promotion Headquarters in dealing with issues to be addressed by individual ministries and other cross-sectorial issues to be dealt by multiple ministries and agencies. Preceding examples of such platforms are the Stakeholders’ Meeting established by the Ministry of the Environment and the Roundtable Meeting on the Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) to which both the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology and the Ministry of the Environment, are serving as the secretariat.

The Government of Japan will also enhance close cooperation with a range of stakeholders engaging in philanthropic activities and various other initiatives in support of the SDGs.

(NGOs and NPOs)

NGOs and NPOs played an important role on behalf of the general public in the formulation process of the 2030 Agenda. Now, in the implementation of the Agenda, NGOs and NPOs will likewise play an extremely important role in building a future society where “no

one will be left behind.” They will facilitate collaboration with vulnerable people and advocate on potential challenges and policy options through their networks at the global and regional levels. The Government of Japan views NGOs and NPOs, as well as expanded local communities, private entities, community based organizations and other groups, as important implementing partners and will further foster effective partnerships with these organizations.

(Private Companies)

For the achievement of the SDGs, it is critical that not only the public sector, but also the private sector contribute to solutions for the public agenda. Private technologies and resources are necessary for the success of the SDGs. In addition to conventional corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities, some companies have already begun engaging in activities that contribute to solutions to social issues by incorporating the SDGs into their core business. The Government of Japan welcomes this trend and will enhance cooperation with the private sector by sharing the good practices on advanced implementation measures and by giving incentives through awards and other means, with the goal of the further implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The government will also make efforts to create an environment conducive for companies in the private sector to foster innovation in their business.

In particular, the private sector needs to implement sustainability-oriented initiatives such as “business and human rights,” Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) investment, and social bonds, in order to proactively address public agendas related to environmental, social, governance issues and human rights. These initiatives are also critical for Japanese companies to maintain their competitiveness in the global market and to avoid falling behind in meeting global investor evaluation criteria, which increasingly focus on the ESG fields. The Government of Japan will implement policies to help companies meet these requirements and will support the private sector in conducting related activities.

(Consumers)

Production and consumption are closely and indivisibly related. Sustainable production and consumption should thus be fostered at the same time. Based on this understanding, the Government of Japan will encourage consumers and citizens to take voluntary initiatives as major players in the consumption arena.

(Local governments)

Local governments and other local stakeholders are absolutely essential to the nationwide implementation of SDGs-related measures. The national government will therefore encourage local governments to incorporate the SDGs into their strategies and

policies as much as possible. Government ministries will support the efforts of local governments through measures to promote partnership among various stakeholders in achieving the SDGs.

(Science community)

Science, technology and innovation (STI) is one of the priority areas of the guiding principles and an essential element for the attainment of targets. The Government of Japan will effectively use STI to implement a range of related measures, including enhanced international cooperation, and to solve emerging issues in a swift and flexible manner. It will also strengthen scientific analysis and evidence in setting and monitoring appropriate indicators to achieve the SDGs, analyze synergy and offset effects among the implemented measures, and take actions based on scientific analysis in the follow-up and review process. To this end, the government will foster systematic cooperation and collaboration with the scientific community in Japan as well as international initiatives such as Future Earth.

(Labor unions)

Labor unions, as a vehicle for social dialogue, can make important contributions to achieving decent work for all and building a sustainable economy and society by ensuring fair labor conditions, human rights, environment protection, safety, and peace both at the national and international levels, and by exercising mechanisms for collective employer-employee relationships. The Government of Japan will promote dialogue with labor unions both at the planning and implementation phases of measures related to the SDGs by the national and local governments.

(4) Communication

The SDGs Promotion Headquarters will proactively plan and lead communication activities to promote SDGs-related measures as a national movement in order to increase public understanding and support for engagement with the SDGs. The Headquarters, in cooperation with the UN, international organizations and other stakeholders, will also actively share Japan's efforts with the world through a range of international conferences and other opportunities.

To this end, the Government of Japan will foster the sharing of good practices among implementing partners, including the private sector, by giving awards and promoting the use of SDGs logos and branding.

Moreover, the Government of Japan will further promote Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) as well as encourage learning about SDGs in all settings, including

schools, households, workplaces and local communities in order to nurture in children, who will lead society in 2030 and beyond, the competencies to be a creator of sustainable societies and the world.

VI. Follow-up and review

In order to appropriately monitor the progress of SDGs-related measures in Japan, the Government of Japan will make proactive use of the relevant statistical data, Earth Observation Data and other data, while employing key performance indicators (KPIs) to the extent possible. The SDGs global indicators will be utilized in these KPIs as much as possible. The progress of the measures listed in the Implementation Guiding Principles will be reviewed based on these indicators, and the review of the Guiding Principles will be conducted in a transparent and accountable manner. The government will also report progress to the United Nations as appropriate, based on the indicators at global or national levels. In addition, the follow-up and review will be examined against the principles listed in Section 4 (Major Principles for Implementation) of this document.

In the review of the Implementation Guiding Principles, new measures that are deemed relevant to the SDGs will be added, taking into account the progress made in the implementation of existing measures.

The Government of Japan will proactively participate in and contribute to the global follow-up and review process of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda through participation in the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF). Japan will present at Voluntary National Reviews of the HLPF in 2017 and will consider participating in its subsequent reviews. The government will consider completing the first round of follow-up and review of the present Implementation Guiding Principles by 2019, looking toward the session of the HLPF to be convened by the President of the General Assembly in the same year. Subsequent to the 2019 HLPF, follow-up and review will be conducted, taking into account the four-year cycle of the HLPF organized by the President of the General Assembly.

The government will ensure the participation of a range of broad stakeholders in the follow-up and review process, similar to the process of formulating this document.