

# Voluntary National Review 2025

## Report on the implementation

### of 2030 Agenda

# JAPAN







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# Chapter 1

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## OPENING MESSAGE







## 1. Opening Message


Nearly a decade has passed since the United Nations adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), aiming for realization by 2030. The achievement of the SDGs now faces unprecedented challenges due to complex crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, conflicts in various regions, and the escalating severity of climate change. Japan remains resolutely committed to addressing these realities head-on, advancing our efforts towards achieving the SDGs with steadfast determination and a hopeful vision for the future.

Japan faces its own internal challenges, such as a declining birthrate and an aging population, alongside a significant contraction in the workforce. My conviction is to confront these issues directly and strive for a sustainable economy and society, envisioning a "joyful Japan." We will bring to fruition a dynamic economy and society where all people feel safety and security, take on challenges to achieve their dreams, and tangibly feel that "tomorrow will be brighter than today"; one where individuals having diverse values treat each other with respect and are able to achieve self-actualization. I firmly believe that by harnessing diverse perspectives and capabilities, we can forge a richer future. To that end, we are advancing initiatives not only by the government but also in close collaboration with a wide array of stakeholders, including civil society, businesses, academia, parliament, and children and youth. Moreover, as one of the world's leading disaster-prone countries, we are committed to sharing our knowledge and expertise in disaster preparedness with the international community, contributing to global disaster risk reduction efforts.

At the ongoing Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, with its theme "Designing Future Society for Our Lives," visitors are afforded the opportunity to experience a world where the SDGs and well-being for all are realized, providing insights into what each individual can contribute toward this achievement. I hope people from around the world will visit the Expo and engage with cutting-edge technologies and diverse ideas and cultures. In these times, when the international community faces various divisions and crises, it is imperative that we share hope for the future and foster solidarity and cooperation towards the SDGs. The Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan stands as a vital catalyst for this endeavor. We warmly invite you to attend.

Japan has been diligently promoting "human security" and the "rule of law" in the United Nations arena. I am convinced that these two principles have gained even greater significance in our current challenging environment. As the international community grapples with various issues, human security focuses on each and every human being. It aligns with the principles of the SDGs and serves as a cornerstone in realizing a society where safety, security, and mutual respect are paramount. Moreover, Japan has been actively working to strengthen the roles of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and the International Criminal Court (ICC) to realize the rule of law in the international community. The rule of law is foundational for constructing a sustainable future and is intricately linked to Japan's efforts in achieving the SDGs.

This Voluntary National Review (VNR) report highlights how Japan, as a nation at the forefront of addressing challenges, has approached issues such as aging and a declining birth rate, disaster risk



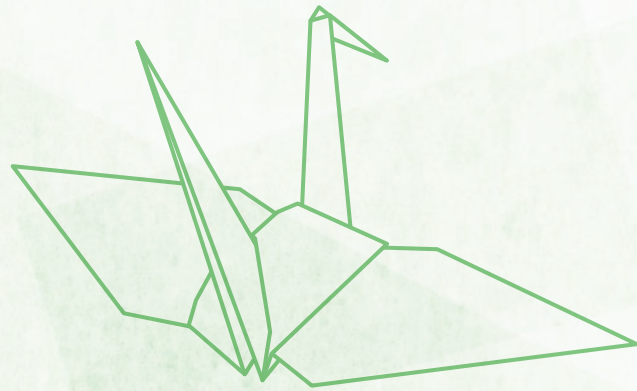
reduction, and the revitalization of local communities. By sharing our expertise and experiences with you all, I aspire to contribute to the advancement of global efforts to promote the SDGs. As a committed member of the United Nations, Japan will continue to work collaboratively with all of you towards realizing a sustainable future.

Prime Minister of Japan  
Chief of the SDGs Promotion Headquarters  
ISHIBA Shigeru

# Chapter 2

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## SUMMARY







## 2. Summary

### (1) Overall situation of Japan's efforts to achieve SDGs

From 2021, when Japan conducted its last VNR, to 2025, the international community has been facing serious issues such as the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, Russia's aggression against Ukraine, and the situation in Gaza Strip. Furthermore, Japan's declining birthrate and aging population is progressing ahead of the rest of the world. The decline in the working-age population will continue to progress further, even as the increasing concentration of the population in Tokyo is impacting regional areas, making the situation even more severe.

### (2) Japan's efforts over the past 4 years and its results

Japan's strength lies in the widespread awareness of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) throughout society, with diverse stakeholders actively engaging in efforts to achieve these goals from their respective positions. Even under difficult circumstances such as those outlined above, Japan has been promoting initiatives to achieve the SDGs with an “all-Japan” approach.

As a result, progress has been observed in Goal 3 (Health and Well-being), Goal 8 (Economic Growth and Employment), Goal 9 (Infrastructure, Industry, Innovation), and Goal 13 (Climate Change). On the contrary, there are challenges in Goal 5 (Gender) and Goal 10 (Inequality).

#### A. Establishing Sustainable Economic and Social Systems


a. Japan is advancing initiatives that leverage efforts to solve societal challenges as engines for growth to achieve sustainable development. Innovations are progressing in various fields, such as the development of next-generation solar cells (Goal 9). In 2021, the Digital Agency was established to advance the realization of a digital society. Initiatives in finance are also progressing, as evidenced by the increase in sustainable finance balances. As “people” are the driving force behind economic prosperity and strength, Japan has been making investments in human capital. In 2024, a significant wage increase, the highest since 1991, was achieved (Goal 8).

b. Among municipalities facing severe challenges, there is a growing movement to proactively adopt the SDGs as guidelines for problem-solving. Of the 1,788 municipalities nationwide, 1,190 are promoting efforts to achieve the SDGs.

c. The Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan, themed on “Designing Future Societies for Our Lives,” serves as a platform for the exchange of knowledge from around the world. Visitors will gain insights into sustainable economic and social structures where the SDGs have been realized.

#### B. Realizing an Inclusive Society where “No One is Left Behind”

a. In a sustainable economy and society, it has to be that each individual will experience prosperity and well-being, encompassing physical, mental, and social happiness. Facing a rapidly aging population and declining birthrate, Japan is striving to create an economy and society where everyone can thrive



regardless of age, live securely in multigenerational communities, and adapt to the physical and mental changes that come with aging. Japan's universal national health insurance and medical system as well as efforts by local governments, corporations, and private organizations are extending healthy lifespans (Goal 3). Some local communities are collaborating with companies to utilize data and cutting-edge scientific knowledge for advanced initiatives.

b. Under the leadership of the Minister in charge of Measures for Loneliness and Isolation established in February 2021, the government has collectively promoted measures to address loneliness and isolation. Under this framework, initiatives are being advanced based on the Act on the Advancement of Measures to Address Loneliness and Isolation, enforced in April 2024.

c. "Social education" plays a vital role in fostering empathic and cooperative relationships that form the foundation of local communities by creating connections and social bonds through "learning." It also contributes to enhancing the well-being of individuals and the community as a whole.

d. In order to build a sustainable economy and society, the proactive involvement of children and youth, who will shape the future, is essential. In April 2023, the Children and Families Agency was established to centrally promote policies related to children and aim for "Children-Centered Society." Efforts are underway to gather views from children and youth on specific policies and reflect them in policy-making.

e. Amid the global spread of COVID-19, the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games were held in 2021, aiming to advance the SDGs through the power of sports. The event prompted the revision of the Barrier-Free Act, further removing obstacles in many public spaces. Private organizations are also advancing the development of barrier-free maps utilizing ICT, created from the perspective of users, including those with disabilities.

f. Respect for human rights and the mainstreaming of gender perspectives are essential cross-cutting values for achieving all SDGs. Due to efforts to promote women's empowerment and gender equality, the situation of women's employment rate, relative poverty rate and others have remained constant or improved. On the other hand, Japan's ranking in the World Economic Forum's annual Gender Gap Index is 118th out of 146 countries in 2024, indicating that Japan's progress is still lagging behind and that challenges remain to be addressed (Goal 5: Gender Equality, Goal 10: Reduced Inequalities). Various initiatives are being advanced in collaboration with the government, parliament, and civil society regarding measures against sexual crimes and violence. Additionally, Japan is steadily implementing the National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights and continues to promote efforts to achieve the SDGs, with consideration to future revisions.

### C. Strengthening Efforts to Address Major Global Challenges

To overcome the triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution, integrated responses must be accelerated. Under this premise, Japan is advancing initiatives to achieve net zero by balancing greenhouse gas emissions and absorption, realize a circular and symbiotic economy and society, and halt and reverse biodiversity loss (nature-positive).

The latest data (FY2023) shows net greenhouse gas emissions at approximately 1.017 billion tons (CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent), a 27.1% reduction (approximately 378.1 million tons) compared to FY2013. The steady downward trend towards achieving net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 continues. In February 2025, a Plan for Global Warming Countermeasures, including new greenhouse gas reduction targets beyond FY2030, was approved by the Cabinet. The Strategic Energy Plan was revised in order to further promote measures to simultaneously achieve energy stability, economic growth, and decarbonization (Goal 7 and Goal 13).

Amid the increasing severity and frequency of natural disasters, Japan has been promoting initiatives to protect lives and strengthen social and economic resilience in line with the “Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030.” Disaster prevention investments, such as strengthening observation systems, developing prediction technologies, and effectively disseminating information, have proven effective in early evacuation and swift recovery and reconstruction, even during recent heavy rains (Goal 9) in accordance with the Fundamental Plan for National Resilience.

In 2023, Japan formulated a national strategy for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. Efforts to achieve nature restoration by 2030 are progressing under this strategy. In 2027, GREEN×EXPO 2027 (International Horticultural Expo 2027, Yokohama, Japan) will be held in Yokohama, aiming to share wisdom for living in harmony with nature and contribute to realize a sustainable society.


Regarding plastic pollution, Japan is advancing efforts in collecting, processing, and preventing marine debris, conducting surveys to understand the situation, and accumulating scientific knowledge. Japan is also contributing to the establishment of international frameworks.

Since establishing its universal health insurance system in 1961, Japan has promoted Universal Health Coverage (UHC: a state in which everyone has access to the preventive, therapeutic and rehabilitative healthcare services they need at an affordable cost), adapting to an aging society. In May 2022, Japan formulated its Global Health Strategy, with the goal of achieving UHC worldwide and strengthening pandemic prevention, preparedness and response (PPR), by enhancing collaborations with relevant organizations and civil societies, and mobilizing private funds for the health and medical sector through impact investing. Japan is also working with the WHO, World Bank, and others to establish the “UHC Knowledge Hub” in Japan to train personnel for achieving UHC globally.

Additionally, Japan is leveraging space technologies to achieve the SDGs across various fields, including global environmental observation, disaster response, agricultural efficiency, and space debris mitigation.

#### D. Fostering Cooperation and Collaboration with the International Community

A sustainable economy and society cannot be built by Japan alone. Despite facing one of the most challenging fiscal situations among developed countries, the Japanese government continues to provide Official Development Assistance (ODA) based on the principle of human security (Goal 17). As Japan's domestic market is expected to shrink, it will be essential to support Japanese businesses to



play a more significant role abroad in solving social issues in developing and emerging countries. To this end, Japan will promote the mobilization of private funds through ODA and other means.

#### E. Sustaining Peace and Sustainable Development in an Integrated Manner

Sustainable development and sustaining peace are two sides of the same coin. Based on the principle of human security, Japan contributes to "nation-building" and "people-building" worldwide, making this a fundamental stance in our international cooperation efforts. Women's equal and full participation is necessary for international peace, conflict prevention, and resolution, and Japan will continue to promote the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda.

#### (3) Future Direction

Japan will further advance efforts to simultaneously achieve energy stability, economic growth, and decarbonization, transforming the solutions to societal challenges into engines for growth. A resilient and circular economy and social system will be established. Moreover, innovation in various fields, including AI, will be harnessed to achieve sustainable growth.

Additionally, the principles of "leave no one behind" and "everyone contributes towards its realization" are paramount. While population decline and aging and low birth rate are significant challenges, they also present opportunities to create a society where diverse individuals thrive, support each other, and everyone is valued. Realizing such a society will also enhance well-being.

As a nation at the forefront of addressing challenges, Japan will showcase its efforts and insights towards achieving a sustainable economy and society as a model for the international community. Through dialogue and collaboration with developing countries, Japan will promote the co-creation of value for realizing a sustainable economy and society in 2030 and beyond. Areas for advancing these initiatives include addressing declining birthrates and aging populations, as well as disaster risk reduction.

The challenges of declining birthrates and population aging are inevitable for many countries, and Japan's efforts can serve as a model for others. With regional communities facing harsh conditions due to the concentration of the population in Tokyo, initiatives to unlock the potential of each locality are key to solving these issues.

Efforts to promote the SDGs at the local level include supporting youth and women, relocating industries, government, and academia to regional communities, and promoting innovation in these regions. Supporting small and medium-sized enterprises nationwide in their efforts to achieve the SDGs will help create autonomous and sustainable economies and societies in each locality.

Furthermore, disaster risk reduction, considering climate change risks, is crucial, and efforts contributing to disaster prevention and mitigation, as well as national resilience must be strengthened.

Japan welcomes the outcomes of the 2024 UN Summit of the Future and will work towards realizing a peaceful and prosperous world based on the principles of human dignity and human security. The international community must share this responsibility and commit to multilateralism. Japan will also

continue to strongly promote WPS (Women, Peace and Security), and aims to play a leading role in discussions and rule-making on sustainability beyond 2030.

As outlined in Japan's SDG Implementation Guiding Principles revised in December 2023, the Japanese government will continue to take the lead, encourage active participation from diverse sectors, and foster collaboration and cooperation to pave the way for achieving the SDGs. The SDGs Promotion Headquarters will regularly review progress based on the Implementation Guiding Principles and revise them every four years or as necessary.

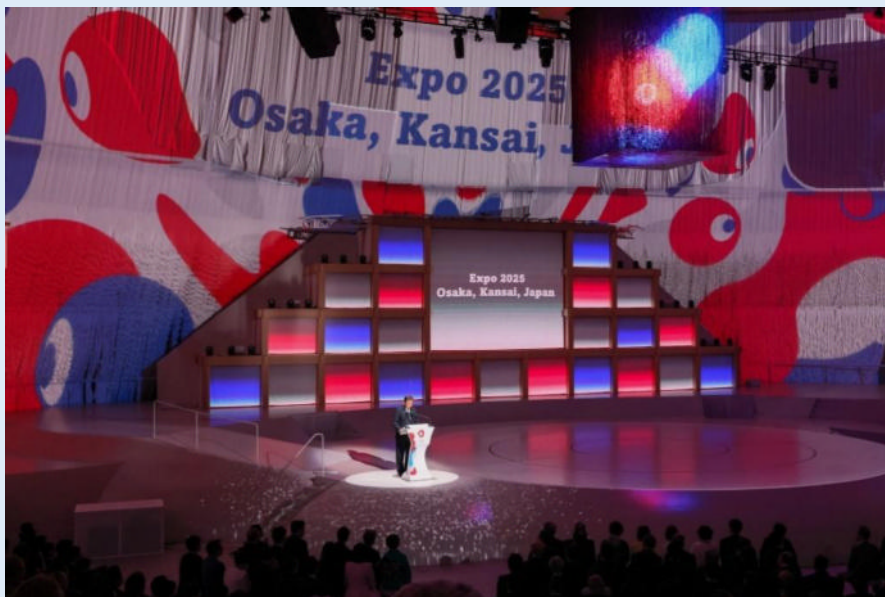


## Column1: Expo2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan

Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan is taking place over 184 days from April 13 to October 13, 2025 under the theme “Designing Future Society for Our Lives,” and aims to contribute to the achievement of the SDGs and the realization of Japan's national strategy, Society 5.0.

There are three zones at the venue which correspond to the sub-themes of “Saving Lives”, “Empowering Lives”, and “Connecting Lives”, and pavilions for the official participants are arranged by theme. Official participants from around the world select a sub-theme or one or more of the 17 SDGs and bring forth outstanding initiatives to achieve the SDGs from each of their respective perspectives. With People’s Living Lab as the concept, the entire venue depicts a future society in which the SDGs were achieved.

On April 12, 2025, the opening ceremony of the Osaka-Kansai Expo was held in the presence of Their Majesties the Emperor and Empress, as well as Their Imperial Highnesses Crown Prince and Princess Akishino. The ceremony was attended by Prime Minister Ishiba, Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry Muto, and Minister for the World Expo 2025 Ito, among others. The following day, April 13, a tape-cutting ceremony took place, during which Chairman Tokura of the Japan Association for the Expo declared the opening of the Expo. Since the opening, many people have visited and enjoyed the Expo.



Prime Minister Ishiba greeting in the ceremony EXPO2025 Osaka, Kansai

Photo: Cabinet Public Affairs Office

<https://www.kantei.go.jp/jp/103/actions/202504/12kaikaishiki.html>



Ribbon-cutting ceremony in EXPO2025 Osaka,Kansai



Photo: Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry

[https://www.meti.go.jp/policy/exhibition/shuho\\_backnumbers/250415syuhou-hp.pdf](https://www.meti.go.jp/policy/exhibition/shuho_backnumbers/250415syuhou-hp.pdf)

During the Expo, an initiative called Theme Weeks will be held in which countries from around the world together create a Future Society for Our Lives and solve global-scale issues through dialogue. A different global issue is set as the theme for approximately a week with dialogue programs for participants to discuss solutions and business exchanges for specific actions. This initiative gathers not only the organizer, the Japan Association for the 2025 World Exposition, but also official participants, the Japanese government and local governments, co-creation project participants, companies participating in the Expo, as well as local governments and industries from across the country.

## Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan

- The World Expo is an event **organized by the Japanese government in accordance with the International Exposition Convention (BIE Convention)**. It holds **international significance and diplomatic importance, aiming to meet the high expectations of countries worldwide**, including those in the Global South, and striving to unite a divided world.

| Event Overview   | Category  | Theme (Title for the week)   |
|--|---|--|
| Title: Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan<br>Venue: Yumeshima (Coastal area of Osaka)<br>Duration: Sun. April 13 to Mon. October 13, 2025<br>Estimated visitor count: 28.20 million<br>Number of participating countries:<br>158 / 7 international organizations<br>Theme: Designing Future Society for Our Lives<br>Concept: People's Living Lab<br> | <b>Saving Lives</b><br>Issues threatening people and life on earth                                    | <b>The Future of Earth and Biodiversity</b><br>(September 17 to 28)      |
|  |   | <b>Health and Well-Being</b> (June 20 to July 1)                         |
|  |   | <b>Peace, Human Security, and Dignity</b><br>(August 1 to 12)            |
|  | <b>Empowering Lives</b><br>Challenges that everyone faces in their pursuit of happy, productive lives | <b>Necessities of Life: Food, Clothing and Shelter</b><br>(June 5 to 16) |
|  |   | <b>Learning and Playing</b> (July 17 to 28)                              |
|  | <b>Connecting Lives</b><br>Challenges to enriching societies  | <b>Co-Creating Cultures for the Future</b><br>(April 25 to May 6)        |
|  |   | <b>The Future of Community and Mobility</b><br>(May 15 to 26)            |
|    | <b>Designing Future Society for Our Lives</b><br>Summary (final week)                                 | <b>SDGs+Beyond</b><br><b>Future Society for Life</b> (October 2 to 12)   |

PPT: Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry

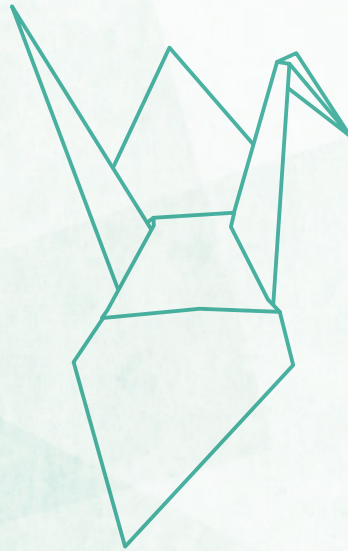
Hosting the Osaka-Kansai Expo in Japan in 2025, five years before the SDGs target year of 2030, makes it a great opportunity to check in on the progress to date towards achieving the SDGs and accelerate efforts to achieve them. At the same time, Japan also hopes it will show the state of society beyond the goals (SDGs+Beyond).



# Chapter 3

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## REPORT PREPARATION METHODOLOGY







### 3. Report Preparation Methodology

#### (1) Basic policy considerations in conducting VNR

This is the third VNR, following 2017 and 2021. For the previous 2021 VNR, due to the SDGs being promoted since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (hereinafter the “2030 Agenda”), improvements in domestic awareness regarding the SDGs had already been sufficiently realized. Therefore, moving forward, Japan will build upon this to change the behavior of each person, accelerate initiatives towards achieving the SDGs, and develop a progress evaluation system. Furthermore, Japan decided to build a system that reflected the opinions of young people and to conduct exchanges of opinions at roundtables with private sector members and civil society on a flexible schedule for future VNR processes.


Based on this, the SDGs Implementation Guiding Principles revised in December 2023 clearly stated the need to secure the participation of stakeholders that was even more diverse than before, especially young people, to manage the progress of SDGs based on scientific evidence and to move forward with initiatives aimed at achieving the SDGs, and to conduct VNR in 2025. By doing so, Japan demonstrated our determination to lead in efforts to ensure the sustainability of the international community as a whole and partake in discussions that focus on 2030 and beyond.

Taking these factors into account, during the implementation of the current VNR, efforts were made to review the structure of the SDGs Promotion Roundtable and the next-generation SDGs Promotion Platform. The approach involved proactively engaging in dialogue with a diverse range of stakeholders, with an eye toward the post-2030 period, and working collaboratively to ensure evidence-based initiatives and assessments of progress.

#### (2) Preparation Process for the Latest VNR Report

Preparations for the structure of the report began in April 2024 with an informal exchange of opinions with private sector members of the SDGs Promotion Roundtable. In September of the same year, a director-level meeting of the SDGs Promotion Headquarters was held and attended by all government ministries and agencies. Here, it was decided that the basic outline would follow the 2021 VNR and a review of the initiatives would be conducted based on the draft composition of the five priority items stipulated in the revised implementation guidelines. In terms of the preparation process, draft composition, and specific details to be included, these were discussed with the private sector members at the 19th SDGs Promotion Roundtable Meeting held in October 2024.

Additionally, from the perspective of ensuring the participation of the younger generation, a dialogue session with youth was held on March 17, 2025. Public comments on the draft VNR report, which included assessments written by stakeholders in addition to the Japanese government's evaluation, began on March 19. In comparison with the previous VNR process, where the public comment period was two weeks, this time a one-month period was secured. Furthermore, a stakeholder meeting for the VNR implementation was held on March 21. To enable participation regardless of region or disability, a hybrid format combining online and in-person participation was adopted, with approximately 150



participants. A total of 100 public comments were received (440 when counting multiple opinions within a single comment separately). A discussion on the draft of the report, which incorporated public comments and other feedback, was held by the 20th SDGs Promotion Roundtable on May 13 of the same year.

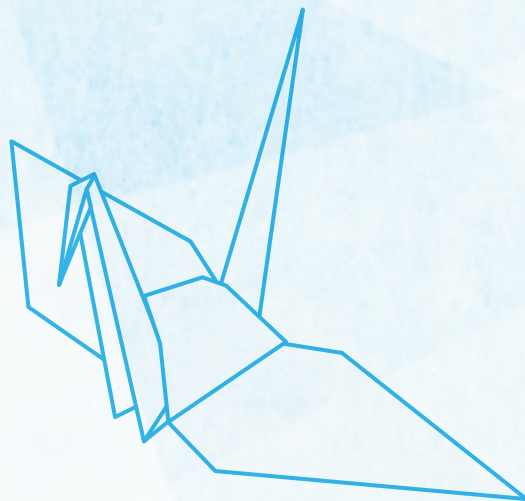
Moreover, as mentioned in the joint statement between the leaders of Japan and Bulgaria regarding the Japan-Bulgaria Strategic Partnership announced on May 20 of the same year, a peer review was conducted with Bulgaria.

After these processes, in June 2025, the report was officially approved by the SDGs Promotion Headquarters, headed by the Prime Minister and comprising all cabinet ministers.

# Chapter 4

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## EVALUATION OF JAPAN'S VISION AND INITIATIVES TOWARDS ACHIEVING SDGS





#### 4. Evaluation of Japan's vision and initiatives towards achieving SDGs

To achieve the SDGs, Japan has been accelerating efforts to build a recycling-oriented and resilient economic and social system as a foundation for simultaneously realizing stable energy supply, economic growth, and decarbonization under the SDGs principle of “Leave No One Behind.” Among them, Japan has made progress on various initiatives that sought to achieve sustainable growth through the resolution of social issues by utilizing innovation.

##### (1) The general situation surrounding SDGs and Japan's vision for achieving SDGs

Even between 2021, when Japan conducted the previous VNR, to 2025, global issues that commonly threaten humanity, such as climate change, biodiversity loss, environmental pollution, international health challenges that include infectious diseases, and poverty, are continuing to pile up. In particular, the severity of the effects of climate change has become even more dire. This is evident by the extreme weather phenomena and natural disasters such as extreme heats, heavy rains, floods, droughts, and wildfires, which have intensified and have become more frequent in recent years. Furthermore, against the backdrop of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, still more crises such as food and energy shortages, increase in refugees including internally displaced persons, and humanitarian crises are being fomented and increasing in seriousness. 2023 marked the halfway point to the deadline of achieving the SDGs for the international community but as divisions and conflicts in the international community worsen, international cooperation for the achievement of the SDGs is faced with some major difficulties.

While the international community is confronted with such complex crises, the focus is once again on human dignity as a common starting point for all humankind. No one can doubt that rather than division and confrontation, human life and dignity are of utmost importance to lead the world towards cooperation. Moreover, armed conflicts such as those in the Ukraine and the Middle East are causing serious harm particularly to women and girls. While working to protect and provide relief for women and girls, there is focus once again on the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda. This agenda recognizes that when women themselves play a leadership role in conflict prevention, reconstruction, and peace-building, it brings us closer to a sustainable peace.

In Japan too, the impacts of climate change are becoming increasingly evident. On the one hand, there is an increase in record-breaking days of extremely hot weather and a decrease in rainfall days while at the same time, unprecedented torrential rains occur more frequently. The impact of the novel coronavirus pandemic is also fresh in our memories. Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the situation in Gaza are felt through rises in energy prices and have impacted our lives financially in no small amount.

Furthermore, in Japan, which has one of the lowest birthrates and the fastest aging societies in the world, the population aged 75 and over is expected to reach approximately 18% of the total population in 2025. Combined with the start of a super-aging society, the overconcentration in Tokyo has made the situation in regional areas even more difficult.

Under these circumstances, since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, the state of economic and social activities of the entire international community, including Japan, is rapidly and drastically changing. This change spans from people's awareness and lifestyles to industrial structures and financial flows and is a result of the various initiatives and efforts to form rules by various stakeholders both domestically and internationally.

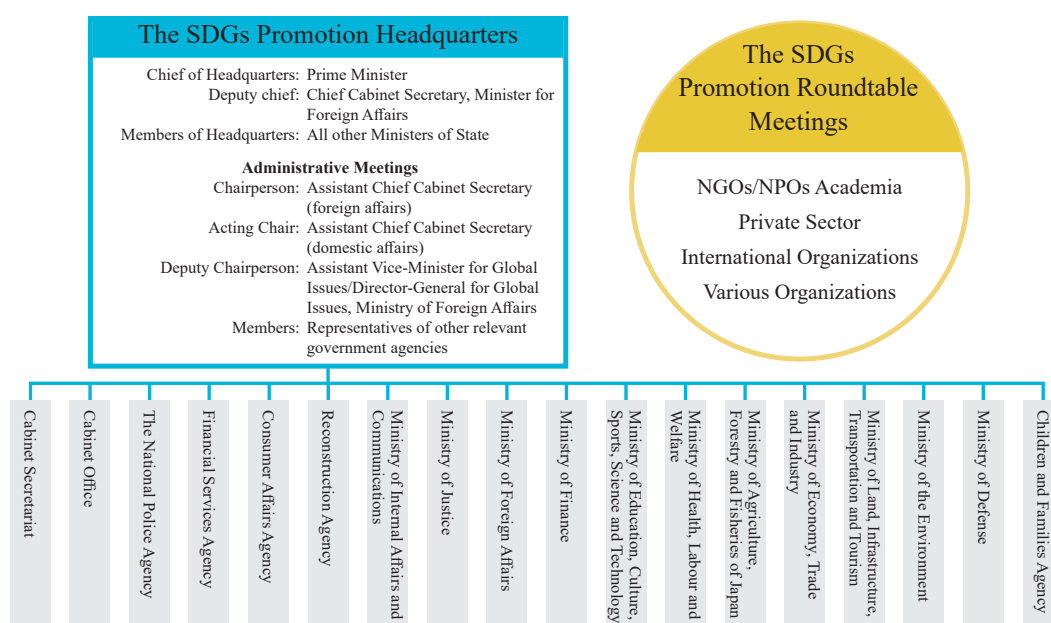
Given this situation, Japan revised the SDGs Implementation Guiding Principles in December 2023 while still keeping the fundamental ideas of the guiding principles to date. Based on these guiding principles, Japan has made efforts to build a diverse and inclusive society, with careful consideration to ensure that respect for human rights and gender equality are realized across all goals.

Also, Japan has reinforced its efforts towards the achievements of the SDGs so as to realize Japan's own sustainable growth and prosperity as well as strengthen its international competitiveness through the resolution of social challenges that leverages innovation.

Additionally, Japan has further contributed towards efforts to achieve the SDGs for the international community in the most effective manner.

## (2) SDGs implementation framework and efforts to raise domestic awareness

Japan as a whole has put forth the effort towards the achievement of the SDGs, and its strength is the widespread awareness regarding the SDGs and the active involvement of diverse stakeholders with varying perspectives towards the achievement of the SDGs (see “6. Evaluation and Initiatives of Each Stakeholder” below for the efforts of various stakeholders).



Since the 2030 agenda was adopted in 2015, Japan has made efforts both in the public and private sectors for the promotion of SDGs. In 2016, an SDGs Promotion Headquarters was established, headed

by the Prime Minister with the Chief Cabinet Secretary and Minister of Foreign Affairs as deputy chiefs and all ministers of state serving as members. An SDGs Promotion Roundtable Meeting was also established made up of a wide range of participants from NGOs, NPOs, academia, the private sector, etc.

### (Japan SDGs Award)

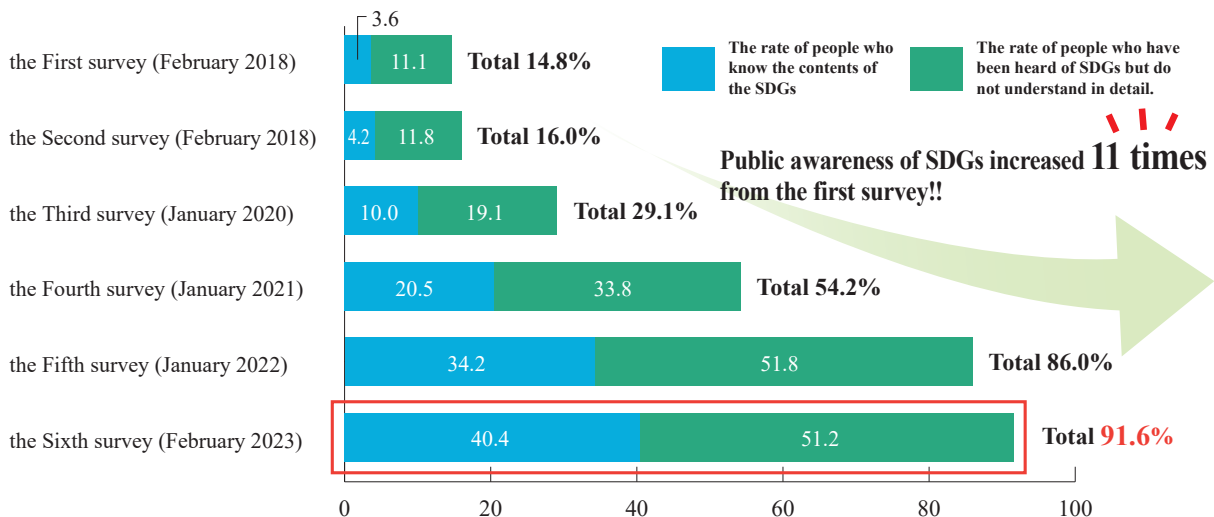
The “Japan SDGs Award” is an award system established in 2017 to promote nationwide efforts towards the achievement of the SDGs by striving to make SDGs mainstream domestically and promoting the efforts of companies and organizations. Since then, in addition to the Japan SDGs Award, SDGs-related sector-specific and issue-specific award programs were also implemented, sponsored by the relevant ministries and agencies. Because of the results of such efforts, public awareness of the SDGs domestically reached approximately 90% in 2023 compared to about 50% in 2021 when the survey was taken for the previous VNR. This shows that Japan’s efforts to achieve the SDGs have also progressed greatly.

## Public awareness of SDGs in Japan

Best on record

# 91.6%

The number of people who answered that they knew the contents of the SDGs increased **about 11 times** from the first survey conducted in February 2018.



Data; The 6th "Survey on SDGs" (Dentsu Team SDGs)



The “Japan SDGs Award” has been held three times since the previous VNR in 2021. In determining the recipients of the awards, the selection process was based on opinions of the selection committee composed of members of the SDGs Promotion Roundtable.

At the 5<sup>th</sup> “Japan SDGs Award” held in 2021, Euglena Co., Ltd. was awarded the Chief’s Award by the Prime Minister. The company cultivates high-quality mung beans that enables poor famers in developing countries to increase income and also provides food assistance to refugees, thereby simultaneously solving two issues.



Euglena Co. Ltd. being awarded the Chief’s Award by the Prime Minister t the 5<sup>th</sup> “Japan SDGs Award” (Photo: Cabinet Public Affairs Office)



Agricultural support for refugees from Rakhine State, Myanmar. (Photo: Euglena Co. Ltd)

In 2022, at the 6<sup>th</sup> “Japan’s SDGs Award” ceremony, the specified nonprofit corporation Action against Child Exploitation (ACE) received the Chief’s Award for its work towards the abolishment and prevention of child labor. ACE, through cooperation with private companies, implements education support and self-reliance support to poor families.



Action Against Child Exploitation (ACE) being awarded the Chief’s Award by the Prime Minister t the 6<sup>th</sup> “Japan SDGs Award” (Photo: Cabinet Public Affairs Office)

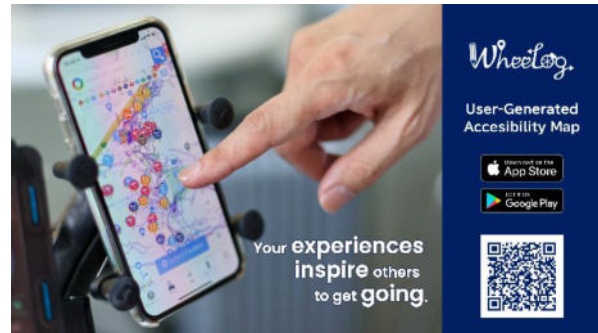


ACE’s original workshop materials (Photo: Child Exploitation (ACE))

The “Japan’s SDGs Award” at the 7th ceremony in 2023 was given to the NPO corporation WheelLog which develops and operates a barrier-free map application based its mission to “promote a society where wheelchair users and people with mobility challenges can fully enjoy their lives”.



the NPO corporation WheelLog being awarded the Chief’s Award  
by the Prime Minister at the 6<sup>th</sup> “Japan SDGs Award”  
(Photo: Cabinet Public Affairs Office)



Introduction about application program “WheelLog!”  
(Photo: the NPO corporation WheelLog)

Since its establishment seven years ago, the “Japan SDGs Award” has contributed to making SDGs mainstream domestically and have promoted the initiatives of companies and organizations. Having accomplished the significance of the policy defined at the time of establishment, the “Japan SDGs Award” was brought to an end. Japan will continue its nation-wide efforts to achieve the SDGs through various sector-specific and issue-specific SDGs-related award programs implemented by the respective ministries and agencies.

### SDGs-Related Award Programs Sponsored by Ministries and Agencies

|  |   |   |   |                                      |
|--|---|---|---|--------------------------------------|
| Japan Medical Research and Development Award   | Food Loss and Waste Reduction Promotion Award   | Green Infrastructure Award                            | Discover Muranotakara (Discover Countryside Treasures In Japan) Award | JICA International Cooperation Award |
| Regional Revitalization SDGs Finance Award     | Senryu (satirical poem) Verse Competition toward Zero Food Loss and Waste!  | Ministry of the Environment Goodlife Award            | Noufuku (agriculture and welfare collaboration) Award                 | “STI for SDGs” Award                 |
| Women's Challenge Award                        | Commendation by the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology for Support for Lifelong Learning of Persons with Disabilities | ESG Finance Award Japan                               | Sustainability Award  | NITS Award                           |
| Monodzukuri (manufacturing) Nippon Grand Award | Let's Extend Healthy Life Expectancy! Award   | Minister of the Environment Awards for Climate Action | Forest x ACT Challenge  | Japan Venture Awards (JVA)           |

### (Domestic Public Opinion Survey on Diplomacy)

In February 2025, as part of a domestic public opinion survey on diplomacy, the Japanese government conducted a survey asking the question “Achieving the sustainable development goals (SDGs) adopted by the United Nations in 2015 by 2030 is an international goal. Of the initiatives that address global issues, what do you think are Japan’s strengths?” (multiple answers allowed). The survey was conducted by telephone on 1,000 men and women aged 18 and over, living in the 47 prefectures nationwide. According to the survey, responses showed that Japan’s strengths in achieving the SDGs were in the areas of water and sanitation (58.8%) first, followed by education (40.4%) in second place, and disaster prevention in third place (39.2%).

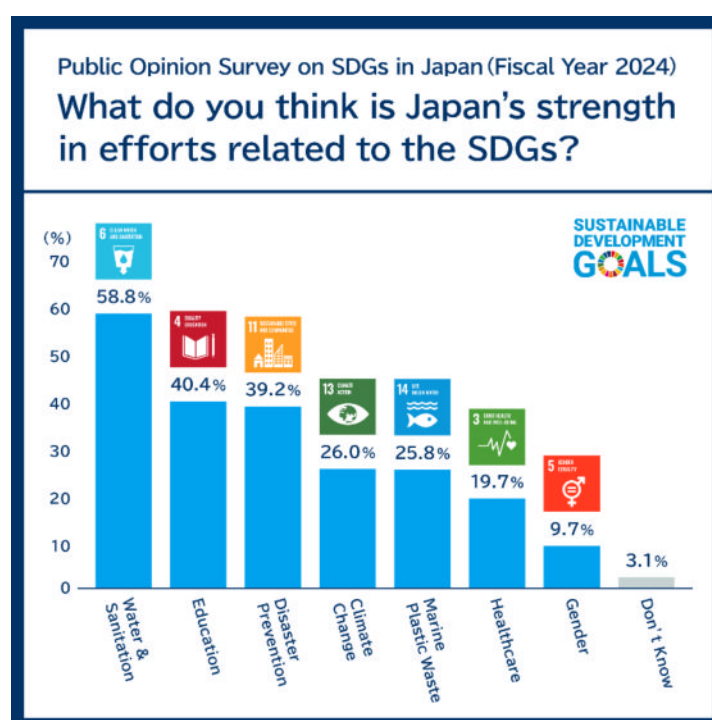


Figure: Ministry of Foreign Affairs

### (SDGs Implementation Guiding Principles and SDGs Action Plan)

Japan established the SDGs Implementation Guiding Principles as its mid- to long-term national strategy for achieving the SDGs and formulated an SDGs Action Plan with specific Japanese government policies from 2017.

As for the Action Plan, a meeting of the SDGs Promotion Headquarters was held in December 2021, and the “SDGs Action Plan 2022” was adopted. Amidst doubts regarding the progress of SDGs achievement due to the spread of the novel COVID-19, the meeting indicated the need to accelerate initiatives by building a strategy that was not bound by precedents and work together. Various policies were also decided under the philosophy of “creating a new society where every person can feel their purpose in life”, beginning with the urgent and highest priority issue of responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. In March 2023, the 13th meeting of the SDGs Promotion Headquarters was held during

which the “SDGs Action Plan 2023” was decided. This action plan took into consideration the G7 Hiroshima Summit in May and the SDG Summit in September held in the same year and resolved to accelerate initiatives towards the achievement of SDGs by establishing a sustainable economic and social system that “leaves no one behind” under the “New Form of Capitalism” set forth as economic policy.

The SDGs Implementation Guiding Principles are basically to be reviewed every 4 years or if necessary. To revise the implementation guiding principles in 2023, a “partnership conference of the SDGs Implementation Guiding Principles” was held in 2022 under the leadership of the SDGs Promotion Roundtable members. In this meeting, opinions from a wide range of stakeholders were collected and recommendations were formulated for revisions to the Implementation Guiding Principles and these recommendations were handed over to Prime Minister Kishida in March 2023.

In May 2023, Japan hosted the G7 Hiroshima Summit and led international discussions on the global economy, state of the region, and various global issues. Also at the United Nations General Assembly's SDG summit in September of the same year, Prime Minister Kishida emphasized that while progress towards achieving SDGs has been delayed significantly on a global level, it is necessary to return to the origin of the SDGs, “Leave No One Behind”, and aim to realize a world where “human dignity” is protected, and for the entire international community, including Japan, to accelerate efforts to achieve the SDGs.

Based on Japan's efforts to achieve the SDGs in the international community, the government proceeded with a review of the “SDGs Implementation Guiding Principles” which are mid- to long-term national strategies for achieving the SDGs. During the second half of 2023, frequent discussions and opinions were exchanged with members of the SDGs Promotion Roundtable, and public comments were gathered. The 14th meeting of the SDGs Promotion Headquarters was held in December 2023 and taking into consideration the various opinions submitted in the public comment, a decision was made to revise the SDGs Implementation Guiding Principles.

The main message of the revised Implementation Guiding Principles is to build a diverse and inclusive society amidst accelerating population decline, birthrate decline, and a growing aging population while also ensuring Japan's sustainable development and prosperity by leveraging innovation to resolve social issues, and to further contribute to the international community's efforts to achieve the SDGs in the most effective way.

With the spread of SDGs in Japan, in order to ensure the guiding principles are even more action-oriented, the specific priority areas and initiatives for the implementation of the SDGs described in the action plan were highlighted as areas of focus. For 2024 and beyond, the Japanese government's efforts and budgets towards achieving the SDGs are being compiled.



## Japan's SDGs Implementation Guiding Principles (Key points of revision①)

### 1 Purpose of revision

- **Significant changes in social and economic activities globally, including in Japan**, from awareness and lifestyles to industry and finance.
- Despite **facing complex crises and difficulties**, the overarching goal of achieving the SDGs by 2030 remains unchanged.
- Amid population decline and aging, **from the perspective of our sustainable development and prosperity**, Japan must: ① strengthen and accelerate efforts to achieve the SDGs, and ② further contribute to the international community.
- Participation from **various stakeholders**, especially the **younger generation**, is crucial.

### 2 Current situation

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>(1) Japan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The principles of the SDGs are important <b>driving forces</b> for Japan's sustainable development and prosperity.</li> <li>→ National level: Integration of the SDGs with <b>'New Capitalism'</b></li> <li>→ Local level: The SDGs are <b>a banner for regional revitalization</b>. Their penetration at the local level is a major feature of Japan.</li> <li>→ Business: The direction of <b>achieving the SDGs through business</b> operations is becoming increasingly clear.</li> <li>→ Civil society and private sector: Expansion of efforts among <b>a wide range of stakeholders</b>.</li> <li>● Various issues related to each goal have also been pointed out (such as <b>poverty, gender, and human rights</b>).</li> </ul> | <p>(2) International community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Progress toward the SDGs faces <b>major difficulties, especially in developing countries</b>, with significant disparities in achievement and priorities, particularly concerning funding and debt.</li> <li>● Integrating solutions for both developed and developing countries to <b>comprehensively advance the SDGs as an international community as a whole is essential</b>.</li> </ul> |
|--|---|

## Japan's SDGs Implementation Guiding Principles (Key points of revision②)

### 3 Guidelines for Implementation

#### (1) Key Focus

##### ① Building Sustainable Economic and Social Systems

Under the "New Form of Capitalism", establish an economic and social structure that ensures sustainable growth and a sense of security and happiness (including investing in people, promoting GX/DX, impact investing, regional revitalization through SDGs, and the Vision for a Digital Garden City Nation).

##### ② Realizing an Inclusive Society where "No One is Left Behind"

**Create an inclusive society where diversity is respected and everyone can contribute their full potential** (Child welfare policies, accelerating women's participation, society of mutual coexistence and support, addressing loneliness and isolation, and "Business and Human Rights").

##### ③ Strengthening Efforts on Global Issues

Address **climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution**, and promote **global health** (net-zero emissions, nature-positive initiatives, regional circular symbiosis, disaster risk reduction, and Universal Health Coverage (UHC)).

##### ④ Collaboration and Cooperation with the International Community

**Enhance contributions to achieving the SDGs comprehensively across the international community** (new development cooperation framework, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, and action plans related to Women, Peace, and Security (WPCS)).

##### ⑤ Promoting Peace and Sustainable Development Together

A peaceful and stable international environment is a prerequisite for global sustainability. Under the concept of **human security**, promote development cooperation centered on **"human dignity"** while paying attention to the nexus of humanitarian, development and peace efforts.

#### (2) Implementation Efforts

- Strengthening implementation systems and coordinating stakeholders
- **Voluntary National Review** and leading the initiatives in the international society (**take a leading role in international discussions, including those looking beyond 2030**)

### (3) Five priority areas and major initiatives

In the SDGs Implementation Guiding Principles revised in December 2023, the following five priority areas were raised, keeping in mind the interrelationships between the objectives of each SDG.

- (i) Establishment of sustainable economic and social systems
- (ii) Realization of an inclusive society where “no one is left behind”
- (iii) Strengthen efforts to address major global issues
- (iv) Cooperation and collaboration with the international community
- (v) Sustaining peace and promoting sustainable development in an integrated manner

The following reviews the accomplishments of the major initiatives for each of the above five priority areas, based on the 5P (People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace, and Partnership as stated in the 2030 Agenda) and 8 Priority Areas (1. Realization of gender equality and a society where every person can play an active role and gender equality; 2. Achievement of good health and longevity; 3. Creating growth markets, revitalization of rural areas, and promoting science technology and innovation; 4. Sustainable and resilient land use, promoting quality infrastructure; 5. Energy efficiency and renewable energy, disaster risk reduction and climate change countermeasures, sound material-cycle society; 6. Conservation of biodiversity, forests, and oceans, and other environments; 7. Achieving peaceful, safe and secure societies; and 8. Strengthening the means and frameworks for the implementation of the SDGs) described in the Implementation Guiding Principles to date and the efforts set forth in the action plan.





## Priority Area (i)

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Establishment of  
sustainable economic  
and social systems





## Priority Area (i): Establishment of sustainable economic and social systems

In recent years, as Japan's economy and society as a whole undergo a period of major transformation, the rapid introduction of new disclosure standards and indicators based on global issues in the climate change and environment is causing a major impact on corporate activities. Japan also faces a variety of issues as it leads the world in terms of declining birthrate, aging population, and population decline, and this issue is particularly serious in rural areas.

Under these circumstances, Japan has advocated a New Form of Capitalism and through public and private sector collaboration, it has worked to transform social issue resolution into an engine for growth. Efforts by businesses to create a sustainable economy and society have accelerated and innovation is progressing in various fields such as the development of next-generation solar cells (refer below to “5. Status of achievement of each goal”, SDGs’ goal 9). As shown by the increase in fund balance for sustainable finance, initiatives in the financial sector is also making headway. These efforts have progressed steadily, enabling us to completely overcome the deflation that continued for 30 years, and we have now reached a key turning point to determine whether people are able to realize a growth-oriented economy.

In fact, the driving force behind economic affluence and strength is people, and Japan has promoted an investment in people which led to a realization of wage increases in 2024, the first time in 33 years since 1991 (refer below to “5. Status of Achievement of Each Goal”, SDG’s goal 8).

Even among local governments that are facing difficult issues, the widespread movement to proactively incorporate efforts aimed at achieving the SDGs as set forth in the guiding principles for issue resolution has resulted in 1,190 municipalities out of 1,788 municipalities nationwide promoting efforts to achieve the SDGs.


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### (Investing in People)

Due to a “New Form of Capitalism” and to realize a virtuous cycle of growth and distribution, Japan has been Investing in People, the driving force that brings about economic affluence and strength. With green and digital as keywords, the economy and society of Japan as well as the world are undergoing major changes and amidst this environment, Japan has promoted various policies to workers including non-regular workers. In order to strengthen the ability to create new added value and increase distribution to people who create the next growth, beginning in 2022, Japan has provided support on the scale of 400 billion yen (approximately 3.5 billion US dollars<sup>1</sup>) over 3 years for capacity development, re-employment, and career advancement support by moving to other companies, .

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<sup>1</sup> Calculated by the secretariat based on an exchange rate of 1 US dollar to 133.85 yen in FY2022 (for dollar amounts included by the secretariat, the foreign exchange rate of each fiscal year uses the Tokyo Market Interbank Rates (US dollar/yen, spot, central rate/monthly average) from March of each fiscal year, as announced by the Bank of Japan (FY2016: 1 US dollar/113.01 yen, FY2021: 1 US dollar/ 118.51 yen, FY2022: 1 US dollar/ 133.85 yen, FY2023: 1 US dollar/149.63 yen, FY2024: 1 US dollar/151.96 yen. The same rates apply hereafter))



Various measures have subsequently been taken to strengthen Re-skilling support, amounting to 1 trillion yen (approximately 7.5 billion US dollars) over five years.<sup>2</sup>

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(Transition to a new industrial structure through promotion of GX/DX)

The Japanese government has promoted green transformation (GX) to simultaneously realize stable energy supply, economic growth, and decarbonization, and have carried out initiatives to decarbonize with the basic premise of securing stable energy supply through the maximum introduction of renewable energy and thorough energy conservation, etc.

As part of the policy package for GX, Japan is advancing the realization of the "Pro-Growth Carbon Pricing Concept." This involves gradually implementing carbon pricing measures, including the full-scale operation of an emissions trading system starting in fiscal year 2026 and the introduction of surcharge on fossil fuel supply beginning in fiscal year 2028. These efforts are integrated with a government-led upfront investment support totaling 20 trillion yen (approximately 134 billion US dollars<sup>3</sup>) over the decade starting from 2023. The aim is to enhance predictability for businesses working towards GX and to achieve over 150 trillion yen (approximately 1 trillion US dollars<sup>4</sup>) in public and private investment.

One research and development example in this effort is the perovskite solar cells which are a new type of solar cells. Compared to the conventional solar cells, the perovskite cells are being developed as the next-generation solar cells for being remarkably lightweight, flexible, and can be made transparent. These solar cells are being used at Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai and various efforts are being made for its practical application. In addition to this example, Japan is making progress in innovation in various fields.

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<sup>2</sup> Calculated by the secretariat as reference, based on the FY2022 exchange rate of 1 US dollar to 133.85 yen

<sup>3</sup> Calculated by the secretariat based on the FY2023 exchange rate of 1 US dollar to 149.65 yen

<sup>4</sup> Calculated by the secretariat based on the FY2023 exchange rate of 1 US dollar to 149.65 yen



Perovskite solar cells installed at EXPO, Osaka-Kansai Transportation Terminal (Photo: Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry)



Smartwear equipped with a probe and solar cells worn at Expo, Osaka-Kansai

Also, as the aging of the population, decline in birthrate, and decline in population of the regional areas continues to progress, Japan has taken measures to improve the productivity of the society as a whole. By promoting digital transformation (DX) and thorough regulatory reform that includes digital regulation, Japan is promoting social implementation of innovation and technology, creating new added value and services that enable the public and private sectors to maximize the use of data accumulated through digitalization, and the proactive use of new technology and services developed and provided by start-ups, etc. When compared against other countries, Japan has an overwhelming advantage in gathering and accumulating data related to the elderly and disasters. Japan maximizes the use of this data and aim to resolve social issues which is a vital component of our growth strategy. Consequently, by maximizing the digital potential, making efforts to resolve social challenges, and raising the digital competitiveness of Japan as a whole, the government has worked towards creating a sustainable society that continues to grow.

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#### (Efforts Toward the Advancement of a Digital Society)

In September 2021, the Japanese government established the Digital Agency. The mission of the Digital Agency is “Human-friendly digitalization: No one left behind” and it aims to serve as the command center for forming a digital society by building public and private infrastructure for the digital age. Based on the "Priority Plan for the Advancement of a Digital Society," efforts are being made to realize a digital society where all citizens can benefit from digitalization through the creation of citizen-focused services, effective use of data resources, and promotion of digital transformation (DX) across society. This includes utilizing new technologies, including AI and Web3. Notably, as of March 2025, approximately 78% of Japanese citizens possess a My Number card, which is used in various public and private services as a reliable means of identification both in-person and online, enhancing its safety, convenience, and efficiency. Simultaneously, the government is promoting the onlineization of administrative procedures, enabling various applications via smartphones. Specifically, regarding passports, user convenience has been significantly improved. In addition to online application for renewal introduced in March 2023, online applications for new passports had also

become available in all prefectures since late March 2025, with the commencement of linkage with family registry information.

Furthermore, toward the realization of the Digital Garden City Nation Concept, efforts continue to improve the usage environment and infrastructure by eliminating areas without fiber optics, expanding 5G population coverage, establishing communication environments suited to usage needs in non-residential areas, and promoting the development of non-terrestrial networks and data centers.

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### (Promotion of sustainable finance)

As the importance of social and environmental issues such as climate change, etc. increases, financial efforts to encourage the society to transit to new industrial and social structures and realize a sustainable society (sustainable finance) are progressing. Japan's balance of sustainable finance grew from approximately 56 trillion yen (approximately 500 billion US dollars<sup>5</sup>) in 2016 to approximately 626 trillion yen (approximately 4.12 trillion US dollars) in 2024. <sup>6</sup> In an effort to further promote sustainable finance and to improve the disclosure of sustainability information by companies, a new section to the securities reports was created in 2023 to include sustainability-related opinions and initiatives.

Furthermore, discussions are underway to consider the application of domestic standards that are functionally aligned with the sustainability disclosure requirements of the International Sustainability Standards Board (ISSB) for all or some of the companies listed on the Tokyo Stock Exchange Prime Market.

Furthermore, impact investments that intend to realize social or environmental impact while securing certain financial return are growing in Japan and were estimated to be about 11.5 trillion yen (about 77 billion US dollars) in FY2023. However, there is potential for further growth in the future. To promote impact investments, the Basic Guideline on Impact Investment (Impact Finance) was announced in March 2024 to outline the basic elements of impact investment. Additionally, in order to establish financing methods and markets to create such impact, the "Impact Consortium" was launched in November 2023 in which a wide range of public and private stakeholders participate and discuss case studies of regional initiatives and investment methodologies.

In terms of financial and economic education, materials related to sustainable finance is published by the Japan Financial Literacy and Education Corporation (J-FLEC), established in April 2024.

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### (Ethical consumption and consumer-oriented management)

In order to realize a sustainable society, it is essential for consumers to be aware of the influence they have on their own society and to practice consumption behavior that takes into consideration the

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<sup>5</sup> Calculated by the secretariat based on the FY2016 exchange rate of 1 US dollar to 113.01 yen

<sup>6</sup> Calculated by the secretariat based on the FY2024 exchange rate of 1 US dollar to 151.96 yen



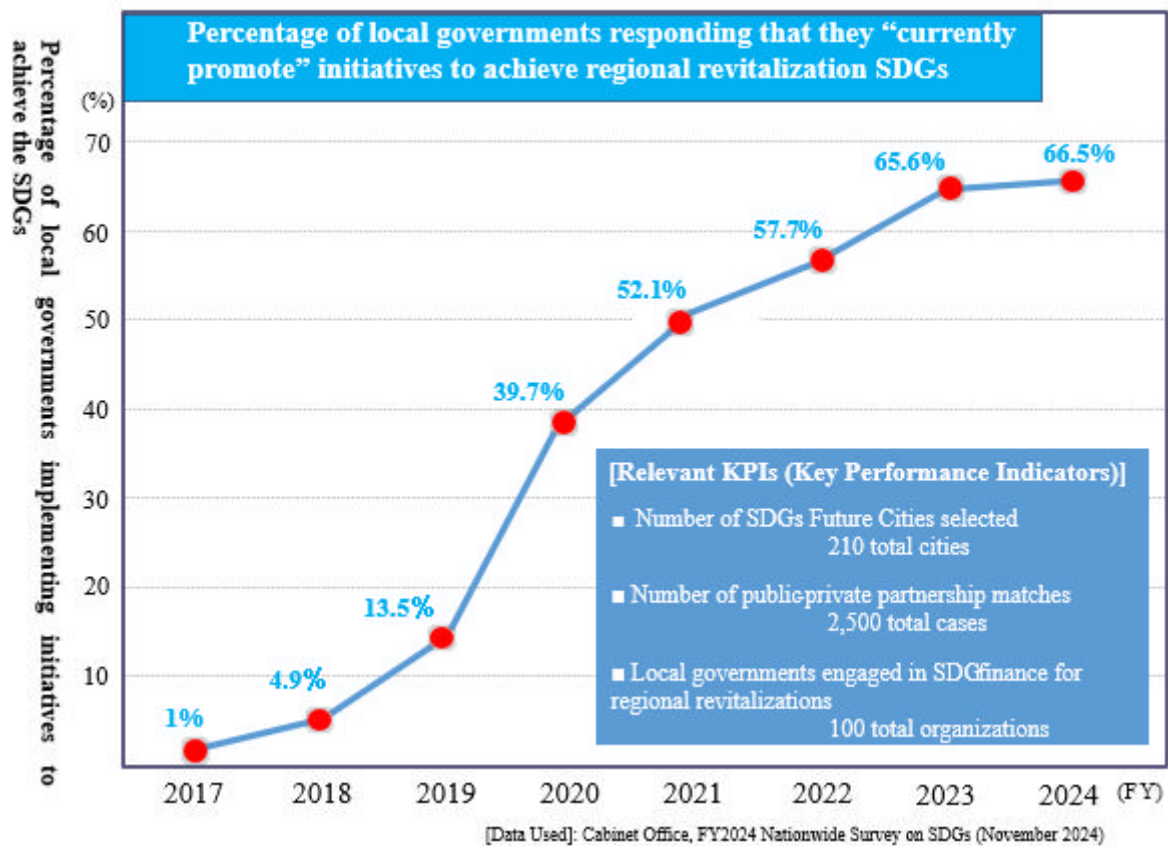
people, society, and the environment, including regional revitalization, employment. In other words, “ethical consumption”. Japan has been working on information dissemination using SNS and implementation of experiential workshops to raise awareness of ethical consumption. The Japanese government continue to share information via special websites that introduce leading examples about the huge potential each person has to “change the future of the world” through their consumption behavior.

In order to realize a sustainable society, consumers, businesses, and government must cooperate and collaborate. It is important to have a structure where businesses that are working to solve social issues are being appropriately understood, evaluated, and supported by consumers in the market economy, thereby allowing them to increasing corporate value. The Japanese government is promoting “consumer-oriented management” in which businesses increase social value through management practices that encourages changes in consumer behavior through improved products and services as a result of co-creation and collaboration with consumers. To raise social awareness of initiatives taken by businesses that are based on the idea of consumer-oriented management, the government promotes the voluntary declaration of “consumer orientation and follow up activities,” and has been giving awards to businesses that carry out exceptional efforts related to consumer-oriented management since FY2018.

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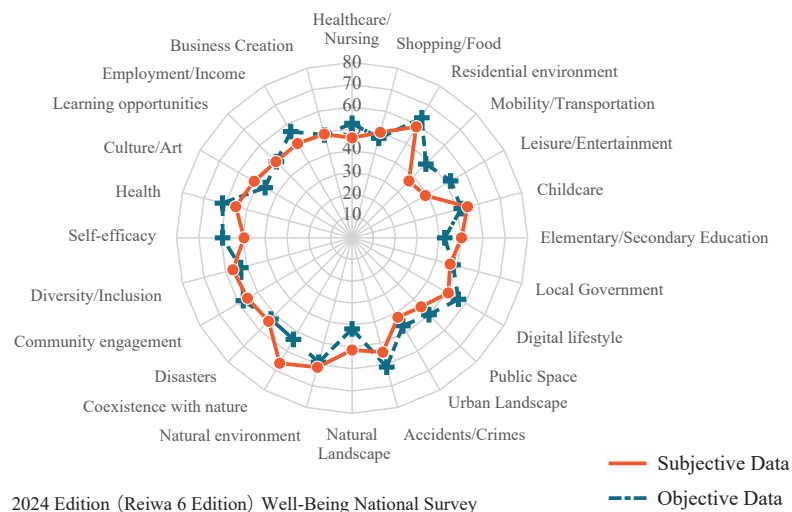
#### (Regional revitalization SDGs)

Since 2021, Japan has accelerated regional revitalization efforts to date by utilizing the power of digitalization, and has set up the Vision for a “Digital Garden City Nation” which aims to create a “society where everyone can live in convenience and comfort wherever they live in the country”. The comprehensive strategy (2023 revised edition) from this vision outlines the selection of the “SDGs Future Cities” that began in 2018 as an initiative to deepen the regional revitalization nationwide by supporting the efforts of the local governments themselves and sharing success cases. Seven selections have taken place as of FY2024 and a total of 206 cities have been selected as “SDGs Future Cities”. Despite only 1% of local governments implementing SDGs in 2017, a target was set to increase this to 60% by FY2024 and in FY2024, the target of 66.5% was achieved. On the other hand, in smaller local governments, the lack of experience and expertise has become apparent as challenges and barriers to promoting the SDGs. In light of this need, starting in fiscal year 2024, local governments that wish to utilize personnel with experience and knowledge in regional revitalization SDGs will be selected as “Regional Revitalization SDGs Challenge Solving Model Cities.” Measures to promote the dissemination of successful examples are being implemented. Going forward, by publicly sharing the plans and results of local governments that have implemented advanced and experimental solutions to urgent and serious regional issues, efforts will be made to promote regional revitalization and sustainable community development in line with the principles of the SDGs.



To enhance well-being in the community, a "Liveable Well-Being Index" has been introduced to quantify and visualize residents' "livability" and "sense of happiness (well-being)" for use in policy planning and implementation. This indicator is composed of subjective indicators based on surveys of residents and objective indicators using various open data. It is visualized in radar charts for each of the approximately 1,700 municipalities, with a dashboard published on the website. This enables a quick understanding of the characteristics and challenges of each municipality and facilitates the formulation of goals aimed at improving the overall well-being of the region. By establishing a common set of indicators, an environment is created where diverse stakeholders, including industry, government, academia, finance, labor, media, and residents, can collaborate and coordinate to sustainably enhance the well-being of the community.

## Categorized



【Source】 2024 Edition (Reiwa 6 Edition) Well-Being National Survey

Additionally, with the aim to promote domestic implementation of the SDGs and further prompt regional revitalization, the SDGs Public-Private Partnership Platform for Regional Development was established in 2018 as a collaborative place for public and private sectors to deepen the partnership between local public bodies and companies, NGOs, NPOs, universities, research institutes, etc. working to resolve regional issues and revitalize the regional economies. As of the end of August 2024, there were 7,732 member organizations, of which 1,176 organizations were local public bodies (67.5% of all local public bodies). The platform provides support to match members with others aiming to achieve SDGs and solve regional issues, and encourages subcommittees to create new value through public-private partnerships and cross-field collaborations on common issues. Our objectives for “public-private matches” were to reach a total of 1,000 matches over the five years from FY2020 to FY2024 and as of the end of January 2025, this has already reached 2,908 matches.

Furthermore, focused support has been provided to regional businesses that proactively work to resolve regional issues and the reinvestment of profits obtained by these regional businesses back into the region creates an “autonomous virtuous cycle”. This cycle is essential and as a first step in forming this “autonomous virtuous cycle”, the government compiled and announced the Regional Revitalization SDGs Registration and Certification System Guidelines for Local Governments in October 2020. Our target for the number of local governments adopting SDGs finance for regional revitalization was 100 organizations for the five years from FY2020 to FY2024, and as of the end of March 2025, there are 102 organizations.

The concept of a “circular and ecological economy” referred to a “self-reliant and decentralized society” where regional issues continued to be resolved by creating enterprises that utilized regional resources to improve the environment, economy, and society (local SDGs enterprises) and where networks were formed that enabled regions to support each other by leveraging their regional characteristics. This concept was further built upon in the Sixth Basic Environmental Plan which sought to practice and implement “new avenues for growth” that bring about well-being and a high quality of life. Through

the “Platform for the Creation of a Circular and Ecological Economy to Revitalize Local Communities from Environmental Aspect” project, the central government has supported a total of 86 regional communities through the creation of an environment that facilitates stakeholder organization, and provided entrepreneurs with the necessary assistance to develop project concepts.

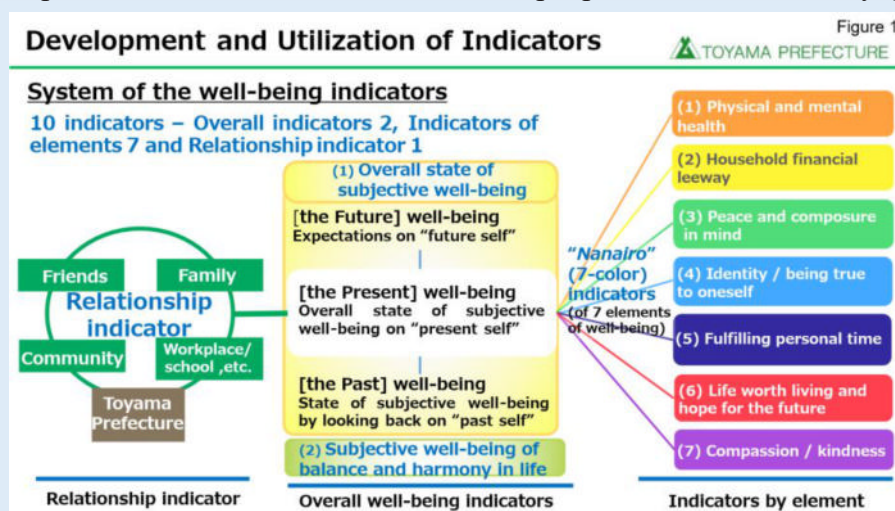
## Column 2: Efforts to Create Unique Regional Well-Being Indicators

### Cases from Toyama Prefecture

Toyama Prefecture, located in central region along the Sea of Japan, has a population of approximately 990,000 (as of March 2025) and has faced significant challenges due to population decline over the past 25 years. In a happiness survey conducted by a private organization for all 47 prefectures, Toyama ranked highly at third place nationwide based on objective data such as official statistics. However, it ranked low at 39th place based on subjective data from citizen surveys, highlighting a gap between the two evaluations.

Against this backdrop, Toyama Prefecture formulated the "Toyama's Growth Strategies" in February 2022, established with "well-being" as its core, under the awareness that "economic value represented by GDP (Gross domestic product) may not fully capture the 'happiness of the citizens.'" The strategy envisions "A happy greater community of 10 million people -Towards an Advanced Well-being Society in Toyama," aiming for a virtuous cycle where diverse talents gather in Toyama, feel well-being, foster active exchanges, create new industries and values, and further enhance the citizens' well-being alongside economic growth.

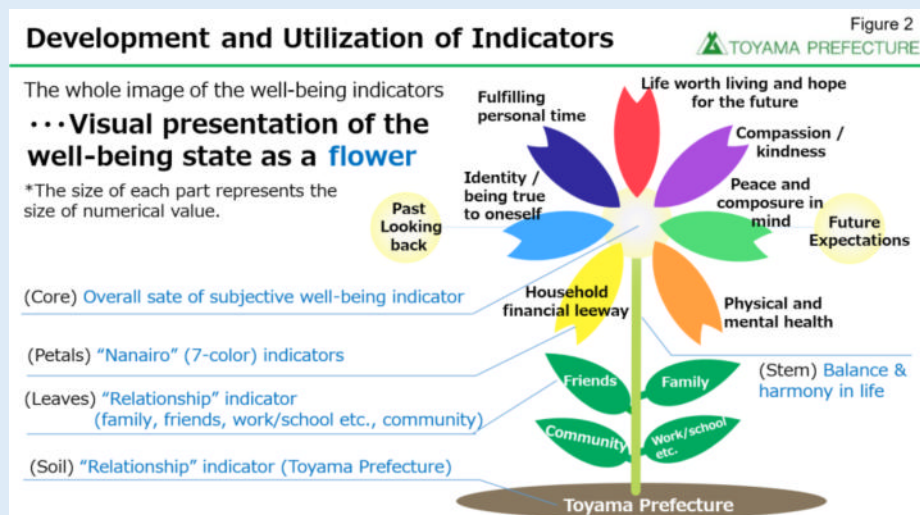
Toyama Prefecture's challenge began with the creation of well-being indicators. To understand the current state of citizens' well-being, the prefectural staff led the efforts to conduct citizen awareness surveys and analyze the results, developing a unique system of indicators. Considering the diversity in well-being that varies such as by age and gender, the indicators were organized into ten categories through correlation and factor analysis, focusing on subjective, multifaceted, and sustainable experiences, as well as connections with people and the community (Figure 1).



Moreover, to make citizens perceive it as relevant to themselves, the overall concept was visually expressed by likening it to flowers growing in the soil of Toyama Prefecture, and efforts were made in public relations and awareness-raising (Figure 2).

As a result of these efforts, the recognition of the term "well-being" among citizens improved from 15.6% in 2021 to 48.3% in 2024. The prefecture also launched a dedicated website on well-being and published a tool that allows individuals to check their well-being in five minutes. Additionally, initiatives such as participatory and experiential activities that inspire citizen awareness, consciousness, and action, as well as public relations and awareness activities through picture books, are being undertaken.

Furthermore, from 2024 onwards, Toyama Prefecture is sharing a "Citizen Awareness Survey Data Dashboard," organized according to this system of indicators, within the prefectural government and utilizing it in policy planning alongside other objective data. The future of Toyama Prefecture's initiative to incorporate subjective data into Evidence-Based Policy Making (EBPM) and aim to form policies that enhance well-being is anticipated. The future of initiatives in Toyama Prefecture looks promising.




### (Utilization of science, technology, and innovation, including AI)

Science, technology, and innovation are playing an increasingly important role, particularly in identifying and addressing both issues in Japan and overseas in order to achieve all the goals of the SDGs comprehensively and in an integrated manner, it is necessary to maximize the use of innovative technologies such as digital technology and AI.

In particular, the Japanese government has formulated an AI strategy that outlines comprehensive guidelines and policies for systematically planning and promoting AI-related initiatives, including





research and development, implementation, ethics, education, and human resource development. In the AI section of the “Integrated Innovation Strategy 2024,” the government has set forth an integrated strategy for technologies, measures to strengthen international collaboration from a global perspective, and policies aimed at enhancing competitiveness in the field of AI while ensuring safety and security. In addition, in July 2024, the “AI Institutional Study Group” was established under the “AI Strategic Council.” It examined the state of the AI governance with various stakeholders, including domestic and international businesses, experts, and local governments. Based on this discussion, an “Interim Report” was published in February 2025, outlining for AI policies such as strengthening government’s leadership functions and enhancing national efforts in research and information gathering. Taking into account this interim report, the government approved an AI bill<sup>7</sup> in the same month to promote the appropriate development and use of AI. The bill was subsequently submitted to the ordinary session of the National Diet and was passed in May.

As for international efforts, the “Hiroshima AI Process” was launched under Japan’s G7 Presidency in 2023, which has led to the development of “Guiding Principles” and “Codes of Conduct”. In addition, the Hiroshima AI Process Friends Group was launched in May 2024 as a voluntary framework of countries and a region that support the spirit of the “Hiroshima AI Process” and seek to strengthen collaboration with many countries including developing countries beyond the G7. In this way, Japan works towards promoting safe, secure and trustworthy AI. Furthermore, the government is working on developing and implementing international rules to promote “Data Free Flow with Trust (DFFT)” which was advocated by Japan at the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting in 2019. Beginning with the adoption of the United Nations Global Digital Compact (GDC), Japan is actively working to promote multilateral digital cooperation to resolve digital disparities including AI. Japan is also supporting human resource development and system construction in the digital field in developing countries, and will continue to collaborate with international organizations in order to support the improvement in AI environment and governance building in developing countries.

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<sup>7</sup> Act on Promotion of Research and Development, and Utilization of AI-related Technology



### Column 3: “Happy Economics” and a Sustainable Future (Written by Soichiro Chiba, a member of the SDGs Promotion Roundtable)

#### *Introduction*

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) represent a global framework designed to address the challenges facing the international community and to build a sustainable and inclusive future. I have been involved in fostering innovation and its social implementation, both domestically and internationally, as well as in creating an environment for young people and active generations in Japan to participate in international policy discussions through the management of Y7/Y20, the official engagement group for under 40s in the G7 and G20. Based on these experiences, in this column, I will examine Japan's leadership and the role of young people in achieving the SDGs, and the importance of innovation. I will also explore the challenges and possibilities that Japan should address in pursuit of a sustainable future.

#### 1. The vision of “Happy Economics” to realize a sustainable society

Y7/Y20 Japan advocates three core pillars for building a sustainable society and economy, based on the belief that these interconnected elements must work together to achieve lasting impact.

##### (i) Health: Well-being of mind, body, and planet

In striving for a sustainable society, it is essential to achieve both physical and mental health and the preservation of the global environment. To that end, the following initiatives are crucial:

- Promoting individual well-being through the use of digital technology, while also embracing a perspective that is attuned to each person's emotions and inner thoughts.
- Promoting the development of preventative medicine, health-related industries, and health management.
- Realizing the sustainability of the global environment.

##### (ii) Growth: Growth of businesses and individuals

Fostering creativity and entrepreneurship forms the driving force for economic growth. The following are particularly important:

- Introducing and disseminating education that fosters creativity and leadership.
- Building an ecosystem that creates disruptive business models.

- Building a social system that embraces failure, encourages repeated attempts, and fosters a collaborative environment where people can learn from one another without holding each other back.

### (iii) Connection: Bonds of hearts

Research has shown that human "bonds" based on trust and empathy are more important than economic factors as a determinant of individual happiness. To create a society where diverse individuals feel connected from the local to the global level, the following elements are essential:

- Fostering a culture that promotes mutual understanding and exchange across generations and backgrounds.
- Strengthening local roots and promoting education that fosters understanding of one's own country and an international perspective.
- Establishing systems that respect gender and diversity, enabling everyone to thrive.

These pillars concretely indicate the role Japan should play in achieving the SDGs, and we believe they serve as important guidelines for countries around the world seeking to achieve economic growth while addressing social challenges.

## 2. Japan's leadership toward a sustainable society

What initiatives are needed to build such a society in Japan—and scale it globally? While countries differ in their approaches to environmental issues, Japan is steadily advancing its position in the international community by committing to carbon neutrality by 2050. Research suggests ironically that this progress stems not only from environmental policy, but also from Japan's ability to turn structural challenges—such as population decline and economic stagnation—into strengths. A shrinking and aging population, typically viewed as a drag on economic growth, can also reduce environmental impact and thus contribute to long-term sustainability. We may be entering an era in which the very values of what is considered “good” and “bad” are undergoing fundamental change.

Given this context, Japan is expected to demonstrate a social model that integrates social, environmental, and economic values and to take a leadership role in the international community, as many countries will face similar challenges to Japan. Not only in the field of green transformation (GX), but also in the context of the rapid development of AI that is dramatically changing the social structure, Japan, which has diverse and advanced social challenges, has the opportunity to show the world a path to a sustainable society and become a role model for the world. Crucially, this requires not simply adopting frameworks established by the West, but

articulating and sharing a distinct Japanese vision—both at home and on the global stage—of what a future society can and should look like.

To achieve this, it is essential to clearly understand the country's strengths and weaknesses, and to develop strategies that actively incorporate the perspectives of students and young people in their 20s, working generations in their 30s to 50s, and the wisdom and rich experience of those over 60 who helped shape the present era.

### 3. The path to the future: Commercializing innovation as a key driver


For Japan to demonstrate true international leadership in achieving the SDGs, it must go beyond policy and place a strong emphasis on commercializing innovation. While innovation is clearly essential to solving unresolved social challenges, it holds little value if it remains confined to research and development (R&D) or patent counts alone. What truly matters is the ability to generate new economic value by transforming existing business structures through disruptive innovation. In fact, Japan ranks among the world's leaders in R&D—5th in R&D investment, 3rd in patent acquisition, and 1st in intellectual property income<sup>8</sup>. However, turning these achievements into tangible commercial success remains a challenge. For instance, Japan ranks 83rd in ICT service exports, 43rd in unicorn company valuations, and 111th in labor productivity growth—figures that suggest Japan is not fully harnessing its potential for economic growth<sup>9</sup>. Moreover, much of Japan's R&D is still concentrated on incremental improvements in established fields. Looking ahead, a fundamental shift is needed: one that focuses on strategic, market-oriented innovation and begins from the pressing global challenges we face.

Through my involvement with Y7/Y20, I've had numerous conversations with young people. While many express support for the SDGs, one common reason they struggle to see these goals as personally relevant is that they aren't directly tied to economic value. This is especially true in Japan, where a significant portion of the population faces financial hardship—making abstract or vague efforts to address social issues difficult to connect with, regardless of age. To truly advance the SDGs, it is essential to promote innovation that fuels economic growth and ensure it leads to tangible commercialization.

In this process, it is necessary to promote the commercialization of innovative venture companies and innovation within companies, and the power of young people is indispensable. Historically, many disruptive innovations have been born from young entrepreneurs in their 20s and 30s, or at the latest, in their 40s. It is therefore crucial to provide younger generations with the right

<sup>8</sup> Reference: derived from data presented in the World Intellectual Property Organization's "Global Innovation Index 2023."

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.



environment and culture, access to high-quality education, and sufficient resources to enable them to become the driving force of innovation.

However, this does not mean that innovation should be limited to young people. In countries where innovation is thriving, individuals across a wide range of generations—not just those in their 20s and 30s—are actively engaged in entrepreneurship and advancing technological innovation. In many places, it is socially accepted—even encouraged—for senior citizens to start businesses as a second career after retirement. By reshaping Japan’s social structure to support this kind of multigenerational participation, the country can foster an environment where people of all ages can contribute to innovation. This, in turn, could significantly enhance Japan’s overall innovation capacity and global competitiveness.

#### 4. Moving beyond self-reliance bias and the importance of international collaboration

One of the key lessons from Japan’s past economic successes is the importance of “breaking free from an excessive reliance” on internal development. For instance, Japan’s automobile industry thrived globally by refining and commercializing core technologies originally developed in the West. Similarly, today, Japan can once again achieve sustainable growth by cultivating an ecosystem that swiftly commercializes innovation—leveraging insights, technologies, and business models from around the world.

In recent years, however, a tendency toward an excessive reliance on internal development in some sectors has, at times, hindered innovation in Japan. This is particularly evident in fields such as AI, green transformation (GX), and other emerging technologies, where accelerating innovation through international collaboration and the adoption of global technologies is essential. Such an approach would not only enable Japan to more effectively address SDG-related challenges both domestically and internationally, but also enhance its economic competitiveness. Furthermore, such efforts could help Japan move away from a technology-driven or reactive approach to new business development. Instead, by adopting a globally informed perspective to identify priority areas, Japan can send a clear message to young people: *“This is where your ideas can make the greatest impact.”* Such strategic direction could serve as a powerful guidepost for the younger generation as they forge the future.

#### 5. Conclusion

For Japan to achieve a sustainable society and assume a leadership role in the global pursuit of the SDGs, it is imperative to develop a social model that harmonizes environmental, economic, and social values. This model must then be effectively communicated to the international community. To accomplish this, Japan must undertake an accurate analysis of its challenges and potential, leading to the construction of a novel effective social model grounded in a shared vision of a sustainable future. Crucially, this effort must embrace a truly intergenerational perspective—

actively incorporating the voices of students and young people in their 20s, the working generations in their 30s to 50s, and the accumulated wisdom of those over 60 who have shaped the foundation of modern Japan. Additionally, empowering active generations as innovation drivers requires fostering an environment that encourages challenges, providing high-quality education, and ensuring adequate resources.

History bears witness to the countless transformative business models that have originated from young entrepreneurs, highlighting the critical need to create a system that supports their potential across all levels of society. Furthermore, by moving beyond a bias toward self-reliance and proactively integrating the world's most advanced technologies and knowledge, Japan can enhance its global competitiveness and offer clear direction to the active generations—highlighting where the greatest opportunities for impact and innovation lie.

Through these efforts, innovation will thrive, paving the way for a society in which all generations can enjoy healthy lives, pursue meaningful growth, and build deep, lasting connections. This is the vision of “Happy Economics” brought to life—a model of sustainable prosperity that positions Japan as a global beacon and a role model for others to follow.





## Priority Area (ii)

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Realization of an inclusive society where no one is left behind





## Priority Area (ii): Realization of an inclusive society where no one is left behind

The phrase “Leave No One Behind” is a fundamental principle that underlies the 2030 Agenda. It requires solidarity that transcends the differences in systems and values of each country. By returning to the origin of the SDGs of Leave No One Behind, Japan has set forth the concept of human dignity as a central principle that supports the solidarity of the international community. In this way, Japan is working to realize an inclusive society where no one is left behind.

In a sustainable economy and society, each and every person must be able to experience abundance and well-being (a state of physical, mental, and social happiness). As Japan's declining birthrate and aging population progresses rapidly, there is a need to build an economy and society where everyone can actively participate regardless of age, where multiple generations can live together in peace, and where is suitable to respond to the mental and physical changes associated with aging among the elderly. In Japan, the healthy life expectancy continues to get extended due to the universal health insurance system, medical system, and the efforts of the local governments, corporations, and private organizations, etc. (refer below to “5. Status of Achievement of Each Goal”, Goal 3). Some local governments are working with companies, etc., on advanced initiatives that utilize data and cutting-edge scientific knowledge (refer to Column 5: Expanding initiatives for mutual assistance Initiatives).

With the Minister in charge of Measures for Loneliness and Isolation, established in 2021, acting as the control tower, the government has been promoting measures to address loneliness and isolation. In April 2024, the Act on the Advancement of Measures to Address Loneliness and Isolation was enforced, and in June of the same year, the " Priority Plan to Facilitate the Promotion of the Policies Regarding Measures to Address Loneliness and Isolation" was formulated based on this Act. These initiatives focus on supporting local governments and NPOs, as well as strengthening the prevention of loneliness and isolation.

Additionally, regarding the improvement of individual and community well-being within local communities, "social education" plays a crucial role in fostering empathetic and cooperative relationships that form the foundation of community ties. It does so by creating "connections" and "engagement" among people through "learning." For example, social education facilities such as community centers across the country host various courses tailored to local needs, including those related to the dissemination and awareness of the SDGs, serving as learning hubs for local residents.

Furthermore, to build a sustainable economy and society, it is essential that children and young people who will bear the responsibility for the future are actively involved. In April 2023, the Children and Families Agency was established to centrally promote policies related to children and to realize a "Children-Centered Society". Efforts are also underway to hear those views of children and young people with regards to individual policies and to reflect these views in policies.

Respect for human rights and the mainstreaming of gender perspectives, which are fundamental principles of the SDGs, are essential as cross-cutting values for achieving all of the SDG goals. Due to efforts to promote women's empowerment and gender equality, women's employment rate has increased. On the other hand, Japan's ranking in the World Economic Forum's annual Gender Gap

Index<sup>10</sup> is 118th out of 146 countries in 2024, indicating that challenges remain to be addressed. Regarding measures against sexual crimes and violence, various initiatives are being advanced through the collaboration of the government, parliament, and civil society (see "5. Progress Toward Each Goal," Goal 5, for more information). Furthermore, the action plan concerning "Business and Human Rights" is being steadily implemented, and efforts to achieve the SDGs will continue, taking into account its future revisions.

Amidst the spread of COVID-19 across the world, the Tokyo Olympics and Paralympic Games (Tokyo 2020 Games) were held in 2021 with the goal of advancing the SDGs through the power of sports. The Barrier Free Law was revised in the wake of the Tokyo 2020 Games and the removal of obstacles was further implemented in many public spaces. Private organizations are developing barrier-free maps utilizing ICT and from the perspective that everyone, including people with disabilities, are users.

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#### (Achieving health and longevity)

As a result of Japan's medical system which for more than 50 years has provided the universal health insurances system, as well as exceptional pharmaceuticals, medical devices, and medical technology and services, Japan has realized and become the world's healthiest and longest-living society. Japan's healthy life expectancy is 72.57 years for men and 75.45 years for women (in 2022), and when compared to 2010 (70.42 years for men, 73.62 years for women), men are living 2.15 more years and women are extending their life by 1.83 years. This exceeds life expectancy increase during the same period (1.50 years (79.55 to 81.05 years) for men and 0.79 years (86.30 to 87.09 years) for women).

As part of a new national health promotion campaign that enables citizens to proactively take action, the Japanese Government is promoting the "21st Century Measures for National Health Promotion (Health Japan 21)". The final evaluation report for "Health Japan 21 (second term)" was compiled in its tenth year since beginning in FY2013. In addition to extending, one's healthy life expectancy as mentioned above, targets were achieved in areas such as the reduction in mortality rates for cancer, cerebrovascular disease, and ischemic heart disease, and controlling the increase in the proportion undernourished elderly. On the other hand, there are some indicators that worsened including the decrease in the number of definite and at-risk people with metabolic syndrome, the decrease in the percentage of individuals who do not take rest through sufficient sleep, and the decrease in percentage of individuals who consume alcohol over the recommended limits thereby increasing the risk of lifestyle diseases.

With regards to "Health Japan 21 (third term)" which was newly launched in FY2024, the Japanese government is working towards "realizing a sustainable society in which all citizens can lead healthy and fulfilling lives". The basic direction is to i) increase healthy life expectancy and reduce health

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<sup>10</sup> The Global Gender Gap Index in the Global Gender Gap Report 2024 announced by the World Economic Forum

disparities; ii) improve individual behavior and health status; iii) improve the quality of the social environment; iv) promote health based on a life course approach.

Also, in recent years, it has become an international trend to collectively capture cancer, cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD), etc. under the concept of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) and tackle them as comprehensive social policies. The onset and severity of NCDs are not only dependent on individual awareness and actions, but also on the social environment surrounding the individual. Consequently, it is necessary to comprehensively address health measures as social policy from a wide range of perspectives such as environmental factors and economic factors in regions, workplaces, etc.

It is also important to promote health management in which companies strategically maintain and promote the health of employees. In order to create an environment where companies are recognized for managing health, the government is implementing a health management award system (KENKO Investment for Health Stock and KENKO Investment for Health Outstanding Organization.)

In addition, it is also important to support mental and physical health throughout one's life by practicing eating habits that take nutritional balance into consideration. Japan promotes food and nutrition education based on the Basic Act on Shokuiku (Food and Nutrition Education) and the Fourth Basic Plan for the Promotion of Shokuiku decided by the Council for the Promotion of Shokuiku on March 31, 2021. The Fourth Basic Plan for the Promotion of Shokuiku considers the promotion of food and nutrition education which supports the mental and physical health throughout one's life to be one of its priorities. In order to realize healthy eating habits among citizens and to realize a sustainable society that takes into account the environment and food culture, the Japanese government will focus on promoting initiatives such as popularizing the Japanese-style dietary habits with its excellent nutritional balance, and providing food and nutrition education to adults to switch their daily consumption behavior to one that is healthier. At the same time, a national movement involving various constituents such as schools, companies, food producers, etc. will be developed to promote food and nutrition education.

Lastly, mental health is also important. In “Health Japan 21 (third term)”, the government acknowledges that improving the quality of the social environment, such as connections with society and the maintenance and improvement of mental health, is foundational for the efforts for the health of each and every citizen.

## Column 4: Declining birthrate and aging society

(Situation surrounding declining birthrate and aging society)

The population aged 65 and over in Japan is 36.24 million compared to the total population of 123.80 million or 29.3% (as of October 2024). This is estimated to grow to around 35% in 2040. Furthermore, the baby boomer generation will be 75 years old in 2025, making the population aged 75 and over to about 18% of the total population. In other words, approximately 1 in 4 citizen will be 75 years old or older, thereby creating a “super-aging society”. Various issues associated with such changes in the population structure are becoming apparent and as an advanced country, Japan is currently considering its responses.

(Measures against an aging society)

Japan has promoted measures to respond to an aging society in accordance with the three basic ideas identified in the “Guideline of Measures for an Ageing Society” (decided by the Cabinet on February 16, 2018). These are i) review standardization by age and aim at creating an age-free society in which people of all ages can leverage their motivation and abilities based on what they desire; ii) develop a community life base and create a local community where people can imagine their elderly life regardless of their stage in life; iii) aim for new measures for an ageing society by using the innovation of technological achievements. Also, in 2024, a new “Guideline of Measures for an Ageing Society” was formulated (decided by the Cabinet on September, 2024) in which various policies are being promoted in line with the three following basic ideas: i) build an economy and society where people can continue to play an active role according to their wishes regardless of age; ii) respond appropriately to changes in the environment such as the increase of elderly people living alone and build a society where multiple generations can live with peace of mind; iii) develop detailed policy and build a social system that responds to changes in physical and cognitive functions associated with aging.

To create an environment where people are able to work as they wish regardless of age, particularly for the employment of elderly people, the government has stipulated in the “Act on Stabilization of Employment of Elderly Persons” that their employment should be secured until the age of 65. Additionally, Japan has promoted initiatives such as improving skills and re-skilling aimed at realizing a society where the elderly who desire to work, can continue to work for all their life, regardless of age.

(Urban development for an aging society)

To realize a society where multiple generations can live with peace of mind, it is necessary to create an environment where everyone can move freely. To that end, Japan is accelerating efforts to secure means of transportation for local residents, starting with the elderly, and to restructure regional public transportation. Efforts will be made to further improve the accessibility of public transportation, buildings, etc. The government will also enhance mobility support services in



regional communities as well as promote the development and spread of autonomous driving technology and driver assistance systems.

As the number of elderly people living alone is expected to increase in the future, it is necessary to ensure people are able to live safely and securely in the regional communities even in their old age. Furthermore, it is important to enhance regional safety net functions by creating an environment where local community development can be carried out with the participation of a wide range of generations so as to build a society in local communities where people live together and support each other across all ages.

(New measures through technological innovation)

To maintain and improve the quality of life and reduce the burden on caregivers through independence support, etc. to the elderly, the government will promote cooperation between private companies and research institutes on medical devices, technology for long-term care. In addition, in long-term care field, Japan provides comprehensive tech support from R&D to market launch through CARISO (CARE Innovation Support Office). The government will make advancements in research to understand the pathology and the pathogenic mechanisms of illnesses to which people are prone in our elderly years, and also accelerate drug discovery. By utilizing cutting-edge science and technology such as genomics, the Japanese government will advance the research and development, and clinical application of new medical technology while also aiming to establish effective healthcare technology.

(Building a social security system for all generations)

In addition to the above, the Japanese government has built a Universal Health Coverage (UHC) where all people can enjoy basic health care services when necessary, at an affordable cost. Through the national health insurance system, Japan has achieved the world's highest levels of life expectancy at birth and healthcare standards. Going forward, the Japanese government aims to build a “Social Security System Oriented to All Generations” in which all generations support each other according to their abilities so as to build a sustainable social security system.

(Countermeasures against a low fertility)

The Japanese government also formulated the “Children's Future Strategy” in December 2023 to reverse the declining birthrate trend. This strategy aimed to create a society where young people can get married as desired, have children, and raise children with peace of mind, and identified three principles: increase the income of young people, change the structure and awareness of society as a whole, and support all children and child-rearing households without interruption. To achieve this, the “Acceleration Plan” radically enhanced support for children and childrearing on an unprecedented scale by expanding the child allowance, establishing the “Connecting All Children to ECEC System”, and promoting flexible work styles, etc., and Japan has seen solid implementation of the plan.

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(Creating an inclusive society of coexistence and mutual assistance)

The government has come together as one to promote measures against loneliness and isolation with the Minister for Loneliness and Isolation at the helm since 2021. The Act on the Advancement of Measures to Address Loneliness and Isolation came into effect in April 2024, and based on this law, the “Priority Plan to Facilitate the Promotion of the Policies Regarding Measures to Address Loneliness and Isolation” was formulated in June of the same year. Based on these, Japan is working on providing support to local governments and NPOs, etc., and strengthening the prevention of loneliness and isolation.

Furthermore, in addition to building a monitoring network for the elderly and people with disabilities, and expanding consultation support and support for people in need in cooperation with NPOs and local governments, the government is also working to strengthen local communities and promote the creation of “ibasho (place where one feels comfortable, safe and accepted)” for children.

The Japanese government has formulated the “Basic Programme for Persons with Disabilities”. To realize a society of coexistence, it supports the participation of people with disabilities in all social activities based on their own decisions so that they are able to exercise their capacity to the fullest extent to achieve self-actualization while also promoting measures to remove social barriers that restrict people with disabilities to participate in society. Furthermore, as hosts of the Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games, Japan used this opportunity to plan for an inclusive society by revising the Barrier Free Law and improving the accessibility at many places including public transportation, public facilities, commercial buildings, etc. Additionally, in thinking about a society and environment where all people can participate equally, the government aims to increase awareness of and take necessary action for a “barrier-free mindsets”. In 2024, the provision of reasonable accommodation by private businesses was mandated, and an "Action Plan Toward a Society of Coexistence Without Prejudice or Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities" was formulated with the involvement of persons with disabilities. This initiative aims to strengthen efforts related to "barrier-free mindsets" across society. Efforts are also being made to make more places barrier-free in preparation for the Osaka, Kansai Expo being held in 2025.

Also, in the 2024 revised “Basic Act on Food, Agriculture and Rural Areas”, “food security” was defined as including each citizen's ability to procure food, and with food security being a basic principle, the Japanese government has decided to take necessary measures “to ensure the smooth procurement of food”. Based on this law, specific measures were included in the "Basic Plan for Food, Agriculture, and Rural Areas," which was formulated in April 2025. There has been an increase in people who are unable to keep healthy eating habits due to the inability to obtain sufficient food for financial reasons, and people for whom purchasing food or eating and drinking is inconvenient or difficult due to the aging population, closure of local retail businesses, and a decline in existing shopping districts, etc. (also known as the shopping disadvantaged). Given this situation, Japan supports the creation of a system where local stakeholders such as local governments, food businesses,

logistics operators, food banks, and children's cafeterias, etc. cooperate to provide various foods to such people. Japan is also promoting initiatives for food banks, children's cafeterias, etc. to provide food that is sufficient in terms of quality and quantity, and support for last-mile deliveries, etc.

The “Local Council for Ensuring the Safety of Consumers” are available in over 540 local municipalities around the country (as of the end of March 2025) to watch over consumers requiring support such as elderly people with dementia and people with disabilities, etc. These councils work in collaboration with the regional consumer affairs centers and welfare departments to advance regional monitoring activities aimed at preventing consumer damage and damage relief.

Based on the "Act on the Utilization of Funds from Dormant Deposits to Promote Privately-Run Public Interest Activities," which was enacted in December 2016, the initiative to utilize dormant deposits began in 2019. As of the end of March 2025, the total amount planned for grants and investments (cumulative) is approximately 36.2 billion yen, with about 1,350 projects (cumulative). This initiative targets the resolution of social issues that are difficult to address through public systems, with around 70% of the projects supporting socially vulnerable groups and promoting social inclusion, such as support for children, youth, and people facing hardship.

## Column 5: Expanding initiatives for mutual assistance

[Case 1] Toyota City’s “Zutto Genki! (keep staying healthy and energetic) Project” ~ Public-Private Partnership for Preventive Care ~

Located in central Japan, Toyota City in Aichi Prefecture has a population of approximately 420,000 people, and according to 2020 data, the rate of aging has reached 23.1%, indicating a progressing aging population year by year. The “Zutto Genki! Project” began in July 2021 with a project period of five years or until June 2026 and provides various preventive care programs including sports, hobbies, and communication. Through such programs, this project aims to reduce future long-term care costs.

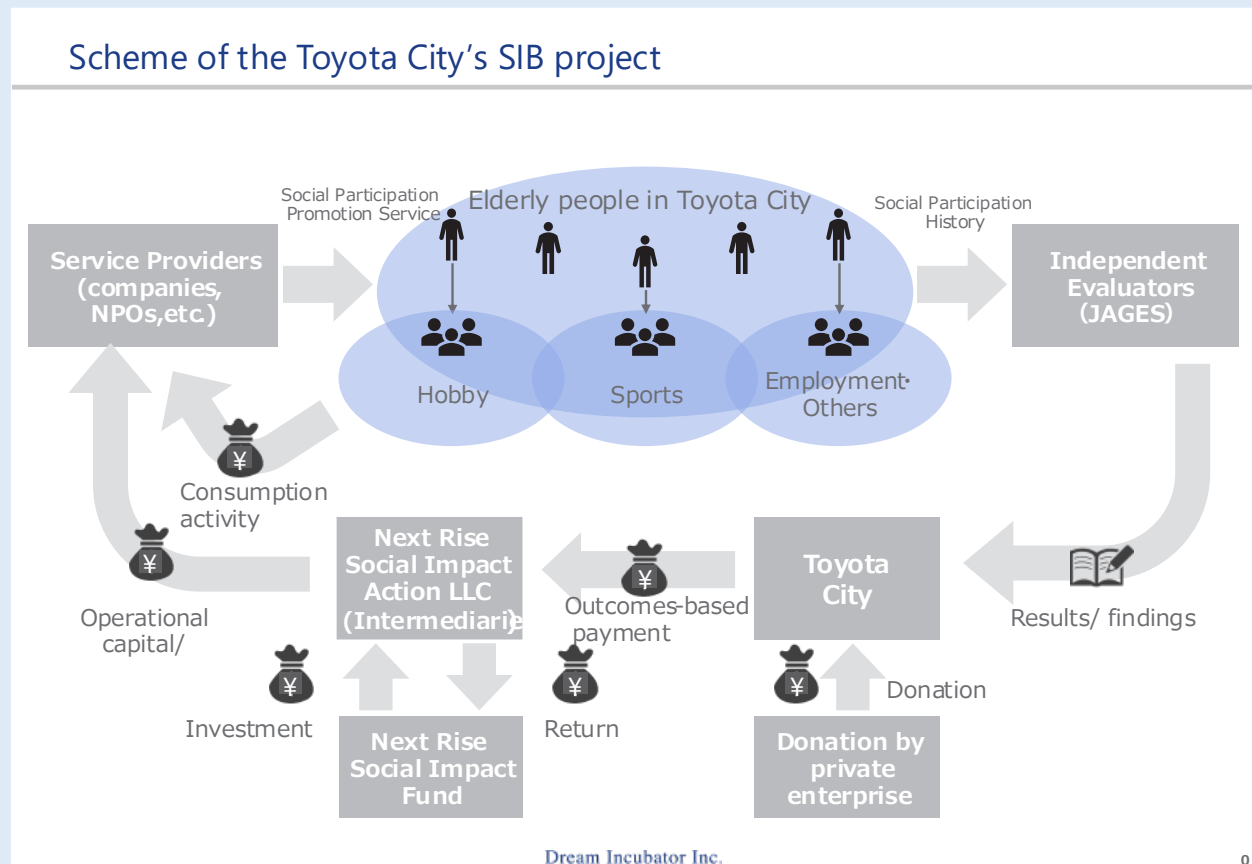
The project came about as a result of concerns for increasing long-term care risks associated with the rapidly progressing aging population. To further exacerbate these concerns were the restrictions on going out that were placed on the elderly during the COVID-19 pandemic, increasing the possibility for an even greater risk. Based on this situation, a project was started, aimed at reducing long-term care risk by increasing the “opportunities for social participation and the amount of social activity” for the elderly through hobbies, exercise, and employment, etc. This project sought to provide people with various human connections as well as a “purpose in life” and “enjoyment” so as to realize a lifestyle where one could feel greater “happiness”.

This project utilizes a mechanism called a social impact bond (SIB), which leverages the knowledge and funds of private companies to solve social issues in return for performance-based compensation. Over a five-year period, Dream Incubator Inc. has invested 500 million yen and in

cooperation with Toyota City, and has worked with various businesses to manage the project as a whole. A characteristic of this project is the evaluation and management based on specific numerical targets (reduce long-term care costs by one billion yen over five years). A third party evaluation conducted by the Japan Gerontological Evaluation Study (JAGES) showed that the actual impact as of the second year was estimated at approximately 370 million yen, and the target of one billion yen in reduction was expected to be ultimately achieved.

Many local businesses are participating in this effort. The local NPO, “Workers' Smile Creation Research Institute”, is responsible for building a network of local companies and participate in the project in conjunction with the Next Rise Social Impact Action Organization, a subsidiary of Dream Incubator Inc. The emphasis is on being able to continuously support the elderly rather than ending with a one-off event.

In this way, efforts are being made towards preventive long-term care in Toyota City with the cooperation between the government, and private businesses and NPOs.



## [Case 2] Consumer Cooperative Initiatives to Build Local Communities

A consumer cooperative is one type of cooperative that is established based on the “Consumers' Livelihood Co-operative Society Law” and is an organization where members who are users, contribute to the capital of the cooperative, make decisions, and operates it. Its characteristics are that “everyone contributes to its capital, everyone operates it, and everyone uses it”. In FY2023,

there were 30.63 million consumer cooperative members and the total business turnover of consumer cooperatives was 3,737.9 billion yen (approximately 27.3 billion US dollars).<sup>11</sup> In terms of business types, they are engaged in businesses that support daily life, such as supplying consumer goods via home delivery and at retail stores, and providing insurance, and medical and welfare services.

Consumer cooperatives provide “community watch-over activities” by utilizing the home delivery business infrastructure and have signed agreements on such activities with 1,300 municipalities. This is equivalent to 74.7% of all 1,741 municipalities (as of January 2025). Specifically, if the delivery item is left untouched, or no one answers the intercom, or the electricity is left on, the delivery staff will notice these abnormalities and will contact the pre-registered emergency contact number and, if necessary, contact the hospital or police. There have been cases where no one is home due to travel or hospitalization, but there have been emergency situations where a person had collapsed at home. In addition, consumer cooperatives also conduct activities to support the lives of local residents, signing comprehensive cooperation agreements with prefectural governments. As an example, in Fudai village in Iwate prefecture, a dinner delivery service was launched to provide nutritionally balanced meals to people who were unable to cook due to the progressive aging. Through the delivery of meals, the delivery staff are able to watch over these people, thereby contributing to the safe and secure living of elderly households.

Consumer cooperatives also collaborate with organizations that carry out initiatives to resolve local issues. From April 2021, with the approval of the prefectures, consumer cooperatives are able to supply goods to organizations that work to resolve local issues such as difficulties in shopping and provide support to people living in need. Additionally, a free car service to the store is provided for the elderly who have difficulties going shopping. Based on a pre-determined day and time, this share-ride system operates every week. This initiative enables people to maintain a normal lifestyle of “going to the store and choosing goods on their own”. To date, a total of 151,206 people (FY2023) have used this service.

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<sup>11</sup> Calculated based on a rate of 1 US dollar to 137 yen

As organizations working for the sustainable development of their communities, consumer cooperatives are actively working to realize local communities where people can continue to live with peace of mind. Moreover, the participation of cooperative members in the initiatives of their cooperatives cultivates their independence and provides them with various values such as the joy of growth and a sense of their lives being enriched. These activities can be considered as good practices towards the achievement of the SDGs.



CO-OP servicing pickup and drop-off on shopping  
(Photo: the consumer cooperative in Kagawa)

### [Case 3] Achieving an Inclusive Society Where “No One is Left Behind” Through the Dormant Deposits Utilization System

Dormant deposits refer to accounts that have had no transactions, such as deposits or withdrawals, for over 10 years, generating around 130 to 160 billion yen annually. Following the enactment of the "Act on the Utilization of Funds from Dormant Deposits to Promote Privately-Run Public Interest Activities" in December 2016 and its enforcement in January 2018, the Japan Network for Public Interest Activities (JANPIA), a general incorporated foundation, was appointed in January 2019 as the "designated utilization organization" under this law. As stated in its vision, "Become a catalyst to create a sustainable society, leaving no one behind," JANPIA aims to be a catalyst that supports those who continue to challenge social issues with innovative methods, ensuring that a sustainable society is passed on to future generations without leaving anyone behind, in line with the principles of the SDGs.

Dormant deposits provided to JANPIA by the Deposit Insurance Corporation are utilized for activities conducted by private organizations in the following three areas:

- Activities related to the support of children and youth
- Activities related to the support of individuals facing difficulties in daily or social life
- Activities related to the support of regions facing social challenges such as declining vitality in local communities.



As of the end of March 2025, the cumulative total amount planned for grants and investments is approximately 36.2 billion yen, with about 1,350 projects (cumulative). The dormant deposits utilization initiative comprehensively addresses the 17 SDG goals, with approximately 70% of the projects focused on promoting respect for human rights and social inclusion, which are emphasized by the SDGs. In particular, the projects often relate to Goal 1 "End poverty in all its forms everywhere," Goal 3 "Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages," Goal 4 "Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all," Goal 5 "Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls," Goal 8 "Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all," Goal 11 "Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable," and Goal 17 "Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development."

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(Radical reinforcement of children's policies and the promotion of education)

Against the backdrop of the difficult environment that surround children,<sup>12</sup> the Children and Families Agency was established in April 2023. By always considering the perspective of the child and prioritizing the child's best interests, the agency's objective is to realize a "children-centered society" that puts initiatives and policies related to children in the center of Japan's society. At the same time, the Basic Act on Children's Policy came into effect as a comprehensive law to broadly and strongly promote children's policies throughout society. In December of the same year, based on the Basic Act on Children's Policy, the "General Principles for Child-Related Measures" which stipulated basic policies concerning child-related measures was decided by the Cabinet to drastically enhance child-related policies. These principles aimed to realize a society where all children and young people can live their life in a state of happiness physically, mentally, and socially. Efforts are also underway to hear those views of children and young people with regards to individual policies and to reflect these views in policies.

Furthermore, Japan has made efforts to provide substantial financial support such as free preschool education and childcare (implemented since October 2019), initiatives to improve the quality of education for children in early childhood and the transition period to the elementary school education stage, and the new financial support system for higher education (launched April 2020 and provides reduction on tuition fees, etc. and scholarship grants). To further enhance education for students with disabilities, Japan is also working to promote special needs education in schools and to improve education and learning environments that promote lifelong learning for people with disabilities after graduation from school. In addition, to maximize the potential of all children, the "GIGA School

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<sup>12</sup> The term "child" is defined as defined in Article 2 of the Basic Act on Children's Policy.



Program" is being promoted to enhance both personalized and self-regulated learning and collaborative learning in an integrated manner, along with the promotion of digital textbooks for learners.

Furthermore, in the Fourth Basic Plan for the Promotion of Education, "promotion of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)" is included as one of the fundamental policies. Additionally, the current national curriculum National Curriculum Standards incorporate the objectives of ESD which is to be the builders of a sustainable society. ESD is said to contribute to the realization of all SDGs goals, and in Japan, to realize the UNESCO mission as outlined in the Constitution of UNESCO<sup>13</sup>, "UNESCO Associated Schools", which practice peace and international cooperation, are positioned as focal points for ESD promotion. Japan has over 1,000 UNESCO Associated Schools, making it the largest number in the world. In addition, based on the Act on the Promotion of Environmental Conservation Activities through Environmental Education whose objective is to create a sustainable society aimed for by the SDGs, Japan is promoting environmental education and ESD as well as encouraging initiatives through faculty and staff training, experiential learning, information dissemination, and an award system. Additionally, since it is important for various entities involved in ESD, such as local governments, NGOs/NPOs, and businesses, to collaborate and coordinate across different fields to promote ESD, an ESD promotion network has been established by utilizing local ESD activity support centers. This network is engaged in collecting and disseminating information related to ESD, facilitating inter-regional cooperation, and supporting activities.

In addition, the Japanese government, in collaboration with the Japan Committee for UNICEF, is creating supplementary educational materials for learning about the SDGs, intended for use in social studies classes for third-year junior high school students. These materials have been distributed to approximately 10,000 junior high schools and other institutions nationwide, with updates made annually since 2018. The website "SDGs CLUB," created by the Japan Committee for UNICEF, which is linked to these supplementary materials for learning about the SDGs, receives over 17.7 million unique accesses annually (as of 2024).

In order to realize a sustainable society, it is important for children who will be responsible for the next generation to deepen their understanding of the benefits of nature and the various activities of people involved in food, develop a sense of appreciation, and acquire correct knowledge about food and desirable eating habits. Based on the Fourth Basic Plan for the Promotion of Shokuiku (Food and Nutrition Education), Japan is working to promote a greater understanding of food, agriculture, forestry, and fishery, and the practice of healthy eating habits through the use of local products in school lunches, provision of opportunities to experience agriculture, forestry, and fishing, etc., and enhancing opportunities to learn about food, such as the importance of nutritionally balanced eating habits.

On the other hand, with regards to students who are chronically unable to attend school for a variety of reasons, a FY2023 survey showed that approximately 346,000 students in elementary and junior high schools struggled with chronic school absenteeism, of which approximately 134,000 students did not receive specialized counseling or guidance etc. at an institution inside or outside the school. Given

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<sup>13</sup> "Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed" (Preamble to the Constitution)

this situation, “measures against chronic absenteeism at school to guarantee learning where no one is left behind (COCOLO Plan)” was formulated in March 2023. Based on these measures, the Japanese government is working to support children and create a learning environment where all students can learn safely.

## Column 6: Radical reinforcement of children's policies: the establishment the Children and Families Agency

(The establishment of the Children and Families Agency)

In 2023, the Japanese government newly established the Children and Families Agency. The purpose of the Children and Families Agency is to centrally promote policies related to children and families, and provide more effective support. Child policies to date were based on the Basic Act for Measures to Cope with Society with Declining Birthrate and the Act on Promotion of Development and Support for Children and Young People, etc., and the Japanese government has worked hard on these various policies. However, with the number of child abuse consultations, the number of students with chronic absenteeism, and the number of serious bullying cases all still remaining high, the environment surrounding children and families has become severe.

Against this background, on December 21, 2021, the Cabinet decision was passed to establish the Children and Families Agency. By always considering the perspective of the child and prioritizing the child's best interests, the agency's objective is to realize a "Children-Centered Society" that puts initiatives and policies related to children in the center of Japan's society. The Act Establishing the Children and Families Agency was enacted on June 15, 2022 and the Children and Families Agency was officially inaugurated on April 1, 2023.

The Children and Families Agency aims to realize a society where children can grow healthily as independent individuals, and conducts affairs relating to improving the welfare and health of children and families, providing child-rearing support, and protecting the rights and interests of children. Furthermore, the agency centralizes jurisdiction over child policy which until now were managed by multiple ministries and agencies, and plays a role in tackling new policy issues.

(Major developments since the establishment of the Children and Families Agency)

The Children and Families Agency has promoted several important measures including the formulation of the "Children's Future Strategy" with the "Acceleration Plan" on a scale of 3.6 trillion yen (about 24 billion US dollars<sup>14</sup>), the enactment of the revised Child and Childcare Support Act, the formulation of a "basic vision for raising children until early childhood", and the establishment of the Prevention of Sexual Violence against Children Act.

Going forward, in an aim to realize a "Children-Centered Society", it will be necessary to dedicate all our efforts into comprehensively promoting children's policies, supporting the pursuit of happiness among children, young people, and those involved in raising children while also drastically changing the trend of declining birthrate, and for society as a whole, to nurture human resources that will lead the future of our country. Specifically, Japan will rapidly implement

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<sup>14</sup> Calculated by the secretariat based on the FY2023 exchange rate of 1 US dollar to 149.63 yen

measures based on the “Children's Future Strategy”, and work steadily to tackle measures for the protection of children from sexual violence, child safety, prevention of abuse, suicide, bullying, and chronic absenteeism.

(Raising awareness on the rights of children and young people, their social participation, and reflection of their views)

The General Principles for Child-Related Measures aims to widely inform society that children and youth are holders of rights by disseminating information about the objectives and contents of the Basic Act on Children's Policy and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Based on this, efforts are being made to raise awareness. Starting in 2024, the "Child Rights Project," which aims to increase awareness on child rights, is being promoted in collaboration with the Japan Committee for UNICEF. Also, in the General Principles for Child-Related Measures, “respecting the viewpoints of children, young people, and those raising children, and hearing those views, discussing with them and taking action together” is considered to be one of the basic principles for child-related measures. Therefore, social participation of children and young people and a reflection of their opinions and views is indicated as necessary for the promotion of child-related measures. Considering the basic principles of the Basic Act on Children's Policy, social participation of children and young people and a reflection of their opinions and views are like two wheels of a car; it is not possible to advance one without the other. Regarding this point, taking into account the intent of this Act, an initiative to hear those views of children and young people regarding policies and to reflect them in policies began in FY2023 called “Kodomo Wakamono★Iken Plus (Program to Promote Reflection of Opinions and Views of Children and Young People)”. In FY2024, the government heard views from a total of approximately 1,900 children and young people on 22 themes. This initiative was not only for themes set by each ministry and agency but also included hearing those views for themes proposed by children and young people.

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(Participation of youth and young people)

There are numerous youth and young people's organizations engaged in activities to promote the achievement of the SDGs. As an example, the “Next Generation Platform for Promoting SDGs”, whose establishment was decided at the 6th meeting of the SDGs Promotion Headquarters in 2018, has been involved with activities to promote SDGs among young people. As of March 2025, members of this platform include G7/G20 Youth Japan, the Junior Chamber International Japan (Japan JC), and the Japan Youth Platform for Sustainability (JYPS).

Since the previous VNR conducted in 2021, members of the above platform joined the SDGs Promotion Roundtable as youth representatives. Furthermore, the SDGs Implementation Guiding Principles revised in December 2023 stated that “the government will work to expand the meaningful participation of younger generations” and in October 2024, the number of youth and young people

representatives was increased to two people. In April 2024, the “Advisory Panel on Sustainability of the International Community” was launched under Foreign Minister Kamikawa with participation of experts from various fields. One member of the above platform participated in the meeting and presented opinions from a youth perspective on ensuring growth and sustainability beyond the 2030 deadline for SDGs.

Members of the platform attended the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Youth Forums in 2022, 2023, and 2024 as representatives of Japan and conveyed the opinions of young people in Japan. In 2024, in preparation for the UN Summit of the Future, members of the platform participated in the “Dialogue between Foreign Minister Kamikawa and the Youths” in July. In September, a total of five young people, including one from the platform, attended the UN Summit of the Future as members of a Japanese government delegation and as evident by the Summit of the Future outcome document, the importance of the role of the youth was recognized. There has also been youth participation in events such as those held during a visit to Japan in December by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Administrator, Mr. Steiner during which opinions regarding the meaningful participation of young people were sent out.

With the objective to nurture future leaders who can raise awareness for disaster prevention and enhance the resilience of the country, Japan has held a High School Students Summit on “World Tsunami Awareness Day” six times since 2016, with participation from a total of 2,163 high school students from both Japan and abroad. The high school students who served as the chairman and vice-chairman at the event held in Kumamoto in October 2024 also took the stage at the “World Tsunami Awareness Day” at the UN headquarters in November and spoke to the world regarding the results of the summit.

## Column 7: Next generation SDGs promotion platform

**In this column, the three organizations constituting the Next Generation Platform for Promoting SDGs write and introduce the outlines and activities of each organization.**

### **Japan Youth Platform for Sustainability (JYPS)**

(Group overview)

JYPS was established in 2015 as an organization that gathers the voices of young people in Japan and establishes a place to deliver them as policy recommendations to the Japanese government, the United Nations, and civil society. The opinions and sentiments of young people from diverse backgrounds are collected via organized events and opinion surveys, and through meaningful participation in opinion exchange meetings with the Japanese government and international conferences, the organization seeks to create a sustainable society in which opinions of young people are reflected.



### (Activities and achievements)

JYPS conducted a survey on the voice of young people in Japan and their state of affairs for the Voluntary Youth Review (VYR) related to the 2025 VNR. Based on the 17 goals of SDGs, the themes were narrowed down to the four themes of “inequality/poverty/gender”, “education/wellbeing”, “environment/climate/biodiversity”, and “youth participation” about which questionnaires, interviews, and discussion events were conducted.

For the theme “inequality/poverty/gender”, it became clear how economic conditions affect higher education progression and how depending on the region, there were disparities in learning environments and career path fixation. Gender was also found to be a big influence and it was evident that there was a growing number of young people who felt restrictions with regards to gender when considering advancing to the next stage of education or with regards to the learning environment.

In “education/wellbeing”, there were calls for opportunities for extracurricular activities, practical use of technology, and the practical use of English. Awareness regarding comprehensive sex education was low and responses showed a desire for it to be introduced in all schools. While the concept of well-being was understood, there was no uniform sense of values for the specific meaning, and there were also groups that showed indifference.

In “environment/climate/biodiversity”, awareness for the importance of climate change and biodiversity was high but poor understanding and lack of information emerged as issues in encouraging behavioral change. On the other hand, it became apparent that relationships with nature and opportunities for discussion raised awareness for problem solving. With regards to nuclear power generation, the majority of voices desired its long-term abolition.

In terms of youth participation, while there were many young people with positive views of the future, there were also many that for whom interest in politics was low. To resolve this, young people wanted a place where they could discuss with adults on equal terms and it became evident that there are many young people who wished to participate in organizations and decision-making bodies dealing with social issues.

A report of these results were handed over to various ministries and agencies, international organizations, etc. and advocacy activities that reflect the current situation and issues of young people are being developed.

### (Meaningful youth participation in international conferences)

To realize a sustainable society under the SDG principle where “no one is left behind”, collaboration across borders, fields, sectors, and generations is essential. As stated by United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, “meaningful, diverse, and effective youth participation – inside the United Nations and far beyond – is essential to (...) achieving the Sustainable Development Goals” and therefore, meaningful youth participation should be

guaranteed.<sup>15</sup> It is recommended that the Japanese government dispatch young Japanese people, starting with members of the Next Generation Platform, to international conferences as government delegates.

The ECOSOC Youth Forum is an important conference hosted by ECOSOC for young people to contribute to policy discussions at a global level. At the 2024 conference, a member of the government delegation spoke about geopolitical barriers for young people from the Asian region when participating in meetings held mainly in Europe and the United States and received a lot of support from young people in the same region. Going forward, it is important to continue increasing the presence of young Japanese people at international conferences and to strengthen cooperative relationships from the viewpoint of young people that transcend politics and interests.

The United Nations Summit of the Future was held with the aim of considering concrete proposals for achieving the SDGs and tackling evolving new issues. In the Summit's outcome document, “Pact for the Future”, the attendees committed to promoting the resolution of a wide range of issues such as sustainable development, international peace and security, human rights, global governance transformation, digital cooperation, youth and future generations, etc. Specific actions related to young people and future generations that should be highlighted are as follows.

- Scale up investment in essential services for young people to ensure they are able to participate fully in the social and economic development of their own countries  
Commitment to increase investment in essential services for young people and ensure that they can participate fully in the socio-economic development of their countries (Action 36)
- Promote, protect and respect the human rights of all young people and foster social inclusion and integration (Action 37)
- Strengthen meaningful youth participation in decision-making processes at the national and international levels (Actions 38/39)

Also, as a pre-event to the UN Summit of the Future, “#YouthLead”, a campaign with the theme of empowering youths was held in which young people from Japan participated in the discussions. In a poll of the participants at the event, the majority of opinions described the current participation of young people as “tokenism” and sought for an increase in opportunities for meaningful participation of young people.

Accumulating specific progresses based on the guidelines for action, such as (1) strengthening sovereign education, (2) establishing opportunities for mid- to long-term participation and opinion exchange regardless of region and economic disparities, (3) creating a system to protect young people from risks from participation (harassment, slander, academic disruption, etc.), (4) guaranteeing access to information, and (5) strengthening accountability related to decision

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<sup>15</sup> United Nations ‘Young People’s Meaningful Involvement Vital for Advancing Sustainable Development Goals, Speakers Stress as Youth Forum Concludes’ <https://press.un.org/en/2022/ecosoc7076.doc.htm>.

making and implementation process, will further promote meaningful youth participation which in turn will contribute to the realization of a sustainable society.

### **Junior Chamber International Japan (Japan JC)**

#### **(Group overview)**

Japan JC began in 1949 with the establishment of the Tokyo Junior Chamber of Commerce by young volunteers with a sense of responsibility and passion, based on the ideal of realizing a bright and prosperous society. Based on the three creeds of training, service, and friendship, the organization is proactively working on volunteering initiatives and tackling various social issues with the aim of creating a better society.

#### **(Activities and achievements)**

Japan JC has hosted the JCI JAPAN Global Youth Ambassador Development Project every year since 2011. This project teaches youths about international relations and world peace and fosters human resources that can play an active role overseas in the future. Every year, middle and high school students from all over Japan are selected as ambassadors, and training is held both domestically and internationally.

In FY2023, a total of three domestic training sessions were held, and for the international training, students visited wells and poultry farms in Cambodia that were supported by Japan JC through the “Smile by Water campaign”. This experience taught them about international support activities aimed at resolving SDGs Goal 6: “ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all”. A forum was also held at Tokyo Big Sight to which Deputy Foreign Minister Horii was invited and a lively exchange opinions on issues and difficulties faced by participants to achieve the SDGs took place. Furthermore, in New York, they visited the United Nations Headquarters and paid a courtesy visit to Izumi Nakamitsu, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations Headquarters. They also visited the Permanent Mission of Japan to the United Nations and the Consulate General of Japan in New York. At a lunch gathering with local New York high school students, they talked about peace over pizza, and in an exchange of opinions with the United Nations Envoy on Youth, they deepened their understanding of the influence of young people's ability to communicate and the importance of correct understanding and information dissemination.

In FY2024, during their domestic training, the youth ambassadors attended lectures on diversity by Sri Lankan born sociologist, Mr. Nishantha, on war and peace from Mr. Steven Lloyd Leeper, who served successive posts as the chairperson of the Hiroshima Peace Culture Foundation (Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum), and about cultural differences between Japan and overseas and the current state of education overseas from Mr. Masaki Fujimoto, a Japanese person active overseas. Through three domestic training sessions, they considered what they could do to achieve world peace and participated in discussions.

The first country they visited for their overseas training was Cambodia. There, they visited the Killing Fields where the massacre under the Pol Pot administration took place and learned about the cruel past and cultural differences through group work with local children. In the Philippines, which was the second country they visited, they learned from Mr. Tomo Matsui who operates a library on Mindanao Island and supports local children. They learned about the current situation in the Philippines and that there were many children who lived in close proximity to danger.

Since their return to Japan, the ambassadors have carried out awareness-raising activities primarily in their regions of origin, and we will ensure that there are opportunities for as many people as possible to take action for peace.

## **G7/G20 Youth Japan**

(Group overview)

G7/G20 Youth Japan was established in 2008 for young people with academic knowledge and expertise to provide constructive policy recommendations. The organization dispatches a Japanese delegations primarily to the Y7 summit and the Y20 summit (hereafter “Y7/Y20”).

(Recent activities and achievements)

In conjunction with the 2023 G7 Summit in Japan, they hosted the Y7 Summit 2023 Japan (Y7 Japan). Prior to the summit, public discussion events and youth awareness surveys were conducted for each theme, such as peace and security, economy, climate change and environmental issues, health and welfare, and digital innovation. Also, in collaboration with the United Nations University, we also hosted the G7 High School Summit 2023. This event brought together approximately 120 high school students and provided them with an opportunity to make policy proposals from the perspective of high school students.

The following responses and suggestions were obtained in the annual survey of young people's attitudes.

- ① 80% answered that there are people, including themselves, in disadvantageous positions at work or school for irrational reasons, and the main causes were gender, age, and disability. The survey showed that the inclusive society envisioned by youths was a society in which they can contribute and play an active role regardless of background or identity.
- ② Responses showed that the most important constituents to contribute to future technological development for sustainability, climate change, and energy, etc. were 30% small to medium companies and venture businesses, 20% large enterprises, 20% international organizations, and 19% governments. This showed that youths had high expectations for small to medium companies and venture businesses.
- ③ Approximately 80% responded negatively regarding the possibility of working continuously at one company/organization, and more than half answered that they had or currently have side jobs or considered taking side jobs. The survey taught us that for young people, demonstrating their own abilities, growth, and money were some of the criteria considered when selecting a work environment.

Furthermore, at discussion events held every year, dialogues were held on the importance of cooperation and cooperation beyond national boundaries for global issues, the necessity of co-creating a sustainable society involving the Global South, and the realization of an inclusive society to protect mental and physical safety and security. There were also opinions raised regarding the development of digital human resources and the activities of minority human resources, including women, as necessary for sustainable economic development, and the need to create common guidelines across countries for climate change and digital technology that is undergoing rapid progress.

The opinions of the many young people that are gathered through these surveys were compiled as communiques by the Japanese delegation, for discussion amongst young people from each countries. These opinions have been proposed to G7/G20 every year. At Y7 Japan in 2023, the findings were submitted to Prime Minister Kishida and were proposed to the G7. Similarly in 2024, proposals were made to the G7 in Italy and G20 in Brazil.


Separate from the Y7/Y20 above, based on the past questionnaires accumulated, we examined what young people desired from a happy society and what elements were necessary for it. In the post-2030 agenda, the sustainable development of the Japanese economy is essential and for this, we identified the three necessary elements of “mental, physical, and global health”, “growth of companies and individuals”, and “domestic and international connections”. Reflecting on the free thinking of young people that is unhindered by preconceived notions and customs as well as the voices of the mature youths who have the achievements and experiences, leads to the creation of new value concepts. On the other hand, the opportunities to exercise discretion and influence are limited, making it necessary to secure and expand places where constituents that represent the opinions of the young generation can take action.

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### (Gender Mainstreaming and Promoting Women’s Empowerment)

In December 2020, the government approved the Fifth Basic Plan for Gender Equality (the Fifth Basic Plan) at the Cabinet meeting (partial revisions approved by the Cabinet in December 2023). In order to comprehensively and systematically promote measures based on the Basic Act for Gender Equal Society, the “basic recognition” for the period up to the end of FY2030 as well as the “basic direction of measures” and “specific initiatives” for the period up to the end of FY2025 were set forth in the Plan. Since 2015, in order to accelerate women's empowerment, the government has also adopted “the Basic Policy on Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women” by around each June, which are reflected in the budget requests of ministries and agencies.

Since 2003, the Government of Japan has set a target of “Expecting to increase the percentage of women in leadership positions to at least 30% by 2020 in all fields in society.” However, the government recognizes that while women’s participation has been progressing in some



fields, there have been fields in which progress has lagged behind, such as political and economic fields. For this reason, the Fifth Plan set out a new aim to achieve a society by the 2030s in which everyone can be empowered without being conscious of their gender and where there is no gender imbalance among people in leadership positions, and to promote initiatives with the aim of achieving the milestone target of increasing the percentage of women in leadership positions to approximately 30% of the total as early as possible during the 2020s.

To realize a gender-equal society, it is vital to monitor and evaluate implementation of gender equality initiatives by all ministries and agencies under the basic plan. To this end, the council for gender equality, composed of relevant ministers and individuals with expert knowledge on gender issues, has been established under the basic act for gender equal society to oversee the implementation of the Fifth Basic Plan for Gender Equality. In particular, in 2023, which marked the midpoint of the Fifth Plan, the government conducted a follow-up review on the progress toward its performance targets. For those targets that had not reached a certain benchmark, expert committees provided recommendations. Based on these recommendations, the Council for Gender Equality encouraged relevant ministries and agencies to strengthen their efforts. Furthermore, in 2024, the Council began discussions toward formulating the Sixth Basic Plan for Gender Equality.

In terms of legislation, the Act on Promotion of Gender Equality in the Political Field was enacted in May 2018 with the aim of effectively and proactively promoting gender equality in politics, thereby contributing to the development of a democratic society in which both men and women participate jointly. This law establishes as a fundamental principle the aim of achieving, to the greatest extent possible, gender balance in the number of candidates in elections for the House of Representatives, the House of Councillors, and local assemblies. It sets forth the responsibilities of the national and local governments, and encourages political parties and other organizations to voluntarily set targets regarding the number of male and female candidates they endorse for public office. Through the June 2021 amendment, the law was revised to include examples of voluntary efforts expected of political parties and similar organizations, such as improving candidate selection processes. The revision also added provisions requiring necessary measures to prevent and resolve problems arising from sexual harassment and other gender-related misconduct, and reinforced the policies of national and local governments.

In August 2015, the Act on Promotion of Women's Active Engagement in Professional Life was enacted to create a society where all women who intend to work can fully demonstrate their qualities and capabilities. As a result, national and local governments, as well as private companies with 301 or more regular employees, have been required to formulate and publicize action plans that set quantitative goals, such as the percentage of women hired and the proportion of women in managerial positions, and to publicize information related to the active engagement of women. In 2019, a partial amendment to the law was enacted, which expanded the obligation to formulate action plans and developed requirements for



information publication. From fiscal year 2022, the scope of application was extended to companies with 101 or more regular employees. In 2022, pay differences between men and women was newly designated as an item for publication. National and local governments, as well as private-sector employers with 301 or more regular employees, are mandated to publicize this information. In June 2025, a revised bill that includes the extension of the Act on Promotion of Women's Active Engagement in Professional Life, as well as enhancements to the publication of information regarding women's active engagement in professional life, was passed in the 217th ordinary session of the National Diet. To encourage corporate efforts, the government has been working in collaboration with the Tokyo Stock Exchange (TSE) since fiscal year 2012 to select listed companies that excel in promoting women's empowerment. These companies are designated as Nadeshiko Brands, highlighting them as attractive investment options for investors who value medium- to long-term corporate value enhancement. As part of corporate governance reform, the TSE revised its listing rules in October 2023, requiring, by way of example, Prime Market-listed companies to set numerical targets for the percentage of female executives.

In the “Intensive Policy for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women 2023,” also called the “Basic Policy on Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women 2023,” adopted in June 2023, Japan set a target for companies listed on the Prime Market of the Tokyo Stock Exchange to increase the proportion of female executives to 30% or more by 2030. As an interim goal, the Fifth Basic Plan, updated in December of the same year, established a new performance target of raising the proportion of female executives among companies listed on the Prime Market of the Tokyo Stock Exchange to 19% by 2025. Based on these goals, efforts are being made to strengthen the recruitment, development, and appointment of women in companies.

Companies that meet certain criteria, such as implementing initiatives for the promotion of women's active engagement, can receive the “Eruboshi” certification. Since 2008, the government has also held multiple “Shining Women” symposia each year across Japan. In 2024, around ten such symposia were held in locations such as Tokyo, Sapporo, Fukui, and online.

To provide a solid foundation for promoting these initiatives, steady efforts will be made to advance work style reform, support the balancing of work with childcare and long-term care, eliminate rigid gender role stereotypes, support women's health, and strengthen measures against domestic violence, sexual crimes, and sexual violence. Lastly, the government remains committed to ensuring women's participation in policy and decision-making processes across all sectors and will enhance efforts across all ministries and agencies to implement policies that reflect a gender-equal perspective in every area of society.

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(Strengthening Enhancement Against Sexual Crimes and Sexual Violence, and Support for Women Facing Difficulties)

Regarding measures against sexual crimes and violence, related ministries and agencies are working closely together to address various aspects such as education and awareness to prevent becoming perpetrators or victims and providing seamless support from immediately after an incident to recovery. It is necessary for society as a whole to share the understanding that "sexual acts without the other person's consent are sexual violence." Efforts are being continued and strengthened based on the "Policy for Enhancement Measures Against Sexual Crimes and Sexual Violence"<sup>16</sup> from fiscal year 2020 to 2022, and a new policy<sup>17</sup> has been formulated to designate the period up to fiscal year 2025 as a "further intensive strengthening period" to implement measures.

From the perspective of criminal law reform, the Act on the Partial Revision of the Penal Code and the Code of Criminal Procedure<sup>18</sup>, which includes revising the requirements for sexual crime provisions, raising the age of consent from under 13 to under 16, and extending the statute of limitations, as well as the Act on Penalizing Photography of Sexual Poses and Other Related Offenses<sup>19</sup>, have been enacted and came into effect on July 13, 2023. This amendment allows for more accurate punishment of sexual acts done in a "freeze state," such as being "paralyzed with fear," which were previously difficult to recognize as crimes.

Additionally, efforts have been made to prevent recidivism among sexual offenders and to improve the environment and support system to make it easier for victims to report and seek consultation. Measures include making calls to the nationwide common number "#8891" for one-stop support centers free of charge, implementing SNS consultations, and promoting strengthened collaboration with medical institutions of various specialties and related local organizations. Furthermore, efforts are being made to ensure the immediate acceptance of sexual crime victim reports, prevent secondary victimization during the investigation stage, promote awareness of the nationwide common number "#8103" for police consultation on sexual crime victimization, and properly operate public expense coverage for emergency contraception, medical fees, and counseling fees.

Moreover, to prevent children from becoming perpetrators, victims, or bystanders of sexual violence, "Life Safety Education" is being promoted. This aims to help them understand the incorrect perceptions and actions underlying sexual violence, as well as its impacts, and to instill a respect for life, self, others, and individuals according to their developmental stages.

As part of measures against domestic violence, the revised DV Prevention Act<sup>20</sup>, which includes expanding protection order system to cover cases of severe psychological harm and establishing a council to strengthen multi-agency collaboration for seamless support up to life reconstruction, was enacted on April 1, 2024. Related ministries and agencies are working together to ensure the smooth

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<sup>16</sup> Formulated at the Inter-Ministerial Conference for Enhancement Measures Against Sexual Crimes and Sexual Violence

<sup>17</sup> Policy for Further Enhancement Measures Against Sexual Crimes and Sexual Violence

<sup>18</sup> Act Partially Amending the Penal Code and the Code of Criminal Procedure (Law No. 66 of 2023)

<sup>19</sup> Act on Penalizing Acts of Photographing Sexual Poses and Other Related Offenses, and on the Erasure of Electronic Records of Images of Sexual Poses Recorded in Seized Items (Law No. 67 of 2023)

<sup>20</sup> Act Partially Amending the Act on the Prevention of Spousal Violence and the Protection of Victims (Law No. 30 of 2023)

implementation of this revised law, thereby enhancing the protection and support for victims of domestic violence.

Additionally, against the backdrop of diversifying and complicating issues faced by women due to changes in socio-economic conditions and family relationships, the limitations and need for revision of welfare and support systems for women, such as the Prostitution Prevention Act aimed at protecting and rehabilitating women at risk of engaging in prostitution, have been pointed out. In light of this, a new Women's Support Act<sup>21</sup> that clearly stipulates perspectives such as women's welfare, respect and protection of human rights, and gender equality has been newly enacted and came into effect on April 1, 2024.

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#### (Realizing a cohesive society with foreign nationals)

To realize a society of harmonious coexistence with foreign nationals, Japan adopted the Comprehensive Measures for the “Acceptance and Coexistence of Foreign Nationals” in 2018. Since then, the content has been enhanced through annual revisions. In 2022, the government further established the “Roadmap for the Realization of a Society of Harmonious Coexistence with Foreign Nationals,” which outlines the vision of Japan for such a society and the medium- to long-term challenges and policies necessary to achieve it.

In the roadmap, three visions of the society for coexistence with foreign nationals are outlined: "a safe and secure society," "a vibrant society rich in diversity," and "a society that respects individual dignity and human rights." To achieve these visions of a coexistence society, four medium- to long-term issues are identified: "initiatives for Japanese language education for smooth communication and social participation," "strengthening information dissemination and consultation systems for foreigners," "support tailored to life stages and life cycles," and "initiatives for the development of a foundation for a coexistence society." Additionally, specific measures to solve these issues are described and are being pursued in collaboration with relevant ministries and agencies. Furthermore, to ensure the steady implementation of these policies, the progress is checked annually by listening to the opinions of experts, confirming advancement, and revising policies as necessary during the promotion of the roadmap.

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<sup>21</sup> Act on Support for Women Facing Difficulties (Law No. 52 of 2022)

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## (Business and Human Rights)

As the importance of respecting human rights in corporate activities gains global recognition, Japan formulated its “National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights” (2020-2025) in 2020. This was followed by the issuance of the “Guidelines on Respecting Human Rights in Responsible Supply Chains” in 2022, and the adoption of a government policy on human rights considerations in public procurement in 2023. Furthermore, based on the formulation of the above guidelines, efforts have been made to disseminate and raise awareness through seminars and other events to ensure that companies, including small and medium-sized enterprises, fully understand efforts to respect human rights, which include dialogue with stakeholders such as labor unions, civil society organizations, industry organizations, human rights defenders, and local governments. Additionally, in April 2023, the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry developed the "Reference Material on Practical Approaches for Business Enterprises to Respect Human Rights in Responsible Supply Chains" to provide companies with more specific and practical guidance on initiatives to respect human rights.

Amid the ongoing globalization of supply chains, Japan is providing supports in cooperation with international organizations such as the UNDP and the International Labour Organization (ILO), such as the assistance for the host governments, in formulating and implementing action plans, as well as the provision of training sessions and seminars for Japanese companies and their suppliers, particularly in countries where Japanese companies operate, for the purpose of realizing decent work for workers in global supply chains. Japan, in cooperation with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), promotes, processes inquiries on, and supports the resolution of issues related to the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises based on the Guidelines, through the Japan National Contact Point (Japan NCP). To strengthen the NCP's functions, Japan is working to promote the utilization of the Japan NCP through awareness-raising activities for domestic and international stakeholders and through awareness-raising activities at overseas embassies.

The Japanese government is working towards revising the National Action Plan by 2025 and will continue its efforts to contribute to the achievement of the SDGs.

As part of private sector initiatives in the field of business and human rights, the Japan Platform for Migrant Workers toward Responsible and Inclusive Society (JP-MIRAI) serves as a support platform for foreign workers, involving over 800 organizations and individuals. The platform provides information, protects human rights, and offers multilingual support services, including “JP-MIRAI Assist,” which operates in 23 languages, and a portal site providing essential life information for foreign workers in or coming to Japan. At the same time, JP-MIRAI promotes ethical recruitment practices and improved working environments for companies employing foreign workers and for larger corporations that utilize those companies’ products or services. These initiatives have also been recognized in the 2024 country visit report by the UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights.

## Priority Area (iii)

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Strengthening efforts to  
address global challenges







### Priority Area (iii): Strengthening efforts to address global challenges


The three global crises, climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution, are intricately interconnected, and it is essential to adopt an integrated approach that simultaneously addresses both climate and sustainable development challenges while generating synergies. Based on this perspective, Japan is advancing efforts to achieve net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by balancing emissions with removals, to realize a circular and nature-symbiotic economy and society, and to halt and reverse biodiversity loss, moving toward a nature positive.

Through initiatives such as Green Transformation (GX) and Digital Transformation (DX), as outlined in Priority Area (i), as well as various other efforts described below, Japan's latest greenhouse gas emissions and removals in fiscal year 2023 totaled approximately 1.017 billion tons (in carbon dioxide [CO<sub>2</sub>] equivalent, hereinafter the same). This represents a 27.1% decrease (about 378.1 million tons) compared to fiscal year 2013, continuing a steady downward trend toward achieving net-zero emissions by 2050. In February 2025, Japan's Cabinet approved a new Plan for Global Warming Countermeasures, which includes updated emissions reduction targets for post-2030. At the same time, in forums such as the G7 and the Asia Zero Emissions Community (AZEC), a shared direction has been articulated for achieving decarbonization. This approach calls for an integrated response to energy security, climate change, and geopolitical risks, while recognizing diverse pathways tailored to each country's circumstances, all aiming toward the common goal of net-zero emissions. Japan is pursuing the simultaneous achievement of a stable energy supply, economic growth, and decarbonization. To further advance these efforts, the government revised its basic energy plan in February 2025. Details are provided in the section titled “5. Progress toward each goal,” specifically under Goals 7 and 13.

Amid the increasing severity and frequency of natural disasters, Japan has been promoting initiatives to protect human lives and strengthen the resilience of social and economic systems, in line with the “Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030”. Based on the national resilience plan, investments in disaster prevention, such as strengthening observation systems, developing forecasting technologies, and combining various methods of effective information dissemination, have proven effective in recent years, particularly in response to localized heavy rainfall, by reducing disaster risks, facilitating early evacuation, and enabling rapid recovery and reconstruction. (See “5 Progress toward each goal,” Goal 9) These initiatives aim to strengthen the resilience of economic and social systems.

Taking into account environmental constraints such as the need to address decarbonization, as well as resource constraints and economic security concerns stemming from Japan's low resource self-sufficiency, the country has been promoting the transition to a circular economy with the aim of strengthening industrial competitiveness and contributing to regional revitalization.

With regard to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, Japan formulated a national strategy in 2023 and is advancing efforts to achieve nature-positive by 2030. In 2027, Japan will host GREEN×EXPO 2027 in Yokohama. This exposition aims to share with the world the wisdom of living in harmony with nature and to present optimal solutions for the sustainable coexistence of nature, people, and society.



To address plastic pollution, Japan is working on waste collection and treatment, pollution prevention, data collection, and the accumulation of scientific knowledge. Japan also contributes to international discussions aimed at establishing a legally binding international instrument (treaty) on plastic pollution.

In the field of global health, Japan has promoted Universal Health Coverage (UHC), by establishing a universal health insurance system in 1961, which has also proven effective in addressing the challenges of an aging society. To share its experience with developing countries, Japan is working with WHO and the World Bank to establish the UHC Knowledge Hub in Japan, a global center to promote human resource development for achieving UHC worldwide.

In promoting the above initiatives, as stated in the Implementation Guiding Principles, it is necessary to deeply consider the different global-level issues be interconnected, based on the concept of “planetary health” which states the co-relation to the health by climate change and the biodiversity.

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#### (Society Circulation and symbiosis based society and the Synergy Approach)

With the recognition that overcoming the triple global crises, climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution, requires the promotion of synergies on a global scale, Japan has placed emphasis on a synergistic approach that takes into account the interlinkages among individual global challenges. Japan has been pursuing a transformation toward a net-zero economy and a circular, climate-resilient, and nature positive economic and social system.

The Sixth Basic Environment Plan, approved by the Cabinet in May 2024, sets forth the vision of a sustainable society in which the economy and society can grow and develop by safeguarding the Earth's carrying capacity and enhancing environmental quality, namely, the realization of a circular and nature-symbiotic society. Discussions on "planetary health," which emphasize the inseparable connection between the health of the planet (environmental integrity) and human health, are becoming more active. On the recognition that natural capital (the environment) forms the foundation of all economic and social activities, it is essential to develop society in a way that not only reduces the total environmental burden but also contributes to the creation of an even better environment, based on terrestrial resources such as renewable energy. In implementing future environmental policies, Japan will ensure speed and scale based on the best available scientific knowledge. It will also aim to generate synergies across the priority strategies in six fields (economic system, national land, community, life, science, technologies and innovation, and international cooperation), as contributions toward achieving the SDGs.

Internationally, Japan has taken a leading role in promoting global discussions on the synergistic approaches, including at various opportunities such as the 2023 G7 Hiroshima Summit, where it served as chair. The Expert Group on Climate and SDG Synergy released the First Global Report on Climate and SDG Synergies during the 2023 SDG Summit, and the Second Global Report during the UN 2024 High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development. Japan contributed to these efforts by hosting key events, including the Third Global Conference on Strengthening Synergies Between

the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda For Sustainable Development in July 2022 and the Expert Group Meeting in March 2024. As global interest in synergy increases, at the 6th United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-6) in March 2024, Japan's proposed resolution titled "Promoting synergies, cooperation or collaboration for national implementation of multilateral environmental agreements and other relevant environmental instruments <sup>22</sup>" was adopted.

Since fiscal 2016, Japan has been holding SDGs Stakeholders Meeting as a forum for sharing progress on the implementation of the SDGs both internationally and domestically, and for promoting efforts from an environmental perspective. The meeting serves as a platform where private companies, local governments, NGOs, and other stakeholders can share leading practices, recognize each other's efforts, and build momentum for further action. At the 13th meeting in March 2022 and the 14th meeting in February 2023, participants shared updates on the latest developments related to the SDGs and introduced the outcome of Third Global Conference on Strengthening Synergies Between the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The meetings also facilitated in-depth discussions on how to generate synergistic effects between environmental goals and other SDG targets in order to advance the achievement of the SDGs.

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#### (Decarbonization)

In the field of climate change, a concerted effort by the international community is essential, and Japan is contributing to global decarbonization, particularly in Asia. Japan announced to provide climate assistance in both private and public finance totaling up to approximately USD 70 billion over the five years between 2021 and 2025, including approximately USD 14.8 billion for adaptation, and has been steadily implementing this commitment. To further promote greenhouse gas reductions in developing countries, Japan is advancing over 250 decarbonization projects in 30 countries through the Joint Crediting Mechanism (JCM <sup>23</sup>). Under the AZEC, Japan promotes decarbonization projects through various pathways. Through the CEFIA<sup>25</sup>, a public-private initiative, Japan has deepened discussions on decarbonization technologies and financing. Additionally, Japan has contributed USD 3 billion to the GCF<sup>26</sup> and announced its intention to contribute up to approximately JPY 165 billion in 2023. To further promote the international development and adoption of transition finance, a financing approach that supports companies in their transition toward decarbonization, Japan has taken a leading role in international discussions by establishing the Asia GX Consortium in October 2024, under the leadership of the Financial Services Agency and ASEAN financial authorities. The consortium facilitates the sharing of case studies and the identification and dissemination of practical challenges. Furthermore, as part of the efforts to globally reduce all greenhouse gases, Japan has participated in the Global Methane Pledge (GMP) Champion and advanced initiatives such as measuring methane


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<sup>22</sup> Fiji, Canada, Chile, Switzerland, Norway, and Peru are also co-sponsoring countries.

<sup>23</sup> The Joint Crediting Mechanism (JCM) is a bilateral scheme through which Japan promotes the deployment of advanced decarbonization technologies and other solutions in partner countries, thereby contributing to greenhouse gas emissions reductions and removals in those countries, while receiving part of the resulting emissions reductions as credits.

<sup>25</sup> CEFIA: Cleaner Energy Future Initiative for ASEAN

<sup>26</sup> GCF: Green Climate Fund



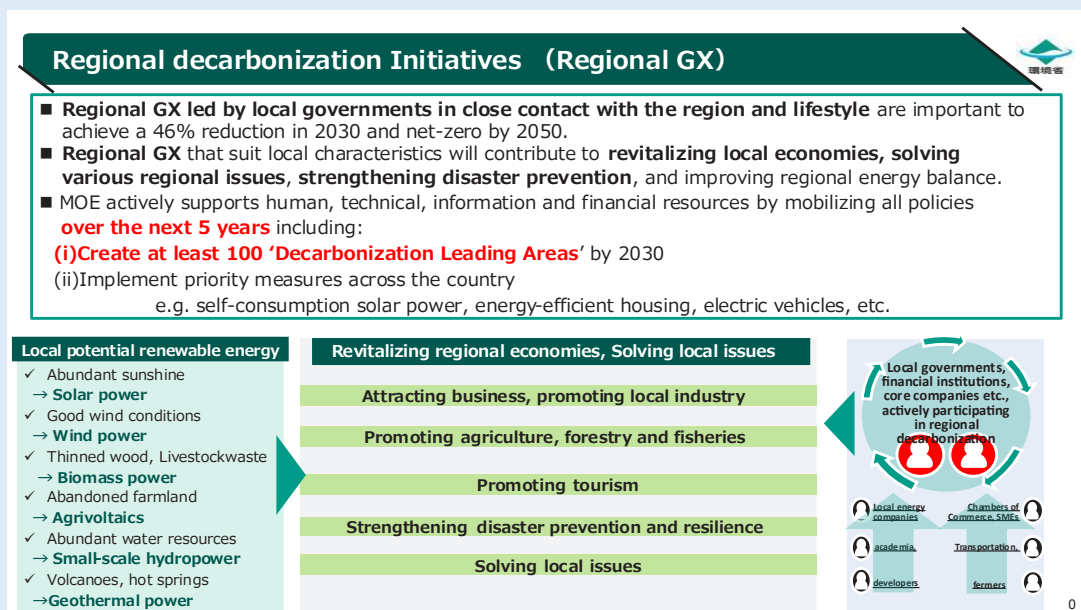
emissions via satellites, supporting methane reduction in the agriculture and waste sectors, and promoting the reduction of fluorocarbon emissions across their entire lifecycle through the Fluorocarbon Initiative launched by Japan.

In October 2020, Japan declared its commitment to achieving net-zero by 2050, aiming to accelerate the transition to a net-zero economy. This declaration was based on the recognition that climate action is no longer a constraint on economic growth, but rather a driver of industrial transformation and societal change, leading to significant growth. In April 2021, Japan announced its aim to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 46% from fiscal year 2013 levels by fiscal year 2030, while continuing to take on the challenge of reaching a 50% reduction. In October 2021, the Cabinet approved the Plan for Global Warming Countermeasures, which outlines the policies and measures to support the achievement of this fiscal year 2030 target. Based on this plan, Japan has vigorously promoted initiatives across all sectors, including thorough energy conservation, maximum adoption of renewable energy, and decarbonization of public and local sectors, to create a virtuous cycle of economy and environment and achieve ambitious fiscal year 2030 goals.

Furthermore, in February 2025, the Japanese government approved a revised Plan for Global Warming Countermeasures, which includes new greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets beyond fiscal year 2030. These targets aim for a 60% reduction by fiscal year 2035 and a 73% reduction by fiscal year 2040, compared to fiscal year 2013 levels. The plan positions these ambitious targets as being consistent with the global 1.5 °C goal and aligned with a linear pathway toward achieving net-zero emissions by 2050. To achieve these targets, Japan will advance policies that promote decarbonization as a driver of economic growth, in coordination with its Green Transformation (GX) strategy, which aims to simultaneously ensure energy security, foster economic growth, and achieve decarbonization.

## Column 8: Regional decarbonization initiatives

The Government of Japan is promoting regionally led decarbonization efforts, driven by local governments closely connected to communities and daily life, as part of its commitment to achieving net-zero emissions by 2050 and a 46% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by fiscal year 2030. Regional decarbonization initiatives that utilize renewable energy sources tailored to local characteristics, such as solar power, wind power, and biomass energy, contribute to solving local issues faced by local governments. These efforts also support regional revitalization and contribute to the achievement of the SDGs. The Government of Japan supports local governments that are working to create sustainable communities by simultaneously promoting decarbonization efforts and addressing local challenges, such as fostering local economic circulation, promoting local industries and agriculture, forestry, and fisheries, enhancing tourism, and strengthening disaster preparedness and resilience, with the aim of enhancing the appeal and quality of the region. This support is provided through a range of policy measures.



PPT: Ministry of the Environment

Focusing on the residential and commercial power sectors, the Ministry of the Environment has designated "Decarbonization Leading Areas," regions aiming to simultaneously achieve decarbonization and address local challenges by fiscal year 2030 without waiting for 2050. To date, 81 proposals from 107 municipalities across 38 prefectures (including 66 cities, 32 towns, and 9 villages) have been selected nationwide, and support is being provided to help these areas achieve their goals. Through these efforts, Japan is setting a course toward decarbonization in a wide range of communities, including rural villages, fishing and mountain areas, remote islands,





Decarbonization and securing the maintenance of regional public transportation  
(Photo: Ueda, Nagano prefecture)

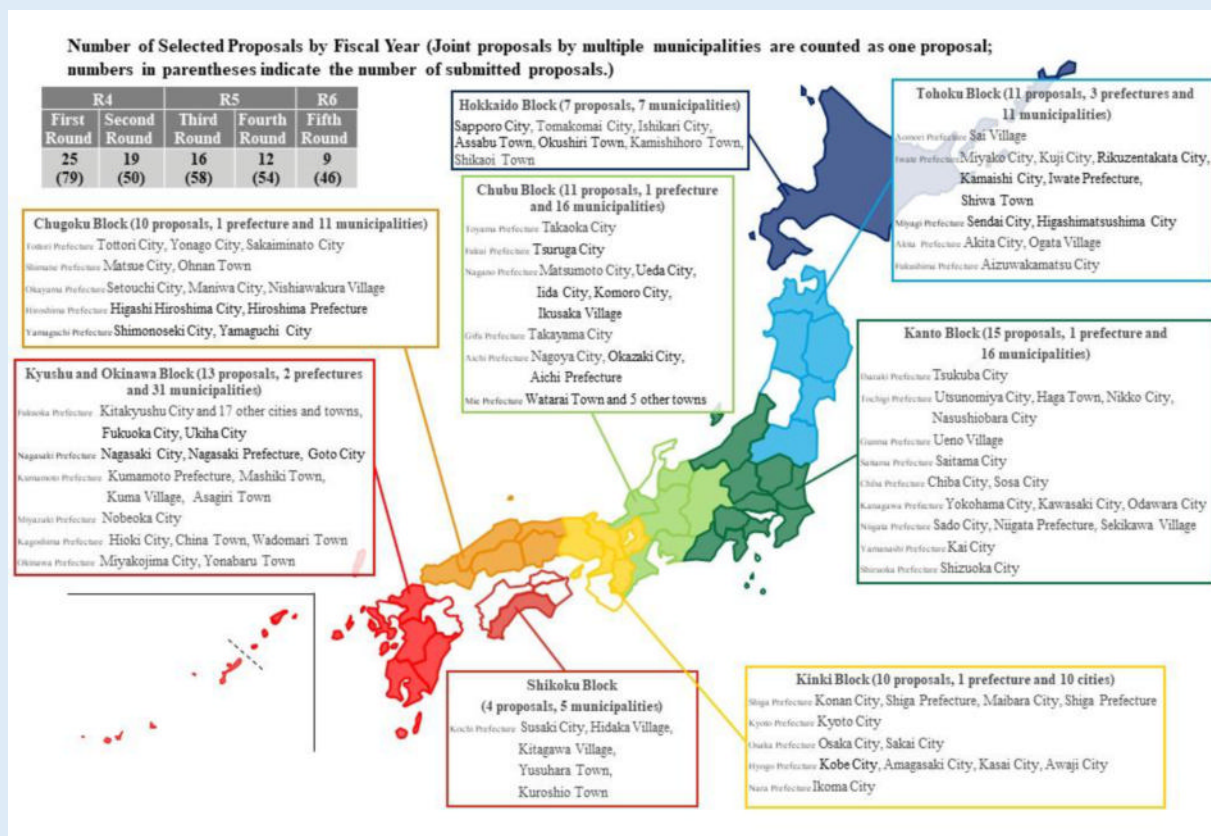


Decarbonization and promoting local tourism  
(Photo: Matsue, Shimane prefecture)

and urban neighborhoods, by addressing local challenges and improving residents' quality of life. Under the priority measures acceleration program, the government provides continuous and comprehensive multi-year support to local governments that are implementing advanced measures in a rapid and integrated manner, such as self-consumption solar

power systems and improvements in the energy efficiency of homes and buildings.

Through these efforts, the Government of Japan will continue to build a foundation for decarbonization at the regional level and aims to accelerate and scale up such initiatives nationwide.





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(Ensuring stable supplies of energy and food and transitioning to a more resilient supply and demand structure)

Even while advancing climate change measures, Japan has strengthened its energy security under the Basic Energy Plan by prioritizing safety and simultaneously working to ensure a stable energy supply, reduce energy costs (S+3E<sup>27</sup>), and transition to a more resilient energy supply and demand structure.

In the food, agriculture, forestry, and fisheries sectors, increasing emphasis is being placed on addressing the SDGs and environmental issues. In line with this trend, the Basic Act on Food, Agriculture and Rural Areas was revised in 2024 to include “Establishment of a Food System in Harmony with Environment” as a new fundamental principle. In April 2025, the "Basic Plan for Food, Agriculture and Rural Areas" was formulated. In addition, Japan is promoting initiatives to reduce environmental impact through the MIDORI Strategy for Sustainable Food Systems and the Act on Promotion of Environmental Burden Reduction Business Activities for Establishing Environmentally Harmonized Food Systems, which aim to achieve both increased productivity and sustainability through innovation.

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(Disaster prevention and enhancing national resilience)

In response to the increasing frequency of natural disasters worldwide due to climate change, Japan has shared its expertise in disaster prevention and reduction, and has actively promoted the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, both domestically and internationally, particularly emphasizing the principle of "Build Back Better" in post-disaster reconstruction. Building on these efforts, Japan has undertaken its own unique contribution through the implementation of the “Sendai Cooperation Initiative for Disaster Risk Reduction Phase 2” since 2019, providing support to at least five million people by 2022 through measures such as flood countermeasures. Also, in 2023, a “political declaration” was adopted in the Disaster Reduction Framework Interim Review. To promote the international deployment of disaster prevention technologies, Japan established the Japan International Public-Private Association for Disaster Risk Reduction (JIPAD) and has strengthened public-private partnerships through initiatives such as the organization of 26 seminars. As disasters occur frequently and with increasing severity around the world, there is significant expectation from various countries for Japan's advanced disaster prevention technologies. Through initiatives like JIPAD, efforts will be made to further strengthen public-private partnerships and promote the international expansion of the disaster prevention industry.

On January 1, 2024, the Noto Peninsula Earthquake struck, forcing many affected people to take shelter and live in evacuation centers and other temporary facilities. It is widely recognized that in the event of large-scale disasters such as earthquakes, the impacts differ between women and men, and that women, children, and other vulnerable individuals are often disproportionately affected. To

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<sup>27</sup> The S+3E framework refers to an approach that prioritizes Safety as a fundamental premise, while simultaneously achieving Energy Security, Economic Efficiency, and Environmental Compatibility.



appropriately address the diverse needs of disaster-affected populations, it is critically important to ensure the participation of women in disaster response efforts. Taking into account the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) perspective, Japan will further promote the participation of women in the field of disaster prevention.

In the field of water-related disaster prevention, the UN 2023 Water Conference was held at United Nations Headquarters in March 2023. During thematic dialogue 3 on “Water for Climate, Resilience and Environment,” Special Envoy of the Prime Minister, Yoko Kamikawa served as co-chair alongside Egypt’s Minister of Water Resources and Irrigation, Hani Sewilam, leading discussions on climate change, water-related disaster prevention, and related topics. Following the conference, Japan has continued to work with Egypt to follow up on international discussions in this field. Joint follow-up meetings between Japan and Egypt have been held at various international forums, including Cairo Water Week (November 2023 and October 2024), the UN Climate Change Summit (December 2023), the tenth World Water Forum (May 2024), and the Dushanbe Water Process conference (June 2024). Additionally, international cooperation is being implemented, such as supporting the creation of flood risk maps in four Southeast Asian countries.

As environmental changes in the Arctic, the fastest-warming region on Earth, are increasingly affecting Japan's weather and climate, including the occurrence of cold waves, Japan is promoting advanced research to better understand these changes and their underlying processes, as well as to enhance the accuracy and resolution of weather and climate forecasting. At the same time, Japan is steadily proceeding with the construction of the Arctic research vessel *Mirai II*, which will serve as an international research platform in the region. Japan is also continuously collecting data related to climate change through observational research in Antarctica.

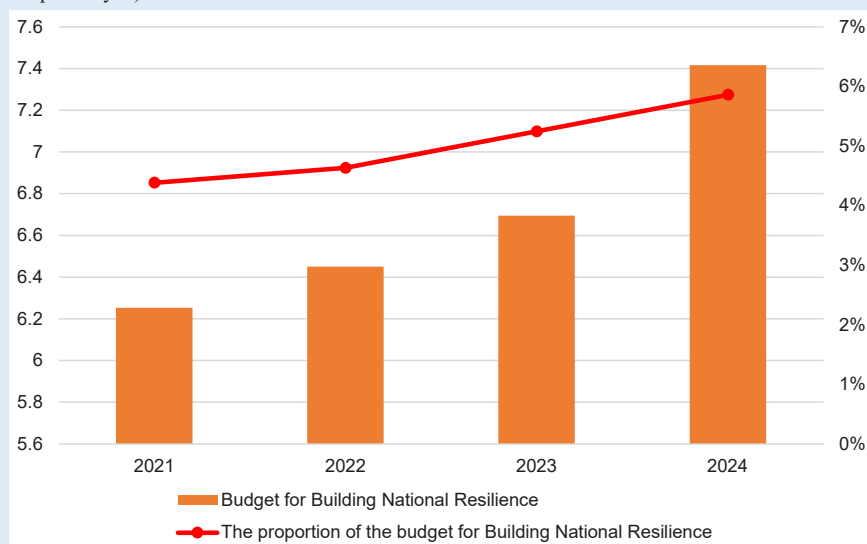
As part of its efforts related to disaster prevention, Japan formulated the Green Infrastructure Promotion Strategy 2023 in September 2023. The strategy outlines a vision and key perspectives for the use of green infrastructure, which leverages the diverse functions of the natural environment, and aims to promote and integrate such approaches across all sectors and settings. It also provides a comprehensive and systematic framework for positioning green infrastructure initiatives within the field of land, infrastructure, transport, and tourism. The number of members of the Green Infrastructure Public-Private Partnership Platform, established in March 2020, has exceeded 2,055 as of March 2025. The platform promotes the social implementation of green infrastructure, conducts research on related technologies, and explores financing mechanisms by leveraging the knowledge and expertise of a wide range of stakeholders. Furthermore, in September 2024, the “Recommendations for Green Infrastructure Projects and Finances: Toward the Promotion of Investment in Urban Development and City Planning through Visualization of Economic Benefits” was published. The publication targets not only pioneering green infrastructure businesses and investors, but also local community development businesses and financial institutions. It compiles and presents a wide range of information, including the various economic benefits of green infrastructure, evaluation and certification systems, and financing schemes.

## Column 9: Pre-disaster investment for national resilience

Japan has been experiencing increasingly severe and frequent weather-related disasters due to the impacts of climate change, while the risk of large-scale earthquakes such as the Nankai Trough Earthquake is becoming more imminent. The infrastructure developed intensively during Japan's period of rapid economic growth is expected to deteriorate simultaneously in the coming years. Without appropriate measures, this could not only lead to an increased burden, but also pose a risk of dysfunction in the country's socio-economic systems. To address these challenges, Japan is working to further accelerate and deepen efforts in key areas: “measures against increasingly severe wind and flood damage and imminent large-scale earthquakes,” “accelerating responses to aging infrastructure with a shift toward preventive maintenance,” and “promoting digitalization to efficiently implement national resilience measures.” For the five-year period from fiscal 2021 to 2025, Japan has identified the additional scale and other aspects of projects needed and is implementing focused and intensive countermeasures.

From fiscal year 2021 to 2024, Japan secured an annual budget of approximately 6.2 trillion to 7.4 trillion Japanese yen (roughly 53 billion to 59 billion US dollars), allocating about four to six percent of the national budget each year as pre-disaster investment in initiatives that contribute to national resilience. Amid the increasing severity and frequency of disasters, it is essential for the Government of Japan to make a certain level of investment in disaster prevention in order to build a sustainable society.

(trillion Japanese yen)



Budget for Building National Resilience (Material: Based on date from the Cabinet Secretariat and the Ministry of Finance)

Japan is also promoting digitalization as part of its efforts to enhance national resilience. For example, in the 2021 landslide disaster in Atami City, the use of high-resolution elevation data enabled the comparison of elevation differences before and after the disaster, contributing to the early assessment of the damage. Approximately 30 percent of areas across Japan still lack high-resolution elevation data, making early development a pressing issue. To address this, Japan is

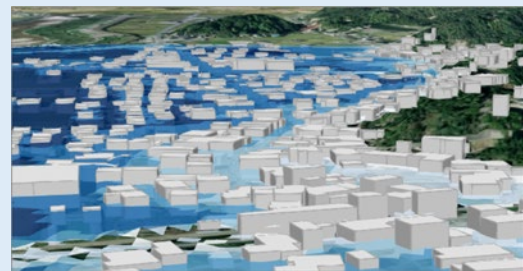
using airborne laser surveying to develop such data. High-resolution elevation data improves the accuracy of simulations for floods and landslides, thereby enhancing pre-disaster preparedness. During disasters, such data enables the precise and rapid identification of inundation areas and landslide occurrences, contributing to faster recovery and reconstruction efforts.



Highly precise elevation data (3D point cloud)  
(Photo: Geospatial Information Authority of Japan)



Estimating inundation depth from elevation data  
(Photo: Geospatial Information Authority of Japan)



Visualization of flood simulation on a 3D map  
(Photo: Geospatial Information Authority of Japan)

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## (Circular Economy)

Resource circulation contributes not only to achieving net-zero emissions, but also to addressing broader social challenges such as economic security and regional revitalization. For Japan, enhancing the industrial competitiveness of resource circulation by securing both the quality and quantity of recycled materials is essential. Accordingly, the transition to a circular economy is positioned as a key policy priority.

In order to promote decarbonization and resource circulation, particularly securing the quality and quantity of recycled materials, in an integrated manner, Japan enacted the Act Concerning Sophistication of Recycling Business, etc. to Promote Resource Circulation in 2024. Under this law, the Minister of the Environment, has formulated a basic policy, require the reporting and publication of recycling performance by industrial waste disposal operators with large disposal volumes, and establish a certification system for the advancement of recycling-related businesses.

The Ministerial Council on Circular Economy was established in July 2024, initiated by the Prime Minister, to realize circular economy in Japan. In August of the same year, the Cabinet approved the Fifth Fundamental Plan for Establishing a Sound Material-Cycle Society, which is a national strategy designed to accelerate the transition to circular economy by consolidating policies across the government to build a circular society. Since then, the Ministerial Council has been convened to implement these initiatives strategically and comprehensively across the government.

In 2022, the Act on Promotion of Resource Circulation for Plastics came into force in Japan. The Act promotes initiatives for plastic resource circulation throughout the entire life cycle of plastic products. Based on the 3Rs + Renewable principle (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, and the use of renewable resources), it introduces measures to encourage efforts by all stakeholders involved. Japan is also actively contributing to international discussions aimed at formulating a legally binding international instrument (treaty) on plastic pollution.

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#### (Food Loss and Waste reduction)

In Japan, the amount of Food Loss and Waste was estimated at 4.72 million tons in fiscal year 2022. Of this total, 2.36 million tons were generated by the food industry, and 2.36 million tons were generated by households.

In October 2019, the Act on Promotion of Food Loss and Waste Reduction came into force, establishing a framework in which the national government, local governments, businesses, and consumers collaborate to address Food Loss and Waste reduction as a national movement. Japan had set a target to reduce both business-related and household Food Loss and Waste by half from fiscal year 2000 levels by fiscal year 2030. However, since the target for business-related Food Loss and Waste was achieved eight years ahead of schedule, the reduction target for this category was revised to 60% starting in fiscal year 2025.

To reduce business-related Food Loss and Waste across the entire food supply chain, Japan is promoting the following initiatives: (1) reviewing commercial practices, such as relaxation of delivery deadlines, switching to year-and-month labeling for best-before dates, and extension of the best-before dates of products; (2) raising consumer awareness of Food Loss and Waste reduction at retail stores and other business locations; (3) encouraging food companies to donate unused food to food banks and similar organizations; and (4) promoting practices such as encouraging customers to “finish their meals” and “take leftovers away” at restaurants. To reduce household Food Loss and Waste, Japan is working to encourage behavioral changes among consumers through various initiatives: (1) promoting better understanding of best-before and use-by dates; (2) providing information on how to effectively use food ingredients at home; (3) publishing estimated figures on economic losses and greenhouse gas emissions based on Food Loss and Waste estimated amounts, so that individual consumers can better relate to the issue; and (4) developing Food Loss and Waste reduction supporters who serve as key actors in promoting Food Loss and Waste reduction in their communities.



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### (Pollution Prevention)

To ensure the proper use of chemicals and prevent environmental pollution, Japan conducts pre-manufacture and import reviews of new chemical substances under the Act on the Regulation of Manufacture and Evaluation of Chemical Substances. In fiscal year 2023, 281 substances were reviewed. Japan has also continued to designate additional substances that exhibit persistence, toxicity, or other hazardous properties. Japan has also promoted the voluntary management of chemical substance emissions by businesses through the PRTR<sup>28</sup> system. This includes the revision of the list of designated substances under the Act on the Assessment of Releases of Specified Chemical Substances in the Environment and the Promotion of Management Improvement, and the amendment of its enforcement order, which came into effect in 2023. At the international level, the fifth session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM5<sup>29</sup>), held in September 2023, adopted the “Global Framework on Chemicals (GFC): For a Planet Free from Harmful Effects of Chemicals and Waste.” This framework serves as a voluntary mechanism for the management of chemicals throughout their life cycle, involving a wide range of stakeholders, including governments, intergovernmental organizations, civil society, industry, and academia, across diverse sectors such as environment, economy, society, health, agriculture, and labor. Countries are expected to implement the framework by formulating national implementation plans. Following the adoption of the GFC, Japan established GFC Liaison Committee of Relevant Ministries and Agencies within the government and is currently working on the development of a national implementation plan.

To help realize clean cities in developing countries, Japan launched the JICA Clean City Initiative (JCCI) in 2022. Through this initiative, Japan is supporting the development of sustainable societies by strengthening the capacity of environmental administrative bodies and promoting environmental measures such as waste management and the prevention of water and air pollution. These efforts aim to ensure sound environmental quality and protect the health and living conditions of people in developing countries. The initiative also serves as a platform for addressing environmental pollution and climate change, by facilitating the sharing of JICA’s cooperation outcomes and assets, promoting project development in collaboration with a wide range of domestic and international partners, including international organizations, donors, local governments, and private companies, and encouraging information dissemination by relevant institutions.

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### (Measures against marine plastic litter)

Marine litter (floating, washed ashore, and seabed waste) causes a variety of problems, including the deterioration of the marine environment, including ecosystems, the decline of coastal functions, negative impacts on landscapes, obstacles to navigation, and effects on fisheries and tourism. Marine litter ranges from man-made items to natural objects like driftwood, but a significant portion of the

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<sup>28</sup> PRTR: Pollutant Release and Transfer Register A system that requires businesses to identify and report the amounts of chemical substances released into or transferred within the environment to the national government.

<sup>29</sup> ICCM5: The 5th session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management




collected and processed marine debris consists of plastic waste. In recent years, the impact of microplastics (tiny plastics generally considered to be less than 5mm in size) on marine ecosystems has become a concern and a global issue.

Japan has been actively addressing plastic pollution, including marine litter, both domestically and internationally. At the 2019 G20 Osaka Summit, Japan proposed the “Osaka Blue Ocean Vision,” which aims to reduce additional pollution from marine plastic litter to zero by 2050. Furthermore, at the 2023 G7 Hiroshima Summit, Japan took the lead in securing agreement on ambitious commitments related to plastic pollution.

Amid these developments, a resolution was adopted at the United Nations Environment Assembly held from February to March 2022 to establish an Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) to develop an international legally binding instrument (treaty) on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment. The resolution aimed to complete the work by the end of 2024, calling for the INC to commence in late 2022. Following an open-ended working group session in Senegal from May to June 2022, the first session of the INC was held in Uruguay from November to December 2022, formally initiating treaty negotiations. Subsequent meetings included the second session in France from May to June 2023, which discussed treaty elements, the third session in Kenya in November 2023, which focused on the treaty's zero draft, and the fourth session in Canada in April 2024, which negotiated based on a revised text draft. The fifth session, initially planned as the final negotiation meeting, took place in the Republic of Korea from November to December 2024. During this session, discussions on draft articles progressed, and the chair presented a new draft text, indicating some advancement. However, differences remained among countries regarding issues such as plastic production, regulation of specific plastic products and chemicals, and financial cooperation for treaty implementation, preventing substantive agreement on the draft text. Consequently, it was decided to continue negotiations at a reconvened meeting, confirming that the entire draft text remains under negotiation. The reconvened meeting is scheduled to take place in Switzerland in August 2025.

Japan has contributed significantly by providing a vice-chair of the INC as well as a representative for the Asia-Pacific region, fostering common understanding among nations. Moving forward, Japan will continue to actively contribute to discussions aiming for an effective and progressive treaty involving many countries, including major consumers and emitters of plastic, working towards an early conclusion of negotiations.

Also, as for the domestic measures, based on relevant laws and basic policies, Japan is promoting the collection and treatment of marine litter, the prevention of its generation, fact-finding surveys, and the accumulation of scientific knowledge. In addition to providing financial support to local governments for promoting regional measures against marine debris such as beach litter, Japan has been developing awareness-raising websites and implementing model projects in collaboration with local governments and private companies. The country has also advanced efforts to consolidate data and conduct surveys, while working on the revision of the “Guidelines for Harmonizing Ocean Surface Microplastic Monitoring Methods,” which were published in 2019, to promote international harmonization of microplastic monitoring methods. In 2024, Japan established a global data-sharing system for



microplastic monitoring, the Atlas of Ocean Microplastics (AOMI), and began providing data through the platform. To promote international information sharing on these measures, Japan has been working together with the G20 Presidency each year to compile progress reports under the G20 Implementation Framework for Actions on Marine Plastic Litter, while also advancing various forms of international cooperation. Furthermore, in accordance with the Act on Prevention of Marine Pollution and Maritime Disaster, Japan has in principle prohibited the dumping of waste and other materials from vessels into the ocean, and appropriately operates the permit system for the ocean dumping of dredged sediment. Through these measures, Japan is ensuring the proper implementation of international conventions aimed at preventing marine pollution, including the 1996 Protocol to the London Convention.

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#### (Biodiversity and nature-positive)

As a response to the “Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework,” Japan formulated the “National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan of Japan 2023-2030” in 2023, and has promoted related policies with the aim of realizing nature-positive by 2030. For example, to achieve the “30by30 target,” which aims to effectively conserve 30% or more of Japan’s land and marine areas as healthy ecosystems by 2030, Japan is working not only to expand protected areas such as national parks, but also to identify and manage areas outside protected areas that contribute to biodiversity conservation, known as OECMs<sup>30</sup>. In particular, to promote the designation of OECMs, Japan launched a certification system to recognize areas where biodiversity is conserved through activities by private entities and other stakeholders as “Nationally Certified Sustainably Managed Natural Sites.” As of October 2024, 253 sites had been certified. In April 2024, Japan promulgated the Act on Promoting Activities to Enhance Regional Biodiversity to further encourage efforts by private entities and others toward achieving a nature-positive society, including through OECMs.

In 2024, Japan formulated the Transition Strategies toward Nature Positive Economy. The strategy outlines the need for companies to shift toward nature positive management, key elements to be addressed in the transition process, specific examples of emerging business opportunities, and government measures to support this shift. As of October 2024, the number of Japanese companies endorsing the TNFD (Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures) Recommendations exceeds 125, making Japan the global leader and accounting for one-fourth of the total worldwide. This reflects the increasing enthusiasm of Japanese companies towards promoting nature-positive initiatives.

To promote sustainable forest management, efforts have been made to establish a cycle of harvesting, using, planting, and raising forest resources. These include promoting reforestation after harvesting and the development of forest road networks. In order to contribute to the promotion of sustainable forest management at the international level, Japan has supported private-sector initiatives such as REDD+<sup>31</sup> and afforestation/reforestation activities, also promoted the overseas transfer of forest-

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<sup>30</sup> OECM; Other Effective area-based Conservation Measures

<sup>31</sup> REDD+ : Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation, and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries. .

related technologies to strengthen disaster prevention and mitigation capacities in developing countries. Furthermore, Japan is implementing nature conservation projects in approximately 40 countries, including those in the Amazon region of South America, Africa, and Southeast Asia, with the aim of enhancing forest management capacities, restoring forests and wetlands, and promoting CO<sub>2</sub> absorption through the introduction of NbS<sup>32</sup> in developing countries.

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<sup>32</sup> Nbs: Nature based solution

## Column 10: Japan's efforts toward a society living in harmony with nature and GREEN×EXPO 2027

In an era when the concept of planetary boundaries is gaining increasing attention, two of the most critical challenges that will significantly affect the future of human life are climate change and the loss of biodiversity. These issues are closely interconnected. Since the adoption of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Convention on Biological Diversity in 1992, global efforts have accelerated, leading to the adoption of the Paris Agreement in 2015 and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework in 2022. At present, countries around the world are working toward achieving the targets set for 2030.

Japan has implemented numerous initiatives aimed at realizing a society living in harmony with nature. Among them, a notable example of an internationally recognized effort that incorporates Japan's own knowledge is the SATOYAMA Initiative, which was jointly proposed with the United Nations University at the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP10). The initiative aims to realize a society living in harmony with nature by promoting the international conservation and sustainable use of secondary natural environments through the integration of traditional knowledge and practices rooted in the views of nature and social systems across the world, including Japan, with modern science and technology.

Against this backdrop, the 1990 International Garden and Greenery Exposition in Osaka introduced the concept of “coexistence between humans and nature” to the world two years prior to the adoption of the Conventions in 1992. Furthermore, the 2005 World Exposition in Aichi, under the theme of “Nature's Wisdom,” played a significant role in raising public awareness of the importance of living in harmony with nature. In this way, the international expositions held in Japan have played an important role as forerunners of global dialogue, encouraging action toward the resolution of global challenges.

GREEN × EXPO 2027 (Official name: International Horticultural Expo 2027, Yokohama, Japan, to be held from March 19 to September 26, 2027) adopts the theme “Scenery of the Future for Happiness,” with a commitment to tackling global challenges. In response to global environmental changes such as climate change, Japan seeks to re-evaluate the wisdom and cultural practices rooted in its long-standing relationship with nature, practices that integrate the diverse functions of the natural environment into everyday life. These values are being leveraged to contribute to the formation of a sustainable society. The exposition also aims to promote global horticultural culture, realize a fulfilling lifestyle surrounded by flowers, greenery, and agriculture, and foster a society where happiness is deepened through the participation of diverse stakeholders.

The venue will be the former Kamiseya Communication Facility, an extensive 242-hectare site that was returned by the U.S. military in 2015, with approximately 100 hectares designated as the

exposition area. As this vast land had long been subject to land use restrictions, it retains a rich natural environment, including farmland, grasslands, and valuable natural assets such as river headwaters and distinctive valley landscapes. Development of the venue is being carried out based on Nature-Based Design, making use of its rich natural capital.

The Basic Policy on the Promotion of Measures for the Preparation and Operation of the International Horticultural Expo 2027 (GREEN×EXPO 2027), adopted at Relevant Ministers Meeting on the International Horticultural Expo 2027, identifies contribution to the achievement of the SDGs as one of its fundamental principles. As the exposition will take place three years prior to the SDGs target year of 2030, it is positioned as an opportunity to promote initiatives in fields closely linked to the natural environment, to contribute to the realization of a nature-positive society, a circular economy, green transformation (GX), and a green society, and to share new initiatives by diverse stakeholders with a view toward the post-2030 era. Preparations are underway accordingly.

The Japan Association for the International Horticultural Expo 2027, Yokohama, a public interest incorporated association, the organizer of GREEN×EXPO 2027, has formulated a Sustainability Strategy to deepen its efforts toward sustainability, and is promoting environmental measures through initiatives aimed at realizing green transformation (GX) and a nature-positive society. As one of the initiatives, standardized reusable components will be used in temporary structures such as those for exhibitions within the venue to reduce environmental impact. At the same time, the venue will make use of “GX HOUSE,” a reusable building designed to achieve zero waste throughout its lifecycle, from material procurement, construction, operation, dismantling, and reuse. In addition, preparations are underway to create a new generation of exposition through the “Village” co-creation initiative, which combines a variety of exhibits, experiential programs, and other elements to embody the theme, “Scenery of the Future for Happiness.”



Venue rendering: Main garden

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## (Universal Health Coverage)

In May 2022, Japan formulated its Global Health Strategy, which sets as policy objectives the strengthening of prevention, preparedness, and response (PPR<sup>33</sup>) to public health emergencies, as well as the achievement of a more resilient, equitable, and sustainable UHC. Based on this strategy, Japan is involved in governance and strategic planning as a board member of the Global Fund, which implements measures against the three major infectious diseases (AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria) and strengthens health systems worldwide. Additionally, Japan contributes to the Gavi Vaccine Alliance, promoting vaccine introduction, health system enhancement, and immunization initiatives in low- and middle-income countries. Furthermore, Japan supports the Pandemic Fund established at the World Bank in 2022 to strengthen pandemic preparedness and response (PPR) in low- and middle-income countries. Japan also engages in continuous and strategic contributions, governance, strategy formulation, and leadership with international organizations such as the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) and the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF), which focus on maternal and child health issues. Japan promotes multilateral cooperation, strengthens collaboration with diverse stakeholders, including civil society, and undertakes bilateral assistance in health system strengthening, infectious disease control measures, maternal and child health/sexual and reproductive health support, and non-communicable disease control measures.

At the G7 Hiroshima Summit 2023, Japan, as the Presidency, took the lead in discussions on global health, focusing on building and strengthening global health architecture for public health crisis response, contributing to achieving more resilient, equitable, and sustainable Universal Health Coverage (UHC), and promoting health innovation to address various health challenges. As part of these efforts, Japan announced the “G7 Hiroshima Vision for Equitable Access to Medical Countermeasures” and launched the “Medical Countermeasures Delivery Partnership (MCDP)” to improve equitable access to medical countermeasures (MCM<sup>34</sup>) such as vaccines during infectious disease crises. Following the G7 Hiroshima Summit, efforts to achieve UHC continued, and in September 2023, during the UHC High-Level Meeting held on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly, Prime Minister Kishida reiterated the need for action towards achieving UHC. Regarding the amendment of the International Health Regulations (IHR) (2005), discussions took place in member state working groups, leading to the adoption of the amendment proposal submitted by several WHO Member States including Japan at the 77th World Health Assembly in May-June 2024. Additionally, discussions were held at the intergovernmental negotiating body on a new instrument on pandemic prevention, preparedness and response (PPR)<sup>33</sup>, with the aim of adopting for the text of the WHO Pandemic Agreement at the 78th World Health Assembly in May 2025. These efforts have contributed to the development and strengthening of the "Global Health Architecture."

At the G7 Hiroshima Summit, the “Impact Investment Initiative for Global Health (Triple I)” was endorsed with a view to addressing global health challenges by mobilizing private capital through

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<sup>33</sup> PPR: Pandemic Prevention, Preparedness and Response

<sup>34</sup> MCM: Medical Counter Measures



impact investment. Subsequently, at a side event of the United Nations General Assembly in September 2023, Prime Minister Kishida officially announced the launch of the initiative. Since its launch with 37 partner organizations, the number of partners had grown to over 100 worldwide as of January 2025, and continues to expand.

At a high-level event on Universal Health Coverage (UHC) held during the International Monetary Fund (IMF)–World Bank Spring Meetings in April 2024, Japan announced that it would establish a “UHC Knowledge Hub” in the country in 2025, in collaboration with the World Bank and WHO. The initiative aims to support efforts toward achieving UHC in developing countries, particularly through human resource-building for financial and health officials. Preparations for the launch are currently underway. Additionally, at the World Health Assembly in May 2024, Japan officially announced its participation in the "Alliance for Transformative Action on Climate and Health (ATACH)" aimed at building climate resilient, low-carbon, and sustainable healthcare systems in response to climate change.

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### (Utilization of Space Technology)


The utilization of space technology is a crucial element in achieving the SDGs, and Japan is employing space technology across a wide array of fields, including Earth environment observation, natural disaster response, agricultural efficiency, and the mitigation of space debris.

The Japanese Experiment Module "Kibo" on the International Space Station (ISS) significantly contributes to research, development and utilization programs aimed at achieving the SDGs, for example by enabling various scientific experiments under the microgravity environment<sup>35</sup> that are difficult to conduct on Earth. For example, in pharmaceutical development, protein crystal generation experiments in the microgravity environment of Kibo can produce higher-quality crystals than those obtained on Earth, allowing for high-precision structural analysis of protein crystals. This contributes to the development of effective therapeutic drugs for muscular dystrophy and influenza.

Additionally, the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) develops and operates various space technologies. JAXA's "Risk Avoidance assist tool based on debris collision proBaBiliTy (RABBIT)" is a system that predicts collision risks by space debris with satellites and spacecrafts, supporting appropriate avoidance actions. It monitors the position and orbit of debris in real-time, calculates collision probabilities, and issues warnings. By mitigating space debris generation, enhancing the safety and sustainability of space activities, and avoiding collision risks with satellites and spacecrafts,

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<sup>35</sup> Even in outer space at an altitude of around 400 km, where the ISS operate, there is a small amount of gas (upper atmosphere) that exerts resistance on spacecraft, resulting in acceleration (deceleration G). Additionally, acceleration can occur when moving away from the center of mass (CP) of a structure where the forces of Earth's gravity and inertia balance. Although these accelerations (G) are very small, they affect the ISS, which is why it is referred to as a "microgravity" environment rather than "zero gravity."



the system supports sustainable economic growth through protecting critical infrastructure such as communications, weather observation, and Earth environment observation.

Furthermore, Japan utilizes space technology to support sustainable development in developing countries. For example, JICA and JAXA utilize the "JICA-JAXA Forest Early Warning System in the Tropics (JJ-FAST)" to contribute to the reduction of illegal logging. This system uses data from the "ALOS-2" satellite, which can observe regardless of weather or cloud conditions, to detect tropical deforestation at an early stage. It identified illegal logging in 78 countries. JICA also conducts training programs on space technology for engineers and scientists in developing countries, aiming to enhance local capabilities and strengthen the foundation for sustainable development.

## Priority Area (iv)

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Cooperation and  
collaboration with the  
international community





#### Priority Area (iv): Cooperation and collaboration with the international community

A sustainable economy and society cannot be built by Japan alone. Despite the various efforts and initiatives undertaken by the international community, including Japan, the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) faces significant challenges. In particular, there is growing global concern over the need to address funding shortages in developing countries and to strengthen multilateral cooperation centered on the United Nations.


Although Japan faces one of the most severe fiscal situations among developed countries, it has continued to provide Official Development Assistance (ODA) based on the concept of human security. With the international target of allocating 0.7% of Gross National Income (GNI) to ODA in mind, Japan is committed to expanding its ODA in various forms, while fully taking into account its extremely severe domestic fiscal situation. Japan's total ODA in 2023 was approximately 19,600.37 million US dollars, according to the Grant Equivalent System introduced as the standard for measuring ODA by the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC), making Japan the third-largest donor among the members of DAC, following the United States and Germany. Japan's ODA as a percentage of GNI increased from 0.20% in 2015, the year the 2030 Agenda was adopted, to 0.44% in 2023 (see “5 Progress toward each goal,” Goal 17 for details). Additionally, about 70 years ago, when Japan was still receiving support from the international community after World War II, international cooperation funded by Japanese private sectors began with the spread of "UNICEF fundraising" in elementary and junior high schools nationwide. In recent years, this private sector-led international cooperation has steadily expanded in scale, and various forms of public-private partnerships have also progressed.

In an era marked by the accumulation of new challenges for which clear solutions have yet to be found, addressing increasingly serious global issues requires that diverse stakeholders bring together their respective strengths under shared goals and work collaboratively through dialogue to create solutions. Based on this perspective, Japan's development cooperation has set forth a direction focused on creating new value through “co-creation” with a variety of stakeholders, including the mobilization of private-sector funds. Amid the vast demand for development finance, Japan aims to realize a new framework for international cooperation by jointly promoting the mobilization of private capital, catalyzed by ODA, and strengthening collaboration with partners who possess the capacity to address domestic and global challenges. The value generated through such efforts will be circulated between developing countries and Japan. In light of the expected contraction of Japan's domestic market, it is essential to support Japanese businesses in playing a greater role in addressing social challenges in developing and emerging countries. From this perspective as well, Japan will continue to promote the mobilization of private-sector funds through ODA and other means.

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#### (Revision of the Development Cooperation Charter)

In June 2023, Japan revised its Development Cooperation Charter. In the international community facing multiple, interconnected crises, Japan has positioned a new era of “human security” as its guiding principle, one that not only emphasizes investment in people, such as protection and empowerment of individuals, but also places importance on “solidarity” with diverse stakeholders.



“Leading international efforts to addressing increasingly complex and serious global issues” was clearly stated in priority policies. While continuing to work on cooperation for vulnerable countries and regions, etc., a policy was set out to drive international cooperation by accelerating efforts aimed at achieving the SDGs based on the philosophy of “human security,” and strengthen comprehensive efforts to resolve global issues.

In addition, as one of the implementation principles for ensuring the appropriateness of development cooperation, Japan has introduced the promotion of inclusive societies, including gender mainstreaming, and ensuring fairness. Japan is committed to ensuring that its development cooperation fully takes into account fairness, with the aim of promoting a diverse and inclusive society in which all people, including women and those in socially vulnerable positions, can participate in and benefit from development.

Furthermore, to enhance the strategic value of its development cooperation, Japan has newly introduced an “Co-creation for common agenda initiative”, through which it proposes cooperation packages that leverage its own strengths. For example, in 2023, Japan reached an agreement with Cambodia on a cooperation package in the digital field to support the development of a digital economy and society. In 2024, it agreed with Fiji on a cooperation package in the areas of disaster prevention and climate change, aimed at strengthening disaster prevention and early warning systems in Fiji and the wider Pacific region. Japan aims to work together with a wide range of partners through development platforms, not only to solve development challenges in developing countries, but also to respond to global, complex crises in solidarity. Through these efforts, Japan seeks the co-creation of social values that can be embraced by the international community as a whole.

Recognizing the importance of “human security,” a concept at the core of the SDGs, Japan has made annual contributions to the Human Security Fund. Japan is virtually the only donor to this fund, and its largest contributor. In individual development projects, Japan has placed “protection” and “empowerment” at the center, while also emphasizing people-centered, inclusive, context-specific, and preventive approaches. Based on these principles, joint initiatives involving multiple UN agencies have been implemented in a broad and cross-sectoral manner, in collaboration with NGOs. As of the end of 2024, Japan has contributed a cumulative total of approximately 51.9 billion Japanese yen (about 472.03 million US dollars) to the Human Security Trust Fund.



## Column 11: International expansion of community-based initiatives based on partnership: Lake Biwa's "UMINOKO" as a model for environmental education in developing countries

Shiga Prefecture, known as a leader in environmental initiatives, has developed a unique environmental education program in which local fifth-grade students board an environmental learning ship called UMINOKO (officially named the Lake Biwa Floating School). Launched in 1983 with the aim of encouraging students to take active ownership in protecting Lake Biwa's environment, the program had reached a cumulative total of approximately 630,000 participants by the end of December 2024, equivalent to more than 40 percent of Shiga Prefecture's population.

In the Lake Biwa Floating School program, students from multiple schools take part in a two-day, one-night voyage, during which they learn and live together with peers from other schools. During the voyage, students take part in recreational activities such as observing the islands of Lake Biwa, participating in walk rallies at port towns, and joining inter-school exchange events. Through these experiences, they learn the importance of helping one another within a group. As part of the environmental learning program, students engage in hands-on activities such as observing plankton, fish, and shellfish, measuring water clarity, and conducting experiments on water purification. The learning content is selectable by each school, and it has evolved over time in response to changing awareness of environmental issues.

All meals provided in the program incorporate locally produced ingredients from Shiga Prefecture, contributing to food and nutrition education for the participating students. Among the meals served, the "UMINOKO Curry," featuring a pork cutlet made from locally raised Shiga pork, is especially memorable. It has become a cherished taste that every student who boards the ship remembers fondly. In addition, the UMINOKO operates using a fuel mixture in which biodiesel fuel (BDF) is blended at a ratio of 1-part BDF to 10 parts conventional fuel. In January 2025, the UMINOKO program received 30 t-CO<sub>2</sub> of Lake Biwa Carbon Credits from The Shiga Bank, enabling it to offset a portion of the greenhouse gas emissions generated during its operations.

The expertise developed through the UMINOKO program is now being utilized in environmental education at Lake Managua, located in the capital city of Managua in Nicaragua, which is the second poorest country in Central America after Haiti.

Lake Managua, which is 1.5 times the size of Lake Biwa, has been undergoing development as a tourism resource, while at the same time suffering from severe water pollution caused by inflows of domestic wastewater and other contaminants. The JICA Nicaragua Office, which had been supporting primary education and other initiatives in the country, sought ways to improve the environmental conditions of Lake Managua. While studying both domestic and international examples, the office took note of Shiga Prefecture's "Lake Biwa Model," a successful case of achieving environmental conservation and restoration, as well as economic development.

In 2020, the JICA Nicaragua Office established the BIWAKO Task Force to address the challenges of environmental conservation in Lake Managua. With support from the Shiga Prefectural Board of Education and personnel involved in the Floating School program, the task force steadily advanced its activities, leading to the launch of a “Nicaraguan UMINOKO” in 2021.

In the Nicaraguan UMINOKO, a boat normally used for tourism is repurposed to offer approximately two hours of experiential learning for fourth- and fifth-grade students. After observing the lake surface, which appeared dirty and brown or green, floating debris, and aquatic organisms using a microscope, they will discuss what can be done to clean Lake Managua's water. For many students, it is their first time boarding a boat, and much like the original UMINOKO program, the experience becomes a lifelong memory shared with classmates, and a step toward nurturing future environmental leaders.

The Nicaraguan version of UMINOKO has been highly praised by both students and teachers who have taken part in the onboard learning experience. It was introduced to the world by Nicaragua’s Minister of Education at the 26th session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP26) in 2021.

Ongoing dialogue between Nicaraguan educators and members of the “Lake Biwa Floating School” continues to support the enrichment of the Nicaraguan UMINOKO program, with hopes that it will be implemented in a more sustained and expanded manner in the future.



UMINOKO

Reference: Coco Shiga website <https://cocoshiga.jp/official/topic/uminoko/>

Offset: <https://uminoko.jp/topics/2025/3853/>

Reference: [https://uminoko.jp/files/child/NicaraguaUMINOKO\\_C.pdf](https://uminoko.jp/files/child/NicaraguaUMINOKO_C.pdf)

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(Co-creation through “quality infrastructure” and “investment in people”)


Japan has been promoting “investment in people” through initiatives such as training programs and study abroad opportunities, while also fostering collaboration with diverse stakeholders and mobilizing new sources of funding. At the same time, Japan has worked to develop “quality infrastructure” that considers transparency, openness, economic efficiency in view of life-cycle cost, and debt sustainability. Japan has been promoting the development of “quality infrastructure” in line with the economic and development strategies of each developing country, by combining the development of infrastructure on structural aspects, contributing to quality growth in a particular country or region, with cooperation on non-structural aspects, such as institutional development, management and maintenance, and human resource development.

For example, in the agricultural sector, Japan has worked to establish data infrastructure in Southeast Asia by utilizing satellite imagery and other technologies to promote smart agriculture. The development of farmland attribute information is expected to enable the efficient implementation of agricultural policies and encourage private sector participation. Furthermore, under the Asia Health and Wellbeing Initiative (AHWIN), the Africa Health and Wellbeing Initiative (AfHWIN) and the Global Health Strategy, Japan has been strengthening human resource development in the healthcare and long-term care sectors, supporting to achieve Universal Health Coverage (UHC).

On the infrastructure front, Japan has strengthened transportation infrastructure and power connectivity through investment and financing via the Asian Development Bank (ADB) by JICA, as well as through the framework of the Japan-ASEAN Comprehensive Connectivity Initiative. Japan has continued to raise funds through the JICA Bond, the country's first social bond, and since 2023, has expanded its issuance as a sustainability bond.

To promote the development and expansion of water infrastructure overseas, Japan has been continuously conducting feasibility studies (F/S), engaging in policy dialogue with partner countries, and inviting key foreign officials to Japan. These efforts support the introduction of high-quality Japanese water infrastructure and related equipment, as well as encourage increased business investment by Japanese companies. Since June 2019, Japan has been supporting a public-private platform composed of companies, industry associations, and local governments involved in overseas water-related businesses. In collaboration with relevant organizations, Japan has also dispatched mission teams and undertaken other initiatives to help improve water conditions in Asia and other regions.

Japan has been making annual contributions to the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), with the aim of enhancing the efficiency of the United Nations, maintaining peace and security, and promoting economic and social development. UNITAR’s core mandate includes providing training for administrative officials, primarily from developing countries, and conducting research related to the functions and objectives of the United Nations. For example, in fiscal year 2023, Japan contributed to several training programs, including: (1) women's leadership in tsunami disaster risk reduction; (2) the G7 Hiroshima Summit legacy project, Shimanami Collective: Sea and Human Security for Free and Open Indo-Pacific and ; (3) Shimanami Collective: Rapid Response to Climate



Crises Through Early Warning Systems; (4) Food and Economic Security through Entrepreneurship Training for Women and Youth in Afghanistan; (5) Confidence Building in the ASEAN Region; and (6) Emergency Assistance for Egypt, Iraq, and Lebanon: Fighting Food Insecurity Through Entrepreneurship. These training programs have been implemented by UNITAR in fiscal year 2024.

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(Strengthening multilateralism with the United Nations at its core)

The United Nations, endowed with legitimacy grounded in both universality and expertise, plays an extremely important role in rule-making and international cooperation to address various global challenges. Japan has consistently demonstrated its commitment to strengthening multilateralism with the United Nations at its core and has placed great importance on cooperation with the United Nations and other international organizations. For example, approximately 18.5% of Japan's ODA has been allocated to multilateral institutions, through which Japan has worked to strengthen collaboration with these institutions. At the same time, Japan has aimed to increase the number of Japanese nationals working in UN-related agencies to 1,000 by 2025. As of the end of 2023, the number of Japanese professionals serving in UN-related agencies had reached 958, enhancing its presence within the international organizational framework. Moreover, as mentioned in Priority Area (iii), Japan has taken a leading role in the development of international rules to ensure the sustainability of the global community in fields such as the environment, global health, and artificial intelligence.

## Priority Area (v)

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Integrated promotion of  
sustaining peace and  
sustainable development







## Priority Area (v): Integrated promotion of sustaining peace and sustainable development

In recent years, the international community has witnessed an intensification and expansion of division and confrontation, including attempts to unilaterally change the status quo by force. Such developments not only undermine the foundation of international cooperation, which is essential for achieving the sustainability of the global community, but also lead to surging energy and food prices and destabilized supply chains, making it even more difficult for vulnerable countries to secure their own sustainable growth and prosperity.

Taking these points into account, Japan, recognizing that sustainable development and sustaining peace are inseparable, has positioned its contribution to “nation-building” and “human resource development” based on the concept of human security as the fundamental stance of its international cooperation efforts and has been actively engaged in this endeavor. Japan also promotes the “Women, Peace and Security (WPS)” agenda, recognizing that the equal and full participation of women is essential for achieving international peace, conflict prevention, and conflict resolution. Furthermore, the political and socioeconomic participation of young people is important, and efforts are also being made to promote “Youth, Peace, and Security (YPS).”

Through these activities, Japan has contributed to maintaining a free and open international order, realizing peace agreements in conflict-affected areas, and supporting their subsequent development.

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### (UN Peacekeeping Operations)

Since 1992, Japan has been providing personnel and material support for international peace efforts, centered on the United Nations, based on the Act on Cooperation for United Nations Peacekeeping Operations (PKO<sup>36</sup>) and Other Operations (the International Peace Cooperation Act).

As of March 2025, Japan has conducted 29 international peace cooperation assignments and dispatched a cumulative total of approximately 12,700 personnel as part of its personnel cooperation efforts. Since the previous VNR in 2021, this represents an increase of one operation and approximately 200 additional personnel. In 2022, Japan conducted an international peace cooperation assignment to assist those affected by the crisis in Ukraine, airlifting humanitarian relief supplies (such as blankets) provided by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, to neighboring countries of Ukraine, namely the Republic of Poland and Romania, using Self-Defense Forces aircraft. As of March 2025, Japan has dispatched six Ground Self-Defense Force personnel to the headquarters of the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS) and four Ground Self-Defense Force personnel to the headquarters of the Multinational Force and Observers (MFO) in the Sinai Peninsula.

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<sup>36</sup> PKO: Peacekeeping Operations

With regard to material cooperation, Japan has provided humanitarian relief supplies (such as blankets) in a total of 32 operations to date. Since the last VNR was conducted in 2021, Japan has carried out three additional operations. In 2022, Japan provided support for those affected by the crisis in Ukraine, and in 2024, it carried out support operations for those affected in Palestine and Lebanon.

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#### (Efforts to address piracy off the coast of Somalia and in the Gulf of Aden)

Since July In 2009, Japan launched the anti-piracy measures operations deploying Self-Defense Forces vessels and aircrafts off the coast of Somalia and in the Gulf of Aden, based on the “Act of Punishment and Countermeasures against Piracy”. Since 2013, in order to conduct operations more flexible and effective, Japan has participated in Combined Task Force 151 (CTF 151), a multinational force engaged in anti-piracy operations. As of March 2025, the Self-Defense Forces are using one destroyer and one P-3C patrol aircraft to escort private vessels and conduct surveillance operations. Between April 2021 and March 2025, the 38th to the 50th Deployment Surface Force for Counter Piracy Enforcement (DSPE, deploying the Destroyer) and the 42nd to the 56th Deployment Air Force for Counter-Piracy Enforcement (DAPE, deploying P-3C) served in this operation. As a result of the efforts of Japan and the broader international community, the number of piracy-related incidents, which had exceeded 200 cases annually at its peak, has remained at a low level.

Japan has also contributed for strengthening maritime security capabilities in Somalia and neighboring countries by supporting the establishment of training centers and piracy information sharing centers, as well as the implementation of training programs, through contributions to the Djibouti Code of Conduct Trust Fund administered by the International Maritime Organization (IMO). In addition, the reconstruction and stabilization of Somalia are essential for a fundamental resolution of the piracy issue off its coast. Since 2007, Japan has provided approximately 615 million US dollars in assistance to Somalia, focusing on areas such as security enhancement, humanitarian aid, and infrastructure development.

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#### (HDP Nexus and WPS)

Japan has been working to support refugees and stabilize host countries based on the "HDP Nexus"<sup>37</sup> approach, which integrates humanitarian assistance, development cooperation, and peacebuilding efforts. This approach involves providing humanitarian aid while simultaneously promoting self-reliance among refugees, reducing the burden on host countries through development cooperation, and

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<sup>37</sup> HDP Nexus (Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus):

An approach that integrates short-term humanitarian assistance with medium- to long-term development cooperation to promote the self-reliance of refugees and reduce the burden on host countries, while also advancing peacebuilding efforts aimed at resolving and preventing conflicts, which are the root causes of refugee crises.


advancing initiatives for conflict resolution and prevention, which are the root causes of displacement. Japan has particularly strengthened its support in the Middle East and Africa.

Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) is a concept that emphasizes the importance of women's participation in the leadership roles in conflict prevention, recovery, and peacebuilding, while protecting and providing relief to women and girls, with the aim of achieving a more sustainable peace. Japan formulated its Third National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) for the period 2023–2028 in 2023, to implement United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 and related resolutions, which clearly state the necessity of the equal and full participation of women, the protection from sexual violence in conflict, and the promotion of gender equality for achieving international peace, conflict prevention, and conflict resolution. Building on the experiences of the First and Second National Action Plans, the Third Plan addresses not only conflict-related situations but also natural disasters and climate change. Japan has also strengthened its efforts to enhance domestic capacities related to WPS and to eliminate violence against women.

Japan supports projects through contributions to UN Women, providing emergency humanitarian aid, economic support, protection from violence, and assistance in formulating WPS action plans for women and girls affected by conflicts and natural disasters in regions such as Asia, Africa, and the Middle East. Additionally, since 2014, through contributions to the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Japan supports projects to strengthen judicial and police systems and provide victim support in countries including the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Somalia, the Central African Republic, and Jordan. Through contributions to the Global Survivors Fund (GSF), Japan provides support for economic empowerment and awareness-raising activities to improve access to remedies for survivors of conflict-related sexual violence.

In 2025, Japan and Norway assume the role of Co-Chair of the WPS Focal Points Network and hosted the 7th Capital Level Meeting in Tokyo on February 4 to 6, 2025. The meeting highlighted the 25th anniversary of the adoption of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, reviewed the international community's efforts on WPS over the past 25 years, renewed commitments for the future in light of the current global situation, and deepened discussions on the future direction of the WPS agenda.

As part of its peacebuilding assistance through JICA, Japan has supported inclusive service delivery by local government in Mindanao, the Philippines, which has been affected by conflict for over 40 years; promoted infrastructure development and the expansion of administrative services to support the self-reliance of refugees and reduce the burden on host communities in countries such as Uganda and Zambia; and, in cooperation with Cambodia, with which Japan has collaborated for more than 25 years, strengthened response capacities and provided equipment for mine action and unexploded ordnance in countries such as Colombia and Ukraine, a prerequisite for recovery and reconstruction. In addition, in its support for improving refugee camps in Palestine, Japan has introduced mechanisms to reflect the needs of women, and across all of its projects, actively incorporates women's perspectives and promotes their proactive participation in peacebuilding.



Japan has also been engaged in the development of civilian personnel working in the fields of peacebuilding, development assistance, and humanitarian aid since 2007. In collaboration with United Nations agencies and other organizations, Japan has trained more than 1,000 personnel to date.

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#### (Promotion of the rule of law)

At the 14th United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (commonly known as the "Kyoto Congress"), held in Japan in 2021, the role of criminal justice in achieving the SDGs was discussed, and the "Kyoto Declaration," a medium- to long-term guideline for the field of crime prevention and criminal justice, was adopted. In order to demonstrate leadership in the implementation of the Kyoto Declaration, Japan has contributed to the promotion of the rule of law by establishing practitioner networks in various regions to advance international cooperation and by supporting efforts to prevent recidivism in countries around the world.

Japan has also contributed to strengthening the capacity of criminal justice practitioners by conducting international training programs through the United Nations Asia and Far East Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders (UNAFEI), which Japan operates in cooperation with the United Nations. These programs, targeting developing countries including those in the Asia-Pacific region and Africa, focus on topics such as countering organized crime, preventing corruption, and terrorism. Furthermore, through JICA, Japan has been implementing training programs related to improving access to justice, business law, international public law, anti-corruption measures, and business and human rights, as well as projects in Southeast Asia, South Asia, and Africa focused on areas such as legal and judicial system development, strengthening the functions of law enforcement and application, improving access to dispute resolution mechanisms, promoting the rehabilitation and reintegration of young offenders, and enhancing the capacities of law enforcement agencies.

Japan has established a specialized department within the Ministry of Justice, the International Cooperation Department (ICD) of the Research and Training Institute, dedicated to supporting legal system development. Through this department, Japan has been providing assistance primarily to Asian countries, including Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Indonesia, Mongolia, Bangladesh, East Timor, Sri Lanka, and Uzbekistan. The areas of support include legislative assistance, operational support, and human resource development in fields such as civil law, criminal law, commercial law, administrative law, civil procedure law, criminal procedure law, administrative procedure law, arbitration, and mediation. Furthermore, Japan is extending this support to Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan and plans to expand its activities to Pacific island countries and Africa as well. These initiatives to support legal system development contribute to strengthening the rule of law, while also helping to build peaceful and inclusive societies and to provide access to fair judicial systems.

Japan has also been making efforts to maintain international peace by supporting measures against organized crime, including cybercrime, and counterterrorism efforts through international organizations such as the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). As part of its efforts to promote the rule of law internationally, Japan has been hosting workshops by inviting foreign criminal justice practitioners, in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the United Nations

Asia and Far East Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders (UNAFEI), and the International Institute for Justice and the Rule of Law (IIJ). In February 2024, Japan organized a workshop by inviting participants from South Asia and Southeast Asia, with the aim of ensuring fair, transparent, and human rights-conscious procedures in the criminal justice processes of terrorism-related cases. In February 2025, Japan organized a workshop by inviting participants from five Central Asian countries, focusing on the investigation, prosecution, repatriation, and social reintegration of foreign terrorist fighters (FTF) originating from the region.

Furthermore, Japan cooperates with the development of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and the International Criminal Court (ICC), actively contributing to the peaceful resolution of international disputes and the promotion of the rule of law in the international community.

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#### (Efforts Toward Peace)

It is meaningful that Nihon Hidankyō (Japan Confederation of A- and H-Bomb Sufferers Organizations), which has been working for many years on elimination of nuclear weapons and promotion of understanding of the realities of nuclear weapons use, received the Nobel Peace Prize in December 2024. Japan will continue to uphold and strengthen efforts that contribute to lasting peace in the international community, including promoting a comprehensive and accurate understanding of the realities of the atomic bombings.

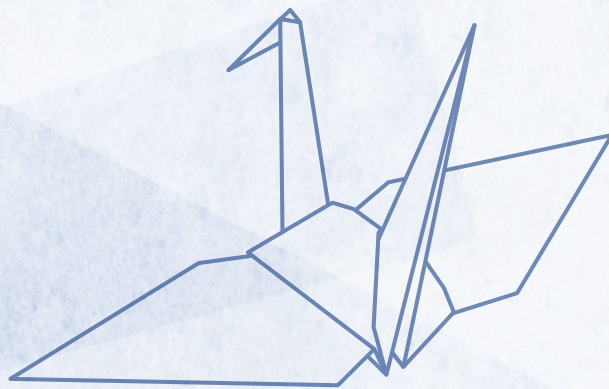




# Chapter 5

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## PROGRESS TOWARD EACH GOAL





## 5. Progress toward each goal

### Progress assessment by the government of Japan

Through the various initiatives outlined in "4. Japan's vision and efforts toward achieving the SDGs," Japan is now at a critical juncture where it must determine whether it can achieve a growth-oriented economy, leveraging a virtuous cycle of growth and distribution driven by innovation, while making progress toward a complete exit from the deflation that had persisted for 30 years and realizing significant wage increases. At the same time, Japan has also achieved progress in areas such as reducing greenhouse gas emissions toward achieving carbon neutrality by 2050 and strengthening resilience against disaster risks.

As a result of comprehensively reviewing the progress achieved through various initiatives, Japan confirmed advancements in several SDG targets, including Goal 3 (Good Health and Well-Being), Goal 8 (Economic Growth and Decent Work), Goal 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure), and Goal 13 (Climate Action).

On the other hand, with respect to such goals as Goal 5 (Gender Equality) and Goal 10 (Reduced Inequalities), several challenges have also been identified, although economic improvements such as expanded employment opportunities and the redistributive effects of social security systems and taxation have led to a generally stable or improving trend in indicators such as female employment rates and relative poverty.

Details are provided in the following section where the progress for each goal is reviewed.

The 2030 Agenda, which introduced the SDGs, positions the global indicators as a framework for following up on the 17 Goals and 169 targets. In line with this, the Government of Japan has also made Japan's data on the global indicators publicly available on its website, the "Japan SDGs Action Platform."<sup>38</sup> As of March 2025, 174 indicators have been published, with 36 new indicators developed since the previous VNR.

In the following progress assessment conducted by the Government of Japan, while reference is made to the targets associated with the SDGs and the related global indicator data, evaluations are carried out for each goal by also taking into account Japan's relative priorities and other factors, rather than being strictly bound by a single global framework.

<sup>38</sup> [https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/gaiko/oda/sdgs/statistics/data/21\\_SDG\\_indicator\\_data\\_list\(for\\_download\).xlsx](https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/gaiko/oda/sdgs/statistics/data/21_SDG_indicator_data_list(for_download).xlsx)

## Goal 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere



### (1) Average income

Based on the 2023 Comprehensive Survey of Living Conditions, which is not a direct indicator of Japan's progress toward this goal but focuses on domestic income and related factors, the average income per household in 2022 for "all households" was 5.242 million Japanese yen (approximately 39,000 US dollars<sup>39</sup>). Furthermore, the average income was 3.049 million Japanese yen (approximately 23,000 US dollars<sup>40</sup>) for elderly households, 6.511 million Japanese yen (approximately 49,000 US dollars<sup>41</sup>) for non-elderly households, and 8.126 million Japanese yen (approximately 67,000 US dollars<sup>42</sup>) for households with children.

### Annual Trends in Average Household Income by Household Type

| Household Type  | 2013  | 2014  | 2015  | 2016  | 2017  | 2018  | 2019 | 2020  | 2021  | 2022  |
|---|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------|-------|-------|-------|
| Year-on-Year Growth Rate                              |       |       |       |       |       |       |      |       |       |       |
| All households (10,000 yen)                           | 528.9 | 541.9 | 545.4 | 560.2 | 551.6 | 552.3 | ...  | 564.3 | 545.7 | 524.2 |
| Year-on-Year Change Rate (%)                          | -1.5  | 2.5   | 0.6   | 2.7   | -1.5  | 0.1   | ...  | ...   | -3.3  | -3.9  |
| Elderly households (10,000 yen)                       | 300.5 | 297.3 | 308.1 | 318.6 | 334.9 | 312.6 | ...  | 332.9 | 318.3 | 304.9 |
| Year-on-Year Change Rate (%)                          | -2.8  | -1.1  | 3.6   | 3.4   | 5.1   | -6.7  | ...  | ...   | -4.4  | -4.2  |
| Households other than elderly households (10,000 yen) | 615.2 | 636.4 | 638.0 | 656.3 | 653.2 | 659.3 | ...  | 685.9 | 665.0 | 651.1 |
| Year-on-Year Change Rate (%)                          | 0.8   | 3.4   | 0.3   | 2.9   | -0.5  | 0.9   | ...  | ...   | -3.0  | -2.1  |
| Households with children (10,000 yen)                 | 696.3 | 712.9 | 707.6 | 739.8 | 743.6 | 745.9 | ...  | 813.5 | 785.0 | 812.6 |
| Year-on-Year Change Rate (%)                          | 3.4   | 2.4   | -0.7  | 4.6   | 0.5   | 0.3   | ...  | ...   | -3.5  | 3.5   |

\*The figures for 2015 exclude Kumamoto Prefecture.

\*The survey covering 2019 income was not conducted in 2020.

<sup>39</sup> For reference, the Secretariat calculated the figures in US dollars based on the 2022 fiscal year's exchange rate of 1 USD = 133.85 Japanese yen.

<sup>40</sup> For reference, the Secretariat calculated the figures in US dollars based on the 2022 fiscal year's exchange rate of 1 USD = 133.85 Japanese yen.

<sup>41</sup> For reference, the Secretariat calculated the figures in US dollars based on the 2022 fiscal year's exchange rate of 1 USD = 133.85 Japanese yen.

<sup>42</sup> For reference, the Secretariat calculated the figures in US dollars based on the 2022 fiscal year's exchange rate of 1 USD = 133.85 Japanese yen.

## (2) Act for Supporting the Self-Reliance of Persons in Need

The Act for Supporting the Self-Reliance of Persons in Need came into force in April 2015. It provides consultation services for individuals facing financial hardship and offers various forms of support tailored to each person's circumstances, including employment assistance, housing support such as rent subsidies, and assistance with rebuilding household finances. Since the Act came into force, the cumulative number of new consultations received had reached approximately 3.153 million cases by fiscal year 2023.

In fiscal year 2020, when COVID-19 spread widely, the number of new consultations increased to 786,163 cases. However, the number subsequently declined, reaching 293,455 cases in fiscal year 2023 .

## (3) Public assistance

For individuals who remain in financial hardship despite utilizing all available assets, abilities, and other means, support is provided through the public assistance system, which aims to guarantee a minimum standard of living that is healthy and culturally adequate and to promote self-reliance. The number of public assistance recipients peaked in March 2015 and then began to decline, reaching approximately 2.01 million as of September 2024. On the other hand, the number of applications for public assistance has been increasing since the spread of COVID-19 in 2020, with the cumulative total for the nine months from January to September 2024 reaching approximately 200,000 cases.

## (4) Promotion of measures to eliminate child poverty

The child poverty rate<sup>43</sup>, based on the Comprehensive Survey of Living Conditions published in 2014, when the "General Principles of Policy on Child Poverty" was first formulated, was 16.3% for 2012. It subsequently declined to 14.0% in 2018, as reported in the previous VNR, and further dropped to 11.5% in 2021. Based on the "General Principles for Child-Related Measures" approved by the Cabinet in December 2023 and other related documents, Japan will continue to promote measures to eliminate child poverty.

## (5) International cooperation

In the Development Cooperation Charter revised in June 2023, "quality growth" in the new era and poverty eradication through such growth are designated as key policies, and it is stated that efforts will continue to cooperate with vulnerable countries and regions.

JICA has been promoting the Smallholder Horticulture Empowerment & Promotion (SHEP) approach, a market-oriented agricultural extension initiative designed to respect the autonomy of smallholder farmers and enhance their income levels. The SHEP approach, developed through technical cooperation with Kenya, is a JICA-led initiative that simultaneously pursues agricultural development

<sup>43</sup> Source: OECD "Income Distribution Database"



and poverty reduction. It has been confirmed to significantly increase the income of the farmers involved. As of March 2025, it has been implemented in approximately 60 countries around the world.

In addition, Japan has been working in collaboration with international financial institutions to implement measures aimed at reducing poverty and inequality in developing countries, including budget support for governments, community development, women's empowerment, and social protection programs.



## Goal 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture



### (1) Implementation of support by the government

The Government of Japan has been providing support through the school assistance program and the public assistance system, including subsidies for school meal costs and educational aid for low-income households. Japan aims to promote the practice of healthy eating habits and to maintain and improve health through the expansion and enhancement of school meal programs and the promotion of food and nutrition education. In addition, Japan is supporting the establishment of frameworks for collaboration among local stakeholders and promoting initiatives such as food banks and children's cafeterias, with the aim of improving the quality and quantity of food supplies provided to economically disadvantaged individuals. In addition, as part of food and nutrition education initiatives, the government is providing government-stockpiled rice free of charge to children's cafeterias and similar facilities.

According to the 2022 Survey on Daily Life and Mutual Support<sup>44</sup>, 11.1% of households reported having experienced, within the past year, an inability to purchase necessary food for their families due to financial reasons. An improvement can be observed compared to the 2017 figure of 16.9% cited in the previous VNR.

### (2) Regional initiatives

In recent years, initiatives such as children's cafeterias, which provide nutritious meals, warm communal spaces, and places for children to gather at little or no cost, have been spreading throughout communities. These initiatives offer nutritionally balanced meals and opportunities for communal dining to children who have difficulty accessing adequate meals or shared dining experiences at home. In addition, initiatives by food banks, which collect unused food donated by food companies and provide it to children's cafeterias and other similar facilities, have been expanding. As a result, the utilization of unused food to support those in need has been advancing.

### (3) Sustainable food systems

The "MIDORI Strategy for Sustainable Food Systems" sets 14 KPIs (Key Performance Indicators) for the vision to be achieved by 2050, including achieving zero CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in agriculture, forestry, and fisheries, and reducing the use of chemical fertilizers by 30%. In fiscal year 2022, CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from fuel combustion in the agriculture, forestry, and fisheries sectors amounted to 14.3 million t-CO<sub>2</sub>, representing a reduction of approximately 13.8% compared to fiscal year 2013. The use of chemical fertilizers totaled 810,000 tons in the 2022 fertilizer year, reflecting a decrease of approximately 11% compared to the 2016 fertilizer year. Efforts will continue to be promoted toward achieving the established targets.

<sup>44</sup> National Institute of Population and Social Security Research "Survey on Life and Support" (2022)  
[https://www.ipss.go.jp/ss-seikatsu/j/2022/SSPL2022\\_gaiyo/SSPL2022\\_gaiyo02.pdf](https://www.ipss.go.jp/ss-seikatsu/j/2022/SSPL2022_gaiyo/SSPL2022_gaiyo02.pdf)

#### (4) Tokyo Nutrition for Growth Summit 2021

At the Tokyo Nutrition for Growth Summit 2021 hosted by the Government of Japan in December 2021, Japan announced that Japan will provide nutrition-related overseas assistance, which will amount to over 300 billion Japanese yen (2.8 billion US dollars) for the next 3 years and contribute to the achievement of Universal Health Coverage (UHC), etc. Japan also stated that food industries can contribute to improvement of nutrition through innovation and pointed out the importance of changing behavior of individuals through Shokuiku (food and nutrition education) as well of assisting developing countries through public-private partnership and, amid concerns about more people suffer from malnutrition due to the spread of COVID-19, to work together to promote nutrition improvement.

At the Tokyo Nutrition for Growth Summit, a total of 396 commitments were submitted by all participating entities, and nutrition-related financial contributions totaling over 27 billion US dollars were announced, resulting in achievements that surpassed those of previous Nutrition for Growth Summits. Japan, based on its governmental commitments, is further promoting nutrition policies and, as part of these efforts, is working to create a healthy and sustainable food environment.

#### (5) International cooperation in agriculture

Japan has been working, in collaboration with G7, G20, and other relevant countries and international organizations, to ensure food security both domestically and globally. Efforts include promoting technical cooperation aimed at securing sustainability and enhancing productivity in the agriculture, forestry, and fisheries sectors, including reducing greenhouse gas emissions, as well as advancing the development of international standards related to food safety, animal health, and plant protection. Japan is also contributing to the promotion of the use of nuclear technology in areas such as crop improvement and pest control through contributions to the International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) "Atoms4Food" initiative.

JICA launched the Coalition for African Rice Development (CARD) and is contributing to food security by supporting the doubling of rice production in Africa. As of March 2025, 32 African countries are members of the CARD. In addition, efforts to improve nutrition in Africa are being carried out through the Initiative for Food and Nutrition Security in Africa (IFNA).

Furthermore, it is important to build an inclusive and sustainable food value chain that enhances value at each stage from agricultural production to processing, distribution, and consumption, while also creating a chain of added value across these stages. Through these efforts, initiatives are being implemented to reduce Food Loss and Waste, ensure a stable supply of safe and high-quality agricultural products to consumers, and contribute to increasing farmers' incomes.

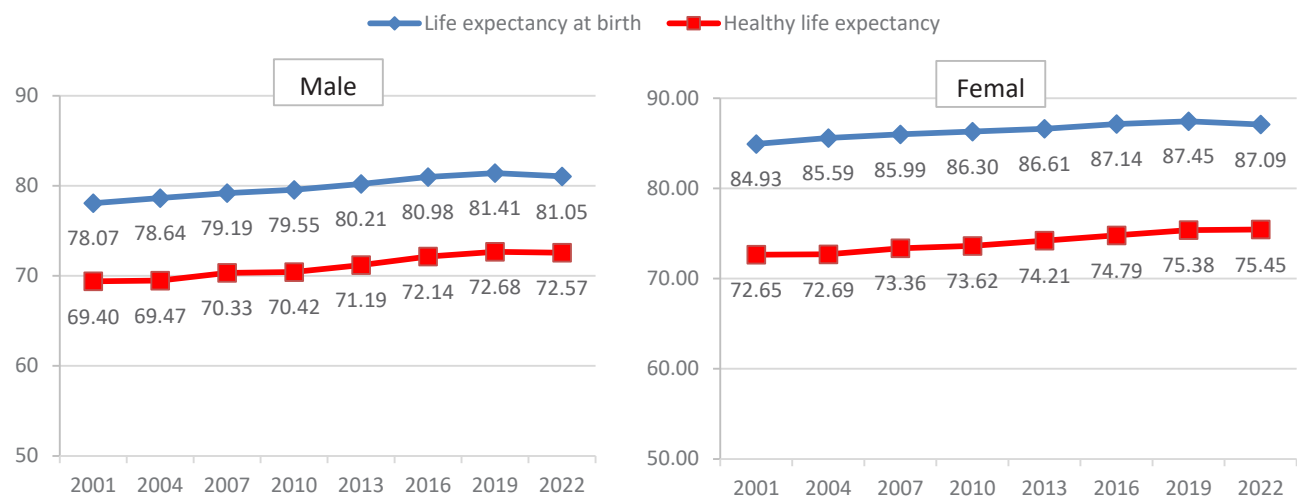
### Goal 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages



#### (1) Trend in life expectancy at birth and healthy life expectancy

In Japan, healthy life expectancy has been extended thanks to the results of various activities, including the establishment of basic legal systems and mechanisms, efforts by a wide range of entities, such as local public authorities, insurers, enterprises, educational institutions, and private organizations, as well as the utilization of data health and ICT, the development of social environment, and initiatives that incorporate new elements, such as nudges and incentives. Meanwhile, the final evaluation of the Health Japan 21 (the second term) also pointed out that some indicators, such as those related to preventing the onset of lifestyle-related diseases, had worsened. In light of such evaluations, the Health Japan 21 (the third term) has been launched since 2024 based on the Health Promotion Act, and health-related targets for the next 12 years have been set. In order to realize a sustainable society in which all citizens can live healthy and fulfilling lives, this plan aims to extend healthy life expectancy and reduce health disparities by improving the social environment surrounding individuals and improving the quality, in addition to improving individual behavior and health conditions.

Trend in life expectancy at birth and healthy life expectancy



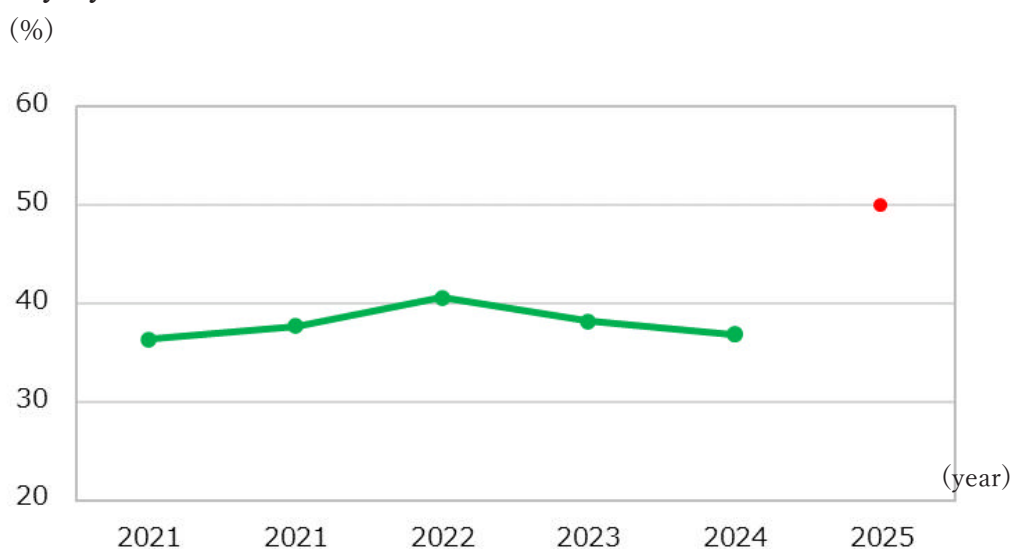
Material: Excerpt from Item 1-1 in the material of the Fourth Health Japan 21 (the third term) Promotion Committee

\*Healthy life expectancy refers to the average period of time without restrictions on daily life.

## (2) Promotion of shokuiku (food and nutrition education)

Based on the Basic Act on Shokuiku (Food and Nutrition Education), the Fourth Basic Plan for the Promotion of Shokuiku has been implemented since FY 2021, and promotion of shokuiku (food and nutrition education) that supports mental and physical health throughout life has been set as one of the priorities, promoting the practice of healthy eating habits. In order to maintain physical and mental health throughout life and to adopt healthy dietary habits, it is necessary for each citizen to habitually eat nutritionally balanced meals. For this reason, the Fourth Basic Plan for Promotion of Shokuiku sets a target of increasing the number of people who practice dietary habits with a "meal combining staple foods, main dishes, and side dishes," outlining the nutritional balance of the entire meal as a guideline for a nutritionally balanced diet, which is easy for the citizens to understand. However, there is still a gap of approximately 10% to achieve the related target.

Percentage of citizens who eat meals combining staple food, main dish, and side dish at least twice a day almost everyday



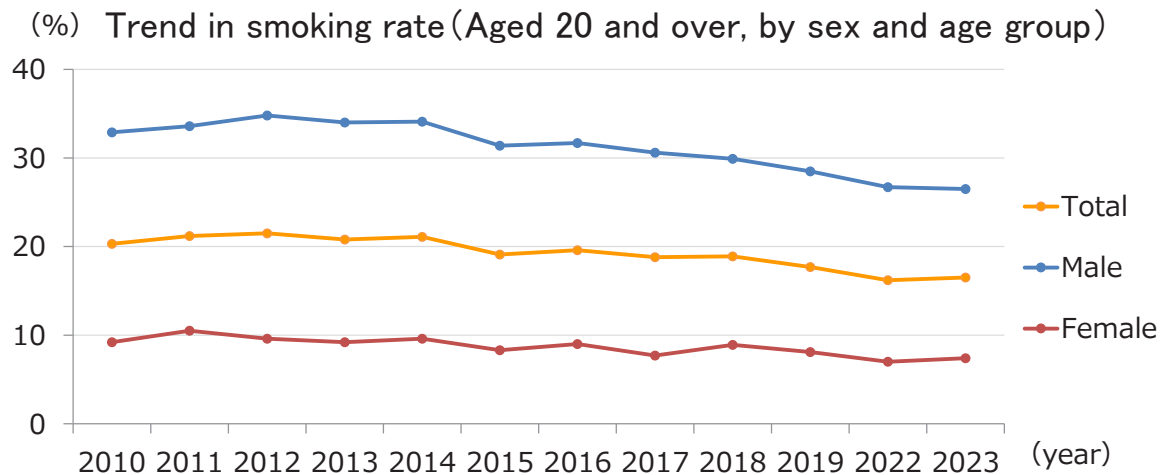
Data: Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries

In the future, the government will organize issues and share awareness aimed at realizing healthy eating habits for each generation, including youth and elderly, and promote shokuiku activities and others by food-related businesses that directly appeal to consumers.

## (3) Smoking in Japan

The Health Promotion Act was revised in 2018 to eliminate unwanted secondhandsmoking and has been fully enforced since April 2020. In many facilities, smoking is prohibited indoors as a general rule, and initiatives are being made, such as prohibiting people under the age of 20 from entering smoking areas. The government has set a goal of reducing the smoking rate among adults to 12% and is working to improve lifestyle habits. Compared to 28.5% for men and 8.1% for women in 2019 described in the previous VNR, the smoking rate in 2023 is 26.5% for men and 7.4% for women,

indicating a decrease in both men and women. Japan will continue to promote comprehensive measures to achieve our goals.



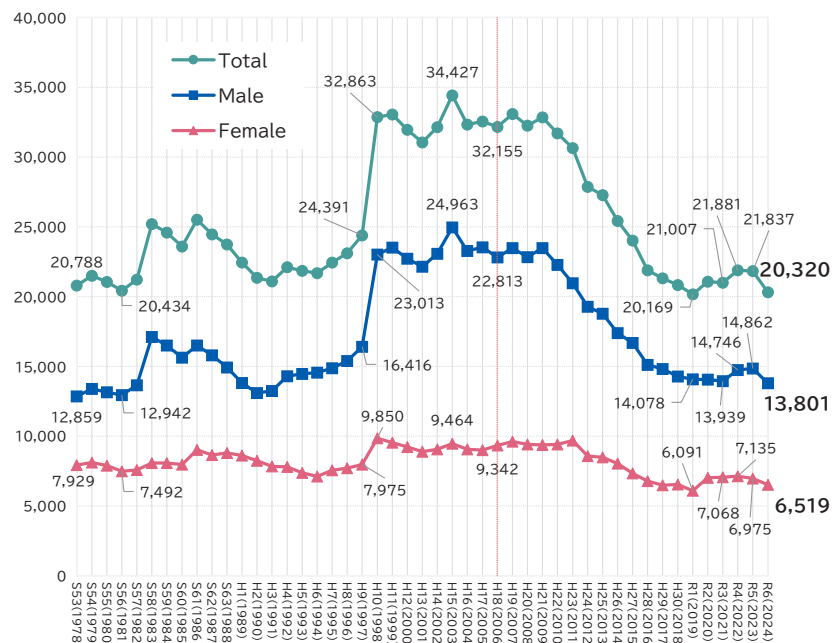
National Health and Nutrition Survey (Data: Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare)

#### (4) Suicide countermeasures

Japan aims to realize a society where no one is forced to commit suicide under the Basic Act on Suicide Countermeasures. Based on the Act, the General Principles of Suicide Countermeasures Policy have been established and then reviewed approximately every five years. In 2022, the fourth General Principles of Suicide Countermeasures Policy were approved by the Cabinet. The Comprehensive Measures include further promotion and strengthening of suicide countermeasures for children and youth, strengthening of support for women, and strengthening of regional suicide countermeasures. And it sets a numerical target of reducing the suicide mortality rate by 30% or more compared to the 2015 level (from 18.5% to 13.0% or less). When converted into figures, it would need to be approximately 16,000 people or fewer. The number of suicides in 2024 was 20,320, a decrease of 761 compared to that in 2020 (21,081) described in the previous VNR. In 2023, based on the fact that the number of suicides among elementary, junior high, and high school students has been on an upward trend in recent years, Emergency Enhanced Plan for Child Suicide Countermeasures incorporating various initiatives, such as early detection of suicide risks and appropriate responses to them, was compiled at Liaison Conference of Related Ministries and Agencies on Child Suicide Countermeasures to promote comprehensive measures. Japan will continue to promote comprehensive measures with the aim of realizing a society where no one is forced to commit suicide.

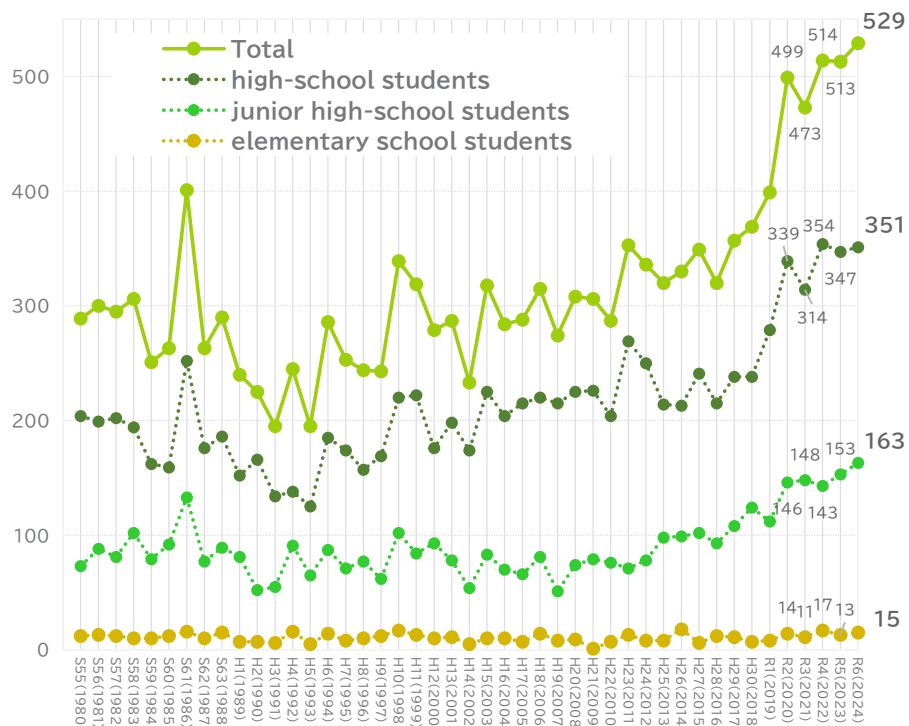


Annual trend in the number of suicides



Note: Suicide statistics records from the National Police Agency; prepared by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare. The units for figures are expressed in person.

Annual trend in the number of suicides among elementary, junior high-school, and high-school students



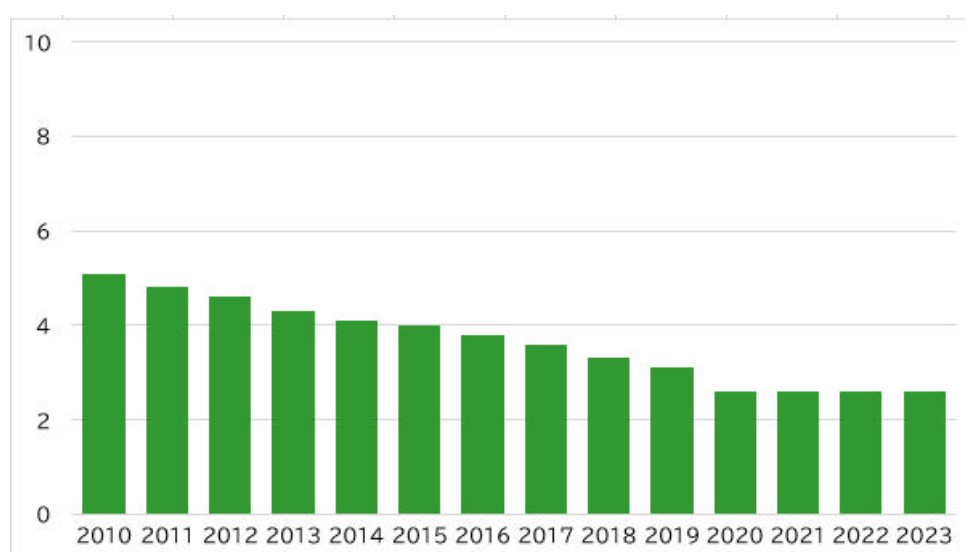


Note: Suicide statistics records from the National Police Agency; prepared by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare. The units for figures are expressed in person.

#### (5) Number of deaths from road traffic accidents

The number of deaths was 3,819 (3.1 per 100,000 population) in 2019, but it decreased to 3,173 (2.6 per 100,000 population) in 2023, showing a downward trend over the years.


Trend in death rates from road traffic accidents



Note: Death rates from road traffic accidents per 100,000 Population.  
Prepared from the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare's Vital Statistics

#### (6) Cooperation in Global Health, including achieving UHC

Under the AHWIN and the AfHWIN, Japan has signed the Memorandum of Cooperation in the healthcare field with six Asian countries and six African countries, respectively. Additionally, from 2019 to 2024, Joint Committees on Healthcare have been held with the Philippines, India, and Viet Nam to discuss cooperation in the healthcare sector. Japan has also contributed to creating an environment conducive to the international expansion of Japanese healthcare businesses in the Asian and African markets through pilot projects, mission dispatches, matchmaking events, and the invitation of health professionals. In May 2022, Japan's Global Health Strategy was formulated with the goals to strengthen pandemic prevention, preparedness, and response (PPR) to public health emergencies and to achieve more resilient, equitable, and sustainable UHC. Efforts include institutionalizing collaboration frameworks among financial and health authorities of various countries and international organizations, contributing to the establishment of international norms, including new international documents on pandemics, promoting UHC initiatives, enhancing contributions and collaboration with international organizations and public-private partnership funds, utilizing both ODA and non-ODA resources, strengthening partnerships with diverse stakeholders including private companies and civil



society, and addressing various global health challenges such as infectious and non-communicable diseases, maternal and child health, climate change, and antimicrobial resistance (AMR). Furthermore, Japan contributes to global health through cross-sectoral approaches in such area as education, water and sanitation, nutrition, demographic changes and development, humanitarian crises, and human rights. These efforts by Japan are highly regarded in the international community.

For example, JICA has contributed to Target 3.c “Substantially increase health financing and the recruitment, development, training and retention of the health workforce in developing countries, especially in least developed countries and small island developing States” through international cooperation with technical cooperation, grant aid, and loan assistance, including issue-specific training courses for multiple developing countries, least developed countries, and small island countries, such as “Health Policy Development and System Management for SDGs and Beyond -An Introduction to Japan's Achievements and Challenges,” “Strengthening Social Health Protection Towards Universal Health Coverage (UHC),” “Strengthening Human Resource for Improvement of Community Health,” and “Enhancement of Nursing Management Towards Universal Health Coverage.”

In the field of cancer countermeasures, through contributions to the IAEA's "Rays of Hope" initiative, Japan is contributing to international capacity building in cancer radiation therapy, diagnostic imaging, and nuclear medicine testing.

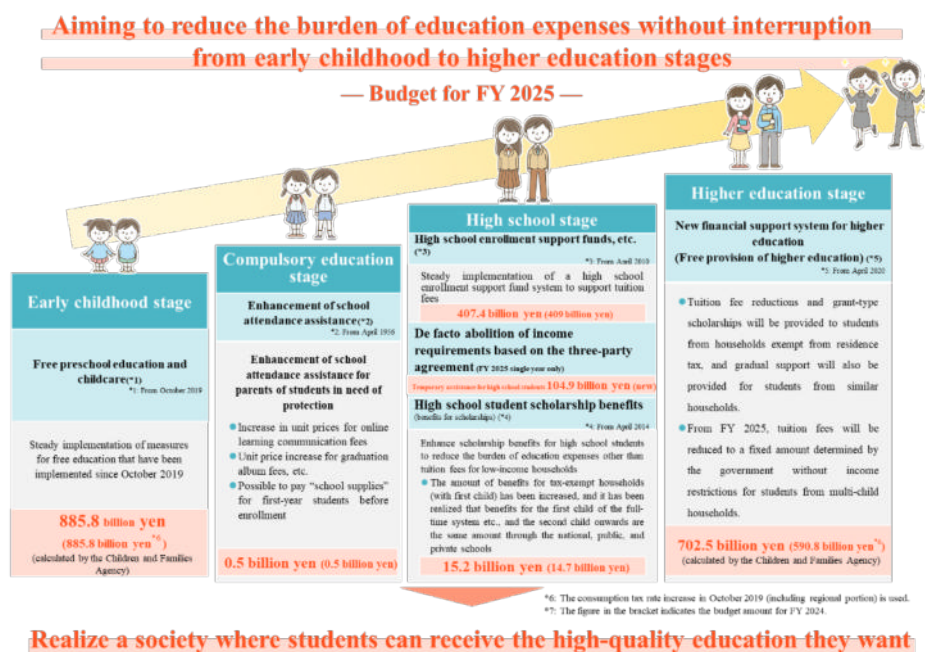
Additionally, at the G7 Hiroshima Summit 2023, Japan, as the presidency, led discussions in the global health sector. As outcomes of these discussions, initiatives such as the "Delivery Partnership for Medical Countermeasures (MCM)" and the "Impact Investment Initiative for Global Health (Triple I for GH)" were launched. Within Triple I for GH, efforts are being made to issue recommendations for promoting impact investment and to develop a practitioner guide for impact measurement measuring and management (IMM) in the global health sector.

Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all



### (1) Initiatives for free education and alleviation of burden

In view of the importance of early childhood education, which cultivates the foundation for lifelong personality development, usage fees for kindergartens, day care centers, centers for early childhood education and care, etc., have been made free of charge for all children between the ages of three and five since October 2019. In addition, as for the free provision of higher education, tuition fee reduction and grant-type scholarships have been provided to students from low-income households since April 2020. This scheme is applicable to students when their academic motivation is recognized, rather than being judged solely on their grades up to high school. As planned for the future, from FY 2024, financial support for higher education will expand to multi-child families and the middle class of science, engineering, and agriculture, and from 2025, tuition fees will be free for students from multi-child families without income restrictions, based on the law enacted at the end of March 2025.



PPT: Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology

### (2) Steady implementation of the National Curriculum Standards

In the current National Curriculum Standards, fostering "the builders of a sustainable society" is set forth in the preamble and general provisions as a role in future school education and curriculum, and

the philosophy of education for sustainable development (ESD) is incorporated. Based on this course of study, ESD-related initiatives are being promoted at each school.

### **The National Curriculum Standards for Elementary Schools (notified in March 2017)**

#### **[Preamble]**

Schools, henceforth, are required to... enable each pupil to recognize their own good points and possibilities, respect all others as valued members of society, overcome various social changes while cooperating with diverse people, establish to a fulfilling life, and be **a builder of a sustainable society**.

#### **[Chapter 1 General provisions]**

1. Foundation of elementary school education and the role of the curriculum

3. When aiming to foster Competencies for Living in those pupils who are expected to...be equipped with rich creativity, and be the **builders of a sustainable society**, each school should clarify what kinds of competencies they are aiming to develop through instruction in school education overall and in all subjects...in order to enhance their educational activities ...

(\*The National Curriculum Standards for junior high schools, high schools, and special needs schools also describe the same idea.)

### **(3) Promoting Education for a Symbiotic Society that Leaves No One Behind and Unlocks the Potential of All Individuals**

The Fourth Basic Plan for the Promotion of Education, approved by the Cabinet in June 2023, sets "promoting education for a symbiotic society that leaves no one behind and unlocks the potential of all individuals" as one of its fundamental policies. In the context of increasingly diverse and complex challenges faced by children, there is a need to enhance individually optimized and collaborative learning in an integrated manner and to promote an inclusive education system to meet diverse educational needs.

In the fiscal year 2023, the number of recognized bullying cases and the number of serious incidents reached a record high. The government is encouraging schools to actively recognize bullying, which is believed to have led to an increase in reported cases. However, there are challenges in the early detection, early response, and organizational handling of bullying, and the continued occurrence of serious incidents is a matter of grave concern. As a countermeasure against bullying, comprehensive efforts are being made from prevention, early detection, early response, to preventing recurrence. Additionally, the number of violent incidents in 2023 also reached a record high, and efforts are being made to eradicate such acts in collaboration with police and other relevant agencies.

Furthermore, to support the independence and social participation of children with disabilities, efforts are being made to create conditions for children with and without disabilities to spend as much time together as possible. This includes providing a continuum of diverse learning environments such as regular classes, resource rooms, special support classes, and special support schools, tailored to the educational needs of each child. These efforts are part of promoting an inclusive education system. Moreover, with the increasing internationalization of local communities and the growing

number of foreign children studying in Japan, efforts are being made to promote school attendance among foreign students and to provide detailed instruction, including Japanese language education, to ensure educational opportunities and maintain educational standards.

#### (4) Promoting education and learning to promote gender equality

Achieving gender equality is the most important issue that must be addressed by society as a whole. The Fifth Basic Plan for Gender Equality calls for the development of education in view of promoting understanding of gender equality, and aims to expand women's participation in policies and decision-making processes in fields, such as school education, from the viewpoint of strengthening the promotion system. In elementary, junior high, and high schools, career education is being strengthened so that students can be proactively choose their career paths regardless of gender, taking into account their individual abilities and aptitudes. In addition, based on the National Curriculum Standards, students are taught scientific knowledge about sexuality, as well as human relationships that foster mutual respect.

Also, the Next Generation Life Planning Education Promotion Project has developed life planning education programs for high school and university students to foster awareness of gender equality.

| Trend in performance targets in the Fifth Basic Plan for Gender Equality<br>— Raising awareness and facilitating understanding through education and media for both women and men — |   |                               |                           |
|---|---|-------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Item  | Target (deadline)                                 | Value at the time of planning | Latest value              |
| <u>Proportion of women among faculty members at assistant principal level or higher in primary and secondary education institutions</u>   |   |                               |                           |
| Vice principal/assistant principal  | 25%<br>(2025)                                     | 20.5%<br>(2019)               | 25.2%<br>(2023)           |
| <u>Proportion of women among university faculty members</u>   |   |                               |                           |
| Associate professor   | Aiming 27.5%<br>(early) and then<br>30%<br>(2025) | 25.1%<br>(2019)               | 26.9%<br>(2023)           |
| Professor, etc. (president, vice president, and professor)  | Aiming 20%<br>(early) and then<br>23%<br>(2025)   | 17.2%<br>(2019)               | 19.2%<br>(2023)           |
| <u>Number of education boards without women among all prefectural and municipal education boards</u>  | <u>0</u><br>(2025)                                | <u>62/1,856</u><br>(2019)     | <u>52/1,853</u><br>(2021) |

[Table] Trend in performance targets in the Fifth Basic Plan for Gender Equality (Source: Gender Equality Bureau Cabinet Office, 2024, *Trends in performance targets in the Fifth Basic Plan for Gender Equality (as of April 30, 2024)*, retrieved on December 9, 2024, [https://www.gender.go.jp/about\\_danjo/seika\\_shihyo/pdf/numerical\\_targets\\_r060517.pdf](https://www.gender.go.jp/about_danjo/seika_shihyo/pdf/numerical_targets_r060517.pdf))

## (5) Promoting Lifelong Learning

Develop an environment where people can learn and be active throughout their lives, where learning opportunities are guaranteed to help solve individual and social issues that arise in each situation of life, and where learning can lead to a sense of fulfillment and continued learning, to realize the well-being of all people with a focus on a 100-year life era. Develop an environment where information can be provided to diverse generations, learning outcomes can be visualized, and students can learn while connecting with their peers.

## (6) Support for international cooperation and basic education

Various educational support activities are being carried out around the world under the “Learning Strategy for Peace and Growth” proposed by Japan in line with the adoption of the 2030 Agenda. At the G7 Hiroshima Summit in May 2023, as the chair country, a leaders' communiqué was compiled stating that “education is a catalyst for achieving all SDG goals” and calling for “continued support for key partners such as Global Partnership for Education (GPE) and Education Cannot Wait (ECW), which help countries build stronger education systems for the most marginalized children, as well as UN agencies including UNESCO and UNICEF.” Also, the Development Cooperation Charter approved by the Cabinet in June 2023 clearly states the quality education for all, the empowerment of women, children, and youth, and the ensuring of educational opportunities in conflict and disaster situations. Based on this, in 2024, Japan made a new financial contribution to the “ECW,” which is a global fund for education in crises, so that Ukrainian children can learn in a safer environment.

JICA is mainly working to improve children's learning through development of textbooks, teaching materials and teachers’ capacity, to resolve educational issues by involving local communities, and to expand educational opportunities for children in vulnerable situations such as girls and persons with disabilities. Also, through the JICA Development Studies Program, future leaders of developing countries such as administrative officials, researchers, and others have been invited to Japan as international scholars, who are provided with high-quality educational and research opportunities within the university degree programs. These contribute to Goal 4 of SDGs, which upholds “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.”



The development of technical and vocational skills is also emphasized, with a focus on promoting the development of industrial human resources and support for enterprises in African countries. In FY 2022 to 2023, 26,086 industrial human resources were developed in Africa through Kaizen and management training, and Japan will continue to provide further support by setting a target number for the future.



Ethiopia "Project for the Construction of a Comprehensive Support System for Strengthening Corporate Competitiveness".

A scene of training using a simulated manufacturing line at the Kawana Training Center of Toyota Engineering Corporation in Nagoya City, Aichi Prefecture. Photo: JICA)

## Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

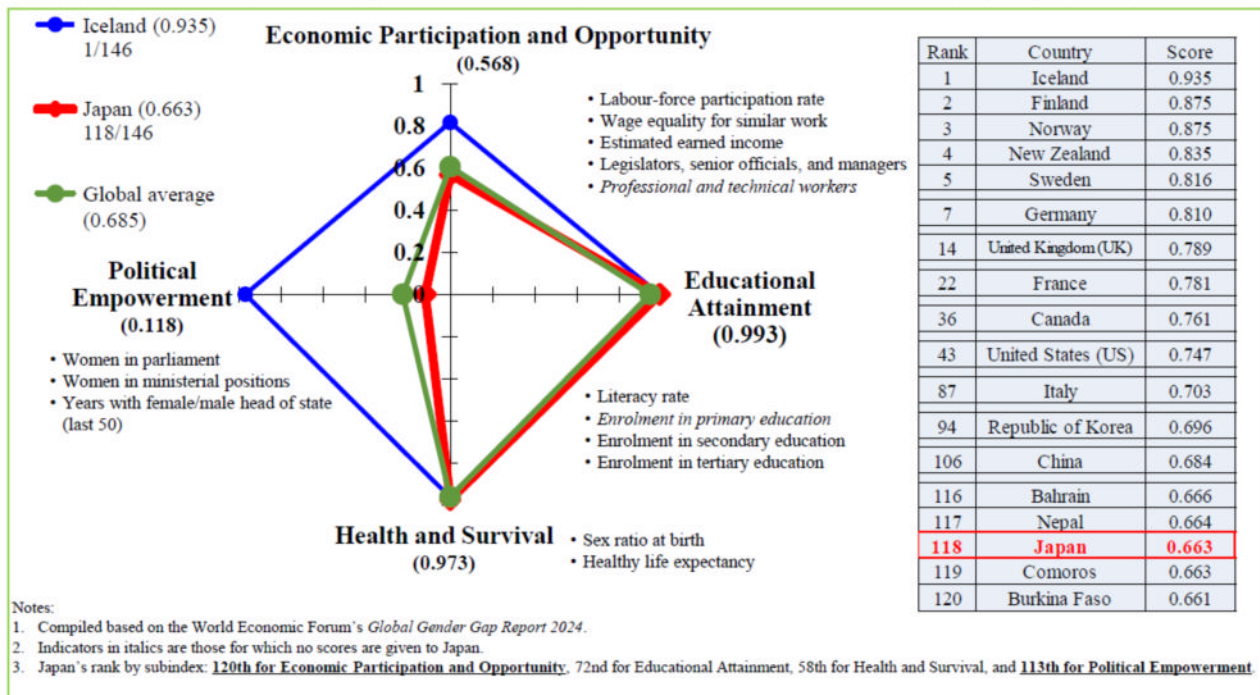


### (1) Promotion of gender equality

Women's empowerment and gender equality are essential elements in realizing a society where diversity is respected and ensuring its sustainable development. Currently, although the employment rate for women is rising, Japan's ranking in the World Economic Forum's annual Gender Gap Index is 118th out of 146 countries in 2024, indicating that Japan's progress is still lagging behind compared to other countries.

## Gender Gap Index (GGI) 2024

- Published by the World Economic Forum, a Swiss-based nonprofit foundation, the Gender Gap Index benchmarks progress toward gender parity, which is calculated as the ratio of the value of each indicator for women to the value for men. **A parity score of 0 indicates full imparity with 1 indicating full parity. The closer a country's score is to 1, the higher its rank.**
- Japan ranks 118th out of 146 countries. Although its educational and health parity scores are among highest in the world, the political and economic parity scores are low.**



PPT: Cabinet Office

Recognizing this situation, the Japanese government has implemented various initiatives based on the Fifth Basic Plan for Gender Equality and "The Basic Policy on Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women" (approved by the government annually around June). In particular, progress was made on the legal framework to promote, implement and monitor gender equality as following.

- In 2021, the Act on Childcare Leave/Caregiver Leave was amended to create an environment conducive to promoting men's participation in childcare leave. This includes mandatory measures for employers to individually inform employees who inform pregnancy or childbirth about the

childcare leave system and confirm their intentions to take leave, thus facilitating a workplace environment where taking childcare leave is easier.

- In 2021, the Act for the Prevention of Sexual Violence by Educators<sup>45</sup> was enacted, addressing sexual violence by educational staff against students (effective April 2022).
- In 2021, the Act on Promotion of Gender Equality in the Political Field was amended to clarify the organizations involved in promoting gender equality in politics, encourage efforts by political parties and groups, strengthen the responsibilities of national and local governments, and include measures to address sexual harassment and maternity harassment as mandatory policies.
- The partial revision of the Civil Code, effective April 2022, raised the marriageable age for women to 18, aligning it with that of men.
- In 2022, legislation related to the Act on Promotion of Women's Active Engagement in Professional Life was amended to mandate the publication of information regarding pay differences between men and women.
- In 2022, in response to the emergence of complex and diverse challenges facing women, a new Women's Support Act<sup>46</sup> was enacted to establish a new framework of support, including perspectives on addressing loneliness and isolation (effective April 2024).
- In 2022, the Act on Prevention and Remedy of Harm Associated with Performing in Sexually Explicit Video Productions was enacted to prevent harm from participation in adult video productions and provide relief to victims.
- In 2022, the Civil Code was amended to abolish the 100-day remarriage prohibition period, which previously applied only to women (effective April 2024).
- In 2023, provisions of the Penal Code regarding sexual crimes have been amended, changing the names of offenses such as non-consensual sexual intercourse to reflect the revised elements of the crime, and the age of consent is raised from under 13 to under 16. Additionally, the Act on the punishment for recording sexual behavior was enacted to ensure more appropriate response to sexual crimes.
- In 2023, the Spousal Violence Prevention Act was amended to expand the protection order system to include severe mental harm (effective April 2024).
- In 2024, the Prevention of Sexual Violence against Children Act was enacted, introducing mandatory measures for education and childcare providers to prevent sexual violence against children (to be effective by December 2026).

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<sup>45</sup> The Act on the Prevention of Sexual Violence Against Students by Educational Personnel

<sup>46</sup> The Act on Support for Women Facing Difficulties

## (2) Gender-Based Violence

Regarding gender-based violence, according to the Cabinet Office's "Survey on Violence Between Men and Women" published in March 2024, 13.2% of women who have been married reported experiencing violence from their spouse multiple times. Furthermore, 8.1% of women have experienced non-consensual intercourse, indicating a persistently serious situation.

For domestic violence (DV) countermeasures, the DV Prevention Act<sup>47</sup> was amended to expand the protection order system. Additionally, during the 2023 amendments to the penal code regarding sexual crimes, it was clarified that non-consensual intercourse offenses also apply between spouses.

Regarding measures against sexual crimes and sexual violence, the 2023 amendments to the penal code transformed offenses such as forcible intercourse into non-consensual intercourse offenses, clarifying the requirements for these offenses, which has made it easier for victims to report crimes. Additionally, the enhancement of consultation systems contributed to an increase in recognized cases of non-consensual intercourse from 2,711 in 2023 to 3,936 in 2024, and in arrests from 2,073 in 2023 to 3,376 in 2024. As part of the consultation system, each prefecture has established at least one one-stop support center to connect victims with necessary support based on their wishes, while also stabilizing operations and improving the quality of each center. Efforts are being made to strengthen collaboration between one-stop support centers and police and medical institutions, and to build networks with relevant agencies to provide necessary support.

Furthermore, considering the complexity, diversity, and multiplicity of issues surrounding women, comprehensive support tailored to the needs of individual women facing difficult problems is being implemented under the new Women's Support Act (effective April 2024), which was enacted to establish a new framework of support. This includes strengthening the functions of women's consultation support centers and supporting activities by private organizations.

It is important to note that violence such as DV, sexual crimes, and sexual violence often stems from gender disparities, and diverse victims, including men, foreigners, and victims of same-sex violence, exist. Therefore, efforts are being made to establish a system that makes it easy for these diverse victims to seek consultation.

## (3) Unpaid Childcare, Long-term Care, and Household Labor and the Division of Responsibilities Within Families and Households

With regard to acceptance of childcare to support women's labor, the number of children on the waiting list<sup>48</sup>, which was a significant challenge, is 2,567 as of April 2024, decreasing for seven consecutive years from 26,081 in 2017, when the number of waiting children peaked, reaching one-tenth.

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<sup>47</sup> The Act on the Prevention of Spousal Violence and the Protection of Victims (Act No. 31 of 2001)

<sup>48</sup> The definition of children on the waiting list, that is, a child waiting to use a daycare center, etc., is a child who has been certified as necessary for childcare as of the survey date carried out by the Children and Families Agency (by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare before FY2022), but has applied for use of a specific education/childcare facility or specific regional type childcare business, but is not using it.

Approximately 87.5% of municipalities (1,524 local governments) had no children on the waiting list. This was because of the expansion of the capacity to accept children.

Also, the rate of taking parental leave for men is 30.1% in FY 2023, which is an increase compared to 17.13% in FY 2022<sup>49</sup>.

#### (4) Women's Participation in Decision-Making at All Levels in Political, Economic, and Public Spheres

The female labor force population in 2023 is 31.24 million, accounting for 45.1% of the total labor force population. While women's advancement into society is progressing steadily, such as the female labor force population rising year by year, pay differences between men and women has been shrinking over the long term, but the disparity is still large compared to major developed countries, and the proportion of women among management-level position, etc., is on an upward trend over the long term, but similarly remains low. In the Fifth Basic Plan, one of the specific areas for action is "expanding women's participation in policy and decision-making processes." Efforts have been made to increase women's participation in decision-making roles in political, economic, and public sectors. For example, performance targets have been set for the proportion of women among political candidates, the proportion of female employees at each level in private companies in the economic sector, including the proportion of female executives among companies listed on the Prime Market of the Tokyo Stock Exchange, and the proportion of women in various public sector roles, such as national and local government officials and members of national and local councils. The progress on these targets is publicly available on the Cabinet Office Gender Equality Bureau's website<sup>50</sup>.

Additionally, under the Act on Promotion of Women's Active Engagement in Professional Life, specified employer action plan and information on women's active engagement are made visible in a way that allows for comparisons among local governments. Furthermore, to accelerate the development of women with digital skills directly linked to employment, the "Women's Digital Talent Development Plan" was formulated in April 2022. This plan focuses on three main axes: 1) support for acquiring digital skills, 2) support for employment in the digital sector, and 3) nationwide dissemination of best practices. Efforts have been concentrated in these areas over three years. Specifically, the "subsidies for women's empowerment in regions"<sup>51</sup> assists local governments in conducting seminars to develop female digital talent and female entrepreneurs, providing employment-related consultations, creating networks, and promoting the appointment of women to executive and managerial positions, tailored to regional circumstances.


#### (5) Rights and Health in Relation to Gender and Reproduction

<sup>49</sup> The rate of taking parental leave for men from the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare's *Basic Survey of Gender Equality in Employment Management for FY 2022*

<sup>50</sup> Cabinet Office Gender Equality Bureau Website "Outcome Goals and Indicators"  
[https://www.gender.go.jp/about\\_danjo/seika\\_shihyo/index.html](https://www.gender.go.jp/about_danjo/seika_shihyo/index.html)

<sup>51</sup> The initial budget for fiscal year 2024 is 300 million yen (2.158 million USD).





In 2023, oral abortion medication became available for use in medical institutions. Furthermore, a research project has been launched to determine whether emergency contraceptive pills is appropriately available at pharmacies without a prescription..

(6) International cooperation

Regarding gender mainstreaming in ODA, gender equality and women's empowerment through gender mainstreaming have been promoted at every stage of development cooperation based on the Development Cooperation Charter approved by the Cabinet in June 2023. As a result, the proportion of gender-related funding in Japan's total ODA (commitment basis) increased from approximately 29.9% in 2016 to approximately 50.7% in 2023 (Source: OECD Data Explorer, March 2025).



## Goal 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all



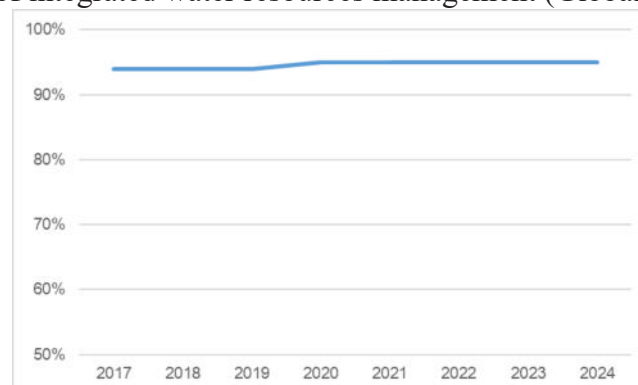
### (1) Safe water

Regarding achieving universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all, which is set out in Target 6.1, Japan originally has maintained a high standard, and the water supply coverage ratio in 2023 is 98.2%. Furthermore, according to a survey based on the Water Pollution Prevention Act, the achievement rate of health-related items in public water areas in 2021 and 2022 is 99.1%. Meanwhile, as for living environment-related items, the achievement rate of environmental standards for biochemical oxygen demand (BOD) or chemical oxygen demand (COD), both of which are typical water quality indicators for organic pollution, is 89.2% in FY 2023. By water area, it is 93.8% for rivers, 52.6% for lakes, and 80.5% for marine waters. The achievement rate for lakes remains low.

### (2) Integrated water resources management

In promoting integrated water resources management, based on the Water Resources Development Promotion Act, Japan has formulated the Water Resources Development Basic Plan, which is the basis for comprehensive development and rationalization of the use of water resources in seven water resources development river systems where approximately 50% of Japan's industry and population are concentrated, to proceed with continuous reviews in light of the situation where risks and issues related to water resources have become apparent in recent years, such as critical droughts, massive natural disasters, and major accidents associated with aging and/or deterioration of water resources development facilities. Also, in the Basic Plan on Water Cycle based on the Basic Act on Water Cycle, the concept of “river basin management,”<sup>52</sup> which embodies the idea of comprehensive and integrated management of river basins, has been clarified, and a framework for river basin cooperation aimed at maintaining and recovering a sound water cycle is being promoted. Through these initiatives, integrated water resources management is being promoted and established.

Degree of integrated water resources management (Global Indicator 6.5.1)



Data: Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism

<sup>52</sup> River basin management: Comprehensive and integrated management of river basin is considered to refer not to the management of the entire river basin by a single party but to coordinated activities by various actors, including administrators and other public agencies, experts, businesses, groups, and residents related to the river basin, to maintain or improve people's livelihoods, water quantity and quality, and natural environment engaged with water in sound and good conditions, in forests, rivers, farmland, lakes, coastal areas, groundwater basins, and elsewhere.

### (3) Water resources management in preparation for disasters

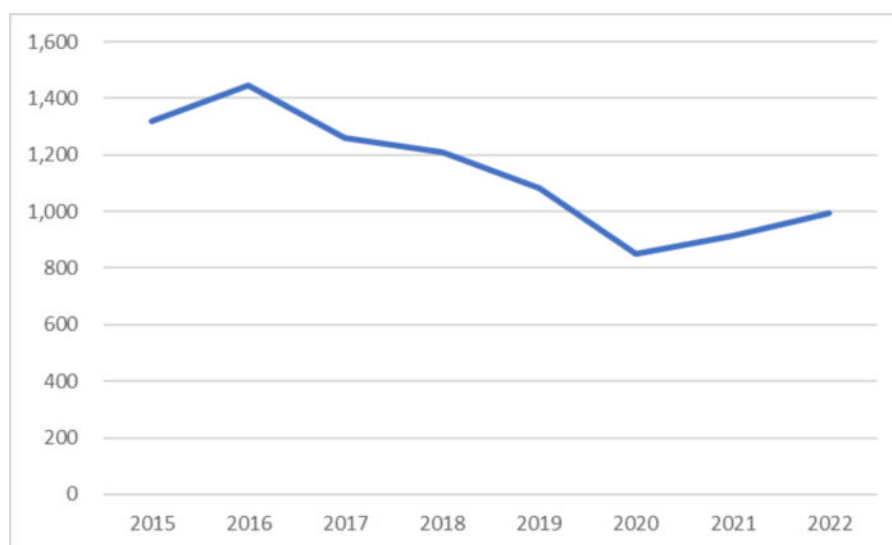
In the event of massive disasters, such as the 2024 Noto Peninsula Earthquake that occurred in January 2024, vulnerabilities became apparent, including widespread and long-term water outages of water supply facilities due to damage to facilities and cessation of energy supply, and breakdown of sewage treatment facilities. In order to ensure the minimum water supply and wastewater treatment necessary for citizens' lives and socio-economic activities in the event of massive disasters, Japan will promote earthquake resistance to minimize damage to water infrastructure, develop water supply systems and storage facilities that enable transmission and distribution of water from other systems at water supply facilities, achieve mutual complementarity of networks at sewage treatment facilities, establish mutual support systems and strengthen emergency water supply systems for water infrastructure restoration, conduct training that also leads to human resource development, formulate and implement business continuity plans (BCPs), and promote initiatives aimed at temporary use of groundwater, etc.

### (4) International cooperation

Japan has been working on international cooperation utilizing Japan's technology, human resources, know-how, and others in response to issues in the water and sanitation field in cooperation with the United Nations, international aid organizations, and various countries, and has had the world's largest cumulative aid record since the 1990s. JICA aims to promote a healthy water cycle in developing countries, and provides support in both hardware and software aspects utilizing Japan's technology, such as infrastructure development and improvement of maintenance/management capabilities in line with the needs of urban and rural areas. Specifically, they have implemented a wide range of technical and financial cooperation, such as integrated water resources management, sewerage and water quality management, water supply facility development, access to water resources, water quality improvement, and business improvement of water suppliers.

Also, in March 2023, the UN 2023 Water Conference, which mainly discusses water issues, was held at the United Nations headquarters for the first time in 46 years. Japan served as co-chair in the Interactive Dialogue 3: Water for Climate, Resilience and Environment, and has been leading global discussions in the water sector amid the growing importance of international collaboration and cooperation in the water field. The impacts of climate change are causing water-related disasters to become more severe and frequent. Recognizing the importance of implementing integrated countermeasures to protect people's health through the stable management of water resources and the preservation of water quality, efforts are being made both domestically and internationally, utilizing Japan's past experiences.

Amount of water- and sanitation-related official development assistance that is part of a government-coordinated spending plan (Global Indicator 6.a.1)



Data: Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism

## Goal 7: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all



### (1) Securing access to modern energy

Japan enacted the Act on Rationalizing Energy Use in 1979 and has promoted thorough energy conservation. Also, the renewable energy rate expanded from approximately 10% in FY 2012 to approximately 22% in FY 2022. Japan will continue to work to maximize the introduction of renewable energy as a primary power source. Also, in order to promote the introduction of hydroelectric power generation equipment, development feasibility survey at undeveloped sites of existing dams and assistance for upgrading facilities at the existing hydroelectric power plants for increasing output and power are being conducted. Trials and introduction support of new initiatives are also being conducted, such as generating electricity by utilizing the difference in elevation when treated sewage water is discharged, and using biogas from sewage sludge and heat from sewage as energy.

### (2) Strategic energy plan

The Seventh Strategic Energy Plan shows the energy policy path for achieving ambitious international commitments of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 73% in FY 2040 and realizing carbon neutrality by 2050. Given Japan's unique circumstances, such as a lack of readily available resources and the land surrounded by mountains and deep seas, Japan will aim to maximize the use of renewable energy as the primary power source and to achieve a balanced power source mix that does not rely excessively on specific power sources or fuel sources, in order to balance a stable energy supply with decarbonization.

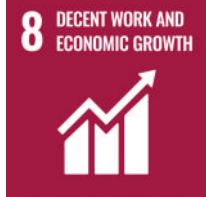
Furthermore, since it is required to thoroughly save energy and promote decarbonization even in fields where decarbonization is difficult, such as where electrification is difficult, it will proceed with measures utilizing the recovery, storage, and effective use of hydrogen and others, and carbon dioxide capture, utilization and storage (CCUS) in addition to fuel conversion to natural gas, etc.

### (3) International cooperation

Japan is based on the idea of thinking that aims to simultaneously realize energy security, economic growth, and decarbonization. Furthermore, taking into account each country's different resource availability situations, industrial structure, and energy mix, Japan will aim to realize decarbonization of the entire world through various paths, and will also contribute to decarbonization of the entire world while utilizing Japan's various technologies.

In particular, many of Southeast Asian countries, like Japan, are facing the common issues for decarbonization since they rely on thermal power for most of their electricity and their manufacturing industry plays a large role in the economy. Under such circumstances, through international initiatives, such as the Asia Zero Emission Community (AZEC), Japan will advance decarbonization in Asia in a realistic manner through various paths tailored to the circumstances of each country while utilizing Japan's technology, such as renewable energy, energy conservation, hydrogen, ammonia, and CCUS.

## Goal 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

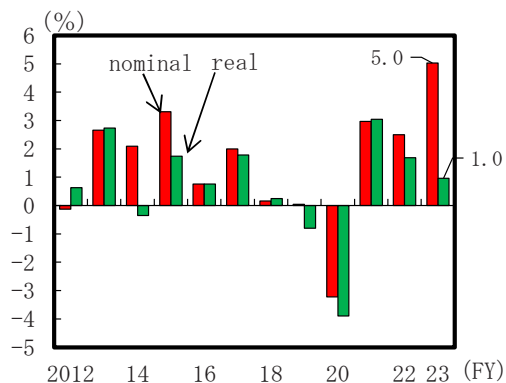


### (1) Trend in GDP and other variables

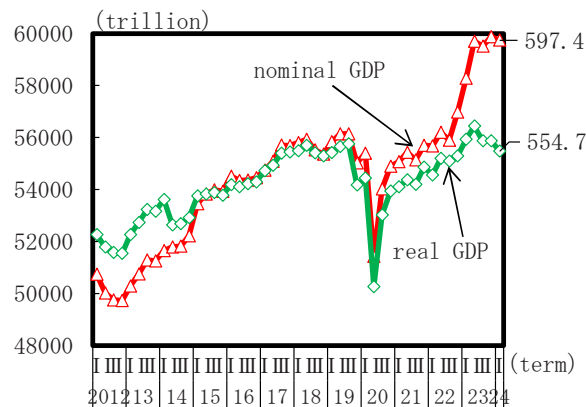
The GDP growth rate for FY 2024 was 3.7% in nominal terms and 0.8% in real terms.

Looking at quarterly trends, nominal GDP has continued to increase, and the amount of nominal GDP has reached a record high of 625 trillion yen (approximately 4.1 trillion US dollars<sup>53</sup>) for the first quarter in 2025.

#### (1) The GDP growth rate



#### (2) The trend in GDP



Data: Cabinet Office

### (2) Employment status

Japan's unemployment rate for 2025 is 2.5%, with the number of completely unemployed people being 1.80 million compared to the total number of employed people of 67.70 million. The rate has never exceeded 5.5% in the past 30 years. It was 3.4% in 2015, when the 2030 Agenda was adopted. The latest rate is lower than 2.8% in 2021, when the previous VNR was implemented.

### (3) Prices and wages

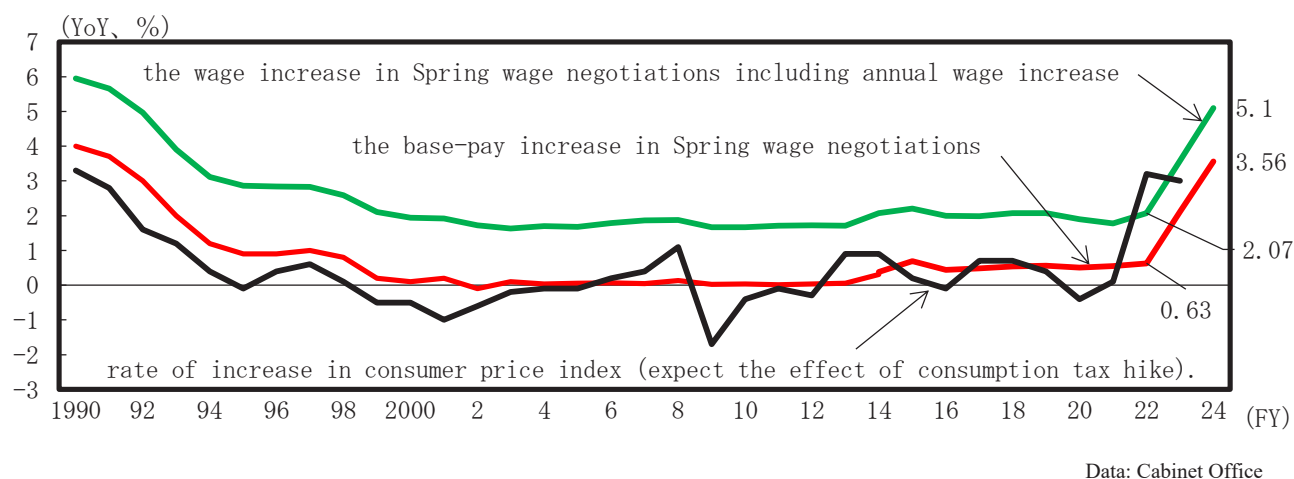
Prices began to rise from 2021 to 2022 due to a recovery in global demand following the spread of the COVID-19 infection and a rise in resource prices due to Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Combined with the depreciation of the yen, the year-on-year rate of increase in consumer prices (for all items) reached 4.3% during the peak in January 2023 as rising import prices began to be passed on to domestic prices of foodstuffs and other items. After that, price rise through cost-push inflation starting from increased prices of imported goods has calmed down temporarily due to a slowdown of price increases for foodstuffs as well as settling of resource prices and the effects of various policies.

The highest wage increase rate was achieved in 2023 for the first time in 30 years, and in 2024 for the first time in 33 years. The average monthly wage for general workers was 330,400 yen (approximately 2,400 US dollars), the highest since comparable data became available in 1976. The growth rate was 3.8%, the highest in 33 years since 1991. Such wage increases are gradually pushing up the prices of

<sup>53</sup> Calculated by the Secretariat as a reference at an exchange rate of 151.96 yen per US dollar in FY 2024.

services by passing on prices, particularly in sectors with a high proportion of labor costs, creating a virtuous cycle of wages and prices. An unprecedented positive trend is emerging toward breaking away from the long period of deflation that has been lasted for the past quarter century.

#### The Wage Increase in Spring Wage Negotiations and the trend in inflation

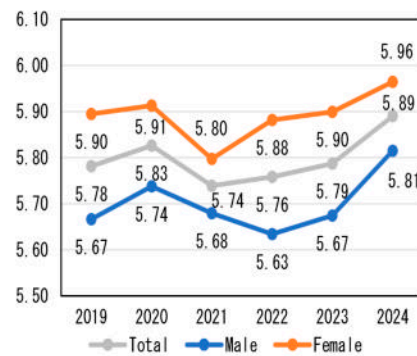


#### (4) Life satisfaction

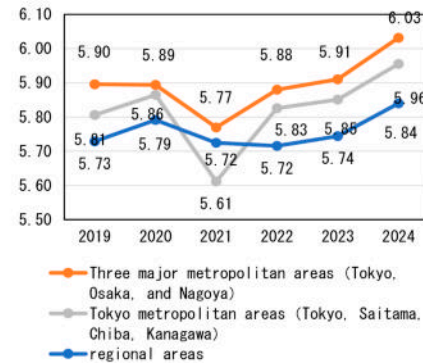
Regarding economic and social conditions, from the viewpoint that it is important to “visualize” wellbeing trends not only from GDP but also from a wide range of perspectives related to satisfaction and quality of life, In Japan, a survey on life satisfaction, a subjective indicator in which respondents rate their level of satisfaction with life on a scale of 0 to 10 points, began in February 2019. In the sixth survey, which was conducted in February 2024, life satisfaction was 5.89, the highest level since the survey began and the largest increase in one year. By gender, the figures for both men and women reached the highest levels, with the increase being particularly higher for men (Chart 1-1). By age group, the figures for all groups rose, but those for group aged between 40 and 64 have not reached the 2020 level (Chart 1-2). By region, the figures for all regions rose equally (Chart 1-3). By employment type, the figures for non-regular employment, which was greatly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, continued to rise, and the level gap with regular employment narrowed (Chart 1-4).



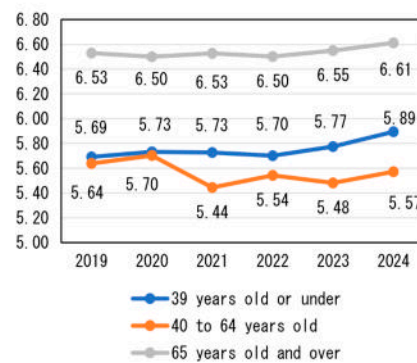
Trend in Life satisfaction (By gender)



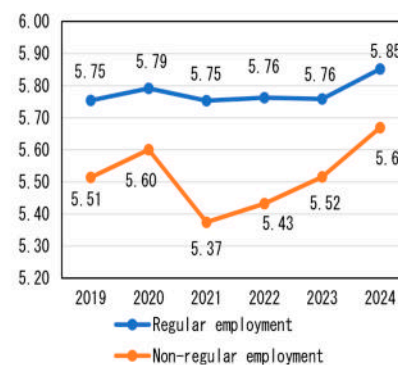
Trend in Life satisfaction (By region)



Trend in Life satisfaction (By age group)



Trend in Life satisfaction (By employment status)



Data: Cabinet Office

## (5) Foreign workers

The number of foreign workers in Japan has increased from approximately 1.72 million at the time of the previous VNR publication to about 2.3 million as of the end of October 2024, marking a record high. Additionally, in 2024, the Diet passed and promulgated partial amendments to the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act and related laws, which include the progressive dissolution of the Technical Intern Training Program for foreign workers and the establishment of the Employment-for-Skill-Development (ESD) Program. The Program is scheduled to begin operations in April 2027. Under the ESD it is expected that foreign workers will continue to have their human rights protected while playing a role in addressing Japan's labor shortages, with opportunities for career advancement.

## (6) Promoting working-style reform and decent work

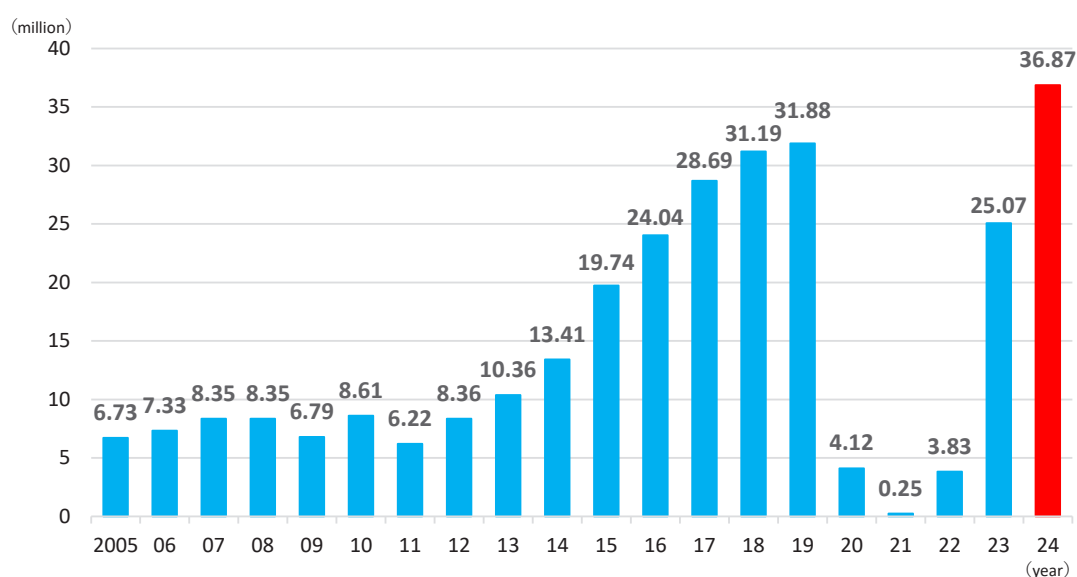
In order to respond to issues facing Japan, such as the “decline in the working-age population due to the declining birthrate and aging population” and “diversification of the needs of workers,” it is necessary to create an environment where employment opportunities can be expanded, and motivation and abilities can be fully demonstrated along with improving productivity through investment and innovation. Working-style reform enables workers to “choose” diverse and flexible working styles tailored to their individual circumstances, and the Act on the Arrangement of Related Acts to Promote Work Style Reform was enacted in 2018. First, as a corrective action for long working hours, based on this Act, regulations were put into effect that, in principle, limit overtime work to 45 hours per month and 360 hours per year and, even in cases of temporary special circumstances, less than 100 hours per month and an average of 80 hours per month over two to six months (including holiday

work). Such regulations will reduce the risk of death from overwork and protect the health of workers. Next, promotion of telework, popularization of flextime, and enhancement of childcare leave system have also been promoted. In particular, telecommuting has spread rapidly due to the impacts of the COVID-19, and a flexible way of working regardless of location or time has become popular. As a result, effects, such as improved work-life balance, the ability to balance work with childcare and long-term care, and population migration to rural areas, have been confirmed.

## (7) Sustainable tourism

Target 8.9 clearly states that policies for promotion of sustainable tourism leading to job creation as well as cultural promotion and product sales promotion in various regions shall be formulated and implemented by 2030. Regarding the number of foreign people visiting Japan, domestic and international tourism demand fell drastically after 2020 due to the spread of the COVID-19 infection, but demand recovered steadily after the drastic relaxation of border measures in October 2022, and in 2024, it reached a record high with a total of 36.87 million people (an increase of 15.6% compared to 2019) per year.

Trend in the number of foreign tourists visiting Japan



Material: Prepared by the Japan Tourism Agency based on *Statistics of Visitors Arrivals to Japan* issued by the Japan National Tourism Organization.

Under the idea that tourism is a pillar of growth strategies as a last resort for regional revitalization, in the Tourism Nation Promotion Basic Plan, which was approved by the Cabinet in 2023, the government is promoting measures with sustainable tourism, promote regional attraction, and increase in tourism consumption as keywords. Specifically, in addition to working on creating content that contributes to attracting regional customers and providing special experiences to connect to specific consumption activities, etc., comprehensive initiatives are being carried out, including measures aimed

at preventing and suppressing overtourism and initiatives contributing to conservation and utilization of regional resources, etc., in order to promote sustainable tourism.

#### (8) International cooperation

JICA has focused on the development of industrial human resources in Africa, training 26,086 people with the help of Japanese experts and local Kaizen consultants in FY 2022 to 2023. Moving forward, JICA plans to support 13,600 companies through trained Kaizen consultants and others by 2030. In the Asian region, with the goal of training more than 80,000 business professionals by 2030, 10,444 people were trained in 2022 and 28,743 people in 2023. Additionally, JICA supports the improvement of investment environment and the formulation of industrial policies through technical cooperation and training for administrative officials.

In particular, issue-specific training on promoting innovation and utilizing IoT and AI is being implemented to promote sustainable industrialization. In the FY 2022 to 2023, JICA supported the corporate growth of 824 companies, including startups. In Bangladesh, it has contributed to economic growth through the development of special economic zones and one-stop services. Furthermore, in Indonesia, Vietnam, and Nepal, technical cooperation on foreign human resources is being developed, and labor policy training is being conducted to realize decent work.



Kenya "Project for Strengthening Corporate Competitiveness".  
Scenes of on-site consulting in the area of quality productivity improvement at local private companies in Nairobi, Kenya.  
(Photo: JICA)

#### (9) Elimination of Child Labor

Since 2020, Japan has been continuing its efforts to eliminate child labor in developing countries. Notably, within the "Sustainable Cocoa Platform in Developing Countries," for which JICA serves as the secretariat, a "Sectoral Action for the Elimination of Child Labor" was established in September 2021. This initiative promotes collaboration among stakeholders, including businesses, NGOs, and government agencies, and a report on the progress of these efforts has been published annually since the following year. In Ghana, starting from January 2024, JICA has been supporting the strengthening and dissemination of the "Child Labor Free Zone" system, which is being advanced as a national plan, while also enhancing cooperation with organizations such as UNICEF and the International Labour Organization (ILO). Additionally, in October 2023, Japan joined Alliance 8.7, a global partnership aimed at achieving SDG Target 8.7, which calls for the elimination of child labor, as a partner.

## Goal 9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation



### (1) Building resilient infrastructure

In Japan, natural disasters are becoming more severe and frequent due to climate change, and large-scale earthquakes, such as the Nankai Trough megathrust earthquake, are imminent. In addition, infrastructure that has been intensively developed after the high economic growth period is expected to deteriorate all at once in the future. In order to overcome such crises, protect the lives and property of residents, and maintain important social functions, Japan has taken the Five-Year Acceleration Plan for Disaster Prevention, Disaster Mitigation, and Building National Resilience (approved by the Cabinet in 2020) based on the Fundamental Plan for National Resilience to aim to accelerate and deepen national land resilience initiatives. In addition to the development and management of disaster prevention infrastructure and the strengthening of lifelines, such as transportation, communication, and energy, it is essential to use digital technology in order to efficiently advance national resilience measures. Initiatives will be promoted, such as disaster prevention/mitigation measures using supercomputers, improved prediction accuracy of training rainbands, climate change countermeasures through high-precision forecast information, and enhancement of road management systems using IT.

### (2) Industrialization and technological innovation

Japan aims to realize a human-centered society "Society 5.0" that balances economic development and the resolution of social issues in the five-year plan the Sixth Science, Technology and Innovation Basic Plan (STI Basic Plan) decided in March 2021, and plans to invest a total of 30 trillion yen (approximately 250 billion US dollars) in government research and development over five years as a science and technology innovation policy. While strengthening international competitiveness through the development of science and technology, Japan will strive to build a sustainable and resilient society by exploring the frontiers of knowledge and creating innovation.

In the agricultural sector, Japan is promoting smart agriculture using IoT and AI. Thus, even in rural areas where the declining birthrate and aging population are progressing, agriculture can be carried out efficiently with a small labor force. For example, technologies, such as agricultural drones and autonomous driving tractors, have been introduced, thereby improving the efficiency of farm work and sustainability.

### (3) International cooperation

Japan has declared the Initiative to Expand Export of High-quality Infrastructure in order to promote the export and development of high-quality infrastructure. The Initiative supports the sustainable development of the region by making infrastructure investments approximately 200 billion US dollars in infrastructure projects worldwide. Specific examples of projects include the Thai urban railway "Red Line," which opened in August 2021, and the Kenyan geothermal power development plan. These projects reduce traffic congestion, improve the stability of power supply, and contribute to regional economic development.

## Goal 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries

### (1) Status of poverty inequality

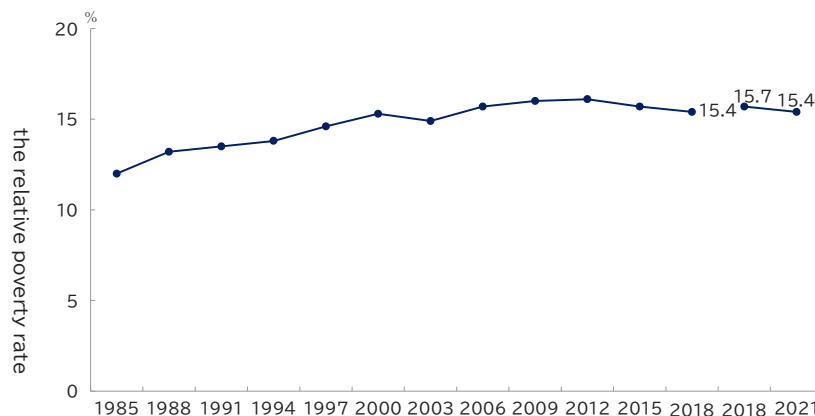
According to the *Comprehensive Survey of Living Conditions 2022*, the poverty line in 2021 is 1.27 million yen (approximately 11,000 US dollars), and the relative poverty rate is 15.4%, an improvement of 0.3 points compared to that in 2018. In addition, the income Gini coefficient after redistribution in 2021, according to the special tabulation of the same survey, is 0.338, less changed from 0.334 in 2018. Additionally, Japan's relative poverty rate is the seventh highest among OECD member countries<sup>54</sup>. Although these indicators focus on "income," and the increase in relatively low-income elderly populations due to aging contributes to upward pressure, in recent years, there has been a basic trend of stabilization or improvement. This is due to factors such as the improvement in economic conditions, including the expansion of employment, as well as the redistributive effects of social security, such as pensions, and tax redistribution.



### (2) Addressing poverty inequality

In order to respond in detail to people living a difficult life due to poverty, etc., comprehensive measures have been taken, such as providing consultation support in the self-reliance support system for the persons in need, raising the minimum wage, and promoting the conversion of non-regular to regular employees.

Trend in the relative poverty rate




Note: 1. The poverty rate is calculated based on OECD preparation standards.

2. Household members whose equivalent disposable income is unknown are excluded.

3. Data on Hyogo Prefecture are excluded from the figures for 1994.

4. Data on Kumamoto Prefecture are excluded from the figures for 2015.

<sup>54</sup> The OECD comparison of relative poverty rates uses figures from the OECD "Income Distribution Database" (as of April 2025). These figures are primarily from 2022, but for Costa Rica, they are from 2023; for Japan, the Netherlands, and Switzerland, from 2021; for Australia and Germany, from 2020; for Denmark, from 2019; and for Iceland, from 2017. There are no figures available for Colombia.



5. The “new standard” established in 2018 means a new standard for the OECD income definition, which is calculated by further deducting “automobile tax, light vehicle tax, and automobile weight tax,” “corporate pension premiums,” and “remittances” from conventional disposable income.

6. The new standard has been applied to figures from 2021 onwards.

Material: Prepared based on Table 11 from *Summary Report of Comprehensive Survey of Living Conditions 2022* issued by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare. The units are expressed in %.

### (3) International cooperation

JICA, based on the "Global Compact on Refugees" adopted at the United Nations General Assembly in 2018, is working on comprehensive support for refugee-hosting countries (strengthening administrative capacity, improving social services, infrastructure development, etc.), human resource development targeting refugees (improving self-reliance and livelihoods, providing educational and training opportunities), and strengthening cooperation with international organizations. For example, in northern Uganda, which has been affected by conflict and has become a refugee-hosting area, JICA is supporting the formulation of integrated development plans that reflect the needs of both refugees and host communities, and is dispatching policy advisors related to refugee support to countries such as Kenya, Uganda, and Bangladesh.



## Goal 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable



### (1) Disaster countermeasures and basic plans

Based on the Basic Act on Disaster Countermeasures enacted in 1961, the Disaster Management Basic Plan was revised tailored to the annual disaster situation, the effects of the countermeasures, and the results of scientific research. Local public authorities prepare local disaster management plans, and designated local government organizations and public institutions prepare disaster management operation plans. In order to promote voluntary disaster management activities by residents, the Community Disaster Management Plan System has been established, in which residents, businesses, welfare workers, and other entities specify proposal plans for local disaster risks and disaster management activities and include them in municipal regional disaster management plans. As of April 2023, community disaster management plans have been formulated in 43 prefectures, 216 municipalities, and 2,428 districts.


Regarding business continuity plans (BCPs), the Japanese government supporting the BCP preparation by formulating guidelines, etc., in order to improve business continuity in the event of a disaster. Regarding the BCP formulation status, prefectures achieved 100% as of 2016, and municipalities achieved 100% as of 2023. According to the fact-finding survey of private companies, the achievement rate from FY 2021 to FY 2023 rose from 70.8% to 76.4% for large enterprises and from 40.2% to 45.5% for medium-sized enterprises. Also, in addition to the designation of designated evacuation centers based on the Basic Act on Disaster Countermeasures, the central government is calling on local governments nationwide to secure evacuation centers through agreements, notifications, etc., in preparation for when designated evacuation centers are not enough (108,638 locations as of November 1, 2024).

Recognizing the importance of incorporating a gender perspective in strengthening disaster response capabilities, efforts have been made to achieve gender equality in decision-making participation, integrate gender perspectives into disaster preparedness items, and consider gender aspects in evacuation shelters. Progress in these areas is publicly available on the Cabinet Office Gender Equality Bureau's website<sup>55</sup>.

### (2) Development and management of disaster prevention infrastructure

As described in Target 9, based on the Fundamental Plan for National Resilience and the Five-Year Acceleration Plan, Japan is promoting initiatives, such as the development and management of disaster prevention infrastructure, strengthening of lifelines, including transportation, communications, and energy, utilization of digital technology, enforcement of public-private partnerships, and strengthening of regional disaster prevention capabilities.

<sup>55</sup> Cabinet Office Gender Equality Bureau Website "Outcome Goals and Indicators"  
[https://www.gender.go.jp/about\\_danjo/seika\\_shihyo/index.html](https://www.gender.go.jp/about_danjo/seika_shihyo/index.html)



Ensuring communication services in the event of a disaster is important, and “information communication network safety and reliability standards” stipulating earthquake resistance measures, power outage countermeasures, and fire prevention measures that telecommunications carriers should implement have been established. This standard has been reviewed multiple times based on damage status and recovery response of communication services during massive disasters to ensure communication services during disasters.

### (3) Public transportation issues and formulation of regional public transportation plans

In Japan, population decline and aging are progressing, and transportation operators are facing a difficult financial situation especially in rural areas. By 2050, the population is expected to decrease significantly in many regions, and the number of public transportation users is also expected to decrease. Local public authorities are taking the lead in initiatives to ensure the provision of sustainable regional passenger transportation services, such as preparing 1,124 Local Public Transportation Plans as of the end of January 2025, based on laws relating to the revitalization and reconstruction of local public transportation.

### (4) Creating “Children-Centered Communities”

Based on the purpose of the Basic Act for Children, which aims to realize a society where all children can live happily into their future, many prefectures and municipalities are devising “Plans for Children” that consolidate local children-related policies, taking into account the “General Principles for Child-Related Measures” by the national government. These plans are scheduled to be developed by all prefectures by the end of fiscal year 2025. As such, efforts are being made at the local government level to achieve the “Children-Centered Society.”

### (5) Accessible tourism

As an accessible tourism initiative, in order to create an environment where all travelers can travel stress-free and comfortably, accommodation facilities and tourist facilities are being supported in their initiatives, such as barrier-free renovation of guest rooms and common areas carried out by accommodation facilities, and barrier-free tourist facilities are also being promoted. Between 2021, when the previous VNR was issued, and March 2025, the Project for Universal Tourism Promotion (FY2024 budget: 54 million yen or approximately 0.388 million USD), the Project to Support Accommodation Facilities in Responding to Inbound Tourists (FY2024 budget: included in 1.374 billion yen or approximately 9.885 million USD), and the Project of Sophistication to Improve the Environment for Accepting Inbound Tourists (FY2024 budget: included in 990 million yen or approximately 7.122 million USD) were implemented.

### (6) International disaster reduction cooperation

Japan has accumulated a lot of knowledge and measures while experiencing numerous disasters. By sharing these, it is leading global discussions in the field of disaster prevention and contributing to strengthening disaster prevention initiatives in countries around the world. In particular, Japan is expected to play a leading role from the international community in the implementation of the Sendai

Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, which was adopted at the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in March 2015, and is actively promoting initiatives, such as advance disaster prevention investment and “Build Back Better” in recovery through bilateral cooperation in the field of disaster prevention and multilateral cooperation in cooperation with international organizations, such as the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR).

Also, in December 2015, the 70th United Nations General Assembly Plenary Meeting designated November 5<sup>56</sup> as “World Tsunami Awareness Day” in order to promote initiatives all over the world, such as educational activities to raise awareness about tsunamis and the strengthening of tsunami countermeasures. Since then, initiatives have been made to deepen understanding and interest in the threat of tsunamis and countermeasures around the world through the World Tsunami Museum Conference, the Hamaguchi Award/Essey Contest, collaboration with international organizations (UNDRR, UNITAR, UNDP), and the holding of the High School Students Summit on World Tsunami Awareness Day.

#### (7) International cooperation for cleaning cities

The JICA Clean City Initiative (JCCI), which was established in 2022 with the aim of realizing clean cities in developing countries, has been working to promote environmental measures against waste, water pollution, and air pollution. In addition to sharing JICA's cooperation results and assets, the Initiative promotes business formation in cooperation with various domestic and international partners, including international organizations, donors, local governments, such as Yokohama City and Kitakyushu City, and private companies, as well as information dissemination from related organizations, serving as a platform for measures against environmental pollution and climate change. The JCCI International Seminars, held annually since 2022, have attracted over 2,100 participants from more than 80 countries around the world. JCCI aims to benefit 500 million citizens in 50 countries by 2030. As of February 2025, over 90 projects (including technical and financial cooperation) have been implemented in 60 countries, reaching 350 million beneficiaries.

The African Clean Cities Platform (ACCP) was launched in 2017 by Ministry of the Environment, Japan, JICA, UNEP, UN-Habitat, and the City of Yokohama, in collaboration with 24 African countries. It has expanded to encompass 198 cities in 47 African countries, as of May 2025. The aim of ACCP is to achieve the waste-related SDGs in Africa by 2030, given its rapid urbanization. The ACCP is a knowledge-sharing and investment-promotion platform that encourages the introduction of external funds from the private sector and other donors to support the development and implementation of waste management projects. It also promotes the dissemination of subjective initiative results and knowledge from member countries and cities in order to effectively scale up.

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<sup>56</sup> It comes from an anecdote about the “Inamura no Hi (the burning of rice sheaves),” in which Goryo Hamaguchi (1820-1885) set fire to harvested rice sheaves as a signal of early warning during the massive tsunami that took place in the present Wakayama prefecture on November 5, 1854, saving the lives of villagers by evacuating them, and then working hard to build back better in the disaster-stricken area.

## Goal 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns



### (1) Popularization of ethical consumption

Regarding ethical consumption, the Fourth Basic Plan for Consumers, which was approved by the Cabinet in March 2021, states that initiatives will be promoted to popularize and raise awareness of ethical consumption, which is smart consumption behavior that consumers take people, society, and the environment into consideration, including the purchase of fair trade products that aim to improve the lives of workers in developing countries as well as sustainable products, such as eco-friendly products. According to the 2024 survey, awareness of ethical consumption is 27.4%. Japan will continue to promote initiatives.

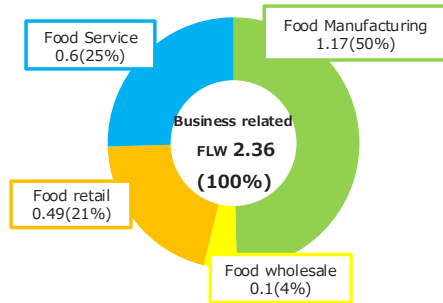
### (2) Food Loss and Waste reduction

The Act on Promotion of Food Loss and Waste Reduction was enforced in October 2019. While the target has been set to halve the amount of Food Loss and Waste by FY 2030 (business-related: 2.73 million tons, household-related: 2.16 million tons), the amount of business-related and household-related Food Loss and Waste in FY 2022 was 2.36 million tons each. As for the business-related Food Loss and Waste reduction, since the target was achieved eight years ahead of schedule, the business target was changed to a 60% reduction (new business target of 2.19 million tons) so that Food Loss and Waste reduction will progress further.

In order to reduce Food Loss and Waste on the business-related is reviewing commercial practices (relaxation of delivery dates, year-and-month labeling for best before dates, and extension of best before dates of products), promoting the use of food banks, raising awareness among consumers, and promoting “eating all (finishing their meal)” and “take leftovers away” at restaurants. As for the household-related Food Loss and Waste reduction, the government aims to raise consumer awareness and realize a sustainable society through promoting better understanding of best before dates and use-by dates, and providing information on how to use food at home).

### Breakdown of Business related FLW (edible-parts)

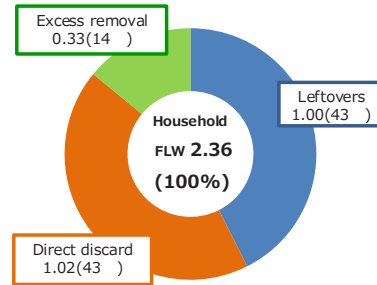
FY2022



PPT: Ministry of Agriculture,  
Forestry and Fisheries

### Breakdown of Household FLW

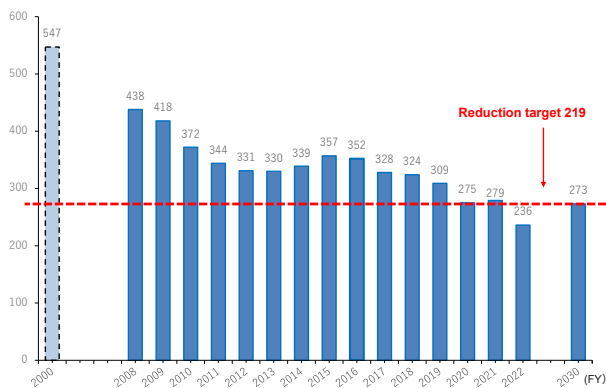
FY2022



Unit: million tons  
PPT: Ministry of the Environment

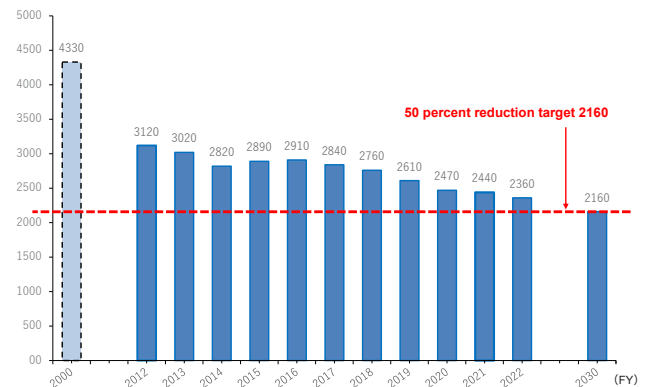
### Goal and Trend in Business related FLW

the amount of FLW (Unit: million tons)



### Goal and Trend in Household FLW

Household FLW (Unit: thousand tons)



### Trend Graph and Reduction Target regarding Food Loss and Waste (FLW) in Japan

Business related FLW (unit: ten thousand tons) / Household related FLW (unit: ten thousand tons)

PPT: Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and  
Fisheries

PPT: Ministry of the Environment

## Goal 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts



### (1) Greenhouse gas reduction targets and emissions results

In the Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC)<sup>57</sup> submitted to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in October 2021, Japan stated that it aims to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 46% in FY 2030 from its FY 2013 levels, which is aligned with the long-term goal of achieving net-zero by 2050 (actual zero greenhouse gas emissions) and will continue strenuous efforts in its challenge to meet the lofty goal of cutting its emission by 50%.

Furthermore, in the NDC submitted to UNFCCC in February 2025, Japan stated that it aims to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 60% in FY 2035 and by 73% in FY 2040, respectively, from its FY 2013 levels, as ambitious targets aligned with the global 1.5°C goal and on a straight pathway towards the achievement of net zero by 2050.

Greenhouse gas emissions and removals in FY 2023 is approximately 1,017 million tonnes (CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent; the same applies hereinafter), a decrease of 4.2% (approximately 44.9 million tonnes) compared to FY 2022, and a decrease of 27.1% (approximately 378.1 million tonnes) compared to FY 2013. It marks the lowest on record and keeps the steady decreasing trend toward net-zero by 2050.

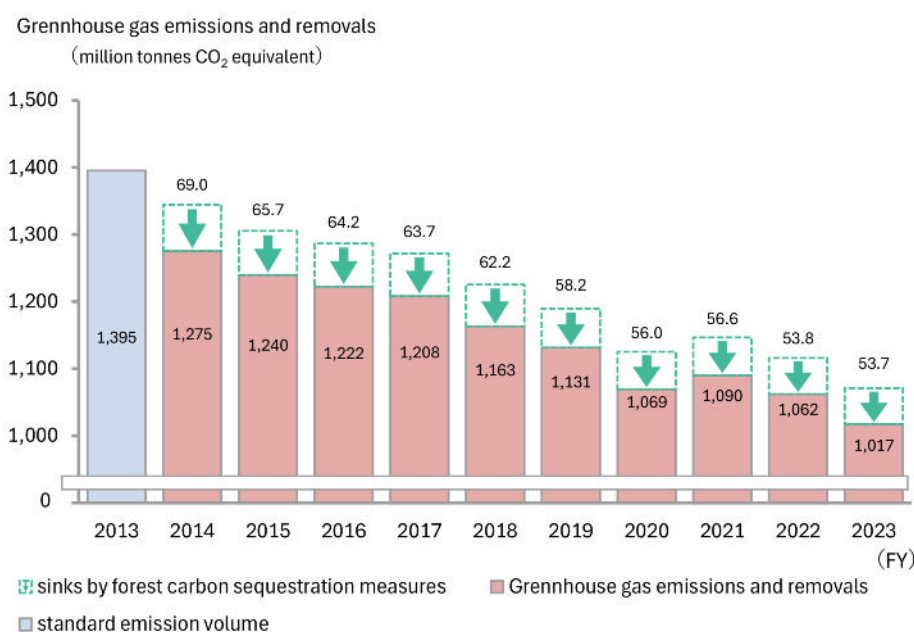


Figure: Trend in greenhouse gas emissions and removals in Japan

Data: Ministry of the Environment

F-gas emissions (HFCs, PFCs, SF<sub>6</sub>, and NF<sub>3</sub>) have further declined compared to 2022, when F-gas emissions turned to a decrease for the first time since their increasing trend began in 2009. Their emissions in 2023 were 37 Mt, which was a 3.9% (1.5Mt) decrease compared to 2022. Five years have passed since the revised Act on Rational Use and Proper Management of Fluorocarbons came into

<sup>57</sup> NDC: Nationally Determined Contribution



effect in 2019, and necessary revisions will be made considering the implementation status of the revised Act.

Regarding measures for forests and other carbon sinks, including blue carbon, the removals in FY2023 were 53.7 Mt, similar to those of the previous fiscal year (53.8 Mt in FY2022). These removals are equivalent to 14.2% of the reduction amount (378.1 Mt) from the FY2013 emission levels. Regarding offshore blue carbon initiatives, which are attracting high expectations as sinks, a promotion system through the collaboration of relevant ministries and agencies and public-private partnerships will be established, and considerations will be undertaken.

Regarding Carbon Capture and Utilization (CCU) technologies such as CO<sub>2</sub>-absorbing concrete, more technologies have been added to the list of CO<sub>2</sub>-absorbing concrete, etc., and the removals (CO<sub>2</sub> fixation) in FY2023 were 121 tonnes (27 tonnes in FY2022). Consideration of J-credit accreditation for CO<sub>2</sub>-absorbing concrete will be further accelerated from FY2025.


Moreover, even if climate change measures are steadily promoted toward 2050 and the temperature rise is suppressed to approximately 1.5°C, the risk of extremely high-temperature phenomenon and heavy rain is expected to increase. Therefore, both the above-mentioned mitigation measures and adaptation measures to avoid and reduce damage caused by current and future climate change are essential in climate change measures. Japan has promoted adaptation measures by formulating the Climate Change Adaptation Act and the Climate Change Adaptation Plan. In terms of measures against heat illness, which is one of the adaptation strategies for climate change, the Japanese government is implementing these measures based on the Climate Change Adaptation Act. This includes the issuance of special alerts for heat illness and the establishment of the system of designating facilities by local mayors, which are commonly referred to as “Cooling Shelters”. The Climate Change and Disaster Management Strategy in the Era of Climate Crisis, which was jointly announced by the Minister of State for Disaster Management and the Minister of the Environment in 2020, sets out initiatives to effectively link climate change measures with disaster prevention and mitigation measures to seek to mainstream them into policy as cross-sectional challenges addressed in all fields.

## (2) International cooperation

Developed countries including Japan have provided various supports for developing countries so that those countries can implement sufficient climate change measures. Those supports include financial support, capacity building, and technology transfer.

Japan announced in 2021 at the G7 Cornwall Summit and at the 26th session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP26) that it would provide assistance in both private and public finance totaling up to approximately USD 70 billion over five years from 2021 to 2025, including doubling its assistance for adaptation, totaling approximately USD 14.8 billion. Japan has been steadily implementing this commitment on an ongoing basis.

In the assistance to developing countries, the Green Climate Fund (GCF), which is a multilateral fund that provides support for developing countries to address climate change, also plays an important role.



Japan has contributed a total of approximately JPY 319 billion to the fund to date. In October 2023, Japan announced that it would contribute up to approximately JPY 165 billion in the Second Replenishment period (from 2024 to 2027), nearly the same amount as Japan contributed in the First Replenishment.

In addition, the Global Shield Financing Facility (GSFF<sup>58</sup>) was launched as a multi-donor trust fund under the World Bank in 2022 with the aim of improving the capacity of developing countries to cope with climate change and disasters and strengthening their financial resilience. GSFF provides financial and technical assistance for risk financing, such as disaster risk insurance, including the establishment and strengthening of regional risk pools and premium financing for risk transfer, to which Japan also contributed 800 million yen in March 2023 and 685 million yen in March 2024.

At COP28 held in 2023, the basic institutional design of the Fund for responding to Loss and Damage (FRLD<sup>59</sup>) was decided in order for developing countries that are particularly vulnerable to respond to loss and damage associated with the adverse effects of climate change. Japan contributed USD 10 million (JPY 1.37 billion) to the Fund in March 2024, followed by additional USD 5 million (JPY 695 million) in March 2025. At the Fund's board meetings held four times from April 2024 to March 2025, it was decided that the Philippines would be the host country of the board of the Fund, and progress was made in selecting the Executive Director and developing the legal arrangements to establish the secretariat of the Fund under the World Bank. As a country which holds a seat in the board, Japan has actively contributed to discussions for the appropriate operationalization of the Fund.

Regarding the Joint Crediting Mechanism (JCM), taking into account the total international emission reduction and removal targets of approximately 100 million t-CO<sub>2</sub> by FY 2030 and approximately 200 million t-CO<sub>2</sub> by FY 2040 based on the Plan for Global Warming Countermeasures (approved by the Cabinet in February 2025) as well as the GX2040 Vision (approved by the Cabinet in February 2025) and others, Japan will conduct projects in line with the detailed guidance Article 6 of the Paris Agreement, which have been fully operationalized in the COP29 decision, and aims to achieve global decarbonization and the goals of the Paris Agreement.

Furthermore, through international initiatives, such as the Asia Zero Emission Community (AZEC), Japan will advance decarbonization in Asia through various pathways, taking into account each country's national circumstances in a realistic manner while utilizing Japan's technology, and also contribute to decarbonization worldwide.

Japan is also supporting capacity building for ensuring transparency in climate change measures by developing countries through initiatives such as the "Cooperative Actions for NDC Implementation and Transparency Enhancement" announced at COP29 and the "Capacity-building Initiative for Transparency (CBIT)" established at COP21.

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<sup>58</sup> GSFF: Global Shield Financing Facility

<sup>59</sup> FRLD: Fund for responding to Loss and Damage

## Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development



### (1) Achievement of 30by30 target (sea area)

In order to achieve the target of effectively conserving more than 30% of land and sea areas by 2030, as it is called the 30by30 target, which is one of the global targets of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, initiatives are being made to expand protected areas and improve the quality of their management, as well as to establish and manage sites that are managed in an effective manner for long-term biodiversity conservation in areas not subject to nature conservation (other effective area-based conservation measures; hereinafter OECMs). As of August 2024, 13.3% of sea areas have been protected.

### (2) Countermeasures against marine pollution and debris

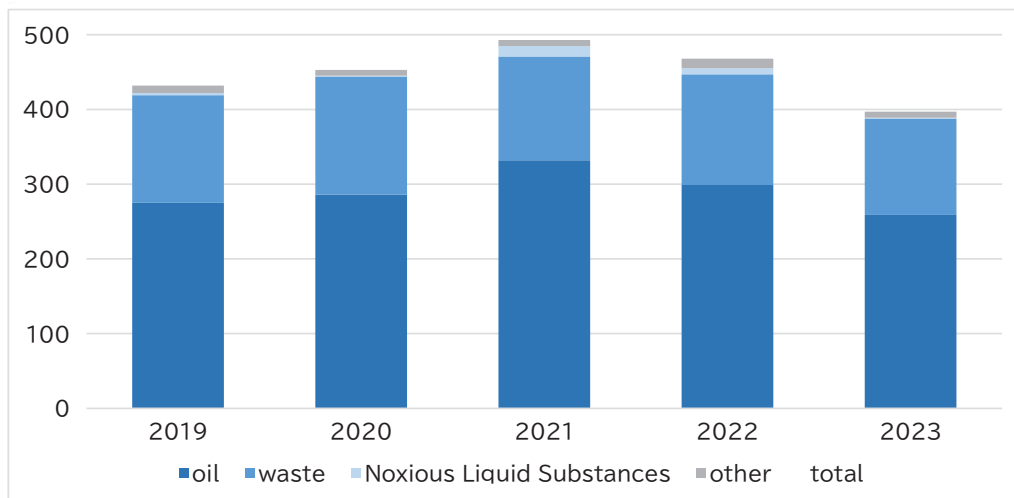
The trend in the number of confirmed cases of marine pollution (oil, waste, etc.) in the waters surrounding Japan in the last five years (from 2019 to 2023) is shown in the figure below. In 2023, there were 397 cases, a decrease of 71 cases compared to 2022. Looking at this by pollutants, there are 259 cases caused by oil contamination, a decrease of 40 cases compared to the previous year, 129 cases caused by waste, a decrease of 19 cases, one case caused by contamination with noxious liquid substances, a decrease of 7 cases, and 8 cases caused by contamination with other substances (factory wastewater, etc.), a decrease of 5 cases.

It is said that millions of tons of plastic waste flow out into the environment, including the ocean, every year, and the damage to living organisms due to accidental ingestion and entanglement, as well as the socio-economic impacts on ship navigation, tourism, and fishing activities have become problems. There are also concerns about the impacts of chemical substances, such as additives and microplastics on ecosystems.

In Japan, the Fourth Basic Plan on Ocean Policy, which was approved by the Cabinet in April 2023, clarifies the marine debris measures, and the revised Act on Promoting the Treatment of Debris that Drift Ashore stipulates the obligation of operators to make the best efforts to suppress waste plastic emissions. Basic policies based on the Act, Resource Circulation Strategy for Plastics, and Action Plan for Marine Plastic Debris Countermeasures were formulated in May 2019, and the Act on Promotion of Resource Circulation Related to Plastics was enforced in April 2022. Thus, whole-of-government initiatives are being strengthened.

Furthermore, it is contributing to the promotion of sustainable and effective use of marine resources through development of methods related to grasping the actual state of marine pollutants and evaluating their impacts on marine ecosystems as well as marine surveys, observations, and research and development regarding the ocean, such as the advancement of technology for utilizing big data on marine life.

Trend in the number of confirmed cases of marine pollution



Material: Prepared based on Japan Coast Guard's public relations materials

### (3) International cooperation

JICA is working on promoting Fisheries-centered approach for Blue Economy, which aims to improve the livelihoods of communities and reduce poverty through the sustainable use of fisheries resources and revitalize the coastal economy for developing countries that are heavily dependent on marine fisheries resources and coastal ecosystem services.

Through contributions to the IAEA's "NUTEC Plastics" initiative, Japan is promoting the establishment of recycling technologies for plastics using nuclear science and technology and fostering international cooperation for tracking marine plastic waste.

### (4) BBNJ Agreement

With the adoption of the BBNJ Agreement<sup>60</sup> in June 2023, progress has been made in establishing rules for the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction. To achieve its early entry into force, Japan is currently proceeding with the necessary domestic procedures to become a party, having obtained approval of the Diet in May 2025.

<sup>60</sup> The Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction

Goal 15: Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss



#### (1) Achievement of 30by30 target (land area)

In order to achieve the target of effectively conserving more than 30% of land and sea areas by 2030, as it is called the 30by30 target, which is one of the global targets of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, initiatives are being made to expand protected areas and improve the quality of their management, as well as to establish and manage OECMs. As of August 2024, 20.8% of land areas have been protected.

Furthermore, the water cycle connecting forests, rivers, farmland, cities, lakes, and coastal areas is an important cornerstone of ecosystem networks in national land, which is also deeply related to ecosystem services, such as food, water, and climate stability. In order to properly manage ecosystems in river basins, regular surveys are conducted on inhabiting/growing/breeding conditions of organisms in rivers and dam lakes. In the Monitoring-site 1000 (Project for Promoting Monitoring of Important Ecosystem Monitored Areas), which grasps the current state and changes in the natural environment, the habitat and growth conditions of plants, birds, fish and corals are monitored at approximately 300 survey sites nationwide set up in lakes, wetlands, coastal areas, and coral reef ecosystems.

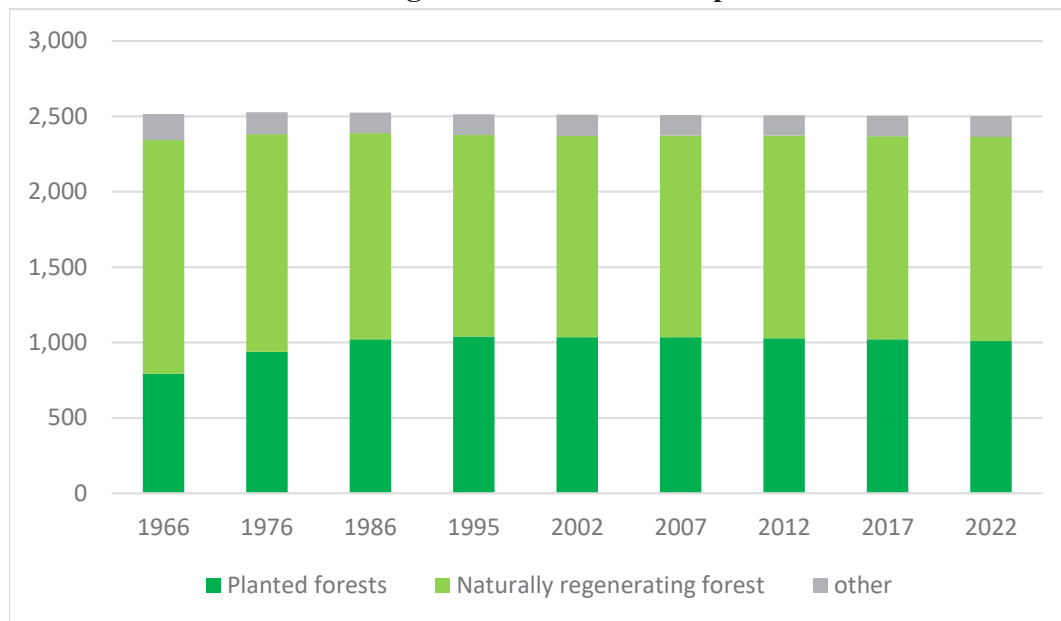
#### (2) Sustainable forest management

Japan's forest area is approximately 25.02 million hectares as of the end of March 2022, accounting for approximately two-thirds of the country's land area. This area has remained almost constant over the past half century, and 18.3% of forests are protected under systems such as national parks, primeval nature conservation areas, protected forests, green corridors, etc.

Appropriate maintenance and conservation are important in order to continuously demonstrate the multifaceted functions of forests, and it is necessary to establish a cycle of “logging, using, planting, and growing.” In Japan, long-term forest plans have been formulated by countries, prefectures, and municipalities. The Basic Plans for Forests and Forestry was formulated based on the Forest and Forestry Basic Act, promoting measures related to forests and forestry comprehensively and systematically. In line with the Basic Plans for Forests and Forestry, a national forest plan was formulated, showing targets for maintenance and conservation as well as the designed amount of logged timber volume and afforestation area.



**Changes in forest area of Japan**



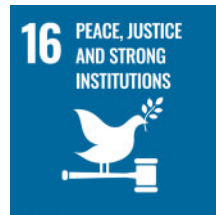
Material: Prepared based on the *Current Status of Forest Resources (as of March 31, 2022)*.  
The units for figures are expressed in 10,000 hectares.

### (3) International cooperation

The Amazon area in South America accounts for approximately one-quarter of the Earth's tropical forests, but deforestation is progressing due to large-scale agriculture and land development. In fact, 628,800 hectares of forest have been lost in one year until July 2024, and there is a need to strengthen sustainable forest management. In Brazil, JICA is implementing illegal deforestation management improvement projects since 2021 in cooperation with the Brazilian Institute of Environment and Renewable Natural Resources (IBAMA) through the Project for improving control of illegal deforestation through advanced SAR and AI technologies in the Brazilian Amazon. By using synthetic aperture radar (SAR) satellites of the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA), useful data for crackdown can be obtained by making it possible to observe forest changes even during the rainy season with many clouds. In collaboration with the National Institute of Advanced Industrial Science and Technology (AIST), a deforestation prediction system using AI is being developed. They are contributing to measures against illegal deforestation by strengthening information provision to the law-enforcement official and feedback mechanisms.



Goal 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels



### (1) Decrease in violence and deaths due to violence

Target 16.1 aims to “substantially reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere.” Since 2003, the number of deaths and injuries due to criminal offenses has been on a downward trend, but in recent years, it has shifted to an upward trend.

The number of people who were killed or injured as a result of criminal offenses




Data: National Police Agency

### (2) Ending Violence Against Children

Efforts are underway to achieve Target 16.2, which aims to "end abuse, exploitation, trafficking, and all forms of violence and torture against children." Japan is actively participating in international initiatives and, as a Pathfinding Country (a country which is committed to working towards ending violence against children within its borders), is implementing measures based on the "National Action Plan to End Violence Against Children." This action plan, involving various government ministries, civil society, and incorporating children's views, includes strategies focused on four pillars: abuse, sexual violence, bullying, and corporal punishment.

Regarding child abuse, the number of cases handled by child consultation centers nationwide as child abuse consultations during FY 2023 was 225,509 (As of March 25, 2025). In light of the situation in



which households with difficulties in raising children are becoming more apparent than ever before, the Act Partially Amending the Child Welfare Act and Other Legislation was enacted in 2022 to strengthen support for families and upbringing environments for children and promote child welfare policies that protect children's rights. The Act includes provisions, such as the obligation to make the best efforts to establish Children and Families Centers to provide comprehensive support for child welfare and maternal and child health in municipalities, the improvement of environment in temporary protection facilities, and the introduction of judicial review for temporary protection. (The Act was enforced on April 1, 2024, with the exception of some provisions.)

Based on the idea that protecting the irreplaceable dignity of children and preventing sexual violence against children is extremely important, the Prevention of Sexual Violence against Children Act was enacted in Japan in June 2024, and considerations are underway toward the enforcement deadline of December 2026. The Act requires certain educational and childcare providers, including schools and daycare centers, to take daily safety measures, such as interviews, consultations, and staff training, and check for certain criminal records of sexual crimes in order to prevent sexual violence against children by their workers.

In November 2024, Japan participated in the First Global Ministerial Conference on Ending Violence Against Children held in Bogota, the capital of Colombia, introduced Japan's initiatives to end violence against children, such as the establishment of the Children and Families Agency, the enactment of the Prevention of Sexual Violence against Children Act, and the establishment of the Children and Families Center, and expressed that Japan would continue to work to end violence. Japan also agreed with the Bogota Call to Action, which was adopted as a deliverable of the meeting.

### (3) International cooperation

In 2021, from the perspective of preventing violence and eradicating terrorism and crime, Japan hosted the Kyoto Congress and played an international role. The overall theme of the Kyoto Congress was “Advancing crime prevention, criminal justice, and the rule of law: towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda,” and the following items were specifically discussed, confirming the strengthening of international cooperation: (i) Comprehensive strategies for crime prevention towards social and economic development, (ii) Integrated approaches to challenges facing the criminal justice system, (iii) Multidimensional approaches by Governments to promoting the rule of law, and (iv) International cooperation and technical assistance to prevent and address all forms of crime.

Additionally, since the 1990s, Japan has been providing legal technical cooperation toward developing countries, including assistance in drafting laws and capacity-building in the field of law and justice. This cooperations has been expanding beyond the ASEAN region to include Ukraine, Central Asia, Pacific Island nations and Africa. Furthermore, through the United Nations Asia and Far East Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders (UNAFEI), which is operated in cooperation with the United Nations, Japan is working to improve the capacity of criminal justice practitioners in various countries by implementing international training on topics, such as measures against organized crime, corruption and terrorism, for developing countries in the Asia-Pacific region and Africa.

The presence of civil society, including NGOs, is expanding in conflict areas around the world through prompt cooperation that is attuned to local needs, providing emergency humanitarian assistance. Japan considers these NGOs as strategic partners and conduct emergency humanitarian assistance in conflict zones through the Japan Platform. In the fiscal year 2023, assistance was provided to vulnerable displaced persons in conflict-affected areas such as Ukraine, Myanmar, Sudan, and Gaza. In the fiscal year 2024, support was extended to these countries as well as to Yemen, Syria, Ethiopia, South Sudan, and others, focusing on those displaced persons who tend to be left behind in conflict situations.

#### (4) Cooperation in UN PKO

Since 2015, Japan has been cooperating with the UN Triangular Partnership Programme (TPP), a framework in which the UN, supporting member states, and troop-contributing countries cooperate to provide the necessary training for personnel dispatched for UN PKO, in order to support peacekeepers from various countries participating in UN PKO to enhance their capabilities. Specifically, Japan dispatched a total of 217 personnel, including SDF personnel, as instructors to Kenya, Uganda, and other countries, and conducted training on the operation of heavy engineering equipment for 336 personnel from nine African countries that expressed intentions to dispatch engineering units to UN PKO. Since 2018, the target area of the TPP has been extended to include Asia and the surrounding regions, and Japan dispatched a total of 165 personnel, including SDF personnel, to Vietnam and Indonesia, and conducted training on the operation of heavy engineering equipment for 127 personnel from 14 countries in Asia and the surrounding regions. Furthermore, since October 2019, Japan has also dispatched a total of five personnel as instructors to the United Nations Field Medical Assistant Course (UNFMAC) in the medical field, a considerably problematic area for UN PKO (as of March 2025).

## Goal 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnerships for Sustainable Development

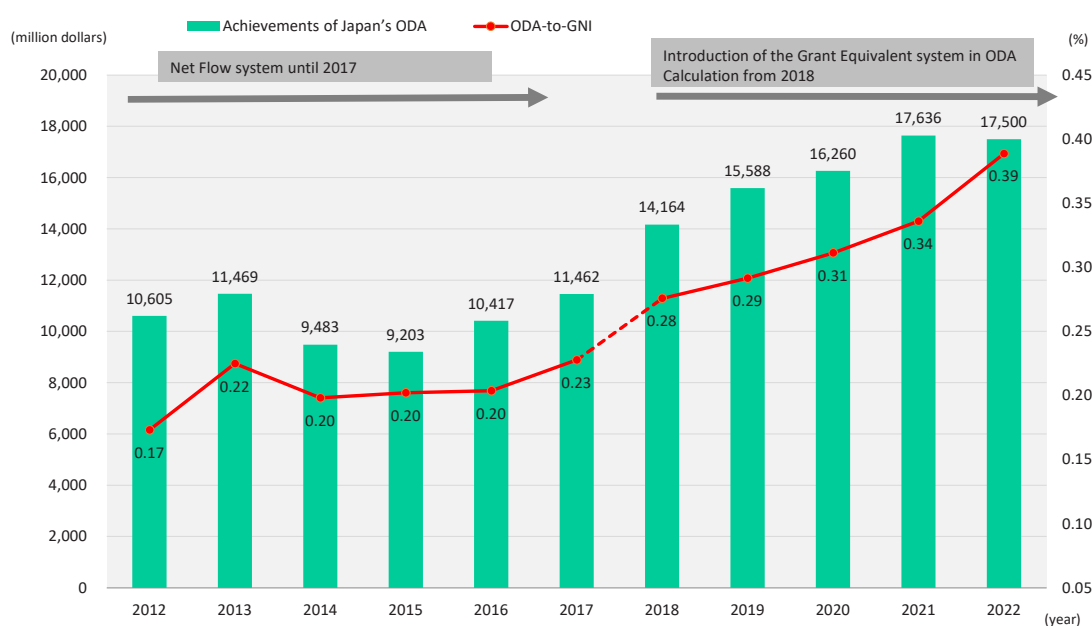


### (1) Financing for development

Japan's total ODA in 2023 was approximately 19,600.37 million US dollars (approximately 2,754 billion yen), according to the Grant Equivalent System (GE system) introduced as the standard for measuring ODA by the OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC) from 2018. Gross disbursement was approximately 24,001.45 million US dollars (approximately 3,037.2 billion yen), an increase of approximately 7.8% in terms of US dollars (an increase of approximately 15.3% in terms of yen) compared to the previous year (2022). As a result, Japan ranked third among the members of DAC, following the United States and Germany according to both the GE system and gross disbursement. Japan's ODA as a percentage of GNI increased from 0.20% in 2010 to 0.44% in 2023. Also, ODA to LDCs as a percentage of GNI was 0.09% in 2023 (net disbursement basis).

According to the *Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) report 2024*, it is confirmed that the financing gap for development has reached 4.2 trillion US dollars per year, which is a significant increase from 2.5 trillion US dollars before the COVID-19. Addressing this financing gap for development is important to achieving the SDGs across the international community. In discussions on financing for development at the United Nations, OECD, and other forums, it is important to accurately grasp the financing flow to developing countries and to stimulate discussions on the expansion of the donor base, including emerging countries, as well as private sector fund mobilization and others. Japan will continue to constructively participate in discussions.

Trend in Japan's ODA as a percentage of GNI



Note: As the standard for measuring ODA by the OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC), the net disbursement system has been used until 2017, and the Grant Equivalent System has been used since 2018.

Material: Prepared based on Chart II-6: Trend in Japan's ODA and as Percentage of GNI from *White Paper on Development Cooperation 2023* issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan. The amount of ODA is expressed in millions of US dollars. Also, ODA as a percentage GNI is expressed in %.

## (2) Multi-stakeholder initiatives

Multi-stakeholder initiatives are essential to promote the SDGs, and as mentioned above, Japan has been carrying out awareness raising and cooperation projects with a wide range of stakeholders. From 2021 when the previous VNR was announced to 2023, the recognition rate and understanding of the SDGs in Japan improved drastically. While the recognition rate of the SDGs was 86% in 2021, it rose to 91.6% in 2023. Also, the proportion of people who answered, “I am aware of SDGs, including the content,” has increased 11 times or more since the first survey (in 2018), reaching 40.4% (See Chapter 4. Public awareness of SDGs in Japan, p.23).

As for local governments, only 1% of governments were implementing SDGs initiatives in 2017, but 65.6% in 2023. This means that the initial target of setting the ratio of local governments working on the SDGs to 60% by the end of 2024 has already been achieved. Japan will continue to form SDGs model cases for regional revitalization and expand them horizontally within the country (See Chapter 4. Regional revitalization SDGs, p.37).

As one of concrete example of international collaboration through the SDGs, the Mekong-Japan SDGs Forum was held between Japan and the Mekong countries Following the online forum in 2021, the second forum was held in Bangkok in March 2025, bringing together experts to discuss water resources management and transboundary haze in the Mekong subregion. Based on the Mekong-Japan Initiative for SDGs toward 2030 and Mekong-Japan Cooperation Strategy 2024, Japan will continue to share each country's initiatives to achieve the SDGs and aim to solve issues.

As part of JICA's initiative for sustainable development, SDGs Business Supporting Surveys, are promoting solutions to various issues in developing countries through the business of private companies, etc. Through the JICA Chair (JICA Program for Japanese Studies), Japanese development experience is shared and Japanese studies and research are promoted in collaboration with universities and other institutions in about 80 countries., Besides, JICA Development Studies Program offers JICA scholars the and opportunities to learn about Japanese development experience in collaboration with 26 universities in Japan. In Africa, efforts are underway to promote the dissemination of the Kaizen approach, advancing South-South cooperation through over 600 local consultants trained in various African countries. From FY2022 to 2024, Kaizen and management support were provided to approximately 2,000 companies. In terms of business linkage, cooperation between companies is being promoted, 119 cases in FY 2023 and already 267 cases in the first half of FY 2024. Furthermore, JICA is strengthening cooperation with various stakeholders by, participating in donor meetings on private sector development and sharing knowledge and co-creation activities in private sector development.

Furthermore, by strengthening collaboration with civil society, including NGOs, efforts are being made to realize a world where "no one is left behind," providing support to vulnerable people who are

difficult to reach and promoting the SDGs. The Development Cooperation Charter, revised in June 2023, newly positions civil society as strategic partners in Japan's development cooperation. As part of economic and social development support for developing countries, based on the implementation guidelines, Japan offered Grant Assistance for Japanese NGO projects amounting to 6.96 billion yen across 109 projects in fiscal year 2023 and 6.71 billion yen across 102 projects in fiscal year 2024. Additionally, for emergency humanitarian assistance in response to natural disasters and conflicts, support was provided through the Japan Platform (JPF), amounting to 6.17 billion yen across 145 projects in fiscal year 2023 and 3.47 billion yen across 106 projects in fiscal year 2024. Furthermore, support is provided to enhance the organizational structure, project implementation capacity, and expertise of these NGOs, as well as to improve the environment for their activities. The NGO-MOFA Regular Consultations Meetings are held, aimed at improving ODA policies and strengthening partnerships with NGOs, striving for further collaboration.

### (3) Cooperation through the United Nations

Japan has been providing financial support and administrative cooperation to the United Nations Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific (SIAP) as the host government for over 50 years. SIAP provides practical statistical training to government officials in developing countries, particularly in the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) region, which is a regional commission of the United Nations, and plays an important role in follow-up and review for achieving the SDGs, including providing training related to statistical methods and data analysis necessary to measure the progress of the SDGs.



Gathering of African Kaizen Initiative stakeholders at the annual meeting in Tunis, Tunisia. (Photo: JICA)



# Chapter 6

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## EVALUATION AND INITIATIVES BY EACH STAKEHOLDER





## 6. Evaluation and initiatives by each stakeholder

### (1) Introduction

In this chapter, we aim to elucidate the process that led to raising the awareness of "SDGs" to over 90% and the actual state of initiatives by having stakeholders review their actions and progress toward achieving the SDGs. By including qualitative data that cannot be fully expressed through indicators, and conducting reviews from a critical perspective outside the government, we intend to demonstrate progress comprehensively across the entire VNR.

The review method for this chapter is as follows: The primary members of the SDGs Promotion Roundtable conducted reviews on issues related to the stakeholders they belong to or represent. Subsequently, editing was done to integrate texts appropriately and avoid duplication. The main authors for each section are as follows, with overall supervision by member Norichika Kanie, and final editing was conducted in coordination with the SDGs Promotion Headquarters Secretariat.

While efforts were made to ensure that there was no bias in content or volume based on goals or stakeholders, it is a fact that there was some bias in the information provided by each stakeholder. Standardizing data and information remains a challenge for the future.

General supervision: Norichika Kanie (member)

(2) Evaluation chart map by 17 goals by stakeholders: Norichika Kanie (member), Yusuke Inoue (project assistant professor at Keio University)

Evaluation by goal: Masaki Inaba (member), Atsuko Miwa (member), Ren Onishi (member)

(3) Initiatives by stakeholders—A. Media Trend: Norichika Kanie (member), Keiko Iizuka (member)

Support: Masahiro Kawatei

B-1. Gender: Atsuko Miwa (member), Asako Kimura (member), Yoshiko Norimatsu (member)

B-2. Youth: 2.1 Soichiro Chiba (member)

2.2 Kumiko Hongyo (member)

C-1. Trend in businesses 3.1 Business: Keiji Nishizawa (member)

3.2 Small and medium enterprises: Asako Kimura (member)

3.3 Finance: Masayuki Takanashi (member), Yoshinori Endo (member)

3.4 Labor Union: Yoshiko Norimatsu (member)

C-2. Trend in civil societies      4.1 Masaki Inaba (member), Atsuko Miwa (member), Ren Onishi (member)

4.2 Consumers: Yasuko Kono (member)

4.3 Labor union: Yoshiko Norimatsu (member)

4.4 Cooperative union: Masahiro Higa (member)

C-3. Trend in research and education institutions

5.1 Research institutions: Norichika Kanie (member), Fumiko Kasuga (member)

5.2 Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology

C-4. Trend in local governments      6. Yatsuka Kataoka, Research Fellow of Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES)

C-5. Congress      Secretariat

## (2) Evaluation by stakeholders by 17 goals

### Evaluation by 17 goals

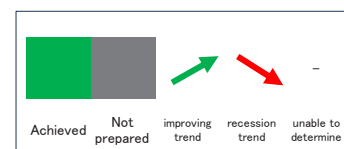
The progress of the SDGs thus far has been evaluated based on global indicators. The evaluation method and overall trends are as follows:

For each SDG target, global indicators were assessed using the longest available period of data. If the most recent value of an indicator exceeds the average value for the period, it is considered an "improving trend"; if it is below, it is deemed a "deteriorating trend." When comparing the most recent and average values, it is important to determine whether the indicator is a "positive indicator" (a higher value is more desirable) or a "negative indicator" (a higher value is less desirable). For example, for positive indicators, if the most recent value is above the average, it is considered an "improving trend," and if below, a "deteriorating trend." Conversely, for negative indicators, if the most recent value is above the average, it is considered a "deteriorating trend," and if below, an "improving trend." Additionally, "achieved" indicates that the target level has already been reached, "not established"

means data is unavailable, and a "-" signifies that the trend of the relevant indicator cannot be determined.

As an overall trend, for example, significant progress has been observed in many targets under Goals 3, 6, and 9. However, for targets within these goals that are in decline, as well as for other targets showing a declining trend, there is a need to strengthen measures, especially from the perspective of the "leave no one behind" principle. In some areas, such as gender equality (Goal 5), there are significant fluctuations, and challenges where trends cannot be confirmed are evident. It will be necessary in the future to conduct transparent progress monitoring through the development and disclosure of data in more detailed categories and the selection of relevant indicators.

|   |         |         |         |         |            |            |            |            |        |        |            |            |            |            |         |         |
|---|---------|---------|---------|---------|------------|------------|------------|------------|--------|--------|------------|------------|------------|------------|---------|---------|
| <b>1</b><br>NO<br>POVERTY                                 | 1.1.1   | 1.2.1   | 1.2.2   | 1.3.1   | 1.4.1      | 1.4.2      | 1.5.1      | 1.5.2      | 1.5.3  | 1.5.4  | 1.a.1      | 1.a.2      | 1.b.1      |            |         |         |
|   |         |         |         | -       |            |            |            |            |        |        | -          | -          |            |            |         |         |
| <b>2</b><br>ZERO<br>HUNGER                                | 2.1.1   | 2.1.2   | 2.2.1   | 2.2.2   | 2.2.3      | 2.3.1      | 2.3.2      | 2.4.1      | 2.5.1  | 2.5.2  | 2.a.1      | 2.a.2      | 2.b.1      | 2.c.1      |         |         |
|   |         |         |         |         |            |            |            |            |        |        |            |            |            |            |         |         |
| <b>3</b><br>GOOD HEALTH<br>AND WELL-BEING                 | 3.1.1   | 3.1.2   | 3.2.1   | 3.2.2   | 3.3.1      | 3.3.2      | 3.3.3      | 3.3.4      | 3.3.5  | 3.4.1  | 3.4.2      | 3.5.1      | 3.5.2      | 3.6.1      | 3.7.1   | 3.7.2   |
|   |         |         |         |         |            |            | ineligible | -          | -      |        |            |            |            |            |         |         |
|   | 3.8.1   | 3.8.2   | 3.9.1   | 3.9.2   | 3.9.3      | 3.a.1      | 3.b.1      | 3.b.2      | 3.b.3  | 3.c.1  | 3.d.1      | 3.d.2      |            |            |         |         |
| <b>4</b><br>QUALITY<br>EDUCATION                          | 4.1.1   | 4.1.2   | 4.2.1   | 4.2.2   | 4.3.1      | 4.4.1      | 4.5.1      | 4.6.1      | 4.7.1  | 4.a.1  | 4.b.1      | 4.c.1      |            |            |         |         |
|   | -       | -       |         |         | -          | -          | -          |            | -      | -      | ineligible |            |            |            |         |         |
| <b>5</b><br>GENDER<br>EQUALITY                            | 5.1.1   | 5.2.1   | 5.2.2   | 5.3.1   | 5.3.2      | 5.4.1      | 5.5.1      | 5.5.2      | 5.6.1  | 5.6.2  | 5.a.1      | 5.a.2      | 5.b.1      | 5.c.1      |         |         |
|   | -       | -       | -       | -       |            | -          |            |            |        | -      |            |            |            | -          |         |         |
| <b>6</b><br>CLEAN WATER<br>AND SANITATION                 | 6.1.1   | 6.2.1   | 6.3.1   | 6.3.2   | 6.4.1      | 6.4.2      | 6.5.1      | 6.5.2      | 6.6.1  | 6.a.1  | 6.b.1      |            |            |            |         |         |
|   |         |         |         |         |            |            |            | ineligible |        |        |            |            |            |            |         |         |
| <b>7</b><br>AFFORDABLE<br>AND CLEAN<br>ENERGY             | 7.1.1   | 7.1.2   | 7.2.1   | 7.3.1   | 7.a.1      | 7.b.1      |            |            |        |        |            |            |            |            |         |         |
|   |         | -       |         |         |            |            |            |            |        |        |            |            |            |            |         |         |
| <b>8</b><br>DECENT WORK<br>AND ECONOMIC<br>GROWTH         | 8.1.1   | 8.2.1   | 8.3.1   | 8.4.1   | 8.4.2      | 8.5.1      | 8.5.2      | 8.6.1      | 8.7.1  | 8.8.1  | 8.8.2      | 8.9.1      | 8.10.1     | 8.10.2     | 8.a.1   | 8.b.1   |
|   |         |         | -       | -       | -          |            |            |            |        |        |            | -          | -          |            |         |         |
| <b>9</b><br>INDUSTRY, INNOVATION<br>AND INFRASTRUCTURE    | 9.1.1   | 9.1.2   | 9.2.1   | 9.2.2   | 9.3.1      | 9.3.2      | 9.4.1      | 9.5.1      | 9.5.2  | 9.a.1  | 9.b.1      | 9.c.1      |            |            |         |         |
|   |         | -       | -       | -       | -          |            |            |            |        |        |            |            |            |            |         |         |
| <b>10</b><br>REDUCED<br>INEQUALITIES                      | 10.1.1  | 10.2.1  | 10.3.1  | 10.4.1  | 10.4.2     | 10.5.1     | 10.6.1     | 10.7.1     | 10.7.2 | 10.7.3 | 10.7.4     | 10.a.1     | 10.b.1     | 10.c.1     |         |         |
|   | -       | -       |         |         | -          | -          | ineligible |            | -      |        | -          | ineligible |            |            |         |         |
| <b>11</b><br>SUSTAINABLE CITIES<br>AND COMMUNITIES        | 11.1.1  | 11.2.1  | 11.3.1  | 11.3.2  | 11.4.1     | 11.5.1     | 11.5.2     | 11.5.3     | 11.6.1 | 11.6.2 | 11.7.1     | 11.7.2     | 11.a.1     | 11.b.1     | 11.b.2  |         |
|   |         | -       |         |         | -          |            |            |            |        |        |            |            | -          |            |         |         |
| <b>12</b><br>RESPONSIBLE<br>CONSUMPTION<br>AND PRODUCTION | 12.1.1  | 12.2.1  | 12.2.2  | 12.3.1  | 12.4.1     | 12.4.2     | 12.5.1     | 12.6.1     | 12.7.1 | 12.8.1 | 12.a.1     | 12.b.1     | 12.c.1     |            |         |         |
|   | -       | -       | -       |         |            | -          |            | -          | -      | -      |            |            |            |            |         |         |
| <b>13</b><br>CLIMATE<br>ACTION                            | 13.1.1  | 13.1.2  | 13.1.3  | 13.2.1  | 13.2.2     | 13.3.1     | 13.a.1     | 13.b.1     |        |        |            |            |            |            |         |         |
|   |         |         |         |         |            |            | ineligible |            |        |        |            |            |            |            |         |         |
| <b>14</b><br>LIFE<br>BELOW WATER                          | 14.1.1  | 14.2.1  | 14.3.1  | 14.4.1  | 14.5.1     | 14.6.1     | 14.7.1     | 14.a.1     | 14.b.1 | 14.c.1 |            |            |            |            |         |         |
|   |         |         |         |         |            |            |            |            |        |        |            |            |            |            |         |         |
| <b>15</b><br>LIFE<br>ON LAND                              | 15.1.1  | 15.1.2  | 15.2.1  | 15.3.1  | 15.4.1     | 15.4.2     | 15.5.1     | 15.6.1     | 15.7.1 | 15.8.1 | 15.9.1     | 15.a.1     | 15.b.1     | 15.c.1     |         |         |
|   | -       | -       | -       |         | -          | -          | -          |            |        |        | -          |            |            |            |         |         |
| <b>16</b><br>PEACE, JUSTICE<br>AND STRONG<br>INSTITUTIONS | 16.1.1  | 16.1.2  | 16.1.3  | 16.1.4  | 16.2.1     | 16.2.2     | 16.2.3     | 16.3.1     | 16.3.2 | 16.3.3 | 16.4.1     | 16.4.2     | 16.5.1     | 16.5.2     | 16.6.1  | 16.6.2  |
|   |         |         | -       | -       |            |            |            | -          |        |        |            |            |            |            | -       | -       |
|   | 16.7.1  | 16.7.2  | 16.8.1  | 16.9.1  | 16.10.1    | 16.10.2    | 16.a.1     | 16.b.1     |        |        |            |            |            |            |         |         |
| <b>17</b><br>PARTNERSHIPS<br>FOR THE GOALS                | 17.1.1  | 17.1.2  | 17.2.1  | 17.3.1  | 17.3.2     | 17.4.1     | 17.5.1     | 17.6.1     | 17.7.1 | 17.8.1 | 17.9.1     | 17.10.1    | 17.11.1    | 17.12.1    | 17.13.1 | 17.14.1 |
|   | -       |         |         | -       | ineligible | ineligible |            | -          |        |        |            | ineligible | ineligible | ineligible | -       |         |
|   | 17.15.1 | 17.16.1 | 17.17.1 | 17.18.1 | 17.18.2    | 17.18.3    | 17.19.1    | 17.19.2    |        |        |            |            |            |            |         |         |
|   |         |         | -       |         |            |            |            | ineligible |        |        |            |            |            |            |         |         |
|   |         |         |         |         |            |            |            |            |        |        |            |            |            |            |         |         |





Below, the progress review results conducted by stakeholders, led primarily by members of the SDGs Promotion Roundtable, are presented for each goal.

## Goal 1 <sup>61</sup>



- Regarding the state of poverty within Japan, data related to global indicators 1.2.1 and 1.2.2 is not available, making progress evaluation impossible. There is consistent concern expressed by civil society about the absence of a government-specific definition of poverty and the lack of established indicators based on such a definition. Additionally, the situation persists where attribute-specific data required by global indicator 1.3.1 is not adequately developed.
- In addition to long-standing issues of poverty and inequality, high prices due to inflation directly hit households, putting pressure on the lives of low- and middle-income groups. The compounded effects of financial hardship and social isolation and loneliness are making life increasingly difficult for many, contributing to growing social fragmentation.
- The need to prioritize poverty reduction measures in Japan's development cooperation policy is pointed out by civil society.

## Goal 2



- Civil society is calling for the publication of data related to global indicator 2.5.2 (the proportion of native species classified as at risk of extinction) and for the clarification of goals and indicators to achieve productive and sustainable agriculture, including the expansion of the agricultural budget.
- The situation in Africa remains particularly severe, with 20% of the population reported to be undernourished, and women being the most affected. In Japan's development cooperation policy, civil society has highlighted the need to prioritize development cooperation that contributes to the prevention of hunger and the achievement of Target 2.4 (ensuring sustainable food production systems).
- Progress in reducing Food Loss and Waste remains slow, and urgent action is required.
- There is significant delay as well in transitioning from industrial agriculture to agroecology in harmony with ecosystems, in providing policy support for small-scale family farming, in securing sustainable livelihoods and employment for farmers and producers, and in ensuring food security based on the right to food.

<sup>61</sup>As for each Goal, SDGs Civil Society Network (SDGs Japan), *SDGs Spotlight Report 2025* (2025) is used as a reference.

- Achieving Goal 2 is critically dependent on the realization of peace. War and armed conflict are severely impacting food supply, with regions experiencing intense warfare, such as the Palestinian Gaza Strip and Sudan, facing what is described as catastrophic levels of hunger. Hunger is the most evident humanitarian crisis, and there is a need for strengthened emergency humanitarian aid, including urgent food assistance.

### Goal 3



- Regarding Target 3.4 (reducing non-communicable diseases and promoting mental health and well-being), mental health issues within communities in vulnerable situations, including LGBTQ<sup>62</sup> individuals, are severe. Several studies indicate that LGBTQ youth experience suicidal ideation, suicide attempts, and self-harming behaviors at higher rates. Factors contributing to these issues include a lack of access to appropriate information about LGBTQ issues, feelings of isolation, and societal stigma. Similarly, there is a higher prevalence of mood disorders and anxiety disorders among LGBTQ youth, with rates three to four times higher than in non-LGBTQ individuals.
- Due to the development of social security systems, Japan is relatively closer to achieving Universal Health Coverage (UHC) compared to many countries. However, population and social groups that are particularly vulnerable and prone to be subject to discrimination and prejudice have problems with access to health care. Regarding mental illness, in addition to remaining issues of long-term hospitalization from before, and coupled with deep-rooted discrimination and prejudice, there are difficulties in accessing the required high-quality medical care. Drug addiction also has similar problems. Meanwhile, undocumented migrants and foreigners who are staying with a short-term status of residence are not covered by most social security systems, and access to necessary medical care, including emergency medical care, is not institutionally guaranteed.
- A lack of education and information dissemination about the social security system, along with the psychological pressure and administrative burdens of applying for assistance, creates the situation that the more vulnerable people are, the more barriers they face in accessing healthcare.
- The sustainability of social security has been called into question due to changes in population structure, such as aging and declining birthrate. Due to post-COVID-19 inflation, disposable income has also declined in many households, and public dissatisfaction with taxes and social security contribution has surfaced.
- As for infectious disease control, HIV countermeasures are symbolic. The disability certification of HIV-positive people introduced in the late 90s, as well as prevention, medical care, and care

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<sup>62</sup> LGBTQ stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, or Questioning, and refers to a broad range of sexual minorities, including these individual

measures in collaboration with communities, have been effective, and overall countermeasures have been highly effective. However, the implementation of effective new technologies, such as Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) and Treatment as Prevention (TasP), which are the results of HIV-related research and development since the 2000s, is lagging behind that of other countries, including developing countries, and is hindering the achievement of goals. As part of the overall infectious disease control measures, there is a need to accelerate the implementation of new technologies through the establishment of new systems and flexible operations.

#### Goal 4



- Regarding Target 4.1 (Elementary and Secondary Education), the number of children and students not attending elementary and junior high schools reached a record high of 346,482 in FY 2023. The number of recognized cases of bullying in elementary, junior high, and high schools as well as special needs schools, and the number of incidents of violent acts also hit record highs, indicating serious issues in the quality of education.
- Regarding Target 4.5 (Equal Access to Education), there is possibility that 5.7% of elementary and middle school age children with foreign connections are not attending school (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, 2024). This is due to the government's position that "there is no obligation for parents of children with foreign nationality to attend school" (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology). Also, the number of students receiving education in a form separated from the regular education (i.e., the number of students enrolled in special needs schools and special needs classes) shows an increase, suggesting that there are substantial challenges to promoting inclusive education.
- Target 4.7 (acquiring the knowledge and skills needed for sustainable development) has seen some advance since the inclusion of fostering "the builders of a sustainable society" in the National Curriculum Standards.

#### Goal 5<sup>63</sup>



- Gender equality, which cuts across all goals, has not progressed sufficiently. This is also evident from the fact that Japan's ranking in the World Economic Forum's annual Gender Gap Index is 118th out of 146 countries in 2024, continuously stagnating at around 110- 120th place.

<sup>63</sup> Reference material: Japan Women's Watch (JAWW), *JAWW NGO Report for Beijing +30* (2024)


- The minimum age for marriage is now 18 for both men and women. However, the selective surname system for married couples has not yet been introduced. Same-sex marriage has also not been introduced.
  - In response to gender-related violence, one-stop centers have been set up in each prefecture, but it is difficult to say that there is sufficient support; for example, the Sexual Assault Crisis Healing Intervention Center Osaka (SACHICO), which has been engaged in pioneering activities in Osaka Prefecture, is facing a crisis of survival. There is also a problem where digital violence disproportionately affects women and girls.
  - There are serious issues with providing access to low-dose pills, emergency contraception, oral abortion pills, etc., that guarantee sexual and reproductive health and rights.
  - Provisional special measures to encourage women's political participation have not been introduced unlike in many countries. The enforcement of the Act on Promotion of Gender Equality in the Political Field, which is called the Japanese Parité Law, in 2018 was a groundbreaking event. However, it remains merely a conceptual law and has not led to substantial progress.
  - According to a survey conducted by the self-advocacy organizations and research institutes, the unemployment rate and non-regular employment rate of transgender people are about three times higher than those of non-LGBTQ people. Around three to five times more transgender individuals fall into the low-income bracket (under 2 million yen annually).
- **Target 5.1 (Elimination of discrimination):** In Japan, the general anti-discrimination clause is included in Article 14 of the Constitution, and relief against unfair discrimination in various fields has been provided through individual laws. However, since there is no comprehensive law that defines and then prohibits discrimination, recommendations have been received repeatedly from various United Nations treaty bodies, such as the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. As stipulated in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, legislation and measures, including the realization of substantive equality with a view to equality of results and the introduction of provisional special measures (positive actions) to resolve inequalities that still remain today as a result of past historical discrimination and inequalities, are required in order to eliminate all forms of discrimination. Progress has been made in abolishing the period prohibiting remarriage in the Civil Code, which has been imposed only on women, unifying the minimum age for marriage for men and women, and reviewing the legitimacy presumption system. The intersecting and complex discrimination experienced by groups, such as Koreans living in Japan, members of discriminated Buraku communities, persons with disabilities, Ainu people, and immigrant women, remains a challenge. It is necessary to address hate speech against these women.

- **Target 5.2 (Elimination of all forms of violence):** Progress has been made in revising the penal code to criminalize non-consensual sexual intercourse, which makes the presence or absence of consent an issue, raising the age of consent from under 13 to under 16, criminalizing sexual violence between spouses and sexual violence against children by caregivers, and abolishing the requirement for rape victims to file a complaint. In the revised Act on the Prevention of Spousal Violence and the Protection of Victims (DV Prevention Act) enacted in 2023, progress has been made in expanding the scope of restraining orders to cases where the victim has suffered serious psychological harm, in adding social media messages to the list of acts that can be subjected to orders prohibiting calls to the victim, in strengthening penalties for violating protective orders, and in stipulating online applications. Meanwhile, with regard to the Act, issues remain: no emergency protection order system, inadequate protection for the domestic violence victims who live away from their abusers, and the lack of the penal system that prohibits domestic violence as a crime or aggravated crime, beyond violation of protective orders. Access to public emergency protection shelters is also very limited.

Since 2018, progress has been made that at least one one-stop center for victims of sexual crimes and sexual violence has been established in each prefecture. However, support levels vary due to the lack of a legal framework. Sexual violence and sexual harassment occur to both women and men, taking advantage of social status or dominant positions. Justice for survivors—especially for childhood victims—still faces many barriers, including entrenched attitudes in media, the corporate world, entertainment industry and society at large. Also, digital violence has become a critical issue and requires attention. Women and girls are disproportionately affected by digital violence through social media, such as online harassment/bullying, revenge pornography, sextortion, doxing, trolling, deepfakes, internet stalking, and illicit filming.

Support groups for young women and victims of sexual violence have been subject to relentless, large-scale, and unfounded online attacks, resulting in restrictions on their activities. When an immigrant woman who complains of domestic violence, the consultation center for women should provide assistance, regardless of their immigration status according to the internal rules. However, it was ignored, resulting in a case where a DV victim was housed and then died without receiving appropriate medical care. There is an urgent need to establish a system to protect immigrant women from violence, regardless of their immigration status.

- **Target 5.3 (Elimination of harmful practices):** Gender equality in education also holds many challenges. Gender disparities in enrollment rates and majors persist, and the proportion of women in school administrative positions is low. Stereotyped career guidance that functions as a “hidden curriculum” has also been reported.
- **Target 5.4 (Provision of public services/social security policies, recognition and evaluation of unpaid childcare, long-term and household work):** Men engage only one-quarter of time in unpaid household-related work when compared to women (Source: Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, *2021 Survey on Time Use and Leisure Activities*). Significant



disparities remain between men and women, affecting women's equal participation in the economic activities. The well-known M-shaped curve for women's labor force participation rates by age is being resolved, but there is a reality that approximately 30% of women quit their jobs when their first child is born. Policies and social security systems are needed to promote an environment where both women and men can balance their family/caregiving responsibilities with work.

Also, according to the relative poverty rate calculated based on the OECD definition (*Comprehensive Survey of Living Conditions* issued by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare), the rate is higher for women (16.9%) than for men (13.8%). In particular, the risk of poverty among elderly women is high (22.8% for women compared to 16.6% for men), and poverty in single-parent households where women make up the majority is also serious. “Feminization of poverty” is remarkable.

- Target 5.5 (Women's participation in political, economic, and public fields and their leadership): As a result of the 2024 Japan House of Representatives election, the proportion of female members of parliament is 15.7% in the House of Representatives and 26.6% in the House of Councilors. Thus, there are still significant challenges to be overcome. The “Act on Promotion of Gender Equality in the Political Field” has been enacted. However, no concrete changes have occurred since it is not enforceable. The government is not active in adopting provisional special systems, such as quota systems and Parité Law introduced in countries around the world, to promote equal political participation. The proportion of women among cabinet ministers was 20% (five out of twenty) in the Second Kishida Cabinet (Second Reshuffle) in September 2023, the highest ever, but decreased to 8% (two out of twenty) in the Second Ishiba Cabinet in 2024.

The Japanese government has provided support from a gender perspective in response to the climate crisis, such as supporting gender-related initiatives in the Green Climate Fund (GCF). Meanwhile, although the number of female negotiators in the Japanese government delegation to the United Nations Climate Change Conferences increased from 33 in 2018 to 44 in 2021, the proportion of women in the entire delegation decreased from 28% to 25%.

- Target 5.6 (Ensuring of universal access to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR)): Japanese women have limited access to various modern contraception methods and means to prevent accidental pregnancies, such as low-dose pills, IUDs, and emergency contraception, which can be voluntarily used by women and can be easily obtained (free of charge depending on the country) in many countries, including the other G7 countries. Also, the criminal abortion still exists today and artificial abortion is subject to criminal punishment. Under the Maternal Protection Law, spousal consent is generally required for abortion or sterilization procedures, and individuals must also meet other conditions stipulated by the law.



There are still a limited number of medical institutions that offer oral abortion pills approved by the Ministry of Health, Labor, and Welfare in 2023.

The incorporation of comprehensive sexuality education into public education has not progressed. A "restriction clause" exists, limiting the implementation of sex education, thereby presenting a serious barrier to promoting sex education based on equal relationships between partners. This issue is also deeply related to Target 5.2.

The 2024 Supreme Court decision is a significant development from the viewpoint of sexual and reproductive rights, ruling that the Now-defunct Eugenics Protection Law as unconstitutional is the result of the activities of groups for persons with disabilities, including a group for female persons with disabilities. The Act on the Payment of Compensation, etc. to Persons Who Underwent Eugenic Surgery, etc. Under the Now-defunct Eugenic Protection Law was enforced on January 17, 2025. It is necessary to thoroughly disseminate the Act and provide relief to eligible persons.

Meanwhile, there are problems with dismissals and forced repatriation of technical interns due to pregnancy or childbirth. These fear led to cases of solitary child-births and abandonment. Based on the 2023 government notification, proper implementation is much required thorough prohibition of disadvantageous treatment of technical interns due to pregnancy, etc.

## Goal 6



- Regarding Target 6.1 (access to drinking water), Japan has boasted a high water supply coverage rate until now. However, the aging of water infrastructure and an increased frequency in water leaks and damage accidents are urgent issues. Preventive measures associated with increases in water fees and deterioration of water quality are much needed. High concentrations of PFAS have been detected in tap water in several municipalities. Investigations, appropriate responses, and regulations based on global standards are necessary.
- Japan has contributed internationally as the largest donor country in this field, but most of the support is large-scale infrastructure for middle-income countries. There is a need to increase support for low-income countries where access to safe drinking water and sanitation facilities remains insufficient.

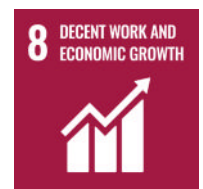
## Goal 7

- Support for Decarbonization Leading Areas, ZEB, ZEH, and others can be positive, but policies lack a clear pathway to reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The consistency between the Strategic Energy Plan, Japan's 2050 net-zero goal and the global 1.5°C target is unclear.
- Given the relatively poor households currently consist of many elderly households, achieving a balance between climate change and energy poverty countermeasures is a major challenge.
- Japan's support for introducing renewable energy and energy conservation in developing countries is commendable. However, more measures are needed regarding CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and other issues resulting from its support for thermal power plants.



## Goal 8

- Non-regular workers who work under low wages and unstable employment conditions account for around 37% of all workers.
- Women accounts for 67.9% of non-regular workers, showing the precarious employment disproportionately affects women. Also, this wage gap persists for general workers; when the salary for men is indexed 100, the female salary stands at 74.8. These have led to a structural “feminization of poverty.” Numerous labor lawsuits highlight the ongoing challenges to realizing equal pay for work of equal value, as stipulated in Target 8.5.
- Global Indicators 8.5.1(Average Hourly Wage of Workers) and 8.5.2(Unemployment Rate) require data on the employment of persons with disabilities, but the government has yet to disclosed those data. Although employment of persons with disabilities in private companies is increasing, many are engaged in unstable, low-paid welfare employment. As a result, 79% of persons with disabilities live below the relative poverty level. Report indicates that the persons with disabilities receive welfare benefits at a rate about seven times higher than that of persons without disabilities.
- Regarding Target 8.7 (elimination of child labor), challenges in Japan include fostering a common understanding of the definition of child labor, data collection, and the formulation of a national action plan. It is also to note that there are cases involving the Act on Punishment of Activities Relating to Child Prostitution and Child Pornography, and the Act on Control and Improvement of Amusement Business, among others, and appropriate response need to be taken. In 2021, the National Police Agency referred 2,969 child pornography cases for prosecution.
- Regarding Target 8.8 (protection of workers' rights), Japan newly introduced the Employment for Skill Development (ESD) Program in place of the Technical Intern Training Program that has been



criticized both domestically and internationally. It is necessary to pay close attention to whether this new program will truly protect of the rights of foreign (immigrant) workers.

## Goal 9



- Regarding Target 9.1 (sustainable infrastructure), Japan has previously been assessed as having achieved 100% progress. However, recently accidents caused by aging infrastructure have emerged. Additionally, there is concern about the increase, expansion, and worsening of accidents due to the rise in severe disasters caused by climate change. The Noto Peninsula earthquake in January 2024 occurred in depopulated and remote areas, and it exemplifies the significant impact expected on the provision of emergency support and recovery/reconstruction assistance for large-scale natural disasters, necessitating prompt action.

## Goal 10



- As for Global Indicator 10.2.1 (proportion of people living below 50% of median income), data is available by age and gender data, but not by the disability status.
- Regarding Target 10.3 (ensuring equal opportunity and reducing inequalities of outcome), it is essential to continue responding to discrimination events and proceeding with initiatives aimed at eliminating discrimination by appropriately implementing the Act on the Promotion of the Elimination of Buraku Discrimination, the Act for Eliminating Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities, and the Act on the Promotion of Efforts to Eliminate Unfair Discriminatory Speech and Behavior against Persons with Countries of Origin other than Japan. The Ainu Policy Promotion Act has been enacted regarding the Ainu people, and the Act on the Promotion of Public Understanding of the Diversity of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (LGBT Understanding Promotion Act) has been enacted regarding sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and sex characteristics (SOGIESC). Further anti-discrimination measures are still necessary. While closely monitoring the situation of human rights relief under these individual laws, the establishment of a national human rights institution should be promptly considered.
- Regarding Target 10.7 (facilitating orderly, safe, and responsible migration and mobility), some industries and business sectors rely heavily on foreign workers. Yet, various discriminatory events, including housing discrimination, continue to occur.
- Since 2020, income inequality has worsened due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the Ukraine crisis, which triggered a surge in energy and food prices. Japan is no exception. The Gini coefficient has been rising since the 1980s, and the Japan's relative poverty rate- 15.4% according to the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, based on the OECD definition- is among the worst among developed countries.

## Goal 11



- The government has claimed “no data available” on Global Indicator 11.1.1 (proportion of urban population living in slums, informal settlements, or inadequate housing). However, the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare has announced survey results on the actual state of homelessness, which could be considered as alternative data.
- As with other goals, the lack of disaggregated data by demographic attributes remains as challenge. For example, Global Indicator 11.2.1 (population with access to public transportation) lacks data on persons with disabilities. Data on mountainous or depopulated areas have also not been disclosed. As for Global Indicator 11.3.2 (proportion of cities with direct participation of civil society in urban planning and management), while the government reports "no data," several advanced cases have emerged.
- Regarding Target 11.5 (significantly reducing the number of deaths and people affected by disasters), the number of disaster-related deaths exceeded the number of disaster deaths in the Noto Peninsula Earthquake that occurred in January 2024. Major challenges remain in responding to the aftermath of the disaster, particularly in providing support for evacuees.
- Women’s participation in disaster prevention councils remains as low as 21.8% in prefectures and 10.8% in municipalities.
- PM2.5 level under Global Indicator 11.6.2 (particulate matter in urban areas) remains relatively high.

## Goal 12



- Regarding Target 12.3 (halving per capita food waste), it is a positive development that the amount of Food Loss and Waste reached a record low in FY 2022. However, the economic loss due to Food Loss and Waste is estimated at 4 trillion yen, and greenhouse gas emissions are estimated at 10.46 million t-CO<sub>2</sub>; further efforts are needed.
- It is a progressive step forward that human rights clauses were incorporated in public procurement contracts in 2023. A sincere compliance to these clauses is required.

## Goal 13



- Japan's upcoming national reduction target formulated as a climate change measure must be consistent with the global 1.5°C goal. Policies to promote renewable energy and to reduce fossil fuel use are necessary to abate CO<sub>2</sub>. It is also necessary to strengthen measures to reduce methane emissions from rice paddies and to recover fluorocarbons.
- Japan's initiative to promote adaptation measures, which are inclusive of highly vulnerable groups, both domestically and internationally, can be appreciated. However, specific adaptation measures for the elderly, persons with disabilities, and people facing economic hardship have not been clarified. Support for developing countries also requires the implementation of resilience-building measures for women, children, migrants and indigenous peoples.
- Japan has provide support with a gender perspective in addressing the climate crisis, including initiatives related to gender in the Green Climate Fund (GCF). However, while the number of female negotiators in the Japanese government delegation to the United Nations Climate Change Conferences increased from 33 in 2018 to 44 in 2021, the overall proportion of women in the delegation decreased from 28% to 25%.

## Goal 14



- Regarding Target 14.1 (preventing and reducing marine pollution), Japan ranks second in the world in per capita emissions of plastic packaging waste. Japan should leverage its strength in proper treatment, recycling, and circular use to actively engage in the adoption of the Plastics Convention.
- Progress has been made on Targets 14.4 (restoring fish stocks to maximum sustainable yield) and 14.6 (eliminating subsidies that contribute to overfishing).
- Regarding Target 14.5 (conservation of coastal and marine areas), Japan is urged to ratify the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ Agreement or High Seas Treaty), adopted under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. This agreement also concerns on Target 15.c (enhancing support for combating poaching and illegal trafficking of protected species).

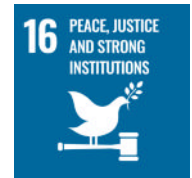
## Goal 15



- Target 15.7 (eliminating poaching and illegal trafficking) has seen no clear progress on controlling movements of wildlife. Illegal imports of insects and amphibians as pets continue under insufficient regulation.

- Regarding Target 15.8 (preventing the introduction of invasive species), while international cooperation on identification of invasion routes for alien species has progressed, establishing an early detection and response system remains a challenge.

## Goal 16



- Of 24 global indicators, the government has claimed “no data available” for 10 indicators, indicating an urgent need for improvement.
- Regarding Target 16.2 (ending violence against children), it is commendable that the Japanese government actively participated the First Global Ministerial Conference on Ending Violence Against Children held in Colombia in November 2024, where it expressed its pledge and support for international framework. This engagement should be reflected in a revised version of the “National Action Plan for Ending Violence Against Children (2021)” that delivers stronger results.
- Regarding Target 16.5 (substantially reducing corruption and bribery), the OECD Bribery Working Group reviewed Japan and noted its insufficient response to bribery cases of foreign public officials.
- As for Global Indicators 16.7.1 (proportion of positions in national and local public institutions compared to the national distribution, by sex, age, disability, and population group) and 16.7.2 (proportion of people who believe decision-making is inclusive and responsive), disaggregated data by attributes other than gender have not been disclosed.
- Regarding Global Indicator 16.a.1 (existence of independent national human rights institutions), Japan has repeatedly received recommendations from the United Nations human rights treaty bodies and other mechanism. While determining the situation of human rights relief based on individual laws, prompt consideration is required.
- As for Global Indicator 16.b.1 (proportion of population reporting feeling discriminated against or harassed within the last 12 months), the Article 14 of the Japan’s Constitution includes the general anti-discrimination clause, and remedy for unfair discriminations are available through individual laws. However, Japan lacks a comprehensive anti-discrimination law that defines and prohibits discrimination. More appropriate responses are needed for diverse forms of discrimination experienced by people with different backgrounds.
- At the local government level, the introduction of same-sex partner certification systems is progressing, and some cases are eligible for welfare and rights protection by local governments. However, there are no national-level systems for legal protection of same-sex partners, access to social security, or prohibition of discrimination for same-sex partners. Additionally, the "Act on Promotion of Understanding of the Diversity in Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity" (commonly known as the "Understanding Promotion Act") was enacted in 2023, but the formulation



of a basic plan is not yet underway. National-level initiatives are still limited to certain areas, such as labor administration by the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare.

## Goal 17



- Japan's ODA-to-GNI ratio is 0.44% (in 2023), and the ODA-to-GNI ratio for least developed countries (LDC) is 0.12% (in 2023), both of which are on an upward trend. Since 2000, Japan has demonstrated leadership in shaping global health policies, and has made significant financial and technical contributions to multilateral cooperation in the health field, such as the Global Fund (Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria) and the Gavi Alliance, etc., earning global appreciation. Under the COVID-19 pandemic, Japan further expanded multilateral cooperation in the health field and assistance to ensure financial liquidity for developing countries, which deserves more appreciation. In an era of harsh inflation and multiple crisis, Japan must not follow the trend of cutting ODAs, but it should instead demonstrate global leadership in solidarity so as to increase the trust of the Global South countries. Based on Target 17.2, Japan should go further and set time-bound targets for the ODA-to-GNI ratio of 0.7% and the ODA-to-GNI ratio for LDCs of 0.15% to 0.2%.
- The amount for ODA (bilateral grants, including grant aid and technical cooperation, multilateral cooperation, budgetary contributions for yen loans, etc.) in the general account budget has remained between 550 billion yen and 570 billion yen over the past 10 years. The increase in Japan's ODA according to the OECD statistics is mainly realized through loans that focus on economic development. Despite growing funding needs from NGOs, their share in ODA has remained unchanged and low at 1% compared to the DAC average of 8%. In order to reverse the decline in social development due to COVID-19 and inflation/debt crises, and to improve the situation of the most vulnerable groups, such as the poor in low-income countries, Japan must increase ODA in general account budgets and expand social development and humanitarian assistance. As funding sources for economic development in developing countries diversify, a greater proportion of ODA should be now directed to social development in least developed countries to improving the livelihood of the most vulnerable groups. As for promoting energy transitions in developing countries, more active promotion in decarbonization is necessary.
- Japan's active position among developed countries in supplying short-term funds to resolve the deepening debt crisis and to expand financial liquidity of developing countries is commendable. Meanwhile, in order to strengthen global partnerships and reduce inequality among nations (Goal 10), Japan should take bold leadership in globalizing and democratizing the international financial architecture centered on the United Nations, beyond the traditional dichotomy of developed and developing countries.

### (3) Evaluation of initiatives by stakeholders

#### A. Media trends<sup>64</sup>

The United Nations has launched the initiative “SDG Media Compact” to raise awareness of the SDGs. Of approximately 400 registered members from 160 countries across five continents, Japan has 220 member companies (as of March 2024), the largest number in the world and accounting for more than half of the total. It can be said that the penetration of the SDGs in Japan is characterized by larger media influence than in other countries. For example, the United Nations Information Centre has called on the registered media of SDG Media Compact in Japan to join the climate campaign “Promise of 1.5°C.” Every year, many domestic media plan various initiatives for this campaign, including special programs by NHK and five commercial broadcasting stations. This is unrivaled in the world.

In the *10th SDGs Awareness Survey* (April 2024) by The Asahi Shimbun, 88.7% of people nationwide reported that they had heard the term SDGs. Reflecting the new course of study implemented since 2020, 55.0% of teenage respondents selected “at school” when asked about how they had learned about the SDGs, which was extremely high compared with the total result (7.9%). According to Hakuhodo's *Sei-Katsu-Sha's Sustainable Purchasing Behavior Survey 2024* (August 2024), 30.0% of teenage respondents reported that they knew the details of the SDGs, which was overwhelmingly higher than other age groups including those in their 20s (14.3%), 30s (9.1%), 40s (6.6%), 50s (6.7%), 60s (6.2%), and 70s (5.1%). The results suggest positive effects of learning at school and other opportunities. Considering these trends, while it is likely that media have played a role in broadly spreading the SDGs to different generations across the country, educational opportunities seem to be where people have obtained deeper knowledge. Below, we will look at the detailed situation of the five main media outlets.

##### (i) Newspaper

Being reliable media with great social impacts, more than 100 newspapers are available in Japan, including general and sports newspapers. Main examples are given in the following categories: national papers (5), block papers (3), and regional papers.

- National papers: The Asahi Shimbun, which took the initiative in this topic; Nikkei Group, which demonstrated overwhelming influence on corporate managers; as well as The Yomiuri Shimbun, The Mainichi Shimbun, and The Sankei Shimbun, which demonstrated influence on many readers. Since they individually disseminated information on the SDGs on a daily basis, in a short-term, and in an intensive manner, they seemed to have played a key role in penetration into a wide range of people nationwide.

As a main example, in January 2017, The Asahi Shimbun Company took the initiative by launching “Looking at the SDGs with Ms. Hiroko Kuniya,” the project featuring the journalist who is influential among Japanese business managers. The impact has been enormous. The

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<sup>64</sup> The section on media trends was prepared with the cooperation of Mr. Masahiro Kawatei, with the collaboration of Asahi Shimbun, Nikkei Group, Fuji Television, and Hakuhodo DY Media Partners.

company has reached approximately 3.65 million people through the paper and about 6.59 million people through ID registration by organizing various initiatives, including the “Change 2030 with the SDGs” series in the paper, the SDGs Action! information site leveraging strengths as a newspaper company, and student awards.

Nikkei Group, taking advantage of its access to business managers, launched the Nikkei SDGs Forum in 2018 to disseminate SDGs initiatives. The program attracted 26 major companies. They also provided support services for sustainability management and matching analysis between the SDGs and businesses. Their impact on the business community has been extremely large through such initiatives as the “Nikkei SDGs Management Survey” and the “Nikkei SDGs Management Awards,” which started in 2019 to comprehensively evaluate SDGs management.

The Yomiuri Shimbun used the popular character Chico-chan from NHK in their projects for the SDGs. The Yomiuri Chukosei Shimbun, the company’s newspaper for junior high and high school students, has had a monthly series “SDGs Newspaper” page since April 2020, featuring schools across Japan working on the SDGs. Reports highlighting junior high and high school students have encouraged young people’s efforts, also helping spread the SDGs broadly to their families and friends.

The Mainichi Newspapers is developing the series “Working Together for an Inclusive Society: The SDGs to Build the Future” and “The SDGs for the Future.” Sankei Shimbun is developing the “The SDGs: Acting Now for the Future” series.

- Block papers: Covering multiple municipalities with strong support from readers in the region, they are thought to have contributed to the penetration of SDG localization in their respective areas. More specific cases includes that the Hokkaido Shimbun Press uses the original logo “SDGs: Towards a Sustainable Future” to introduce stories about local industries and issues close to everyday life. The Chunichi Shimbun has appointed people with a strong interest in and dedication to the SDGs as navigators in its program “Starting the SDGs Together.” With the support of companies, educational institutions, industry groups, and others, they cover local initiatives from readers’ viewpoint. The Nishi-Nippon Shimbun has launched a project titled “Let’s Create the Future: Make Fukuoka SDGs” to discuss the future with children through the coverage of business groups in Fukuoka working on the SDGs.
- Regional papers: They have helped people have a sense of ownership of the SDGs by covering topics close to everyday life such as food, clothing, and housing in the region through SDGs projects in their respective papers. Some examples of the projects are: “Our SDGs: Let’s Introduce Aomori’s Initiatives to the World!” by The To-o Nippo Press, “SDGs from Akita” by Akita Sakigake Shimpō, “Let’s Change the Future from Iwate with the SDGs!” by The Iwate Nippo, “Yamagata SDGs Action” by Yamagata Shimbun, “Miyagi SDGs Farm” by Kahoku Shimpō Publishing, “Fukushima SDGs Project” by Fukushima-Minpo, “Together to the Future 2030” by Kanagawa Shimbun, “Yamanashi SDGs Project” by The Yamanashi Nichinichi Shimbun, “SDGs

Project to Support Future Adults” by The Niigata Nippo, “Nagano SDGs Project” by The Shinano Mainichi Shimbun, “Hito to Mirai” by The Hokkoku Shimbun, “Keiji SDGs Project” by The Kyoto Shimbun, “Hyogo SDGs Hub” by The Kobe Shimbun, “All for SDGs Hiroshima” by The Chugoku Shimbun, “Tokushima SDGs Action” by Tokushima Shimbun, “Oita SDGs Creating the Future” by Oita Godo News, “Kumanichi SDGs Action Project” by Kumamotonichinichi Shimbun, “The SDGs Kagoshima” by Minami Nippon Shimbun, and “The SDGs from Okinawa” by The Ryukyu Shimpo.

## (ii) Television

Being a visual medium, television has the greatest reach among various media with significant effects in giving concrete images of the SDGs. The following describes main examples by terrestrial key stations, stations in major terrestrial cities (Osaka, Nagoya, Hokkaido, and Fukuoka), and regional stations.

Network programs of key stations have introduced the SDGs and their examples to people across the country in an easy-to-understand manner. NTV has launched the “Good for the Planet” campaign based on the idea that what is good for the planet is good for people. They have created a theme song and appointed supporters, mascots, and announcers for the project to cover the 17 SDG goals through various channels, including their news, information, and variety shows. TBS has appointed entertainers, celebrities, announcers, and others as TBS SDGs Ambassadors for the “Week to Make the Earth Smile” campaign. They have been introducing corporate initiatives for the SDGs in TV, radio, and BS programs, featuring people taking action across Japan and the world. Fuji Television began broadcasting the world's first regular SDGs program “Future Runners” in July 2018. Every week, the program introduces individuals and organizations dedicated to solving SDG issues. Although the program is broadcast only in the Tokyo metropolitan area, it is archived on the official website and has spread throughout the country. The program has been available with English subtitles from the time of the original broadcast and also been reported at the United Nations Headquarters. TV Asahi, through its BS station capable of digging deep into themes, disseminates information to viewers interested in the SDGs in the program “Pass the Baton: Taking a Step Toward the SDGs.”

Stations in major cities (Kansai, Chubu, Hokkaido, and Fukuoka), covering broader municipalities, have a great regional influence and contribute to SDG localization. Some main examples by individual companies in the Kansai area include “YTV Sustainability Project” by Yomiuri Telecasting, “MBS SDGs Project” by Mainichi Broadcasting System, “Kantele SDGs” by Kansai Television, and “Asu Mirai Week” by Asahi Broadcasting. In the Nagoya area, a joint effort “SDGs in Progress” has been organized by five commercial stations in addition to individual efforts such as “Let’s Take a Local View on the SDGs! Mirai News” by Tokai Television and “Sports SDGs” by Aichi Television. Examples in the other areas include “Let’s Create the Future: Make Fukuoka SDGs” by RKB Mainichi Broadcasting in Fukuoka and “SDGs from Hokkaido to the Future” by Hokkaido Broadcasting.

Regional stations have helped people develop a sense of ownership of the SDGs by covering news and topics familiar to viewers, such as local issues, food, clothing, and housing. Main examples include regional programs in line with those planned by their affiliated networks, such as “Good for the Planet” by NTV-affiliated stations and “SDGs Week” by TBS-affiliated stations. These stations also introduce companies working on the SDGs and next-generation initiatives in their own news and information programs.


### (iii) Radio

People have access to radio in various situations, including when they are at home, in the office, going shopping, and engaging in leisure activities. Radio is also reaching a growing number of people of the next generation as podcast gains popularity. Both FM and AM stations have helped promote the SDGs on national networks and localize the SDGs for multiple generations at regional stations by covering familiar themes. Some main examples are as follows.

Among FM stations on the national network, J-Wave has offered information through various programs with the key phrase “Future Is Yours: Imagine & Choice” based on the idea that the future is created by our imagination and choice. “Sustainadays” by Tokyo FM is another example. One of the initiatives by AM stations is “SDGs Magazine” by Nippon Broadcasting System, which also works together with Fuji Television and BS Fuji to develop a joint project “Have Fun Taking Action! SDGs Project.” Nippon Cultural Broadcasting has set the theme “SDGs Voice: Turning Your Voice into People’s Voice” and introduced initiatives in Japan in their events and programs. Radio Nikkei reaches diverse groups of listeners through a variety of programs by, for example, offering “ESG A to Z” for business people.

At regional stations, FM Hokkaido and FM North Wave have jointly developed “SDGs x Hokkaido Farming: Sustainable Hokkaido” to discuss the future of agriculture in Hokkaido. The other FM stations that have developed programs on the SDGs are FM Aomori, FM Iwate, FM Yamagata, Yamagata Broadcasting, FM Akita, FM Sendai, FM Gunma, FM Tochigi, FM Yokohama, Bay FM, FM Niigata, FM Nagano, FM Fuji, FM Shizuoka, FM Toyama, FM Fukui, Zip FM, FM Gifu, FM Aichi, FM Mie, FM Shiga, FM Osaka, FM 802, Kiss FM, FM Sanin, FM Yamaguchi, FM Kagawa, FM Ehime, FM Tokushima, Cross FM, Love FM, FM Nagasaki, FM Kagoshima, and FM Okinawa. The AM stations actively featuring the SDGs include Radio Nippon, Hokkaido Broadcasting, Akita Broadcasting, Yamagata Broadcasting, Tohoku Broadcasting, Radio Fukushima, Broadcasting System of Niigata, Shin-Etsu Broadcasting, Yamanashi Broadcasting System, Shizuoka Broadcasting System, Kitanihon Broadcasting, Hokuriku Broadcasting, Fukui Broadcasting, CBC Radio, Tokai Radio, Gifu Broadcasting System, KBS Kyoto, ABC Radio, MBS Radio, Radio Osaka, Radio Kansai, Sanyo Broadcasting, Broadcasting System of San-in, RCC Broadcasting, Yamaguchi Broadcasting, Nishinippon Broadcasting, Nankai Broadcasting, Shikoku Broadcasting, Kochi Broadcasting, RKB Mainichi, Kyushu Asahi Broadcasting, Nagasaki Broadcasting, Oita Broadcasting System, Kumamoto Broadcasting, Miyazaki Broadcasting, Minaminihon Broadcasting, and Ryukyu Broadcasting. The





regional stations of almost all municipalities therefore have disseminated information using themes relevant to their respective communities to help “localize” the SDGs.

#### (iv) Magazine

Magazines help readers develop a sense of ownership of the SDGs by communicating through various vehicles according to the interests of different generations. Major domestic publishers such as Shogakukan, Kodansha, Shueisha, Fusosha, Kobunsha, Magazine House, Hearst Fujingaho, Shufu To Seikatsu Sha, Nikkei Business Publications, and Asahi Shimbun Publications actively publish SDG projects in popular magazines as well as mooks (magazine-like books). For example, among fashion and lifestyle magazines, an entire issue was dedicated to the SDGs in *FraU*, and detailed articles have been published in *Elle*, *Esse*, *Spur*, *Story*, and *Hanako*. As for outdoor magazines, the long-established *Be-Pal* and others have been actively featuring the SDGs and publishing articles on this theme.

Of the examples mentioned above in the four major media, many are not part of SDG Media Compact, reflecting how actively Japanese media are covering the SDGs. Such active coverage of the SDGs is partly due to the growing momentum for the SDGs, which can lead to potential opportunities for business and branding. Yet, many media report that their primary motivation is rather self-directed. Examples include taking measures in such issues as human rights, resources, and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions as part of their corporate social responsibility; fulfilling their mission as local media; addressing local issues; experiencing disasters; supporting municipalities; and finding relevance to featured topics. As the SDGs penetrated the country, employees of media companies may have developed a sense of ownership of the theme, which may have changed their business mindsets and awareness of crisis and resulted in behavioral changes.

#### (v) Social Media (SNS)

In addition to conventional media, the influence of social media (SNS) in promoting the SDGs is also growing in Japan. In particular, many companies actively use X (formerly Twitter), Instagram, etc. in order to expand points of contact with consumers and improve the brand image. By introducing sustainable products, ways to reduce Food Loss and Waste, and other relevant information, they have provided platforms for exchanging opinions and received many views and posts.

Also, social media posting by influencers with an interest in the SDGs has also demonstrated strong influence. Popular comedians and artists are actively disseminating information on social media, offering powerful opportunities for young Japanese people to become interested in the SDGs. For example, there are data showing that in 2021, social media posts related to the SDGs increased by about 238% from the previous year.



## B. Cross-cutting issues (gender and youth)

### B-1 Gender

#### 1.1 Gender initiatives and their evaluations in Japan's international cooperation

Over the years, Japanese civil society has carried out initiatives related to gender mainstreaming, girls' education, sexual and reproductive health and rights, and maternal and child health in developing countries, together with the Japanese government and JICA, and in collaboration with international organizations such as UN Women, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNHCR, and IPPF. A wide range of activities are included in these initiatives, from projects such as direct service provision and awareness raising at the local level in developing countries to awareness raising targeting policy makers such as Japanese and Asia-Pacific parliamentarians, as well as participation in and lobbying at the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), and the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) by the Human Rights Council. In recent years, they actively collaborate with the government in issues related to WPS (Women, Peace, and Security). These activities have also helped improve Japan's presence in international cooperation and multilateral diplomacy related to gender. Meanwhile, delays in addressing gender issues within Japan have had a negative impact on Japan's gender efforts overseas. Improving the domestic situation is essential also for advancing international cooperation on gender.

Initiatives based on JICA's *Global Agenda* (cooperation strategies for global issues) and their *Cluster Strategies* relating to the elimination of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) can be highly rated. Yet, gender mainstreaming needs to be carried out beyond gender-specific programs and expanded to all programs in a cross-cutting manner. Measures are in progress, including the development of guidelines, to facilitate gender mainstreaming in various fields, but it is necessary to enhance awareness in each field. Meanwhile, the level of gender awareness is low in other institutions which NGOs cooperate with, and there is a delay in awareness, such as having to explain its necessity from the beginning.

SRHR (sexual and reproductive health rights) in the field of emergency humanitarian assistance, such as conflicts and disasters, is clearly needed. However, SRHR has been considered lower in priority than other issues, thus not receiving appropriate support.

Under the *National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Third Edition (2023-2028)*, in addition to international cooperation, the country is also to promote WPS domestically. Japan has failed to promote WPS domestically, reflecting delays in gender awareness and initiatives in Japanese society. There are many challenges also in gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment on the front line of disaster relief, reconstruction, etc. due to the lack of vision to nurture female leaders in normal times. Also, women's equal participation in decision making, from central bodies to the front line, is not advancing smoothly. Even in ministries and government agencies, international departments maybe aware, but their progress has not sufficiently transmitted to other departments.

## 1.2 Gender and LGBTQ initiatives and progress evaluation

The United Nations recognizes that LGBTQ issues are related to human rights and sustainable development. For example, the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) has published a guidance note that includes “LGBT persons”. In the Major Group and other Stakeholders (MGOS) related to sustainable development, LGBTQ is positioned as one of the other Stakeholders. A Swedish LGBTIQ+ organization RSFL (Swedish Federation of LGBTIQI Rights) serves as the secretariat of the group. RSFL lists Goals 3 (health), Goal 4 (education), Goal 5 (gender equality), Goal 8 (economic growth and employment), and Goal 16 (peace and justice) as issues particularly close to the LGBTQ community.

Regarding these issues, various nonprofit organizations (NPOs), social enterprises, and other groups organized by LGBTQ people themselves together with their supporters have carried out a wide range of services, education and awareness raising, cultural activities, policy proposals, campaign activities, etc. Since the 2000s, the range of such efforts has expanded rapidly, and the positioning of LGBTQ in society has changed drastically. Furthermore, local governments have also accelerated their efforts since the 2000s. Currently, more than 500 local governments have introduced same-sex partnership certification systems, applying their social security systems to LGBTQ. Since the 2000s, private companies have also been actively working to eliminate discrimination and prejudice within the organizations, such as applying employee benefits to same-sex partners. Meanwhile, efforts at the national level have not necessarily kept up with the above developments.

Japan has been a member of the "United Nations LGBTI Core Group" since its inception. Although Japan as a country is not a member of the "Equal Rights Coalition," an international organization focused on LGBTQ human rights with many members from Latin America and European countries, government officials participate as observers in international meetings. Domestically, there is hope for progress in legal frameworks and initiatives that align with efforts in regions and countries such as Europe, Latin America, Republic of South Africa, Nepal, Thailand, and Taiwan.

## 1.3 Keidanren's initiatives for gender mainstreaming

Keidanren has called on all member companies to support the “# Here We Go 203030” campaign, which aims to achieve 30% representation of women in executive positions by 2030. According to the results of a study on the share of women among executives<sup>65</sup>, as of July 2024, it has steadily increased to 15.6% (up 243.59% from FY 2017 and up 52.27% from FY 2021) among companies listed on the First Section or the Prime Market of the Tokyo Stock Exchange, which are targeted by the government. To further increase female executives, a key issue will be increasing the number of internal appointments. According to a survey conducted by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, as of October 2023, the share of women in management positions equivalent to section chiefs or higher was

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<sup>65</sup> [https://www.gender.go.jp/kaigi/danjo\\_kaigi/siryō/pdf/ka73-2.pdf](https://www.gender.go.jp/kaigi/danjo_kaigi/siryō/pdf/ka73-2.pdf) (in Japanese)

12.7%<sup>66</sup>, the highest since 2009 when the ministry started collecting the data. There are challenges remain, such as slow progress in the appointment of women as executive officers responsible for business execution, as well as disparities in appointment among different industries and business categories. Nevertheless, improvements have been seen in efforts to promote women's active participation in Japanese companies.

#### 1.4 Women's Participation and Leadership in Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs)

The SDGs will not be achieved without the transformation of SMEs, which account for 99% of Japanese companies. It is important to focus on the transformation of SMEs along with the promotion of activities by large enterprises.

Regarding the economic sector, measures have been taken for about 40 years since the Equal Employment Opportunity Law was enacted in 1985. Despite these efforts, Japan ranked 118th out of 146 countries in the Gender Gap Index 2024, the lowest among major developed countries (G7), showing no improvement. According to the analysis of its factors, the main efforts were enlightenment and support. Since these would not promote actors' commitment or initiatives, government and economic organizations are still far from achieving their own gender equality goals. Despite various measures taken in the past 40 years, we must say that there has been a lack of commitment, showing determination and will to address the issue, as well as leadership by administrative agencies, economic organizations, etc. to set an example in addressing it.

In order to achieve gender equality in SMEs, it is necessary to cultivate a new culture that incorporates diversity, including women, within the current male-dominated society. Along with some major factors preventing its realization, such as unconscious bias and the glass ceiling, failure to promote initiatives that embrace the set goals can be another issue hindering progress. For example, some say they do not understand the intention of setting the target “increasing the share of women in leadership positions to at least 30%.” More specifically, many SMEs express disagreement with the goal. Some feel reluctant as it looks just a formality while others say, “Why 30%? Shouldn't we choose people based on ability instead of quota?” and “Isn't that preferential treatment for women?”

Also, a lack of basic knowledge (a lack of common understanding) among local companies is a major factor hindering their activities. For example, various keywords related to women, such as “women's active participation,” “gender equality,” “genderless and gender-free,” and “diversity, D&I, and DE&I,” have emerged one after another. But the meaning of each keyword has been misunderstood, with such comments as, “It is strange to focus on women just because it is the age of diversity” and “The term ‘women’ itself is discriminatory because we live in the genderless age.” Such misunderstanding has indeed disrupted discussions and stopped the progress of activities. In order to overcome this situation, it is necessary to make efforts to broadly raise awareness of misconceptions and promote basic knowledge.

<sup>66</sup> <https://www.mhlw.go.jp/toukei/list/dl/71-r05/02.pdf> (in Japanese)

### 1.5 Specific initiatives for gender mainstreaming in Japan: the Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry Young Entrepreneurs Group as an example

The Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry Young Entrepreneurs Group (Japan YEG) is an organization composed of 32,400 members from the 416 Chamber of Commerce and Industry Young Entrepreneurs Groups across Japan. It is one of the largest organizations led by young SME managers in Japan. Its participants, in their 20s to 50s, are active presidents and management leaders driving the frontline operations, playing a core role in transforming society at a local level. Japan YEG organizes various initiatives on themes essential for SMEs, such as acquisition of diverse talent and women's empowerment, to resolve worker shortages that will become increasingly serious in the future. For example, they provide a variety of training programs and seminars to nurture talent for future leadership in communities. Meanwhile, since the term of officers is only one year, activities are often organized as one-off programs without continuation, making it difficult to foster culture and build a system as an organization. Recognizing this weakness, they make efforts to enable continuous activities.

The following initiatives have taken place with the aim of continuing activities and fostering culture without annual interruption. It has been indicated that, like companies, organizations need to develop medium- to long-term plans and commit to efforts beyond a single fiscal year to nurture and ensure the establishment of a solid culture.

- FY 2021: Publishing the *Sustainable Declaration* at the Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry Young Entrepreneurs Group National Conference. The declaration outlines the issues Japan YEG should address over multiple fiscal years (setting multiple themes contributing to achieving the SDGs, such as gender and carbon neutrality).
- FY 2022: Supporting the organization Happy Woman for the International Women's Day sponsored by the United Nations Information Centre
- FY 2023: For the first time in history, a female president was appointed. The Japan YEG (Young Entrepreneurs Group) executive committee achieved a record high of 30% female representation among its chairpersons. Additionally, they are actively engaging in various collaborative projects, such as conducting leadership development training in cooperation with the Cabinet Office, organizing joint initiatives with HAPPYWOMAN, a project supported by the United Nations Information Centre, and partnering with external organizations like Yoshimoto Kogyo Co., Ltd., which involves SDGs ambassadors.

- FY 2024: Since FY 2021, data show improvements in the number of female presidents and the share of female executives at the 416 Chamber of Commerce and Industry Young Entrepreneurs Groups nationwide. They are developing a strategic plan to further strengthen efforts in FY 2025.

## 1.6 Gender initiatives in Labor unions

The Japanese Trade Union Confederation (Rengo), the national center of labor unions, formulated the *Gender Equality Promotion Plan* in 2021. This is based on the idea that labor unions should realize a gender-equal society as they promote gender equality internally and carry out their movements. Aiming for “203050,” which means raising the female participation rate in all decision-making processes to 50% by 2030, labor unions are also working with the goal of first increasing the share of women on executive committees to 30%.

## B-2 Youth

The two steering committee groups of the SDGs Promotion Platform for the Next Generation separately evaluated the progress of the SDGs.

### 2.1 G7/G20 Youth Japan

A study on the happy society young people seek and what is necessary to realize it was conducted based on the results of past surveys. The study found that sustainable development of the Japanese economy would be essential in the post-2030 agenda. The study also identified three critical elements: mental, physical, and planetary health; corporate and personal growth; and domestic and international connections. Incorporating young people’s free thinking unbounded by fixed concepts or conventions, as well as voices of mature youth with achievements and experience, can lead to the creation of new value concepts. Yet, it is found out that considering limited opportunities for youth to have discretion and influence, it is necessary to secure and expand places for groups representing the opinions of youth to play an active role.

### 2.2 Japan Youth Platform for Sustainability (JYPS)

Looking at the progress of the SDGs from a youth perspective based on the survey conducted by JYPS in 2024, while several developments have been seen, many issues still require improvements even in the fields determined as having achieved. First, support for reducing financial burden is making progress thanks to the strengthening of academic support. But there is still a shortage of comprehensive support for expenses other than tuition fees (examination fees, reference books, transportation

expenses, etc.). Furthermore, many young people still think that regional inequalities, including the ones between urban and rural areas, have not been resolved. Regarding efforts to raise awareness of SDGs-related education and well-being, while a system is being developed based on young people's own values, its framework is still insufficient. Broader awareness raising and promotion of concrete actions are needed. In particular, although awareness of environmental issues is high, many young people do not know how to put it into action, suggesting the need of support from educational institutions and the government.

As for enhancing youth participation, opportunities for participation need to be expanded. There is also an urgent need to formulate a system to eliminate disparities between urban and rural areas. Opportunities to reflect youth opinions are limited, and it is necessary to provide more places for their participation. To achieve this, a system needs to be developed in line with the *Pact for the Future*, which is an outcome document of the UN Summit of the Future 2024. The pact includes investing in children and young people as well as strengthening meaningful youth participation at the international and national levels.<sup>67</sup> Regarding youth participation in Japan, according to the *Survey Results on the Appointment of Children and Young People as Members of Councils, Panels, etc. Based on the General Principles for Child-Related Measures, etc.*<sup>68</sup>, it is evident that the proportion of members aged from their teens to thirties on councils and advisory committees of various ministries and agencies is in the range of 1%.

## C. Trends by sector

### C-1 Business trends

#### 3.1 Business

##### 3.1.1 Progress in incorporating the SDGs into management strategies

The Japan Business Federation (Keidanren) has promoted SDGs initiatives by member companies since revising the *Charter of Corporate Behavior* in 2017. According to the *3rd Questionnaire Survey on the Implementation of Keidanren's Charter of Corporate Behavior* (Keidanren Survey) conducted in 2023<sup>69</sup>, 80% of companies engage in reporting and communication in their SDGs initiatives, a significant increase from 31% in the previous survey (2020). Also, the proportion of companies that reported integrating sustainability into management also increased sharply from 39% to 77%. Thus, Japanese companies incorporate the SDGs into their management strategies and are actively working toward Society 5.0 for SDGs, which solves internal and external social issues and realizes sustainable growth

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<sup>67</sup> United Nations. Summit of the Future Outcome Documents : Pact for the Future, Global Digital Compact and Declaration on Future Generations. (2024) <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/406333?ln=en&v=pdf>

<sup>68</sup> Children and Families Agency. Survey Results on the Appointment of Children and Young People as Members of Councils, Panels, etc. Based on the General Principles for Child-Related Measures, etc. (2024) [https://www.cfa.go.jp/assets/contents/node/basic\\_page/field\\_ref\\_resources/473dbbf4-3379-4212-8abc-b3c99cfd753/7aec6707/20240819\\_councils\\_shingikai\\_iken\\_senmon\\_473dbbf4\\_03.pdf](https://www.cfa.go.jp/assets/contents/node/basic_page/field_ref_resources/473dbbf4-3379-4212-8abc-b3c99cfd753/7aec6707/20240819_councils_shingikai_iken_senmon_473dbbf4_03.pdf) (in Japanese)

<sup>69</sup> [https://www.keidanren.or.jp/policy/2024/005\\_kekka.pdf](https://www.keidanren.or.jp/policy/2024/005_kekka.pdf) (in Japanese)



simultaneously through innovation, and various successful examples have emerged<sup>70</sup>. These can also be confirmed in the video collection (Theater 5.0) showing solutions through innovation in an easy-to-understand manner.

### 3.1.2 Integrated promotion of GX, CE, and NP

#### (1) Green transformation (Goal 13)

Based on the *Keidanren Carbon Neutrality Action Plan*, Keidanren has been strongly promoting proactive efforts for green transformation (GX) to achieve carbon neutrality (CN) by 2050. As a result, total CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from domestic business activities in all sectors (industry, energy conversion, operations, and transportation) in FY 2023 (59 industries) were 468.09 million t-CO<sub>2</sub> (approximately 42.3% of Japan's total CO<sub>2</sub> emissions<sup>71</sup>), down approximately 5.2% from FY 2021 and down about 16.8% from FY 2017.

Furthermore, they published the *Recommendations for Advancing the AZEC Initiative* in 2024, in support of the Asia Zero Emission Community (AZEC), to promote GX in the Asian region based on Japan's experience.

#### (2) Circular economy (Goal 12)

Keidanren is promoting recycling of resources such as plastics through the formulation of the *Voluntary Action Plan for Establishing a Sound Material-Cycle Society* and its annual follow-up (46 industries participate). Also, in 2021, they established the Japan Partnership for Circular Economy (J4CE) with the Ministry of the Environment and the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry in order to accelerate transition to a circular economy. As of February 2025, more than 210 companies and organizations are participating. They also actively disseminate examples of advanced initiatives by Japanese companies nationally and internationally by, for example, publishing a collection of notable case studies three times (in 2021, 2022, and 2024). Their other efforts include public-private dialogues<sup>72</sup> to sort out issues aimed at realizing CE and business exchange meetings to promote collaboration beyond industrial and corporate boundaries.

#### (3) Biodiversity and nature conservation (Goals 14 and 15)

Keidanren has promoted corporate efforts for biodiversity conservation through the “Keidanren Initiative for Biodiversity Conservation” and other activities. As of the end of August 2024, the initiative has 351 participating companies and organizations and has shared 192 examples of initiatives.

<sup>70</sup> <https://www.keidanrendgs.com/innovationforsdgs>

<sup>71</sup> There are differences in the methods and scope of calculation between this survey and *GHG Emissions Data of Japan (1990 to 2023): Provisional Data* by the National Institute for Environmental Studies, which is the reference source for the FY 2023 CO<sub>2</sub> emissions of Japan as a whole, as they have different purposes and backgrounds. It should be noted, therefore, that the coverage ratio derived from comparison between the two sources is only for the reference purposes. The coverage ratio for the transportation sector is calculated based on domestic CO<sub>2</sub> emissions excluding overseas departures and arrivals.

<sup>72</sup> Held 16 times in four years

Furthermore, Keidanren and the Keidanren Nature Conservation Council (KNCC) have conducted seminars, etc. to promote understanding of TNFD (the Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures) as members of the TNFD Consulting Group Japan, which was organized for the purpose of promoting understanding of the TNFD. As a result, Japanese companies represented the largest number of TNFD Early Adopters, 80 of 320 registered companies across the world. The number further increased to 140 by January 2025. In addition, they are working to change corporate behavior through public-private dialogue and collaboration regarding the *Transition Strategies Toward Nature Positive Economy* (2024), which was jointly formulated by four ministries<sup>73</sup> such as the Ministry of the Environment.

Also, since 1993, the Keidanren Nature Conservation Fund (KNCF) has continued to subsidize nature conservation projects by NGOs and the like in developing countries, mainly in Asia. To date, the total number of supported projects is 1,737, and the total amount of support is approximately 5.1 billion yen. Furthermore, since 2023, they are contributing 300 million yen over five years to the “Community Development and Knowledge Management for the Satoyama Initiative (COMDEKS)”<sup>74</sup>, a project implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in collaboration with the Ministry of the Environment, supporting many small-scale projects promoted mainly by local communities in developing countries.

### 3.1.3 Progress in voluntary initiatives on business and human rights

When revising the *Charter of Corporate Behavior* in 2017, Keidanren added a provision to “conduct business that respects the human rights of all persons.” In 2021, they revised and enhanced the section on human rights in the *Implementation Guidance on Charter of Corporate Behavior*. In the same year, they also developed the *Handbook for Management That Respects Human Rights* as a practical guide to fulfill responsibility to respect human rights in accordance with the United Nations *Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights*. Through these initiatives and more, they have promoted member companies’ voluntary efforts.

As a result, the proportion of companies carrying out some kind of initiative based on the guiding principles of the United Nations more than doubled, from 36% in the previous survey (2020) to 76%. Looking at the results by employee size, 95% of companies with 5,000 or more employees are moving forward with the initiatives. In contrast, companies with 499 or fewer employees are more likely to

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<sup>73</sup> Ministry of the Environment; Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries; Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry; and Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism

<sup>74</sup> An international project that aims to promote the SDGs and realize a society in harmony with nature. To achieve this, the project provides support based on Japan’s knowledge and experience in the field of biodiversity conservation in developing countries and supports efforts that promote the sustainable use of Satoyama and Satoumi.

report that they have not started the initiative or do not understand the content. Implementation in SMEs is a challenge<sup>75</sup>.

### 3.1.4 Progress in information disclosure and promotion of impact assessments as a challenge

Regarding information disclosure on sustainability, many Japanese companies set KPIs for their own priority areas, measure progress while referring to global standards and indicators, and disclose information in integrated reports, sustainability reports, websites, etc. The number of companies that voluntarily publish integrated reports increased from 718 in 2021 to 1,019 in 2023<sup>76</sup>.

In 2021, Keidanren published a report *Current Situation and Issues Regarding Measurement and Assessment of Measures to Address the SDGs*<sup>77</sup>. It aims to help systematically organize evaluation methods, etc. and provide useful information for companies when they measure impacts of and manage their initiatives for the SDGs. In 2022, they published a set of recommendations titled *Using Impact Metrics to Promote Dialogue with Purpose as Starting Point*<sup>78</sup>, outlining the significance and practical examples of impact assessment that can be used as a common language for diverse stakeholders.

Major future challenges in effectively utilizing impact assessment include establishing and promoting globally agreed common standards, as tried by UNDP in the “SDG Impact” initiative, regarding the development of appropriate indicators, assessment methods, and data infrastructure for progress management.

### 3.1.5 Evaluation and future of corporate initiatives

Companies are collaborating with diverse stakeholders to promote efforts aimed at achieving the SDGs utilizing technology and innovation, both domestically and internationally. By measuring and disclosing the progress of the efforts, they also drive improvements and utilize the information in dialogue with stakeholders. Companies are also making steady progress in efforts to address human rights, including gender equality which is often pointed out as a challenge in Japan.

Companies will continue their efforts to implement technological and other innovations in society and promote further collaboration with stakeholders, thereby striving to expand and strengthen their impact

<sup>75</sup>From September to October 2021, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry conducted a survey mainly targeting companies listed on the first and second sections of the Tokyo Stock Exchange (n=approximately 2,800). Of the responding companies (n=760), about 70% have formulated human rights policies based on the United Nations *Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights*, and over 50% implement human rights due diligence. About 50% of the total have established guidelines and procedures to provide remedy to victims and to correct problems, of which over 90% have established internal reporting systems.

<sup>76</sup> <https://www.dirri.co.jp/res/report/uploads/2024/02/43defe0a0ba3215455b53fbbb84af45c0c0031e2.pdf> (in Japanese)

<sup>77</sup> <https://www.keidanren.or.jp/policy/2021/055.html> (in Japanese)

<sup>78</sup> [https://www.keidanren.or.jp/en/policy/2022/060\\_summary.pdf](https://www.keidanren.or.jp/en/policy/2022/060_summary.pdf) (in Japanese)

on society. At the same time, they will promote impact assessments and disclose the results of their efforts in a more transparent manner.

## 3.2 The efforts of SMEs

### 3.2.1 Awareness rate of the SDGs is 90.5%

According to the *Survey on the SDGs at Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (2024)*, awareness of the SDGs is extremely high among SMEs, at 90.5%, showing a steady improvement in their awareness of the SDGs. Also, the percentage of companies with positive attitudes is increasing year by year to 34.6%, including those already working on the SDGs (17%) and those planning to work on them in the future (17.6%).

### 3.2.2 Challenges in promoting initiatives for the SDGs

Challenges include not knowing the benefit of working on the SDGs (16.8%), not knowing where to start (16.3%), and not having sufficient funding (14.9%).<sup>79</sup>

Being tight on time, personnel, and funds, many SMEs are particularly interested in themes that can be easily linked to their profit increase and corporate growth, such as Goals 7 and 8. Meanwhile they tend not to be as interested in the themes that they feel is not directly linked to their profits, such as poverty, human rights issues, hunger, and gender equality.<sup>80</sup>

These trends suggest that an effective approach for SMEs is to further highlight the SDGs as a growth strategy that will break the economic stagnation over the last 30 years and contribute to economic and cultural development, while also raising awareness of human rights and poverty issues.

#### [Case] SMEs' initiatives for GX, decarbonization, and carbon neutrality

Sustainable circular economy (Goal 12), biodiversity, and nature conservation (Goals 14 and 15)

##### (1) Initiatives by chambers of commerce and industry

The Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Nissho) collaborates with 515 chambers of commerce and industry across Japan to provide support through management consultations, etc. for decarbonization and carbon neutrality of SMEs nationwide. In 2022, they established the Working

<sup>79</sup> Source: Organization for Small & Medium Enterprises and Regional Innovation, JAPAN. *Survey on the Promotion of SDGs by Small and Medium Enterprises (2024) Report*.

<sup>80</sup> Organization for Small & Medium Enterprises and Regional Innovation, JAPAN. *Survey on the Promotion of SDGs by Small and Medium Enterprises (2024) Report*.

Group for SME Carbon Neutrality Promotion to strengthen support. According to a survey conducted by Nissho in collaboration with the Tokyo Chamber of Commerce and Industry in 2024, about 70% of SMEs are also implementing initiatives on decarbonization and carbon neutrality, mainly through energy conservation. Among reasons for and purposes of their efforts for decarbonization, the most common response was reducing utility and fuel costs (75.2%), followed by maintaining and improving their corporate reputation and presence (30.5%) and responding to changes in the business environment and technological innovation (25.6%). These results show that SMEs are also increasingly working to connect decarbonization and carbon neutrality to corporate branding and management innovation. Also, compared with companies not making decarbonization efforts, those engaging in such activities are significantly more likely to cite reasons such as maintaining and improving their corporate reputation and presence, responding to changes in the business environment and technological innovation, maintaining and expanding business transactions, and improving employee motivation.

These results suggest that decarbonization and carbon neutrality will become even more important themes also for the growth of SMEs. Yet, about 20% of SMEs report they do not know where to start. With the belief that the three steps consisting of learning, measuring, and reducing will be effective for decarbonization among SMEs, Nissho implements various measures to this end. For example, in the learning step, they introduce successful examples by SMEs and organize seminars. In the measuring step, they provide the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions check sheet free of charge on the Nissho website.

Representing the generation to lead the future, the Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry Young Entrepreneurs Group (Japan YEG) published the *Sustainable Declaration* in FY 2021. It incorporates their multi-year commitment to setting an example as they drive transformation in such areas as realizing a sound material-cycle society, facilitating DX and GX, and fostering gender equality. In FY 2023, Japan YEG (consisting of 32,400 individual members from 417 primary groups in nine blocks across Japan as of April 2023) set the slogan “Contribution to a Sustainable and Spiritually Rich Future.” Based on this slogan, they carried out the following activities to achieve a sound material-cycle society and carbon neutrality, targeting the board and all the businesses, through leadership development and the use of the CO<sub>2</sub> check sheet recommended by Nissho.

- (1) Installing the Challenge 2030 awareness panel (visualizing estimated CO<sub>2</sub> reduction)
- (2) Implementing the 1510 Campaign, adapted from the 3010 campaign recommended by the Ministry of the Environment to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by reducing Food Loss and Waste
- (3) Using 99% recycled garbage bags

#### (4) Encouraging people to use their own water bottles (providing permanent water refill stations)

As a result of these initiatives, they reduced CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by approximately 4.294 tons in one year. They continue to create operation manuals and engage in activities that will foster the culture at the 417 primary groups across Japan.

### 3.2.3 Challenges and future directions of SMEs

SMEs face two main challenges: a lack of basic knowledge and shortages of know-how and human resources. In 2024, certifying systems for efforts throughout the supply chain were also launched, such as the “Sustainable Business Certification” (Japan Sustainable Business Association) which mainly targets SMEs<sup>81</sup>. From 2025 to 2030, efforts to develop a collaborative vision and commitment with large corporations are expected to progress, including undertaking initiatives across the entire supply chain in line with the principles of the Declaration of Partnership Building.

## 3.3 Finance

### 3.3.1 National finance

According to the preliminary results of the *Sustainable Investment Survey in Japan 2024*, released by the Japan Sustainable Investment Forum in December 2024, the total amount of sustainable investment in Japan exceeded 625 trillion yen, up 16.6% from the previous year. Discussions are also in progress to qualitatively and quantitatively expand sustainable finance. The Expert Panel on Sustainable Finance, launched by the Financial Services Agency in December 2020, has met 27 times by March 2025 and published four reports to date. Also, in December 2021, the Ministry of the Environment launched the Working Group on the Green List to create domestic guidelines on green bonds and loans<sup>82</sup> and on sustainability-linked bonds and loans<sup>83</sup>. Having concluded that domestic penetration through the guidelines had made some progress, since the 12th meeting in December 2024, the working group has been discussing issues and measures for the further development of the market.

Furthermore, awareness of impact investing, which is intended to create a positive social and environmental impact in parallel with financial returns, has increased, and efforts to implement it are progressing. In November 2021, the “Japan Impact-Driven Financing Initiative” was launched. It is a collaborative initiative by financial institutions that promote the practice of impact-driven investment. The impact investment balance at institutions supporting the initiative exceeded 10 trillion yen as of January 2024.

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<sup>81</sup> <https://sustainable-b.or.jp/> (in Japanese)

<sup>82</sup> Bonds and loans that can only be used for green projects

<sup>83</sup> Bonds and loans that encourage borrowers to achieve ambitious sustainability performance targets, and the degree of improvement is linked to the terms of financing.



In the field of climate change, awareness of transition finance has increased internationally. This type of finance supports transition efforts aimed at steady decarbonization, including energy saving and fuel conversion, mainly in carbon-intensive industries. The practice of finance is also progressing. After the International Capital Market Association (ICMA)<sup>84</sup> published the *Climate Transition Finance Handbook* in December 2020, the Financial Services Agency, the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, and the Ministry of the Environment formulated the *Basic Guidelines on Climate Transition Finance* in May 2021 to promote the practice in Japan. Furthermore, in order to show the specific direction of transition to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050 in carbon-intensive industries, the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry has formulated a roadmap for promoting transition finance for each industry. The Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism has formulated a roadmap for decarbonization in the shipping and aviation fields. The formation of finance utilizing these is progressing. The investment of over 150 trillion yen will be required over 10 years starting in FY 2023 to achieve carbon neutrality in Japan by 2050<sup>85</sup>. As further expansion of transition finance is called for, the GX Acceleration Agency began operations in July 2024. Established with the aim of having a function to help cover risks that cannot be handled by the private sector, the agency promotes financial support across the public and private sectors.

From the perspective of funders, efforts are underway to further expand sustainable investment by individual investors. Sustainable investment is considered highly compatible with stable household asset formation from the viewpoint that it can lead to medium- to long-term corporate value creation. In order to expand sustainable investment, therefore, we need financial and economic education for individual investors as well as appropriate sustainable financial products targeting individual investors. While various financial institutions have worked on financial and economic education for years, the Japan Financial Literacy and Education Corporation (J-FLEC) was established in April 2024, resulting in the public and private sectors working together to promote financial and economic education. Regarding sustainable financial products for individuals, in order to enhance them, the Financial Services Agency's Expert Panel on Sustainable Finance has been discussing how to structure and provide financial products that are easy for individuals to understand, as well as issues requiring consideration in investor protection.

As described above, it is safe to conclude that not only has understanding of various financial methods aimed at achieving the SDGs deepened, but efforts aimed at implementing finance have progressed. In the future, in addition to accelerating the expansion of implementation, we will also need to focus on its results (outcomes), meaning how much it has helped solve social issues. To achieve this, it is critical that we construct the methods of measuring and managing outcomes. We therefore need to accumulate knowledge based on the practice of finance.

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<sup>84</sup> ICMA: International Capital Market Association

<sup>85</sup> A statement by Prime Minister Kishida (then) at the 8th meeting of the Council of New Form of Capitalism Realization (May 2022)

### [Case] Initiatives by the Japanese Bankers Association (JBA)

#### (1) Initiatives aimed at achieving carbon neutrality

The JBA formulated the *JBA Carbon Neutrality Initiative* in December 2021, focusing on the following five key priorities: (i) engagement, (ii) assessment, (iii) sustainable finance, (iv) climate-related disclosure, and (v) climate-related financial risks.

In addition to launching the JBA special website dedicated to climate change in December 2022, they also published several reference materials to support engagement between companies and member banks, including *First Steps Toward Decarbonization* in January 2023 and *CO<sub>2</sub> Visualization and Beyond* in February 2024.

Furthermore, they have also organized and hosted webinars roughly once a month, inviting relevant economic organizations, ministries, etc. to enhance member organizations' knowledge. As of December 2024, they have held 34 webinars.

#### (2) Initiatives to tackle poverty among children and young people

In December 2021, the JBA concluded an MOU with the Japan Securities Dealers Association (JSDA) for the purpose of helping resolve poverty among children and young people. Based on this agreement, they have been working collaboratively to address this issue.

In FY 2023, the JBA participated in a food drive campaign on a trial basis in collaboration with the National Food Bank Promotion Council. Having verified through this trial that the program is effective in reducing Food Loss and Waste and in increasing awareness of the SDGs, in FY 2024, they carried out a project for material support, expanding its target to the members of the JBA and the JSDA.

### 3.3.2 Regional finance

Efforts by regional finance have also progressed, including the delivery of diverse services that contribute to solving various issues in the region. These efforts aim to further infiltrate innovative local solutions related to SDGs promotion, improve the productivity of local industries and enterprises, and achieve sustainable growth of the regional economy.

Various actors play a role in regional finance, such as regional banks, regional banks II, credit associations, and credit cooperatives. They have developed a network of offices rooted in the regions, mainly developing services for SMEs and local residents in the regions. To achieve the SDGs, these regional financial institutions have played a major role in encouraging behavioral changes among SMEs, which account for over 99% of companies nationwide, and local residents as well. The following illustrates some specific initiatives.

- ① Providing guidance and support in formulating SDGs declarations, which summarize relationships

between local companies' business activities and the SDGs and set out efforts for closely related goals.

- ② Providing diagnostic services with established ESG and SDGs evaluation systems for SMEs, as well as financial products utilizing SDGs registration and certification systems implemented by municipalities.
- ③ Expanding the range of user companies for sustainable finance, such as positive impact finance<sup>86</sup> and sustainability-linked loans, by making it more accessible to SMEs. Examples include providing plans with reduced composition costs and constructing simple frameworks in collaboration with municipalities.


Regarding climate action, according to the report *Initiatives on Environmental and Climate Change Issues at Regional Banks* published by the Regional Banks Association of Japan in May 2024, the number of regional banks providing green finance was 54 as of October 2023, an increase by seven from the previous year. They also provide various non-financial support services, such as visualization of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, introduction of companies that sell solar equipment and renewable energy, and consultation in setting goals and taking measures to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. Some financial institutions have also established their own energy business companies to promote renewable energy in the regions, aiming to revitalize regional economies.

Furthermore, there has been progress in efforts by financial institutions to promote region-wide decarbonization in collaboration with local governments. In addition to jointly proposing Decarbonization Leading Areas with the Ministry of the Environment and participating in the ministry's "Model Project for Constructing Regionwide Support Systems for Decarbonizing Business," some financial institutions within their regions have also jointly participate in the launch of regional decarbonization consortiums. The standpoint of regional finance has therefore changed drastically, from the conventional role as funders to co-creators of sustainable local communities.

As for sustainability of local communities, there are concerns about community decline associated with a falling birthrate, aging population, and population decline due to the concentration of people in the capital region, posing a major challenge in achieving the sustainable growth of regional economies. In particular, worker shortages in local companies are serious. Therefore, in addition to support in financing, regional financial institutions have expanded services for local companies, including support in founding and starting new businesses, introduction of management personnel, and support for business succession, as well as IT consultation that will help improve productivity through digitalization. Financial institutions also co-host business meetings such as the Regional Bank Food Selection, Food Appeal Discovery Business Meeting, Good Job Creation Fair, and Shinkumi Food

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<sup>86</sup> A financing method that aims to help increase positive impacts and reduce negative impacts of fundraisers. This is achieved by providing funds based on comprehensive analysis and evaluation of impacts (positive and negative) that corporate activities have on the environment, society, and economy.



Business Matching Exhibition, thereby continuously helping expand the sales channels of local products. Furthermore, there has been a gradual growth in the number of regional financial institutions that establish regional trading companies, which strive to develop domestic and international sales channels for local products and to support the development and branding of new products. Such efforts have expanded their role for regional revitalization beyond finance. The question is whether these efforts can be turned into sustainable business models so that they can continue to be effective in the future.

### 3.4 Labor unions

As bearers of social dialogue, labor unions, together with employers, are expected to make important contributions to (i) the realization of decent work, (ii) respect for human rights throughout the supply chain from a business and human rights perspective, and (iii) building a sustainable economy and society. They will do so through national and international efforts that range from ensuring fair wages and other labor conditions through collective employer-employee relations (i.e., constructive employer-employee relations) to the establishment of workers' rights, human rights, environment, safety, peace, and others. This section describes their role in business. Refer to the next chapter for labor unions in a broader sense as civil society.

Contributions expected from labor unions include realizing decent work, respecting human rights throughout the supply chain from the viewpoint of business and human rights, and building a sustainable economy and society.

Although the prompt ratification of the ILO core labor standards is essential for realizing decent work, Japan has not ratified the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention (No. 111) and the Occupational Safety and Health Convention (No. 155). Rengo has been working to achieve prompt ratification by lobbying the Japanese government in collaboration with such bodies as the Parliamentarian Group for the Promotion of ILO Activities, as well as engaging in joint dialogues with civil society regarding the Japan-EU Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA).

Regarding business and human rights, Rengo formulated *JTUC-Rengo's Views on Business and Human Rights* in August 2023, showing its basic views and specific responses of Rengo as a whole. Based on this document, Rengo organizes activities and workshops on business and human rights issues in spring wage negotiations.

As for the development of a sustainable economy and society, GX needs to further advance in order to tackle the urgent challenge of climate change. In this process, just transition needs to be ensured so as to minimize negative impacts on society and the economy, such as employment. On occasions such as the GX Implementation Council meetings, Rengo has been calling for the implementation of measures such as social dialogue among relevant parties, including governments, employers, and workers, to discuss specific measures to realize just transition.

## C-2 Trends in civil society

### 4.1 The COVID-19 pandemic, post-pandemic, and initiatives by civil society

#### 4.1.1 The COVID-19 pandemic, post-pandemic, and the SDGs

Looking back on the past few years, we cannot ignore the COVID-19 pandemic. During the pandemic, Japanese society also saw an increasing number of people experiencing income loss and job loss. Moreover, all data indicate that the situations have worsened with vulnerable people, such as the increasing number of suicides (especially those aged 18 or younger) as well as growing cases of domestic violence and child abuse.

The Dormant Deposit Utilization Project launched the "Emergency Support Project for COVID-19" in fiscal year 2020 to address the increased support needs. Through this project, 773 projects (cumulative) were implemented, including support single-parent households and individuals who lost their jobs due to the pandemic, and delivered significant results. Starting in fiscal year 2025, the project expands its grant coverage under an "Emergency Framework" for a year to accurately respond and provide rapid focused support for urgent social issues.


Price hikes since the latter half of 2021 have also caused serious damage, particularly to people working in unstable employment and those with low income. In such a social environment, various private sectors and civil society have shown a significant capacity to address a broad range of social issues. One example is the "children's cafeterias," community activities to support children in difficult situations, which now number around 10,000, across the country, surpassing the number of junior high schools in Japan.

Private support organizations also play a major role in 24/7 telephone and online counseling and support for suicide prevention and mental health.

Japanese civil society has long worked to achieve Universal Health Coverage (UHC), which leaves no one behind, by connecting people facing barriers to access, particularly those in marginalized groups and communities to the medical care. Over the years, patients and people affected by diseases have built mutual support networks and nurtured a sense of empowerment based on shared lived experiences. They have also actively contributed to policy advocacy aimed at lowering treatment cost and improving the quality of care, yielding significant results.

#### 4.1.2 International cooperation by Japan's civil society

Japan's civil society has been engaged on international cooperation in various fields, such as education, health, rural development, disaster prevention, and emergency humanitarian assistance in the Global South countries. There are over 400 civil society organizations engaging in international cooperation. As of 2020, the expenses these organizations have spent on projects etc. in developing countries



amount to over 50 billion yen (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Japan NGO Center for International Cooperation [JANIC]. *Data Book on NGOs in Japan 2021*). Of these, it is estimated that financial contributions from public institutions such as the government and JICA account for about 20%; the rest comes from voluntary financial resources of each organization and contributions from individuals, companies, and private foundations. These organizations are also actively engaged in policy advocacy related to multilateral development and humanitarian frameworks, and continue to contribute civil society coordination, including participation in the Major Groups and Other Stakeholders (MGOS) around sustainable development.

#### 4.1.3 Expanding public-private collaboration and cooperation

In Japanese society, a recent policy trend in the field of support is public-private collaboration and cooperation. For various complicated and serious problems and social issues that cannot be handled by administrative agencies alone, what is becoming the standard practice is for administrative agencies and private organizations, including civil society, to collaborate and cooperate, aiming to resolve them together. This may have some relations to the spread of the SDGs philosophy.

For example, the Act on Promotion of Food Loss and Waste reduction, enacted in 2019, mentions the SDGs in the preamble. Also, the philosophy of leaving no one behind has been shown in various Japanese national strategies, such as the Basic Policy in the past few years in the context of realizing an inclusive society. In community welfare and suicide countermeasures, that philosophy is also set forth in the Act on the Advancement of Measures to Address Loneliness and Isolation, enacted in 2023, and public-private collaboration and cooperation is gradually developing as a method of realizing it.

Meanwhile, it should also be noted that this trend is criticized by civil society. While advocating public-private collaboration and cooperation, they argue that it is the mobilization of civil society to address social issues. There is no denying the aspect of leaving all the work to civic activities with low commission fees, etc. within a limited budget or institutional framework. Also, aiming to reduce social security expenses and public support on the premise of helping each other in the community, such as mutual aid, completely defeats the purpose.

#### 4.1.4 Challenge: the need for scientific evaluation and a roadmap to achievement

In the work to achieve the SDGs, the Japanese government needs to scientifically evaluate its progress and draw a road map to achieving the goals. For example, the government says there is currently no data that can be provided regarding 1.2.1 and 1.2.2 of the SDG global indicators on poverty. Despite existing data, such as the relative poverty rate calculated in the *Comprehensive Survey of Living Conditions* by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare and the *National Survey of Family Income, Consumption and Wealth* by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, they are not using it as an indicator, which also means the neglect of accountability for the goal of halving poverty.



Thus, looking at trends over the past few years, collaboration and cooperation with civil society is progressing little by little on various domestic social issues. At the same time, it is necessary to scientifically verify whether these efforts are conducted in a way that leaves no one behind as well as to improve the efforts.

## 4.2 Consumers

Regarding consumers' role, mainly from the perspective of Goal 12 “responsible consumption and production,” the *SDGs Implementation Guiding Principles* (revised in 2023) stresses the importance of promoting awareness-raising and the creation of economic and social mechanisms, in addition to the realization of sound markets. This can be achieved by engaging in sustainable consumption activities contributing to the transition to a circular economy through purchasing products and using services that have low environmental impact, such as ethical consumption and Food Loss and Waste reduction. Goal 12 is becoming even more important as of 2025 in light of global warming, resource depletion, environmental issues such as waste, impacts on human rights and poverty, and changes in corporate social responsibility.

### 4.2.1 Initiatives for resource saving and circular economy

Consumers Japan, prefectural consumer groups, and others collaborate and cooperate with administrative organizations and regional groups to steadily promote activities for resource saving and resource recycling. Specifically, they are working on saving energy such as electricity and water, implementing the “Cool Biz” and the “Warm Biz” campaigns, using energy-saving products such as switching to LED lights, reducing waste through thorough sorting, selecting products with simple packaging, passing products to next owners instead of throwing them away by using thrift stores and flea market apps, bringing their own shopping bags and water bottles, and changing the way they use convenient and inexpensive plastic products such as plastic shopping bags and PET bottles. Furthermore, since 2023, a civil movement centered on decarbonization “Decokatsu”<sup>87</sup> has been spreading on a national scale.

### 4.2.2 Initiatives for ethical consumption

According to the *Survey on Attitude and Awareness in Consumer Life*<sup>88</sup> conducted in October 2024, 27.4% of the respondents were aware of ethical consumption, with relatively high levels of awareness among those in their teens and 40s. Also, 36.1% of the respondents reported that they were taking action leading to ethical consumption. As for reasons for taking action, the most common response

<sup>87</sup> <https://ondankataisaku.env.go.jp/decokatsu/>

<sup>88</sup> [https://www.caa.go.jp/notice/assets/consumer\\_research\\_cms201\\_241107\\_01.pdf](https://www.caa.go.jp/notice/assets/consumer_research_cms201_241107_01.pdf) (in Japanese)

was wanting to choose items that could contribute to the environment or society if they were to purchase something similar (53.3%), followed by being economical (50.4%).

Those who reported not practicing ethical consumption were more likely to choose not knowing which products and services would lead to ethical consumption (23.0%) and not having enough money (20.1%). Looking closely by age group, those aged 60 and older were more likely than any other age groups to say they did not know which products and services would lead to ethical consumption and whether the products and services would really lead to ethical consumption.

#### 4.2.3 Initiatives to reduce Food Loss and Waste and to promote food donation

In measures against food loss and Food Loss and Waste, efforts have made steady progress. Examples to reduce business related Food Loss and Waste include re-examining and disseminating the concept of the “best before date”, revising the long-established “one-third rule” in the food distribution sector, and cooperation with food banks which provide surplus food to people in need free of charge. In December 2024, the *Food Donation Guidelines: Toward Improving the Reliability of Food Donation* and the *Doggie Bag Promotion Guidelines: Toward Achieving the SDGs*<sup>89</sup> were published, providing guiding principles of measures to reduce Food Loss and Waste. In addition, the project named “Shoku No Wa” (meaning “FOOD CIRCLE”) was launched, enabling relevant ministries and agencies as well as local public bodies to work in an integrated manner rather than in silos to visualize overall resource saving and resource recycling efforts. This project aims to help promote consumer participation.

#### 4.2.4 Initiatives for consumer-oriented management

Businesses need to win consumers’ support by illustrating the society they aim to realize through their main business. To this end, management that enhances social value by co-creating and cooperating with consumers, or consumer-oriented management, has been promoted to build a sustainable and desirable society. As of the end of January 2025, 827 businesses have announced the voluntary declaration of consumer-oriented management<sup>90</sup> and engage in follow-up activities every five years. Businesses, being in charge of responsible production, have been promoting various initiatives, such as designing products and services that prioritize environmental consideration, saving energy and minimizing waste in the manufacturing process, and reducing the impact on the social environment throughout the product supply chain. In response, consumers have been working to fulfill their role in responsible consumption by selecting sustainable products and services, carrying out recycling activities, and avoiding wasteful consumption. The SDGs in the consumer sector have significance in

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<sup>89</sup> [https://www.caa.go.jp/policies/policy/consumer\\_policy/information/food\\_loss/promote/#06](https://www.caa.go.jp/policies/policy/consumer_policy/information/food_loss/promote/#06) (in Japanese)

<sup>90</sup> [https://www.caa.go.jp/policies/policy/consumer\\_partnerships/consumer\\_oriented\\_management/businesses/](https://www.caa.go.jp/policies/policy/consumer_partnerships/consumer_oriented_management/businesses/) (in Japanese)

steadily implementing them in daily life. It is hoped that further spread of consumer-oriented management and increased consumer awareness will generate synergies in achieving the SDGs.

#### 4.2.5 Evaluation and challenges

The SDGs are the driving force for achieving sustainable development and prosperity in Japan. A growing number of people are aware that choices and purchases through consumption behavior can greatly influence its success and failure. Meanwhile, the following four challenges deserve attention as we have five years left until 2030.

(i) Opportunities are insufficient for people to see how their consumption behavior is reflected in the progress of Japan's SDGs and what effects they are producing. This may hinder momentum and enthusiasm for future activities.

(ii) Considering the current popularity of social media, it is difficult to determine the quality, accuracy, and reliability of a huge amount of information sent from various entities. Determining cases of greenwashing and SDG-washing is impossible, and it is desirable to explore a system to detect ungrounded arguments and concealed tradeoffs.


(iii) Regarding global issues such as climate change, peace, and human rights, many consumers think nothing will change through individual efforts because these issues are the responsibilities of the state, municipalities, and companies. It is essential for municipalities, businesses, NPOs and NGOs, educational institutions, media, and consumers to work collaboratively and cooperatively to fulfill the promise of leaving no one behind. To achieve this, now is the time to evaluate and analyze each SDG initiative from a partnership perspective, incorporate changes in the external environment, review and improve strategies, methods, etc. again, and put them into practice.

(iv) Although workshops on the SDGs had been frequently held across the country immediately after their adoption, there have been few since 2021. Consumers are expected to change their role, from recipients of protection to active players participating in the formation of a just and sustainable society in the market<sup>91</sup>. It is necessary to remind people that consumption behavior based on the idea of the SDGs can help business and social transformation.

#### 4.3 Labor unions

Labor unions, being special stakeholders in corporate activities, are expected to continue their active efforts in encouraging employers and collaborating with other stakeholders to achieve the SDGs. In addition to Goal 8 (economic growth and employment), labor unions are also expected to contribute to achieving multiple goals such as Goal 1 (poverty), Goal 5 (gender), Goal 10 (inequality), Goal 13

<sup>91</sup> Basic Act on Consumer Policies <https://laws.e-gov.go.jp/law/343AC1000000078/> (in Japanese)



(climate change), and Goal 16 (peace) through efforts aimed at securing an appropriate work environment and working conditions.

For example, since 2016, Rengo has included efforts to solve various issues related to the SDGs in its campaign policy. The organization has been promoting a labor movement based on sustainability, where the future continues to be filled with hope in the next generation, and inclusion that embraces mutual respect and leaves no one behind. Its specific course of action and policies are linked to relevant SDGs. In that sense, the labor movement is the SDGs themselves, and Rengo is interacting and cooperating not only with the government but also with various stakeholders such as businesses, civil society, and private entities engaging in public activities, to achieve the SDGs.

Also, with regard to Goal 16 (peace), Rengo carries out large-scale peace actions every year in Hiroshima, Nagasaki, etc., continually calling for the abolition of nuclear weapons and the realization of permanent world peace. In August 2024, the General Secretary of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) attended the peace rallies in Hiroshima and Nagasaki hosted by Rengo. The events were shared with the world in a timely manner on the ITUC website etc. Furthermore, Rengo makes requests every year to the embassies of countries possessing nuclear weapons in Japan for the abolition of nuclear weapons. The organization also holds photo panel exhibitions across the country, conveying the damage caused by nuclear weapons.

In collaborative work with civil society, Rengo positions the NGO-Labor Union International Cooperation Forum, which was established in 2004, as a place for NGOs and labor unions to address international social issues by utilizing their respective characteristics. Based on this platform, Rengo is promoting efforts to raise awareness among union members and the general public as well as to solve problems in cooperation with NGOs in order to achieve the SDGs. Also, as a management committee member of the Child Labour Network (CL-net) composed of labor unions and civil society organizations, they organize a campaign every June to promote understanding of child labor. The campaign includes awareness raising and policy recommendations through such programs as symposiums attended by relevant ministries, agencies, companies, NGOs, etc.

Target 8.7, ending all forms of child labor by 2025, is difficult to achieve. We are also seeing a rapid growth in factors that will cause more child labor, such as global conflicts, growing number of refugees, food crises, and the effects of climate change. Considering the impact of Japanese companies on the global economy, Japan also needs to fulfill its share of responsibilities. CL-Net proposes that Japan participate as a partner in Alliance 8.7, which is a global framework for achieving Target 8.7, and promote efforts to abolish child labor based on the United Nations *Business and Human Rights Guiding Principles*, including the development of laws on better transparency in corporate supply chains and on public procurement.

## 4.4 Cooperatives

### 4.4.1 Cooperatives and their initiatives to achieve the SDGs

According to the *ICA Statement on the Cooperative Identity* established by the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA) in 1995, the 7th principle that should be used as a management guideline for cooperatives reads as follows.

#### 7th Principle: Concern for Community

Cooperatives work for the sustainable development of their communities through policies approved by their members.

This principle stipulates that cooperatives should contribute to the sustainable development of local communities. Many cooperative groups in Japan have accepted the statement and successively enacted basic policy documents based on it. Against this background, cooperatives in Japan have embraced the adoption of the 2030 agenda. By 2020, most individual cooperative groups had adopted their declarations and action policies to help achieve the SDGs.

As examples of progress since 2021, numerical targets have been set; action policies have been formulated by individual cooperatives and federations; learning activities have been organized for cooperative executives, employees, and members; and concrete practices have moved forward. Considering that 46.5% of Japanese adults (18 years and older) are members of at least one cooperative (according to the JCA survey mentioned later), changes in cooperative members' attitudes and behavior can potentially create a significant movement. According to the *National Attitudes Survey on Cooperatives 2022* (JCA), cooperative members' interest in each of the 17 Goals in the SDGs is higher than that of non-members, suggesting some positive effects of cooperatives' efforts.


Cooperatives contribute to the SDGs by solving social issues through business, by offering donations and subsidies that utilize surplus and management resources, and by taking other activities. Such contributions can also be seen in general enterprises. What is unique about cooperatives is engagement and participation by cooperative members with awareness. This is an action not generally seen among corporate customers and shareholders. Cooperatives' contributions to the SDGs and other issues are often realized through conscious engagement and participation of cooperative members in addition to innovative business models constructed by executives and employees.

The United Nations gave high praise to cooperatives and adopted a resolution at the General Assembly proclaiming 2025 as the second International Year of Cooperatives. The resolution invites all member states and other relevant stakeholders to promote cooperatives and raise awareness of their contribution to the SDGs and other issues.

However, not all cooperative members are active. For cooperatives, a constant challenge will be to enhance their businesses and activities through learning and close mutual communication among members, executives, and employees, thereby contributing to the SDGs and other issues.

### 4.4.2 Implementation of main initiatives by cooperatives since 2021

#### (1) Learning activities



Countless opportunities have been provided for cooperative members to learn about the SDGs. Lecture series and workshops have been held for members and others, and articles related to the SDGs have been published in monthly magazines for cooperative members. Some cooperatives also organized SDGs contests focusing on member organizations' practices. Ultimately, the source of cooperative activities is members' understanding and participation. The following practices started with these learning activities.

## (2) Agriculture, forestry, and fisheries

The JA Group decided on the *Action Policy for Environmentally Friendly Agriculture* in 2024, focusing on reducing chemical fertilizers and chemical pesticides, and reducing greenhouse gases and plastics associated with agricultural production. As concrete measures, for example, they have reused food and fishery waste in feed and fertilizer, expanded the use of compost by providing mixed fertilizer containing compost and through other measures, presented “green menus” (systematic proposals) for farmers to reduce environmental load, and decided on a policy to prevent plastic coating of slow-release fertilizers from being discharged to ocean (aiming for zero plastic-coated fertilizer use by 2030). Agriculture-welfare collaboration is also promoted, connecting welfare facilities for people with disabilities to agricultural production sites to provide farming opportunities for people with disabilities.

To protect and improve fishing grounds, which serve as the foundation of fishery management, the JF Group responds to changes in the marine environment by creating Satoumi, conserving seaweed beds and tidal flats, implementing community based fisheries management, and through other efforts.

In the forestry sector, practices include forest maintenance by forestry cooperatives as well as the creation and sale of J-credits based on this premise.

## (3) Finance and mutual aid

Practices by cooperative financial institutions include ESG investment in bonds and others for the purpose of climate change countermeasures, financial inclusion, and financial education.

Against the backdrop of frequent natural disasters, they have organized “disaster prevention cafes” (places for fun learning) over 550 times, signed comprehensive partnership agreements with local governments, and hosted events on the themes of disaster prevention and mitigation.

## (4) Subsidy system

Using their members' participation (contributions) etc. as funding sources, many cooperatives provide measures against child poverty, academic support, grants to children's cafeterias and NPOs, support for disaster victims, donations to UNICEF, and many other services on a continuous and daily basis.

## (5) Practices by consumer cooperatives

Among cooperative groups, consumer cooperatives are the most systematic promoters of environmental and sustainability policies. In 2021, Japanese Consumers' Co-operative Union (JCCU) formulated the *Consumer Co-op 2030 Environmental Sustainability Policy*. Aiming for 2030, they set



numerical targets for the consumer cooperative group as a whole on reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, reducing food waste, reducing the use of disposable plastic containers and packaging, renewable energy capacity, and reducing the use of paper for product catalogs. They also report their progress every fiscal year, receive evaluation and advice from the evaluation committee they have established, consisting of external experts, and incorporate the results in future actions. For cooperatives, there is no top-down approach by a national organization. To achieve the targets, cooperative members' understanding is also essential. In addition to the effects of practices themselves, the great significance lies in the fact that many cooperative members, executives, and employees learn, understand the importance, and then put it into practice on their own.

#### 4.4.3 Evaluation of progress in cooperatives' efforts for the SDGs

In November 2023, JCCU expressed the following opinions on the revised *SDGs Implementation Guiding Principles*.

- (i) Achievement of the SDGs is in jeopardy amid climate change, infectious diseases, and frequent conflicts. The Japanese government is expected to demonstrate leadership.
- (ii) Peace is essential for achieving the SDGs. It should therefore be more prioritized so that the overall tone of the *Guiding Principles* is based on integrated efforts to promote peacekeeping and sustainable development.
- (iii) Japan is reported to face challenges in Goal 5 (gender) and Goal 10 (inequality). Realizing an inclusive society should be clearly stated as a goal to be achieved by Japanese society as a whole.
- (iv) The broader introduction of renewable energy should be clearly stated in order to avoid the climate crisis.
- (v) The path towards achieving the SDGs should be visualized and made easy to understand so that civil society and consumers can participate.
- (vi) Collaboration between local stakeholders, including cooperatives, and governments as well as government support should be strengthened.

### C-3 Trends in research and educational institutions

#### 5.1 Research institutions

Progress in science, technology, and innovation (STI), which are essential for achieving the SDGs, is supported by the activities of many research institutions. Science, technology, and innovation themselves can play a major role as means to achieve the SDGs. But Japanese research institutions' activities and their scientific results are also expected to make a contribution, both domestically and internationally, in understanding the current state of the world throughs earth observation and more,

as a basis for target setting, in analyzing relationships between targets, in evaluating achievements, and in discussing post-2030 agenda. Many researchers from Japan have contributed to the preparation of reports by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES). Additionally, Japanese individuals participated as authors in the United Nations Global Sustainable Development Report 2023.

Research institutions are expected to help the dramatic transformation of STI based on scientific evidence. In addition to advanced technology, they are also called on to participate in the innovation of regional management to connect existing technology and local knowledge<sup>92</sup>. It should be noted that although innovation and transformation are key to achieving goals, they should be treated as a broader concept that includes social aspects, rather than focusing solely on technical aspects. Sharing visions and information between civil society, businesses, governments, and scientists is necessary also to recognize roles that science, technology, and innovation can play as means to achieve the SDGs, and to raise awareness of various issues and their urgency. Moreover, it is essential that the scientific community collaborate and cooperate with a wide range of other stakeholders to further promote the SDGs and achieve planetary health under international initiatives such as Future Earth. The following outlines examples regarding progress in these areas.

#### [Case 1] Initiatives by the Science Council of Japan

The Science Council of Japan has published a list summarizing recommendations issued since October 1, 2014, and how academic forums held since October 1, 2020, are connected to the SDGs<sup>93</sup>. They used machine learning technology to characterize their 285 proposals and automatically cluster them. The results showed that the proposals were almost evenly distributed across the SDGs. There are also results numerically showing that the proposals of the Science Council of Japan cover issues in a wider range of fields, even in comparison with the classification results of the 100 items described in the *5th Science and Technology Basic Plan*. Furthermore, the Liaison Conference on Carbon Neutrality (Net Zero) was established in June 2021. It comprises the representatives of committees, subcommittees, etc. that discuss carbon neutrality, and the results of their deliberation are widely disseminated to society<sup>94</sup>.

#### [Case 2] Program by JST to construct an industry-academia-government co-creation system

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<sup>92</sup> Japan Science and Technology Agency. *Practices of Science and Technology Innovation to Achieve SDGs*, 2021, p16. (in Japanese)

<sup>93</sup> Science Council of Japan. “Relationships with the SDGs—Activities of the Science Council of Japan: Focusing on Recommendations.” In SCJ from the SDG Perspective—Building Relationships Between Society and Science. <https://www.scj.go.jp/ja/scj/sdgs/index.html> (in Japanese)

<sup>94</sup> Science Council of Japan. Liaison Conference on Carbon Neutrality (Net Zero): The List of Members, Deliberation Details etc. (as of May 1, 2022), [https://www.scj.go.jp/ja/member/iinkai/carbon\\_n/kousei.html](https://www.scj.go.jp/ja/member/iinkai/carbon_n/kousei.html) (in Japanese)

The Japan Science and Technology Agency (JST) has been implementing the “Program on Open Innovation Platform for Industry-Academia Co-creation”<sup>95</sup> since 2020. This program sets forth a vision of the desired future society based on the SDGs and promotes "research and development that contributes to innovation through backcasting" alongside the establishment of a "self-sustaining and sustainable industry-academia-government co-creation system." By leveraging the strengths of universities and regional characteristics, it aims to foster the formation of co-creation hubs among industry, academia, and government, thereby contributing to national growth and regional revitalization. As of January 2025, 45 hubs led by research institutions are underway. Additionally, JST has conducted the "STI for SDGs Award"<sup>96</sup> six times, showcasing the potential contributions of science and technology to achieving the SDGs.

### [Case 3] Future Earth: its activities and integrated report

Future Earth<sup>97</sup>, an international scientific network for a sustainable society, has established a committee called the Earth Commission to advise on local to global policy-making for achieving the SDGs based on scientific knowledge, ensuring that the effects of policies remain within the boundaries of Earth's systems. Experts from Japan have participated as members. Furthermore, at the annual United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP), Future Earth publishes an integrated policy report conveying the latest scientific knowledge on the global environment, including climate science, in an easy-to-understand manner. Within Japan, research institutions also work together with private companies and students to translate reports and organize explanatory events, promoting activities to widely disseminate information.

As shown in these cases, while collaboration beyond the field of science, partnership with society, and international scientific cooperation are making progress, there is a need for greater participation by research institutions in the scientific assessment of achieving the SDGs and evaluating synergies and trade-offs. Additionally, the role that science plays in policy decisions on the SDGs by national and local governments is not necessarily sufficient, with the exception of activities such as councils, etc., and it is not sufficiently recognized by the citizens. Furthermore, a system is underdeveloped in evaluating research institutions' contribution to the SDGs to date. Promoting collaboration with international research and educational institutions such as SDSN Japan will also become increasingly necessary. In the future, activities will need to be transformed based on these evaluations.

## 5.2 Educational institutions

As for educational institutions, following the formulation of the Second ESD Implementation Plan in Japan in May 2021, the *Guide to Promoting Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)* and the *ASPnet*<sup>98</sup> *Schools Guidebook* were revised in May 2021. Also, in the *4th Basic Plan for the Promotion of Education*, decided by the Cabinet in June 2023, promotion of ESD is set as a basic policy relating

<sup>95</sup> <https://www.jst.go.jp/pf/platform/index.html> (in Japanese)

<sup>96</sup> <https://www.jst.go.jp/ristex/sdgs-award/> (in Japanese)

<sup>97</sup> <https://futureearth.org/>, <https://futureearth.org/initiatives/earth-targets-initiatives/earth-commission/>, <https://futureearth.org/publications/science-insights/>

<sup>98</sup> UNESCO Associated Schools Network

to future education policies. In the goals and basic measures of the education policy for the next five years, it is also stated that creators of a sustainable society should be nurtured mainly at UNESCO Associated Schools, which are positioned as bases to promote ESD.

Based on the ESD for 2030 roadmap, the ESD-Net 2030 Global Meeting was held in Tokyo in December 2023, co-hosted by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology and UNESCO. It was attended by over 200 educators from about 80 countries who were implementing ESD initiatives. The event included a special session introducing practical examples of ESD at various schools in Japan and visits to UNESCO Associated Schools in the country, offering an opportunity to share ESD practices in Japan with the world.

Based on the *Constitution of UNESCO*, Japan submitted the *Recommendation on Education for Peace and Human Rights, International Understanding, Cooperation, Fundamental Freedoms, Global Citizenship and Sustainable Development*, adopted at the 42nd session of the UNESCO General Conference in November 2023, to the National Diet in November 2024. In addition to preparing the Recommendation's provisional translation in Japanese and posting it on the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology(MEXT)'s website, the MEXT disseminated it to relevant organizations such as boards of education and higher education institutions.

UNESCO organizes the “UNESCO-Japan Prize on Education for Sustainable Development,” with the support of the Japanese government, for the purpose of motivating ESD practitioners around the world to challenge themselves to improve efforts and spreading excellent initiatives around the world. Kanazawa University, nominated by Japan, was selected as one of the winning institutions in 2023. The award ceremony was held at UNESCO's General Conference in November of the same year.



Scenes of Kanazawa University being awarded a prize (Photo: Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology)

In Japan, the number of UNESCO Associated Schools, positioned as bases to promote ESD, has increased to over 1,000.

The National Conference for the UNESCO Associated Schools Network is held every year, where individuals and stakeholders affiliated with UNESCO Associated Schools in Japan gather to share and exchange good practices. In FY 2024, the event was held combining in-person and online formats,

attended by over 300 teachers, staff members, and those involved in UNESCO activities from across the country.



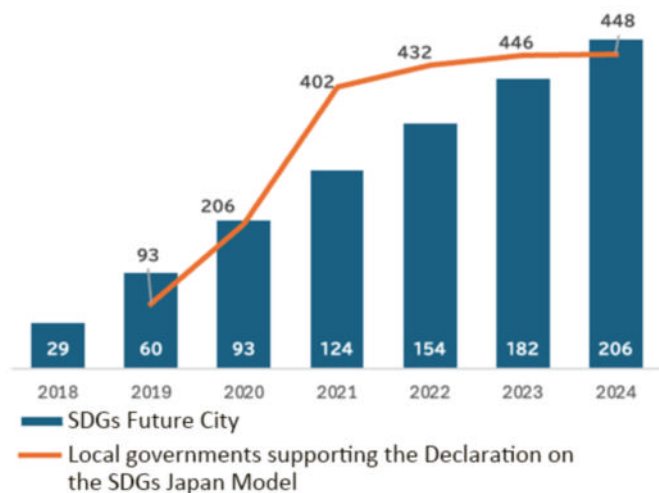
UNESCO National Convention  
(Photo: Ministry of Education,  
Culture, Sports, Science and  
Technology)

## C-4 TRENDS IN LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

### 6.1 Spreading and Advancing the SDGs in Local Communities

The concept of the SDGs has become widely recognized at the local level, and local and regional governments are working to address their respective challenges by taking into account the SDGs, which is a distinctive feature of Japan's implementation and promotion of the SDGs. As of 2023, the percentage of municipalities working on the SDGs has steadily increased from 52.1% in 2021 to 65.6% in 2022<sup>99</sup>. By 2024, 206 municipalities have been selected as SDGs Future Cities. The number of municipalities supporting the *Declaration on the SDGs Japan Model*, published in January 2019, was initially 93 but has increased to 448 (43 prefectural governments and 405 local municipalities) as of March 2024<sup>100</sup>.

Local regions face complex and intertwined challenges stemming from population decline and the contraction of regional economies. Prefectural governments are expected to address administrative issues on a broader scale, while municipal governments need to address challenges more closely aligned with residents' lives and unique local circumstances. The issues vary depending on the size of the




Materials: The number of SDGs Future Cities was prepared based on data by the Cabinet Office, and the number of local governments supporting the *Declaration on the SDGs Japan Model* was prepared based on documents by supporting local governments.

<sup>99</sup> Cabinet Office. *FY 2023 National Survey on the SDGs*. (November 2023)

<sup>100</sup> <https://www.pref.kanagawa.jp/documents/55062/5463298.pdf> (in Japanese)





local and regional governments. Local governments are advancing efforts to build a society where "no one is left behind" by addressing these diverse challenges and residents' needs. In the process of creating such sustainable local communities, the concept of the SDGs is being integrated into their initiatives, with efforts made to reflect it in projects they implement and to ensure that more residents understand it. To achieve this, it is important not only for local governments but also for stakeholders active in the region, including local residents, to collaborate and work together to co-create a sustainable society.

## 6.2 Establishing systems to promote the SDGs in local governments

In order to incorporate the SDGs in the policies and projects of local governments and to mainstream them, it is necessary to develop mechanisms and systems for SDGs promotion. A growing number of municipalities have also established cross-sectional SDGs promotion headquarters and formulated ordinances, guidelines, and plans related to SDGs promotion. Since 2021, Shimotsuma City in Ibaraki Prefecture, Kyotango City in Kyoto Prefecture, Myoko City in Niigata Prefecture, Noboribetsu City in Hokkaido, and others have formulated ordinances related to SDGs promotion. Okinawa Prefecture, Nirasaki City in Yamanashi Prefecture, Fujisawa City in Kanagawa Prefecture, etc. have formulated guidelines and plans. In March 2023, Sado City in Niigata Prefecture enacted the *Sado City Ordinance for the Promotion of Sustainable Island Development Through the Creation of a Circulating and Ecological Sphere (CES)*, aiming to advance concrete visions and initiatives on the SDGs in the region. Furthermore, an increasing number of municipalities are working to mainstream the SDGs in their comprehensive plans, comprehensive strategies, and budgeting. For example, Kawasaki City in Kanagawa Prefecture has clarified the alignment between the *Phase 3 Implementation Plan of the Kawasaki City Comprehensive Plan* (formulated in March 2022) and the SDGs, and states that it integrates the progress management of policies and projects under the *Comprehensive Plan* with the management of SDG promotion. Koriyama City, Fukushima Prefecture, has developed its budget using backcasting approach, based on the basic principles of the SDGs.

## 6.3 Developing partnerships to spread and advance the SDGs in local areas

In addition to collaboration with local stakeholders through the construction of collaborative bases, registration and certification systems for the SDGs, etc., initiatives in broader areas are also progressing and deepening through multi-stakeholder platforms that transcend the boundaries of local governments. For example, the Kansai SDGs Platform (KSP) – which consists of diverse actors such as private companies, civil society, NPOs, NGOs, universities, research institutions, local governments, national government agencies, etc. in the Kansai region– has led efforts aimed at raising awareness of the SDGs in the region. The platform has over 3,100 members as of February 2025. One of KSP's distinguishing features is nine specialized subcommittees (Kansai SDG Contribution Business Network, SDGs Environmental Business, Co-Education, Zero Food Waste, SDGs Knowledge Lab,



Barrier-Free Maps, Academic Commons, Hyogo SDGs Hub, and Local SDGs/Decarbonization), each carrying out unique activities leveraging their respective expertise. In 2024, an inter-subcommittee exchange meeting was held, facilitating broader networking and collaboration through interaction and information exchange among subcommittees, as well as with members not belonging to subcommittees. The meeting has also helped generate new ideas and fostered initiatives aimed at achieving the SDGs. Such regional platforms have also been built in the Chubu and Kyushu regions. In addition, organizations such as the Noto SDGs Lab (located in Suzu City, Ishikawa Prefecture), the Yokohama SDGs Design Center (located in Yokohama City, Kanagawa Prefecture), and the Nishiawakura Whole Village Research Institute (located in Nishiawakura Village, Okayama Prefecture) are playing a crucial role in advancing efforts to achieve the SDGs at the local level. These organizations possess intermediary support functions that foster and strengthen partnerships with diverse stakeholders, including municipalities, businesses, and citizen groups. They coordinate, support, and implement collaborations and projects aimed at solving regional challenges.



The KSP subcommittee exchange meeting (May 29, 2024 at the Osaka University Nakanoshima Center)

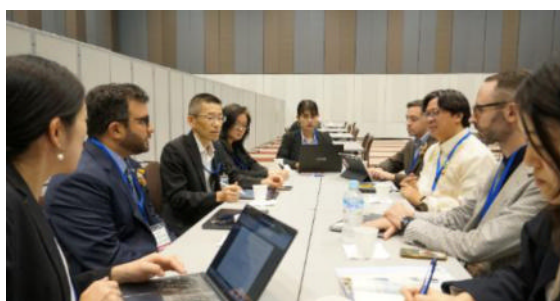
#### 6.4 Voluntary Local Review (VLR)

Follow-up and review of the progress of the SDGs and the use of those insights to further strengthen implementation is a key element in promoting the SDGs. Voluntary Local Review (VLR) has been spreading globally as one of the methods of conducting and publicly sharing such follow-up and review. Shimokawa Town in Hokkaido, Toyama City in Toyama Prefecture, and Kitakyushu City in Fukuoka Prefecture published VLRs, along with New York City, at the United Nations High Level Political Forum (HLPF) in 2018, making a starting point for global movement of the VLRs. Later, VLRs were conducted in 2019 by Hamamatsu City in Shizuoka Prefecture, in 2021 by Tokyo Metropolitan Government and Yokohama City in Kanagawa Prefecture, in 2022 by Toyota City in Aichi Prefecture jointly with the United Nations Centre for Regional Development (UNCRD), in 2023 by Tokyo, and in 2024 by Sado City in Niigata Prefecture. These VLRs are also disseminated internationally through HLPF and other channels.

Notably, the Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs) prepared by Tokyo in 2021 and 2023 have been structured in a "future-oriented" manner. They not only review the current situation but also link with

the comprehensive plan to outline a vision for the future and the policies aimed at achieving it. In 2024, Tokyo was the only municipality in the world to host a side event at the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF), where they discussed efforts to enhance awareness of the SDGs and shared their VLRs on an international platform.

Based on the experience in conducting a VLR, Yokohama City in Kanagawa Prefecture has been contributing to the promotion of the SDGs at an international level. In collaboration with other organizations, such as CityNet and the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES), the city shared knowledge through accepting visitors from overseas and training programs, such as the Asia-Pacific Mayors Academy for Sustainable Urban Development hosted by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and others. Yokohama City also supported the implementation of VLRs in Santa Rosa, Baguio, and San Fernando in the Philippines.



Discussing the VLR within Santa Rosa City(Photo: Yokohama City, Kanagawa Prefecture)

With support from the government, including SDGs Future Cities, Japan has made notable progress in efforts to promote the SDGs by local governments in collaboration with regional stakeholders, especially companies. In this regard, further joint efforts by national and local entities are required. Meanwhile, it is important to go beyond merely linking the SDGs to policies and projects. Efforts are needed to further deepen each initiative. Specifically, enhancing synergies between different policy areas based on the SDGs principles to implement efficient and effective measures, and creating mechanisms to further deepen collaboration with various stakeholders such as businesses, civil society organizations, and individual residents, are crucial for autonomous and sustainable regional development. In this context, remaining challenges include strengthening coordination functions between departments, improving employees' understanding of the SDGs, and promoting a follow-up system based on specific indicators to properly grasp regional issues. In this regard, it is also necessary to advance the VLRs, which primarily target local government efforts, by incorporating a more collaborative, stakeholder-engaged approach inspired by integrated corporate reporting, thereby strengthening it as a tool for regional revitalization and sustainable community building. It is also important to contribute to the achievement of the SDGs by sharing and expanding the diverse and abundant examples of local initiatives accumulated in Japan, not only domestically but internationally as well. In particular, international cooperation and collaboration through the know-how gained from Japan's early adoption of VLRs and the SDGs Future Cities Program can help strengthen initiatives for the SDGs in partner cities and regions. Such exchanges can generate additional benefits, such as strengthening the capacity of local governments in Japan, and mutual learning and deepening understanding by involving local stakeholders in the process.

## C-5 Parliament


As acknowledged in the 2030 Agenda, parliaments can play an integral role from the perspective of effective implementation and accountability. In order to realize a society where no one is left behind in Japan, the Diet and local assemblies are expected to listen to the voices of citizens from all over Japan so that their interests and concerns are reflected in national and local government policies. Moreover, parliamentarians are expected to cooperate with administrative agencies, civil society, and international organizations to propose concrete policy options to solve economic and social issues at both national and regional levels.

The Liberal Democratic Party's parliamentary league on SDGs diplomacy, which was established in April 2017, exchanged opinions when revising the *Implementation Guiding Principles* in 2023. They pointed out the need to mention the impact of wars on achieving the SDGs across the world and that peace is the foundation of everything.

The Komeito Party's SDGs Promotion Committee, established in January 2016, was upgraded to the "Komeito SDGs Promotion Headquarters" in December 2020. It has been working to strengthen initiatives at both the national and local government levels in collaboration with local councilors. In preparation for the 2023 revision of the *Implementation Guiding Principles*, the party asked questions about efforts to the Prime Minister, the head of the national SDGs Promotion Headquarters, at the House of Representatives plenary session in the extraordinary Diet session in October 2023. They also exchanged opinions with the SDGs Civil Society Network and others in November of the same year. These are a few examples of the party's active engagement in discussion. In December of the same year, they directly delivered the *Proposals for the Revision of the SDGs Implementation Guiding Principles* to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, stressing that the Japanese government should lead the international community to achieve the SDGs and drastically accelerate domestic and international efforts.

The Japan Parliamentarians Federation for Population (JPFP) is a cross-party parliamentary league with a very long history, established in 1974. The main objective of JPFP's activities is to contribute to the realization of sustainable development by deepening international understanding of population issues and making concrete recommendations to national policies. JPFP emphasizes that population issues are closely related to fields such as poverty, education, health, women's empowerment, and the environment, and has been promoting international cooperation to address these challenges. Notably, JPFP played a significant role in the concept of "sustainable development." The establishment of the "World Commission on Environment and Development" (WCED), which was instrumental in forming the concept of "sustainable development" foundational to the SDGs, was proposed by members of JPFP through the Japanese government and established with Japan's contribution.

Additionally, JPFP, through collaboration with parliamentarians from various countries, networks of legislators in Asia, Africa, and the Middle East, experts, international organizations, and civil society, advocates for the importance of population issues, shares mutual experiences, and engages in discussions towards related legislation and policy formation, motivating concrete actions for problem-solving. For example, in Egypt, a series of laws have been enacted, including those regarding the



National Council for Women, the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the National Council for Motherhood and Childhood, and the Rights of the Elderly. Since 2023, television programs on population and development issues have been produced to address and raise awareness about youth education and women's issues in various regions.

Additionally, the Global Environmental Action (GEA)<sup>101</sup>, with cross-party parliamentarians serving as executive committee members alongside representatives from the business and academic sectors, addressed the SDGs in 2013 to raise international awareness for the adoption of the 2030 Agenda. The conference was held under the theme "Departure from Rio+20: Towards a Sustainable Future—Economic Revitalization and Contribution to the International Community through Greening the Economy." The GEA has held international conferences every other year since the adoption of the 2030 agenda, covering themes related to global environmental issues aimed at achieving the SDGs. The 2022 event was held on the theme “Challenges and Opportunities for Sustainable Societies: Climate Change, Energy and Food Security.” In 2024, the event was held on the theme “Promoting Measures to Simultaneously Decarbonize and Achieve the SDGs: Overcoming the Triple Crisis of Climate Change, Biodiversity Loss, and Pollution.” Active discussions were held by parliamentarians, business representatives, and experts about measures to address global environmental issues.

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<sup>101</sup> The GEA was established in 1991 as an NGO to help solve global environmental problems and promote sustainable development. It started as the secretariat of the international conference Eminent Persons' Meeting on Financing Global Environment and Development (held in April 1992) and changed the organization name to the Global Environmental Action in 1995.

#### (4) Conclusion

In Japan, notable progress on the SDGs can be seen in several fields, such as broadly promoting awareness, creating business cases, localizing in communities, and changing behavior by using cooperatives. In these fields, it is safe to conclude that progress has been made in such aspects as systems, behavioral changes, and perceptions in comparison with possible situations without the SDGs.

Meanwhile, it has become clear that some issues remain to be addressed. For example, although many activities have taken place regarding gender equality and youth, they have yet to reach the point of starting transformation. Measures are also insufficient in support for marginalized groups such as non-Japanese people and those with disabilities. Cross-sectional work also remains underdeveloped, for example, in creating synergy between poverty countermeasures and actions for climate change and energy, as well as in collaborative work among poverty, employment, and gender fields. Possible causes for these include issues remaining in legislation, such as a basic law aimed to promote the SDGs, and in cross-cutting policy development and budgeting across the goals. There is a need to raise awareness that the SDGs are both international goals and important issues for domestic policies.

In Japan, discussions are also growing on well-being, questioning desirable growth, and on solutions to an aging society with a declining birthrate, that is occurring ahead of the rest of the world. The importance of discussions on an ideal digital space and the peaceful use of outer space is also increasing. In the post-SDGs era, an ideal society will need to be envisioned, also incorporating these issues mentioned above. Reflecting on the effective and ineffective aspects of past implementations, it is necessary to clarify the nature of goals and methods for implementation, as well as strategies to bridge gaps for problem-solving. A comprehensive promotion of the SDGs, treating all 17 goals as an integrated whole, is required through a joint effort between the public and private sectors.





# Chapter 7

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## FUTURE DIRECTION





## 7. Future direction

During the current process of conducting this Voluntary National Review (VNR), Japan has engaged in comprehensive dialogues with diverse stakeholders and solicited public comments in addition to convening the SDGs Promotion Roundtable. The inclusion of stakeholders' self-evaluations and initiatives in this report has provided a meaningful review of Japan's efforts and accelerated its progress towards achieving the SDGs. However, there have been observations pointing to a lack of data-driven evaluation and analysis of progress, as well as lessons learned from ongoing initiatives, highlighting the need for improvement in the methods of progress assessment.

Considering the inputs from the exchanges with the private-sector members of the roundtable, experts, and civil society during this review, the current situations and challenges facing Japan's efforts to achieve the SDGs, as well as future directions, are outlined below.

### (1) Current Situations and Challenges

At the UN Summit of the Future, world leaders agreed to significantly advance progress towards achieving the SDGs. However, as previously mentioned, global challenges such as worsening climate change, biodiversity loss, pollution, and infectious diseases, coupled with severe international circumstances, have heavily impacted the global pursuit of the SDGs. Japan is no exception, and furthermore, faces unprecedented challenges of a rapidly declining birthrate and aging population.

Despite these daunting circumstances, Japan's efforts towards achieving the SDGs have shown definite progress, although various challenges remain. Japan stands at a critical juncture where ensuring sustainability while achieving a growth-oriented economy is essential, necessitating a further strengthening of these initiatives. Japan remains steadfastly committed to intensifying and accelerating efforts to achieve the SDGs by 2030, while contributing effectively to the global community's endeavors.

### (2) The Direction of Future Efforts

A. Japan will further advance efforts to transform solutions to societal challenges into engines for growth. It is essential to simultaneously achieve stable energy supply, economic growth, and decarbonization. Japan will accelerate the construction of a resilient, circular economy and social system. By harnessing innovation across various fields, including AI, Japan aims to realize sustainable growth through solving societal challenges.

B. The principles of "leave no one behind" and "everyone can make it happen" are paramount. While population decline and a society with a declining birthrate and an aging population pose significant challenges for Japan, they also present opportunities to foster a society where diverse individuals thrive, support each other, and are valued. Realizing such a society will also enhance each person's well-being, encompassing physical, mental, and social happiness. Japan will continue to commit itself with an all-Japan approach to achieving the SDGs.

C. As a country at the forefront of addressing challenges, Japan will model its efforts and knowledge towards realizing a sustainable economy and society for the international community. However, it is important to recognize that it is no longer in an era where norms, technologies, and funds flow unidirectionally from developed to developing countries. Japan aims to promote the co-creation of value through dialogue and collaboration with developing countries and their people, in pursuit of a sustainable society by 2030 and beyond. Potential areas for advancing these efforts include:

(i) Declining Birthrate and Aging Population: While the timing varies, declining birthrates and population aging as well as the resultant population decrease are inevitable challenges for most countries. Japan's initiatives can serve as a model for other countries in building a sustainable economy and society amid population decline and an aging society. In facing severe conditions due to the concentration of the population in Tokyo, it is key to advance efforts to maximize the potential of each region.

(ii) Local Development: The Japanese government intends to advance initiatives that support youth and women, relocate industries, government, and academia to regional communities, promote innovation, and develop new-era infrastructure. The role of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) is particularly important. Supporting SMEs in their efforts to achieve the SDGs is believed to contribute to creating autonomous and sustainable economies and societies that capitalize on regional characteristics.

(iii) Disaster Risk Reduction: Disaster risk reduction measures that consider climate change risks will become increasingly important. Efforts to strengthen initiatives that contribute to disaster risk reduction, and national resilience will continue.

D. Japan is committed to realizing a future of peace, freedom, and prosperity based on the principles of human dignity and human security. The international community must share this responsibility and strengthen multilateralism. From this perspective, Japan welcomes the outcomes of the 2024 UN Summit of the Future and will contribute to their implementation. Furthermore, recognizing the necessity of women's equal and full participation in international peace, conflict prevention, and resolution, Japan will continue to strongly promote the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda.

E. Bearing in mind that the aforementioned elements are key to ensuring sustainable growth and the sustainability of the international community as a whole for future generations, Japan aims to play a leading role in discussions and rule-making on international sustainability post-2030.

F. As outlined in Japan's SDG Implementation Guiding Principles revised in December 2023, the government will continue to take proactive leadership, encouraging active participation from diverse sectors and fostering collaboration and cooperation to pave the way for achieving the SDGs. The SDGs Promotion Headquarters will regularly review the progress of initiatives based on the Implementation Guiding Principles and revise it every four years or as necessary.



