

# 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