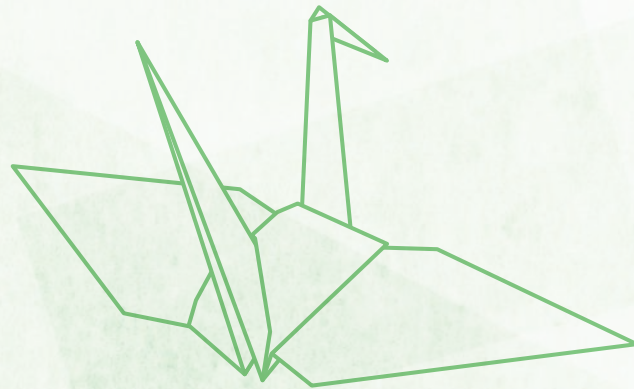


# Chapter 2

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