

DIPLOMATIC BLUEBOOK 2021



Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan

Diplomatic Bluebook 2021

Japanese Diplomacy and
International Situation in 2020

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan

Preface to the Diplomatic Bluebook 2021

While “the past and nature” are unchangeable, we have the power to change “the future and our society.” It is with this belief that I continued to do all my best to promote “diplomacy with a sense of caring and robustness” in 2020.

The greatest challenge in 2020 was, above all, responding to the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, while analyzing the situation on the global spread of COVID-19, has exerted every possible effort, such as providing relevant information including the Travel Advice and Warning on Infectious Diseases in a prompt and attentive manner, reinforcing border control measures; and offering assistance to Japanese nationals overseas who had difficulties in leaving other countries or returning to Japan, which started from the operation to repatriate Japanese nationals from Wuhan, China. Moreover, even when there are limits on in-person diplomacy, I had video conferences and telephone calls 112 times in total with other foreign ministers and resumed overseas visits in August, engaging actively in diplomatic activities both in-person and remotely.

The international community is now confronting three major transformations and challenges. The first is how to overcome the crisis stemming from the global spread of COVID-19 and the difficult situations involving challenges to human security. The second is the challenge against the universal values and international order that have so far underpinned the peace and prosperity of the international community posed by such developments as protectionism and unilateral attempts to change the status quo. The third is the emergence of common challenges facing the international community, including globalization, digitalization and climate change, together with emerging challenges such as those in new domains, including outer space and cyberspace, as well as economic security. In the face of these epoch-making changes, Japan will uphold its respect for multilateralism and take on a greater leadership role in establishing a free and fair order and rules on the economic front, looking ahead to a post-COVID-19 world.

This year, we substantially reorganized the structure of The Diplomatic Bluebook. To begin with, Japan’s responses to the COVID-19 pandemic are covered extensively as the opening special feature. Chapter 1, “International Situation in 2020 and Japan’s Diplomatic Outlook” provides an overview regarding international developments, including those surrounding the U.S. and China that captured much attention in 2020. In the following Chapter 2, “Japan’s Foreign Policy by Region,” newly introduces in its Section 1 our cross-regional initiatives to achieve a “Free and Open Indo-Pacific” that Japan promotes. Chapter 3, “Japan’s Economic Foreign Policy to Promote National and Global Interests,” is in a new independent chapter which covers Japan’s leading efforts since the TPP11 to expand a free and high-standard economic zone as well as to promote international rule-making, including in the digital domain. The efforts previously covered in Chapter 3, such as in security and ODA, are discussed in Chapter 4, “Japan’s Growing Presence in the International Community.” Lastly, Chapter 5, “Japan’s Diplomacy Open to the Public,” elaborates on the subjects including the protection of Japanese nationals.

It is my sincere hope that this Diplomatic Bluebook will be of help in presenting Japan widely at home and abroad as a country that demonstrates leadership toward a post-COVID-19 international community and contributes more than ever to global peace and stability.

Minister for Foreign Affairs
MOTEGI Toshimitsu



In principle, Diplomatic Bluebook 2021 describes an overview of the international affairs and Japan's diplomatic activities between January 1 and December 31 of 2020; however, some important events that occurred until April 2021 are also included.

This book consists of the opening special features, Chapters 1 to 5, and some reference materials. The opening special feature contains comprehensive coverage regarding the response to the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19). Chapters 1 to 5 offer concise overviews of Japan's diplomatic activities throughout 2020, and also include special features explaining specific foreign policy themes in an easy-to-understand manner and column articles contributed by people with global experiences.

This year's and past years' Diplomatic Bluebooks are available on the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA). Summaries of Diplomatic Bluebook 2021 in French and Spanish are also due to be available on the website by autumn 2021.

For more details with respect to Chapter 4, Section 2, "4 Disarmament and Non-proliferation and the Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy," and Chapter 4, Section 3, "Japan's International Cooperation," please refer to MOFA's publications, *Japan's Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Policy*, and *White Paper on Development Cooperation Japan's International Cooperation*. They are also available on the MOFA website.

Please note that the titles of persons and names of countries appearing in this book are those as of the events. The contents and views expressed in contributions from individuals and organizations do not reflect the position of MOFA. The maps in this book are simplified and may not necessarily be drawn to scale.

Previous Diplomatic Bluebooks:
<https://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/other/bluebook/index.html>



Japan's Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Policy
(only in the Japanese language)
https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/gaiko/gun_hakusho/index.html



White Paper on Development Cooperation
Japan's International Cooperation:
https://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/oda/page_000017.html





Contents

Opening Special Features Responses to the Novel Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19)

1	Outbreak and Spread of COVID-19 and Impact on the International Community	2
2	Initiatives of the Government of Japan, including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs	4

Chapter 1 International Situation in 2020 and Outlook for Japan's Diplomacy

1-1	Overview of the International Situation	16
1-2	Developments Centered Around the U.S. and China	19
2	Outlook for Japan's Diplomacy	21
	Special Feature Japan-Australia-India-U.S. Foreign Ministers' Meeting	27

Chapter 2 Japan's Foreign Policy by Region

Section 1 Promotion of a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)"

1	Overview	30
2	Japan's Efforts and Cooperation toward FOIP	31
3	Collaboration and Cooperation with Other Countries	32

Section 2 Asia and Oceania

1	Overview	35
2	Korean Peninsula	39
3	China / Mongolia, etc.	54
4	Southeast Asia	68
5	South Asia	77
6	Oceania	81

	Special Feature Bushfires in Australia; Dispatch of Japan Disaster Relief (JDR) Self-Defense Force Units	82
--	---	----

7	Regional and Inter-regional Cooperation	87
---	---	----

	Special Feature ASEAN Centre for Public Health Emergencies and Emerging Diseases; Strengthening ASEAN's Regional Capabilities to Infectious Diseases through Japan-ASEAN Cooperation toward the Realization of a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific"	90
--	--	----

	Special Feature Mekong-Japan Cooperation	92
--	---	----

Section 3 North America

1	United States	98
2	Canada	108

Section 4	Latin America and the Caribbean	110
	1 Overview	110
	2 Regional Organizations	111
	3 LAC Countries	112
	Column » Brazil's Nikkei Community	115
Section 5	Europe	120
	1 Overview	120
	2 Regional Situations in Europe	123
	Column » Japan-UK Season of Culture	126
	Column » 100th Anniversary of Japan-Czech Republic and Japan-Slovakia Relations	130
	3 Collaboration with European Regional Institutions, and the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM)	131
	Special Feature » Election of Ambassador Morikawa Toru, as the Executive Director of the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF)	134
Section 6	Russia, Central Asia and Caucasus	141
	1 Russia	141
	2 Countries in Central Asia and Caucasus, etc.	145
Section 7	The Middle East and North Africa	149
	1 Overview	149
	2 Situation in the Middle East	150
	3 The Situation in North Africa (Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Morocco and Algeria)	159
Section 8	Africa	162
	1 Overview	162
	2 East Africa	163
	3 Southern Africa	166
	Special Feature » Response to the Oil Leakage off the Coast of Mauritius	167
	4 Central Africa	169
	5 West Africa	170
	Column » 60th Year of Japanese Diplomacy since the "Year of Africa"	173



Chapter 3 Japan's Economic Diplomacy to Promote National and Global Interests

Section 1	Promotion of Rule-Making to Bolster Free and Open Global Economic Systems	176
	1 Overview of Economic Diplomacy	176
	2 Promotion of Economic Partnerships	176
	Special Feature The Japan-UK Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (Japan-UK EPA)	180
	3 Initiatives with International Organizations	183
	Special Feature WTO Reform	186
	4 Intellectual Property Protection	190
Section 2	Leading Discussions at International Conferences	191
	1 G7 and G20	191
	2 Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC)	192
Section 3	Communicating Japan's Economic Strengths (Including the Promotion of Japanese Agriculture, Forestry, Fishery and Food Exports)	195
	1 Promotion of Japanese Companies' Overseas Business Expansion by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Accompanying Diplomatic Missions Overseas	195
	2 Promotion of the Japanese Infrastructure System in Overseas Business Expansion	196
	3 Promotion of the Export of Agricultural, Forestry and Fishery Products and Food (Regulations on Japanese Food Imports after the Great East Japan Earthquake)	196
	Column Overseas Promotion of Ashiro Rindo® Gentians from Hachimantai City	198
Section 4	Promoting Resource Diplomacy along with Foreign Direct Investment in Japan	199
	1 Securing a Stable Supply of Energy and Mineral Resources at Reasonable Prices	199
	2 Ensuring Food Security	203
	3 Fisheries (Whaling and Tuna, etc.)	204
	Column Considering Japan's Fishery Diplomacy with SAKANA-KUN: Aiming to Realize Sustainable Fishery and Achieve the SDGs	205
	4 Foreign Direct Investment in Japan	207
	5 The Road to 2025 World Expo Osaka (Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan)	208
	Column Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan: Thoughts and Sentiments included in the Logo Design	209

Chapter 4 Japan Strengthening Its Presence in the International Community

Chapter 1

Chapter 2

Chapter 3

Chapter 4

Chapter 5

References

Section 1	Japan Strengthening Its Presence in the International Community	212
	1 Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)	212
	2 New Rule-Making	213
	3 International Cooperation Based on Multilateralism	213
Section 2	Efforts for Peace and Stability of Japan and the International Community ..	215
	1 National Security Initiatives	215
	2 Japan-U.S. Security Arrangements	216
	Special Feature Sixtieth Anniversary of the Signing and Entering into Force of the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty	217
	Column Project to Promote Exchanges and Enhance Mutual Understanding between Japan and the United States	222
	3 Global Security	223
	【Regional Security (p.223), Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding (p.226), Initiatives to Combat Security Threats (p.229), The Oceans and Seas (p.234), Cyber (p.239), Outer Space (p.240), Economic Security (p.243)】	
	Column Learning for Empathy – Creating a Peaceful and Sustainable Society Underpinned by Empathy	231
	Special Feature Establishment of the Economic Security Policy Division	244
	4 Disarmament and Non-proliferation and the Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy	246
	5 Japan’s Efforts at the United Nations	258
	6 The Rule of Law in the International Community	263
	Column Participation in the Support Program for Internships at International Courts and other International Organizations	265
	Special Feature Establishment of the “Economic Dispute Settlement Division”	267
	7 Human Rights	271
	Special Feature Toward Business Enterprises that “Leave No One Behind”; Launch of Japan’s National Action Plan (NAP) on Business and Human Rights	273
	Column Re-election as Member of the Committee on the Rights of the Child	275
	8 Women	277
Section 3	Japan’s International Cooperation (Development Cooperation and Response to Global Issues)	280
	1 Development Cooperation	280



【Development Cooperation Charter and Japan's ODA Performance (p.280), Development Cooperation in 2020 (p.281), Safety Measures for Personnel Engaged in International Cooperation Projects (p.282), Initiatives in Major Regions (p.283), Approaches to Appropriate and Effective Implementation of ODA (p.290)】

	Column ▶ Responding to the Largest Postwar Humanitarian Crisis	291
2	Response to Global Issues	293
	【2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (p.293), Global Health (p.296), Labor and Employment (p.298), Environmental Issues and Climate Change (p.298), Arctic and Antarctic (p.303)】	
	Special Feature ▶ Toward the Realization of Net Zero Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions by 2050	301
3	Science and Technology Diplomacy	305
	Column ▶ Vision and Challenges for Japan's Science and Technology Diplomacy	307
Section 4	Efforts to Promote Understanding and Trust in Japan	308
1	Strategic Communications	308
2	Cultural, Sports, and Tourism Diplomacy	311
	Column ▶ Leaving a Legacy in People's Hearts through the Paralympic Games	317

Chapter 5 Japan's Diplomacy Open to the Public

Section 1	Japanese Society and People Deepening Their Ties with the World	324
1	Japan's Growth and Acceptance of Foreign Nationals	324
2	Japanese Taking Active Roles in the International Community	325
	Column ▶ Voices of People Who Have Been Supporting the United Nations' Activities Promoting Global Innovation Through the Spread of Intellectual Property Systems and Services	326
	Reflecting on 2020, the Year of the COVID-19 Pandemic	327
	Column ▶ Toward Sustainable School Library Administration	330
	Column ▶ Toward the Widespread Adoption of Organic Farming in Rural Areas in Nepal	332
3	Cooperation with Local Governments	333
	Column ▶ Sending Hearts across the Seas, and Building Bonds beyond 2020: The Dawning of a New Era in Host Town Exchanges – The Paths and Miracles Woven Online	337
Section 2	Supporting Japanese Nationals Overseas	339
1	Risks and Safety of Japanese Nationals Overseas	339
2	Consular Service and Assistance for Japanese Living Overseas	343

	Special Feature	Issuance of the New 2020 Passport: Preventing Counterfeiting while Promoting Japanese Culture through the “Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji”	347
3		Cooperation with Emigrants and Japanese Descendants (Nikkei)	349
4		The Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction (the Hague Convention) and its Implementation	350
	Section 3	Diplomacy with the Support of the Public	351
1		Proactive Communications to the Public	351
	Special Feature	Online Domestic Public Relations Initiatives under the Novel Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Pandemic	354
2		Strengthening the Foreign Policy Implementation Structure	355
	Column	Executive Chefs for Ambassadors/Consuls-General of Japan: At the Forefront of Diplomacy	356
3		Role of Experts in Diplomacy	360
References			
		The Issue of Comfort Women	364
		The Issue of Former Civilian Workers from the Korean Peninsula (CWKs)	367

Opening Special Features

Chapter 1

Opening
Special
Features

Responses to the Novel Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19)

2

Chapter 1

International Situation in 2020 and Outlook for
Japan's Diplomacy

16

Responses to the Novel Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19)

In 2020, the international community faced an unprecedented crisis: the spread of the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and severe economic downturn. This crisis, which arose in the midst of rising protectionism and growing inward-looking trends in the world, cannot be tackled by any single country alone, and served to reaffirm the importance of multilateralism. On the other hand, it brought into question once again the functions and neutrality of international organizations, including the World Health Organization (WHO).

Against this backdrop, Japan has taken various domestic measures to prevent the spread of infection while maintaining the level of socioeconomic activities. Overseas, Japan has worked to protect Japanese nationals at risk, supported developing countries with weak medical systems, and called for international solidarity, treating the spread of COVID-19 as a human security crisis that threatens people's lives, livelihoods and dignity across the world.

1 Outbreak and Spread of COVID-19 and Impact on the International Community

Since the end of 2019, COVID-19 has spread from China to the rest of the world and evolved into a global pandemic. The epicenter of infections shifted to Italy and other European countries in March 2020. COVID-19 spread in the U.S. from April and in emerging economies, and developing countries, including India, Brazil and South Africa, from June to August. From September onwards, infections were somewhat contained in many countries including East Asia, while the U.S. and Europe saw a resurgence.

As of the end of January 2021, the number of

cases in the world exceeded approximately 102.32 million (approximately 380,000 in Japan) and the number of deaths exceeded approximately 2.21 million (approximately 5,600 in Japan).

Since December 2020, the spread of variants that are thought to be more infectious has been reported in Africa, Latin America, Europe including the UK, as well as Japan. In the same month, a newly developed vaccine against COVID-19 began to be administered in Europe and the U.S. In Japan, vaccination rollout commenced in February 2021 for priority groups, including healthcare workers.

On the economic front, amidst lockdowns and stay-at-home orders in countries, demand fell sharply and supply chain disruptions caused supply constraints, resulting in a rapid contraction in the global flow of people and goods. As a result, the real gross domestic product (GDP) growth rate in 2020 dropped to historic lows in all major countries and regions (-3.5% in the U.S., -6.8% in the Eurozone, and -4.8% in Japan year-on-year). COVID-19 has also considerably changed the social lives of the people in the respective countries. Due to lockdowns and stay-at-home orders, substantial progress was made in digital transformation, including remote working and online classes.

In addition, COVID-19 imposed significant restrictions on the diplomatic activities of each country. To prevent the spread of the disease, most international meetings and conferences, including the United Nations (UN) General Assembly, had to be postponed or changed to an online format. Reciprocal visits by leaders and foreign ministers were

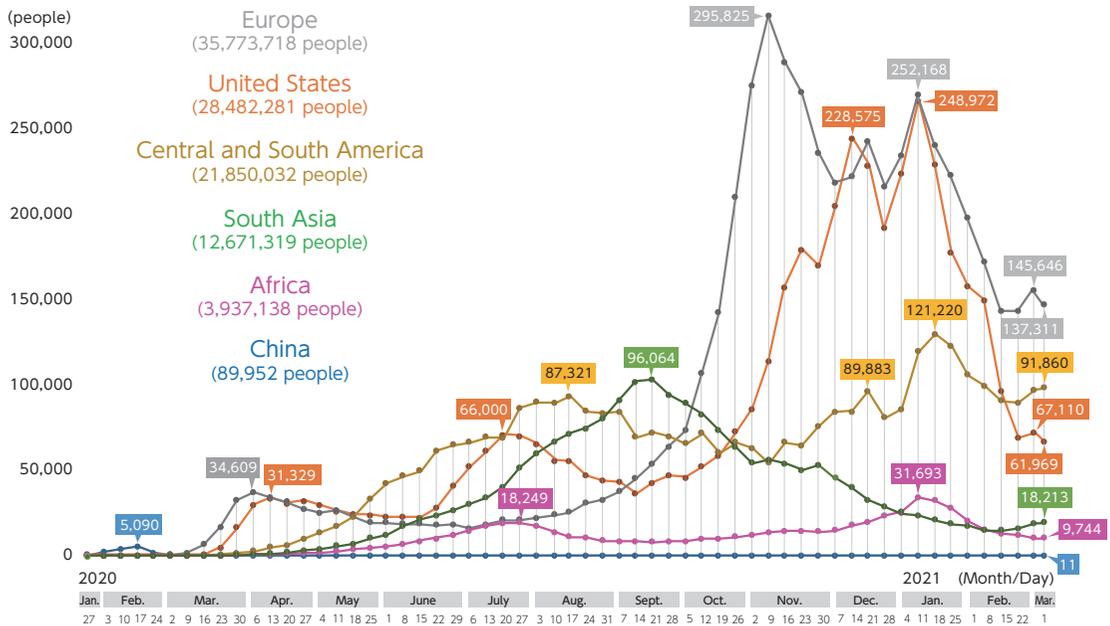
also severely restricted. No overseas visits were made by the Japanese Prime Minister after Prime Minister Abe Shinzo's visit to the Middle East in January 2020 until Prime Minister Suga Yoshihide's visit to Southeast Asia in October. Foreign Minister Motegi Toshimitsu did not have an opportunity for overseas visits after his visit to Germany in February until his visit to the UK in August. Under such circumstances, diplomatic activities were carried out via video conferences and telephone calls. Since the outbreak of COVID-19 until December 2020, video conferences and telephone calls were conducted by Prime Minister Abe over 40 times, Prime Minister Suga over 30 times, and Foreign Minister Motegi over 110 times. Foreign Minister Motegi resumed overseas visits starting with the visit to the UK in August. With thorough safety measures in place, Foreign Minister Motegi visited 23 countries by January 2021, including Europe, Southeast Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and Latin America.

Changes in the number of newly infected people by country and region (7-day average)

COVID-19: Changes in the number of newly infected people by country and region (7-day average)

As of March 5, 2021

Source: Various government announcements (various state announcements for the United States, and WHO announcements for Hubei Province), Johns Hopkins University





←↓G7 Foreign Ministers' Meeting held via video conference for the first time (March 26)



Japan-Indonesia Summit Meeting held with masks on and barriers installed (October 20, Indonesia; Photo: Cabinet Public Relations Office)

Major international conferences that were postponed or changed their format

Major international conferences that were scheduled to be held in Japan but were postponed	Initial planned date	Date after postponement
14th United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (Kyoto Congress)	April 2020	March 7-12, 2021
6th World Assembly for Women (WAW!)	April 2020	TBD
4th Asia-Pacific Water Summit	October 2020	April 23-24, 2022
Tokyo Nutrition for Growth Summit	December 2020	December 2021

Major international conferences that changed their format	Initially planned host country	Meeting format
G7 Foreign Ministers' Meeting (March)	United States	Teleconference
G20 Summit (November)	Saudi Arabia	Teleconference
ASEAN-related Foreign Ministers' Meetings (September), ASEAN-related Summit Meetings (November)	Viet Nam	Teleconference
United Nations General Assembly High-Level Week (General Debate Addresses by Country Leaders) (September)	United States	Video recording
APEC Ministerial Meeting (November), APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting (November)	Malaysia	Teleconference

2 Initiatives of the Government of Japan, including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

The Government of Japan established the Novel Coronavirus Response Headquarters in January 2020 to respond to the pandemic with concerted efforts. From January onwards, the Government, through cooperation among the relevant ministries and agencies, drastically strengthened border measures, helped Japanese nationals abroad return to Japan, and provided support to the crew and passengers on cruise ships. In March, Prime Minister Abe and President Thomas Bach of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) reached the decision to postpone the Olympic and Paralympic Games Tokyo 2020. In April, Japan declared a state of emergency in response to the rise in COVID-19 cases (the declaration was lifted in May). In order to minimize the socio-economic im-

pacts, the measures under the state of emergency declaration took the form of “requests” to the people. This included refraining from non-essential outings, closing schools, shortening business hours, and suspending the use of recreational facilities. The measures did not include curfews or penalties for violations, unlike the lockdowns in major countries, such as Europe and the U.S.

Also in April, the Government made a Cabinet decision on the “Emergency Economic Measures to Cope with COVID-19.” The measures included domestic economic support for employment protection, business continuity and recovery of economic activities, as well as international cooperation, such as support for developing countries and promotion of development of therapeutics and

vaccines. Moreover, in December, the Government made a Cabinet decision on “Comprehensive Economic Measures” that included international cooperation for containing the virus.

The Government took various measures against COVID-19. However, in response to a resurgence of cases since November especially in the Tokyo metropolitan area, the Government re-declared a

state of emergency for 11 prefectures, including the Tokyo metropolitan area, in January 2021 (the declaration was lifted for all areas by March). In February, relevant laws were revised to establish penalties for restaurants and other businesses that refuse to follow orders to shorten business hours or close temporarily and infected people who refuse to be hospitalized.

1. Ensuring the Safety of Japanese Nationals Abroad and Preventing the Spread of Infection

Ensuring the safety of Japanese nationals residing or traveling overseas is one of the most important responsibilities of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA). In response to COVID-19, MOFA has been disseminating relevant information to the broader public in a timely and appropriate manner through the Overseas Safety Website, e-mails, and other mediums. The information includes the Travel Advice and Warning on Infectious Diseases*¹, country-specific infection situation, and restrictions on entry and movement.

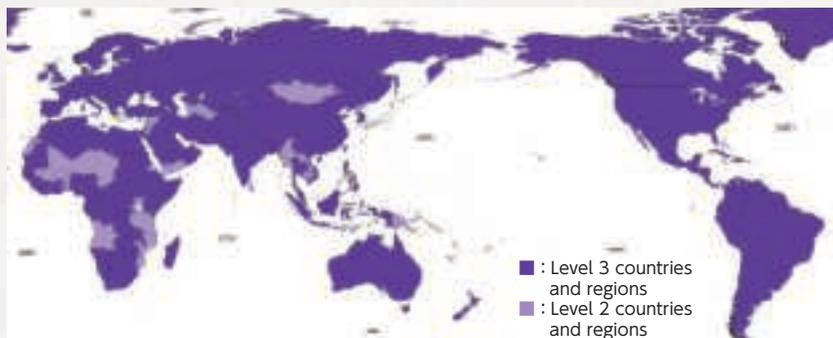
At the end of January 2020, strict movement restrictions were imposed in China’s Hubei Province, including the city of Wuhan. In response, the Government of Japan sent a total of five chartered flights to Wuhan ahead of other countries to help Japanese nationals in the region leave China and realized the early repatriation of all 828 Japanese nationals and their families who wished to return to Japan.

Subsequently, border blockades and suspension of international flights across the world resulted in a succession of Japanese nationals unable to leave the countries they were in. MOFA provided assis-

tance to such Japanese nationals who wished to return to Japan. In Africa, while the number of infections was low compared to other continents, many countries have weak medical systems, posing a risk for rapid transmission. In April, Japanese embassies in African countries provided coordination on boarding support for charter flights arranged by travel agencies, third countries, and other parties so that Japanese nationals who could not leave the continent can return to Japan. As a result, a complex operation was materialized. About 300 Japanese nationals who had been stranded in Africa traveled from 15 countries on 10 routes to gather in Addis Ababa, the capital of Ethiopia, which was the only African country with regular service to Japan at the time. From there, they returned to Japan on regular and chartered flights of Ethiopian Airlines.

In the course of these operations, cooperative relations were established between Japan and other countries and regions that similarly provided repatriation support for their citizens. Poland arranged a government chartered flight to repatriate Polish nationals in Japan, which Japanese nationals in

Diagram of issuance of Warnings on Infectious Diseases



As of August 26
(the most severe situation)
Level 3: 159 countries and regions
Level 2: the rest of the world

*1 Travel Advice and Warning on Infectious Diseases is issued for countries and regions requiring particular caution when travelling to or staying in the destinations in relation to high-risk infectious diseases, including COVID-19.

Level 1: Exercise caution

Level 2: Avoid non-essential travel

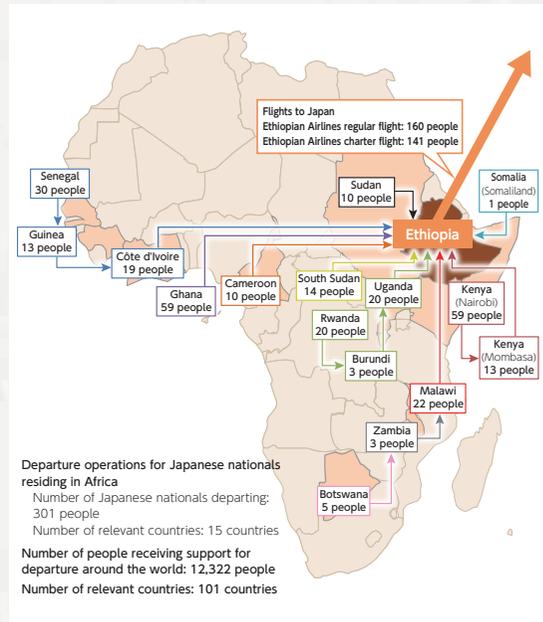
Level 3: Avoid all travel

Level 4: Evacuate and avoid all travel

Poland were permitted to board. This allowed approximately 200 Japanese nationals to repatriate. In Peru, a Taiwanese chartered flight that Japanese nationals could board was operated through coordination between the local Taipei Economic and Cultural Office and Embassy of Japan. In addition, approximately 100 Taiwanese nationals in Russia boarded an extra flight operated by a Japanese airline from Russia carrying Japanese nationals. Furthermore, cooperation between Japan and the Republic of Korea (ROK) enabled approximately 70 ROK nationals in West Africa and other parts of the continent to board chartered planes that flew the aforementioned 10 routes within Africa. Meanwhile, Japanese nationals left Kenya on an extra flight arranged by the ROK Government. In this way, countries and regions cooperated reciprocally in various areas of Africa for the repatriation of their nationals.

With such support of Japanese embassies and consulates-general around the world, more than 12,000 Japanese nationals returned to Japan from a total of 101 countries by the end of November.

Departure operations for Japanese nationals residing in Africa (April)



COLUMN

A Miracle on Children's Day: Japan and the ROK Pass a Baton of Life Together

On May 3, the Embassy of Japan in India received an urgent call. India at the time had suspended regular international flights as part of its stringent border control measures against COVID-19. At such a time, a five-year-old girl from the ROK who was staying in India developed acute leukemia and needed to return to the ROK as quickly as possible for emergency treatment. Her medical condition could suddenly worsen at any time. The ROK Embassy in India, which was scrambling to help the girl's repatriation, requested cooperation of the diplomatic corps, pinning their last hope that they could save her life.

It was the Embassy of Japan in India that immediately responded to this request and offered to help the girl return to the ROK. The embassy staff extended as much support as possible to help the girl and her family, including arranging visas that were necessary for transferring to Narita international airport where the flight to the ROK departs.

In order for the girl and her family to board the extra flight to Haneda airport, originally arranged for Japanese nationals to return to Japan, Japanese citizens who were scheduled to board the flight readily agreed to give their seats to the girl and her family. The ROK Embassy in Tokyo supported the transportation from Haneda to Narita.

Through the close cooperation between Japan and the ROK, the girl was able to return to the ROK via Japan on May 5 and receive treatment safely. This story received large media coverage as the "Miracle on Children's Day" in both Japan and the ROK, and a letter of gratitude was later sent to Foreign Minister Motegi from Foreign Minister of the ROK Kang Kyung-wha.

Many people from the two countries came together to save the life of the young girl. As people around the world have coped with an uncertain future amid the COVID-19 pandemic, this event has become a ray of hope.



COLUMN

The Wuhan Lockdown

Aoyama Takeo

Managing Director, Member of the Board, Nippon Steel Pipe Co., Ltd.
(Then Vice President, WISCO-NIPPON STEEL Tinplate Co., Ltd.)

The lockdown of Wuhan City was suddenly announced on the morning of January 23. The people of Wuhan, who were mostly unsuspecting of the new pneumonia (as COVID-19 was called then), suddenly started wearing masks from a few days earlier, and it seemed that the quarantine instructions of the Government of China were beginning to be enforced more rigorously. I had not expected, however, that a metropolis with a population of over 10 million would suddenly be in a complete lockdown. Train stations and airports were closed. Subway and bus services were suspended. Travel outside the city by ordinary vehicles was prohibited, and special permits were required for travel within the city. Wuhan literally became an isolated island on land. I had planned to go to Japan for the Chinese New Year holiday several days later, but this was no longer possible.

Initially, the situation was completely unforeseeable, and various information was circulating in the Japanese community. As Wuhan has no Japanese consulate-general, members of JETRO (Japan External Trade Organization) and the Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (including volunteers who had already gone to Japan for the Chinese New Year holiday) first took the lead in locating Japanese nationals who were in Wuhan. The group chat function of the Chinese social media app, WeChat, was tremendously helpful in this process. Various WeChat groups were integrated

one after another, eventually forming a group consisting of several hundreds of people. It played a large role in compiling lists of Japanese nationals who were still in Wuhan and in sharing information from the Government of Japan. In the early morning of January 27, Mr. Ueno Atsushi, Minister of the Embassy of Japan in China, and other members of the Japanese Embassy arrived in Wuhan from Beijing by ground travel and started arranging flights chartered by the Government of Japan. I am sure that the aforementioned lists and the social media network were useful to them.

I myself flew to Japan on the first chartered flight. While I had never given much thought to China and Japan as nations, this experience gave me a vivid understanding of their existence as states. Seeing the members of MOFA and the embassy working hard on the front line to coordinate with Chinese authorities was also very encouraging. I will also never forget the many Chinese people who were concerned and helped us, including a Chinese businessman who extended a great deal of assistance when it was difficult to arrange buses to take us to the airport for our return.

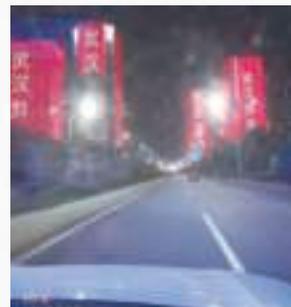
After coming back to Japan, I changed to my current company without returning to Wuhan, and I still have not yet been able to revisit the city. I am looking forward to the day when the COVID-19 epidemic is over and I can reunite with my *lao peng you* (old friends).



The main street in central Wuhan completely devoid of cars



Driver of a bus headed to the airport



“武汉加油” (Stay strong, Wuhan) signages seen through the window of a bus headed to the airport

2. Resumption of Cross-border Travel for Resuming Economic Activities

Many countries began to relax various types of restrictions on movement in the second half of the year of 2020 responding to the economic impact of COVID-19, whereas there are some countries that still faced the continuous spread and had concerns for the rebound of infections. Since the end of 2020, however, global awareness heightened regarding the danger of COVID-19 variants that are more contagious than the original strain, leading a number of countries, including Japan, to strengthen border control measures and take other measures. How to resume cross-border travel while carefully monitoring the infection situation is a key issue going forward.

From July 2020 onwards, Japan started the Residence Track, a measure that enables long-term residents and others to travel between Japan and 11 countries and regions where infections are under control, including Viet Nam, the ROK, and China. From September onwards, Japan also started the Business Track mainly for short-term business travelers for travel between Japan and Singapore, the ROK, Viet Nam, and China.

From October 1, Japan decided that holders of “Student,” “Dependent,” and other statuses of

residence, in addition to cross-border business travelers would be incrementally permitted to enter Japan from all countries and regions in principle. Furthermore, after October 30, the level of the Travel Advice and Warning on Infectious Diseases was lowered from Level 3 to Level 2 for some countries and regions, such as the ROK, Singapore and Australia, and their designation as “country/region of departure subject to denial of permission to entry” was lifted.

However, in response to the spread of variants in various countries since December, the Government of Japan quickly strengthened border control measures for entry into Japan from countries and regions where variants have been confirmed. From January 9, 2021, the Government required that, in principle, all persons entering Japan must submit a certificate of negative result of a COVID-19 test conducted within 72 hours prior to departure and decided to conduct testing upon their entry. Additionally, since January 14, the Government has suspended the entry of foreign nationals from all countries and regions, including the countries and regions of the Residence Track and Business Track.

3. Initiatives for Strengthening the Global Response to COVID-19

Japan leads international collaboration to develop and procure vaccines and therapeutics

Ensuring the development, production, and equitable access to vaccines, therapeutics, and diagnostics is critical to contain the global spread of COVID-19. Competition among states to secure vaccines has become particularly intense due to their high demand immediately following the start of distribution. The international community needs to work together so that a few countries backed by considerable economic power do not monopolize the vaccines that are subject to some supply constraints. Through participation in international frameworks and contribution of financing, Japan is leading the global collaboration effort toward equitable access to vaccines for all nations regardless of their economic power.

In May, the Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator was launched by the initiative of partners, including Japan and seven other countries, to serve

as an international framework to accelerate the development, production, and equitable access to safe, effective, and affordable vaccines, therapeutics, and diagnostics. Under the ACT-Accelerator, international organizations and partners in the field of global health are sharing roles to address the four pillars of vaccines, therapeutics, diagnostics, and health system. Japan has been actively involved in the ACT-Accelerator as a founding donor of the initiative since its inception. As part of the ACT-Accelerator effort, the COVAX Facility was launched under the leadership of organizations such as Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, which is a public-private partnership that supports immunizations in developing countries. The COVAX Facility is a comprehensive financing and supply coordination mechanism for COVID-19 vaccines. Its aim is to provide vaccines quickly and at affordable prices by negotiating with

vaccine manufacturers to guarantee, for example, the purchase of a set number of vaccines. Japan is providing support to ensure equitable access to vaccines for all countries in the world, including developing countries, through contribution to the COVAX Facility's framework for developing countries known as the Advance Market Commitment

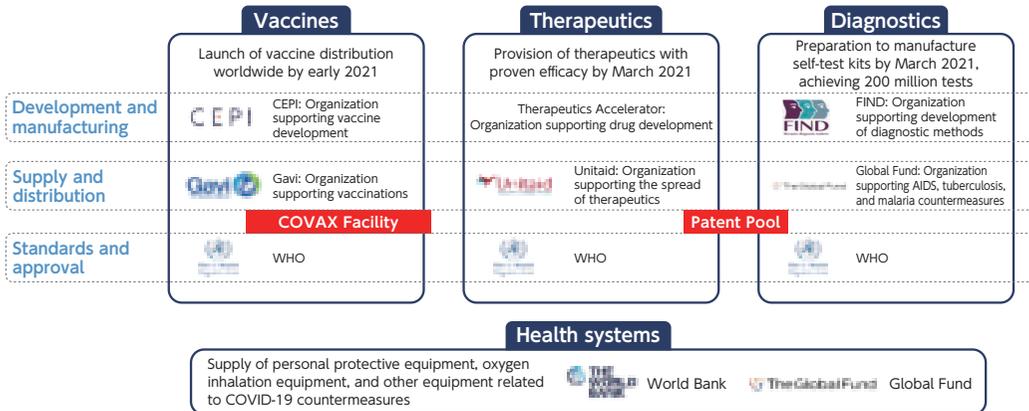
(AMC), to which Japan announced it will contribute 200 million US dollars, and other initiatives.

As the COVAX Facility framework does not completely cover the creation of a cold chain system in developing countries, Japan is also complementing the efforts of the multilateral framework by providing "Last One Mile Support" at an unprecedented

Outline of the ACT Accelerator

ACT Accelerator (Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator) International framework for COVID-19 countermeasures

- An international framework to accelerate the development, production and equitable access to safe, effective and affordable vaccines, therapeutics and diagnostics.
- Proposed by the World Health Organization (WHO) in April 2020. It was jointly proposed and launched by eight countries including Japan and the Gates Foundation at the Coronavirus Global Response Summit hosted by the European Union (EU) in May. The leaders of about 30 countries expressed their intention to work on the supply of vaccines and more.
- International organizations in the field of global health and others share efforts in the four pillars (vaccines, therapeutics, diagnostics and health systems).

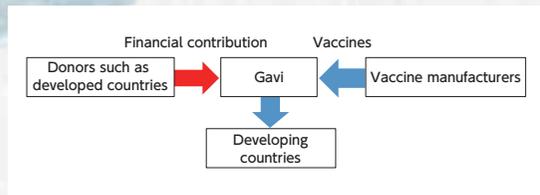


Personal protective equipment (PPE) is essential for preventing the infection of healthcare workers (Photo: Global Fund, ©RED/Jonx Pillemer)



Foreign Minister Motegi announcing Japan's contribution to the AMC at the Ministerial Meeting of the Group of Friends of Universal Health Coverage (UHC) co-hosted by Japan (October 8)

Advance Market Commitment (AMC), a framework for developing countries under the COVAX Facility



Review of WHO's response

WHO is the core organization in the field of global health and is key to reinforcing the global health architecture to strengthen the response to public health emergencies.

In the response to COVID-19, WHO is playing a leading role in tracking and monitoring the spread of infection, providing essential supplies and information to frontline healthcare workers, and in the international framework for accelerating the development, production, and equitable access to vaccines, therapeutics, and diagnostics. Japan intends to support WHO in this role in order to strengthen global response capabilities to international health issues, and is contributing through its 76.4 million US dollar contribution to WHO's Strategic Preparedness and Response Programme (SPRP) and other efforts.

On the other hand, there is international opinion that there were delays in WHO's initial response to COVID-19. Against this backdrop, it is necessary to conduct an impartial, independent, and comprehensive review of the COVID-19 response of the international community, including WHO, in order to overcome the ongoing pandemic crisis and better prepare for future health crises. To this end, in addition to the existing Independent Oversight and Advisory Committee (IOAC), the Independent Panel for Pandemic Preparedness and Response (IPPPR) and the International Health Regulations (IHR) Review Committee, which were established based on a resolution of the World Health Assembly in May, are conducting reviews. In January 2021, IPPPR released an interim report, which presented its tenta-

speed to deliver vaccines to each and every person in all corners of developing countries.

In addition to rolling out vaccines, Japan announced it will contribute 840 million US dollars to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria over the three-year period from 2020 to 2022 and is supporting the expansion of diagnostics and therapeutics.

tive view that China's initial response lacked basic public health measures at the earliest stages, that China could have applied public health measures more forcefully as of January 2020, that WHO was not given sufficient financial resources or authority to function effectively, that WHO did not convene an Emergency Committee quickly and it was unclear why WHO did not declare an emergency until January 30, and that many countries did not take the necessary measures even after WHO issued an emergency declaration. In addition, from January to February 2021, the WHO-convened global study of the origins of COVID-19 conducted a study on the origins of COVID-19 in China. Through these studies, it is important to elucidate the origins of COVID-19 outbreaks and strengthen capabilities to deal with future health crises.

Japanese experts are participating in the IHR Review Committee. Furthermore, Japan has provided materials to IPPPR and WHO member countries on Japan's response to COVID-19 and Japan's view on the review and reform of WHO and other organizations, and is actively engaged in related discussions. Japan will continue to contribute to the review and reform of WHO and other international health frameworks.

In July 2020, the Trump administration of the U.S. notified the UN that it would withdraw from WHO in a year. However, in January 2021, the new Biden administration withdrew this notice. Japan will continue to work with the U.S. and the rest of the international community in addressing health issues.

4. Support to Developing Countries

Support for controlling infection and strengthening health and medical systems in developing countries

The COVID-19 pandemic is threatening people's lives, livelihoods, and dignity and has become a human security crisis. With people and goods moving globally, the entire international community needs to work together to address the crisis based on the concept of "leaving no one behind." In addition, it is important to control the spread of COVID-19 in developing countries with weak health and medical systems, not only because of its direct implications on the health and safety of Japanese nationals in those countries but also for preventing the virus from entering Japan.

From this perspective, Japan has been providing support to developing countries through bilateral cooperation, such as grant aid and technical cooperation, as well as cooperation through international organizations to strengthen COVID-19 response capabilities, including prevention, diagnostics, and therapeutics, to build resilient and inclusive health systems, and to generate an environment that is resilient to infectious diseases.

Under the bilateral cooperation scheme, Japan is not only responding to the urgent issue of COVID-19 but is also providing grant aid (approximately 48 billion Japanese yen) for the provision of health and medical equipment, such as X-ray cameras, thermal imaging cameras, and ambulances, in order to strengthen the mid- to long-term health and medical systems of developing countries. As of the end of December, Japan concluded exchanges of notes with 93 countries. Accordingly, Japan has provided assistance at an unprecedented speed, taking advantage of its advanced technological capabilities and knowledge, and the assistance has been highly evaluated by countries for their timeliness.

In particular, for the ASEAN region, Japan announced its support for the establishment of the ASEAN Centre for Public Health Emergencies and Emerging Diseases to enhance the region's capabilities to combat infectious diseases and contributed approximately 5.5 billion Japanese yen to the Japan-ASEAN Integration Fund.

The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) has been providing capacity building support to organizations around world for many years and they are working at the forefront of the fight against

COVID-19. In response to the spread of COVID-19, JICA has provided technical cooperation to 45 countries by December, including support for the development of medical systems (1.5 billion Japanese yen from the FY2020 first supplementary budget), by leveraging its relations with these organizations. Among them, the Noguchi Memorial Institute for Medical Research (NMIMR) in Ghana, which was established about 40 years ago with Japan's cooperation, plays a central role in tackling COVID-19 in



Handover ceremony for provision of medical equipment to Laos (August 23, Laos)



→Provision of syringe pumps



Handover ceremony for provision of medical equipment to Honduras (September 10, Honduras)

West Africa, conducting up to 80% of PCR tests in Ghana and providing guidance to neighboring countries. JICA has cooperated with NMIMR in speeding up and improving the efficiency of PCR tests by providing equipment and other support. In Viet Nam, JICA provided equipment, such as test kits, artificial lungs, and ventilators, as well as technical cooperation for controlling hospital-acquired infections to the National Institute of Hygiene and Epidemiology, which plays a central role in COVID-19 testing, and to core hospitals, including Cho Ray Hospital, which accepts COVID-19 patients. Through such support, Japan made a comprehensive contribution to the responses in Viet Nam. JICA plans to expand its cooperation with other domestic partners and international organizations to further broaden its cooperation.

Furthermore, in April, based on requests from a number of countries, Japan decided to provide an emergency grant aid totaling 1 million US dollars for expanding international clinical research on Avigan®, a drug that has been attracting great interest from many countries for preventing viral



Human resource development support at the Noguchi Memorial Institute for Medical Research in Ghana (Photo: JICA/Iizuka Akio)



The National Institute of Hygiene and Epidemiology in Viet Nam that was provided with medical equipment (Photo: JICA/Yoshida Katsumi)



Provision of hygiene supplies to Sudan through UNDP (Photo: UNDP)



Handwashing support provided to Myanmar through UNICEF (Photo: UNICEF)

replication. From a humanitarian standpoint, the grant has been provided incrementally through the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) to interested countries. As of the end of December, the drug was provided to 45 countries, and recipient countries have expressed appreciation.

Japan also provides support in cooperation with international organizations, such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and UN Women. Through these organizations, Japan provides emergency support, including technical assistance and assistance in kind, to health and medical workers in developing countries to control and prevent the spread of COVID-19 as well as support to mitigate its social and economic impact.

For example, through UNDP, Japan distributed hand soap and other health and hygiene supplies to Umbada Hospital in the suburbs of Khartoum, the capital of Sudan, and its surrounding areas. This hospital was built with Japan's grant aid and handed over to the Sudanese side in November 2018. In extending this support for the COVID-19 response, UNDP partnered with JICA to provide supplies to the hospital and conduct hygiene awareness-raising activities for the community.

By the end of December, Japan provided assistance

to 29 countries through UNDP, 66 countries through UNICEF, and 13 countries through UN Women.

Moreover, MOFA, in partnership with the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme, launched a program to assign Japanese nationals as UN volunteers to help reduce the impact of COVID-19 in developing countries. In this program, more than 10 Japanese citizens were selected through the UNV selection process to engage in activities in various fields, such as health, sanitation, and so-

cio-economic recovery. The activities are part of COVID-19 countermeasures undertaken by the country offices of international organizations in Africa (Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Namibia and Zimbabwe) and Asia (Myanmar, Nepal, Timor-Leste and Uzbekistan). Since August 2020, each of these Japanese Volunteers has been deployed for a term of up to eight months as soon as coordination with the host entities and travel arrangements were completed.



Japanese Taking Active Roles as United Nations Volunteers

Honda Yuri

United Nations Volunteer (UNV)

Project Support Officer, International Organization for Migration (IOM) Nepal Country Office

The spread of COVID-19 has had a major impact on the movement of people around the world. Migrants are among those who find themselves in dire situations, facing income reduction, unemployment, and lack of access to adequate health care in their countries of stay. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) provides support to migrants who are placed in a more vulnerable situation due to COVID-19. As part of the response to the pandemic, the IOM Nepal Country Office where I work is conducting a population mobility mapping exercise and assessment. In the exercise, we carried out interviews in provinces along the border with India, namely at border points of entry as well as hospitals, schools, markets, compounds of the traditional healer, and other places where there are particularly large movements of people. We collected information such as the conditions of screening facilities, the implementation of body temperature checks, and responses taken when an infected person is found. The assessment revealed that health facilities needed to be improved and that staff needed to be trained in infection prevention and control. IOM will be working with local governments to address these issues. I am mainly in charge of reporting, and I see it as my responsibility to organize the valuable data that my colleagues collected despite travel restrictions and infection risks, and present it to the government in a convincing manner.

A lot of people in Nepal earn income as overseas migrant workers. Due to COVID-19, many of them have lost their jobs and have had to return to Nepal. Nepalis in my neighborhood often tell me that they have family working in Japan. Many express concerns about the health of their family members who cannot return to Nepal, and I realized firsthand the situation faced by foreign workers in the pandemic. In Nepal, there are reports that returnees are being discriminated against or persecuted in their communities due to misunderstanding, making it an urgent task to prevent the spread of infection and strengthen health monitoring capacity. I intend to do my best to ensure that I can contribute to the UN's approach to "leaving no one behind" as a member of the organization.



Exchanging views and opinions with members of the local government (municipality) that is responsible for health surveillance at border points of entry, and the Ministry of Health and Population (author on front left side) (Photo: IOM)

Support for maintaining, revitalizing, and increasing the resilience of economic activities in developing countries

The global spread of COVID-19 and the resulting stagnation of socio-economic activities pose a major threat to the economies and societies of all countries in today's world characterized by the global flow of people and goods. In particular, COVID-19 has significant economic and social impact on developing countries with weak economic foundations, and the international community as a whole needs to unite to help maintain, revitalize, and increase the resilience of economic activities in developing countries. Japan is supporting the revival of economic activities in developing countries through provision of bilateral loans and implementation of international initiatives to defer debt payments.

Japan established the COVID-19 Crisis Response Emergency Support Loan of up to 500 billion Japanese yen over a two-year period from April 2020 to March 2022. The aim is to promptly provide financing required for economic measures and other initiatives to developing countries, mainly in Asia and Oceania, which have close ties to the Japanese economy, including the Philippines, Indonesia and India (50 billion Japanese yen each). This yen loan will be provided under favorable conditions for developing countries, such as low interest rate (0.01%) and untied*2 procurement conditions, thereby contributing to the maintenance and revitalization of economic activities in developing countries in Asia and Oceania and other regions affected by the pandemic.

Furthermore, the Emergency Support Loan was expanded in December 2020 based on the "Comprehensive Economic Measures to Secure People's Lives and Livelihoods toward Relief and Hope" (Cabinet decision of December 8). Japan will promptly provide financing needed for strengthening health systems and maintaining and revitalizing economies to developing countries, mainly in Asia and Oceania that have many geographical and economic linkages with Japan.

Especially in developing countries with the most vulnerable fiscal conditions, foreign direct investment is expected to decline by up to 45%, causing a deterioration in the macroeconomic environment



Signing ceremony for the Emergency Support Loan for Mongolia (October 9, Mongolia)

and increasing the debt repayment burden in many countries. In light of these circumstances, the G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors, and the Paris Club, a group of major creditor countries, agreed to the Debt Service Suspension Initiative (DSSI) in April 2020. Public debt service dues falling between May 1 and December 31, 2020 in low-income countries was deferred. In October of the same year, the G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors and the Paris Club agreed to further an extension of the DSSI, which covers public debt service dues falling between January 1, 2021 and the end of June 2021. Japan will continue to implement this initiative fully and in a transparent manner.

In addition, in November 2020, the G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors and the Paris Club endorsed the "Common Framework for Debt Treatments beyond the DSSI," recognizing that debt treatments beyond the DSSI may be required, as appropriate, depending on each country's circumstances, given the scale of the COVID-19 crisis, the significant debt vulnerabilities, and deteriorating economic outlook in many low-income countries. The Common Framework sets out that all official bilateral creditors will participate in debt treatments and implement them under common terms, and that private creditors' treatment will be at least as favorable as that provided by official creditors. Going forward, it is necessary to ensure that all creditors fully implement debt treatments in line with the "Common Framework."

*2 Untied refers to aid in which the supplier of goods and services is determined through international competitive bidding. On the other hand, tied refers to aid in which the supplier is limited to donors or other conditions are attached.

5. Communications on Japan's Situation and Initiatives

As part of the response to COVID-19, it is important to communicate Japan's situation and efforts, including trends in the number of infected people, measures to prevent the spread of infection, and international cooperation, and thereby gain the accurate understanding of the international community. From this perspective, MOFA is working to carry out communication in a timely and appropriate manner.

At the headquarters, the foreign minister explains about Japan's assistance and the importance of international vaccine cooperation at meetings with his counterparts. Since April, MOFA has been live streaming regular press conferences by the foreign minister in Japanese and English to convey the current state of border control measures and other topics in real time. Furthermore, MOFA coordinated with relevant ministries and agencies in holding press conferences for the foreign press in Tokyo a total of 18 times by the end of December. MOFA is also producing and streaming public relations contents to introduce Japan's initiatives and technologies, as well as examples of international cooperation related to COVID-19.



Live streaming of a regular press conference by Foreign Minister Motegi

Diplomatic missions are also carrying out various communications. In addition, with the cooperation of relevant ministries and agencies as well as Japanese experts, they have conducted online seminars in collaboration with overseas think tanks and universities such as the Royal Institute of International Affairs (UK) and Johns Hopkins University (U.S.), coupled with producing program contents and publishing articles in cooperation with overseas media such as the BBC (UK) and the *Wall Street Journal* (U.S.). Through these initiatives, Japan shares its knowledge and information on its efforts with other countries, including findings on droplet infection from research using the latest science and technology.

6. For the Success of the Olympic and Paralympic Games Tokyo 2020

On November 16, 2020, during a courtesy call by IOC President Bach who was visiting Japan, Prime Minister Suga expressed his determination to host the Olympic and Paralympic Games Tokyo 2020 as a symbol of overcoming COVID-19, and furthermore, as "Reconstruction Olympic and Paralympic Games" to show the world how Japan has been recovering from the Great East Japan Earthquake. In response, President Bach stated that the Games will make a worldwide contribution and that he was determined to ensure the Games are realized and are successful. Both leaders concurred to work closely toward safe and secure Games.

On March 16, 2021, at the Japan-U.S. Foreign Ministers' Meeting with U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken, Foreign Minister Motegi expressed Japan's determination to host the Games and obtained the support of Secretary Blinken. The Ministers also concurred to continue to work closely toward successful Games.

MOFA intends to contribute to the government-wide efforts and strive to ensure successful Games.



Prime Minister Suga receiving a courtesy call from IOC President Bach (November 16, Tokyo; Photo: Cabinet Public Relations Office)



Japan-U.S. Foreign Ministers' Meeting (March 16, 2021, Tokyo)

International Situation in 2020 and Outlook for Japan's Diplomacy

Japan aspires to ensure its national interests in the political, security and economic domains, as well as to maintain and develop a desirable international order that is based on universal values such as freedom, democracy, human rights and the rule of law. To this end, Japan needs to pursue strategic diplomacy, while rationally accounting for and adapting to changes in the international situation.

Below is a broad overview of the international situation surrounding Japan and outlook for its diplomacy.

1-1 Overview of the International Situation

The world is undergoing epoch-making changes. Changes in the balance of power in the international arena are accelerating and becoming more complex, while there is a broadening and diversifying array of security challenges, such as emerging challenges related to economic security and others as well as threats in new domains, including outer space and cyberspace. Today, no single country can protect its peace and security on its own.

At the same time, protectionism and inward-looking trends are becoming conspicuous in reaction to rapid globalization, even in countries that have enjoyed the benefits of free trade, such as the U.S. and Europe. Furthermore, the

international order based on universal values such as freedom, democracy, human rights and the rule of law, which has underpinned the stability and prosperity of the world, is being challenged by unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force or coercion, as well as by the spread of terrorism and violent extremism.

Against this backdrop, the global spread of the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) has threatened human security and exacerbated the trends described above, transforming economies and societies in many parts of the world.

(1) Changes in the International Situation in the Mid- to Long-term

A Changes in the Balance of Power

The balance of power in the international community is shifting dramatically due to the rise of emerging countries, among other factors. Interstate competition, in which states seek to shape an international order to their advantage as well as to increase their influence, is emerging more prominently. Meanwhile, universal values are facing severer challenges, with the COVID-19 crisis being used to attempt to change the status quo, and there is growing uncertainty over the existing order.

B Diversification and Increased Complexity of Threats

The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles, as well as escalating international terrorism, remain grave challenges for the international community.

At the same time, the scope of national security has further broadened to encompass economic and technological fields in recent years, requiring the enhancement of security policy efforts in these fields. In particular, progress has been made in a new paradigm of technological innovation which can bring about essential changes to the nature of society and people's lives, such as the Internet of Things (IoT), the fifth-generation mobile communications system (5G), artificial intelligence (AI) and quantum technology. Countries are vying with each other to develop technologies linked to national competitiveness and are stepping up efforts to apply these technologies in the security domain. The success or failure of innovations is anticipated to have considerable implications for the security environment.

Furthermore, recent advances in science and technology are ramping up activities in outer space and cyberspace. While this presents major opportunities, it also brings about new risks and threats, making international rule-making an imperative from a security perspective.

C Global Economic Trends (the Emergence of Protectionism, Inward-Looking Trends and Economic Friction)

The world economy has become more interdependent than ever through the development of the global supply chain and financial systems, in line with the progress of globalization and innovation, such as digital technology. Thus, factors such as economic shocks and fluctuations in commodity prices in one region have increasing impacts on other regions or the entire global economy. Moreover, innovative progress in information and communication technologies by the Fourth Industrial Revolution, represented by AI, robotics and Big Data, has been driving further

transformation of the international economic order. Furthermore, to enable smoother cross-border economic activities, the maintenance and promotion of a rules-based economic order has become all the more indispensable.

Meanwhile, protectionism and inward-looking trends that have spread as a backlash against globalization are still observed across the world. The backgrounds of such trends are diverse: growing domestic income inequality, job losses, a rise in migrants, global environmental problems, etc. These trends have become even more pronounced as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

D Increasing Seriousness of Global Challenges

Ending poverty is the first goal of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are development goals for the entire international community. Around the world, the COVID-19 crisis pushed more people into poverty and deepened impoverishment, exacerbating the situation for more vulnerable populations. In such circumstances, efforts to eradicate poverty must be accelerated from the perspective of human security as well.

Infectious diseases threaten human life and health and profoundly impact society as a whole. With the globalization, cross-border movements of people have increased dramatically, and outbreak and transmission of infectious diseases have become a more serious threat. COVID-19 has been raging across the globe since December 2019 with unabated vigor. In January 2021, the world's cumulative cases of COVID-19 infection surpassed 100 million. The virus continues to have a substantial impact on the global economy, and hopes are pinned on the resumption of socio-economic activities as vaccines are rolled out.

In addition, the severity of natural disasters is forecast to continue to intensify with the effects of climate change, and there is a concern that this will have a profound impact, especially on people in vulnerable environments. Climate change measures are drawing attention also in the context of recovery from the COVID-19 crisis.

To resolve these global challenges, it is crucial to steadily make efforts on the SDGs and address social, economic and environmental issues in an integrated manner, making active use of science and technology and innovations.

(2) The Very Severe Security Environment in East Asia

The security environment surrounding Japan is becoming more testing and uncertain at a remarkably faster speed. Furthermore, countries with outstanding military capabilities both in terms of quality and quantity are concentrated around Japan, and there is a clear tendency of further reinforcement of military capabilities and acceleration of military activities.

A Nuclear and Missile Development by North Korea

North Korea has not carried out the dismantlement of all weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles of all ranges in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner, in accordance with a series of relevant United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolutions. Following on from 2019, North Korea launched ballistic missiles four times in March 2020 and again in March 2021. It also displayed possible new intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) and submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs) at the military parade celebrating the 75th anniversary of the Workers' Party of Korea (WPK) in October and at the military parade celebrating the 8th Congress of the WPK in January 2021.

B China's Strengthening of Military Power without Transparency and Unilateral Attempts to Change the Status Quo

The peaceful development of China should be welcomed by Japan and the entire international community. China, however, continues to increase its defense budget and has been strengthening and modernizing its military power extensively and rapidly without transparency. It also aims to

secure superiority in new domains, such as outer space, cyberspace and the electromagnetic spectrum. China continues actions based on its assertions that are incompatible with the existing order of the law of the sea and unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force or coercion at sea and in the airspace in areas such as the East and South China Seas.

In the East China Sea, amid the continuation of intrusions by China Coast Guard (CCG) vessels into Japan's territorial sea around the Senkaku Islands, the number of hours for which such vessels were inside Japan's territorial sea and the number of days for which they sailed inside Japan's contiguous zone reached the record high. CCG vessels also repeatedly approached Japanese fishing vessels. Moreover, activities by Chinese military vessels and aircraft expanded and intensified. In addition, China has been continuing unilateral development of resources in the maritime areas pending delimitation of the Exclusive Economic Zone and the continental shelves. Furthermore, in recent years China has been carrying out numerous surveys without Japan's consent or in a manner that deviates from Japan's consent in the waters around Japan, including the East China Sea.

The issue over the South China Sea is a legitimate concern of the international community that is directly linked to the peace and stability of the region. China has announced the establishment of new administrative districts in the South China Sea called the "Nansha District" and the "Xisha District" and has pursued further militarization of reclaimed features, all of which are unilateral attempts to change the status quo that run counter to the rule of law and openness, and attempts to make the results of these actions a fait accompli. Additionally, China has continued actions that increase tensions in the region, including conducting repeated military exercises and missile launches.

1-2 Developments Centered Around the U.S. and China

(1) Transition from the Trump Administration to the Biden Administration

A The U.S. under the Trump Administration

In 2020, the final year in office for President Trump, the U.S. faced significant challenges, including the COVID-19 pandemic and racial divides.

In late January, the first COVID-19 case in the U.S. was confirmed, and on the 31st of that month, President Trump declared a public health emergency. However, infections spread rapidly in the U.S. in March, and by the end of the month, the cumulative number of cases surpassed that of China, making the U.S. the country with the highest number of COVID-19 cases in the world. Accordingly, curfews and restrictions on economic activities were imposed throughout the U.S. While the U.S. economy had a strong performance until then, it suffered a major blow following such measures. The unemployment rate, which had hit a 60-year low in February before cases spread (3.5%), rapidly declined to the worst level in the postwar period in April (14.8%). The real GDP growth rate for 2020 decreased by 3.5% compared to the previous year, marking the second lowest growth rate in the postwar period after that in 1946 (-11.6%).

Meanwhile, protests against racial discrimination, which had been casting a dark shadow over the American society, intensified across the country. In May, a black man, Mr. George Floyd, was neck restrained by the knee of a white police officer in Minnesota and died. A video showing Mr. Floyd being pinned to the ground and pleading, "I can't breathe," went viral, and a protest against racial discrimination developed into a nationwide Black Lives Matter movement. Clashes with police led to many arrests, casualties and injuries in some cities, and the removal and destruction of statues of historical figures, including bronze statues of Civil War Confederate generals. In August, protests were reignited by the shooting of a black

man, Mr. Jacob Blake, by a white police officer in Wisconsin. With regard to the Black Lives Matter movement, President Trump stated that to protect the people from riots by the far-left and anarchists, he would take stern measures by giving top priority to maintaining "law and order." As a result, racial disparities and the maintenance of "law and order" became major issues in the presidential election.

In the face of these major domestic challenges, the Trump administration advocated an "America First" diplomacy and promoted its unique foreign policy. The Trump administration had seceded or withdrawn from multilateral arrangements, including the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Human Rights Council, and the Paris Agreement. In July, the U.S. notified the United Nations (UN) of its intention to also withdraw from the World Health Organization (WHO) in one year. Furthermore, in July, it announced plans to reduce the number of U.S. troops stationed in Germany, further distancing the U.S. from the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

B Inauguration of the Biden Administration

In the presidential election on November 3, former Vice President Joseph Biden received more than 81 million popular votes, the most in history, and the Biden administration was inaugurated on January 20, 2021. Even before taking office, President Biden announced that he would cooperate with other countries, and outlined the priorities of the new administration including measures against COVID-19, reconstruction of the economy, racial equity and response to climate change. On his first day in office, President Biden signed 17 executive actions, including executive orders, and demonstrated a new U.S. at home and to the world. This included reversing the measures taken by the previous Trump administration, such as reversing the decision to withdraw from the WHO and returning to the Paris Agreement. On February 8, 2021, the U.S. announced its return to

the UN Human Rights Council, which the U.S. had withdrawn from under the Trump administration.

While expectations for the Biden administration are high in and outside of the U.S., the new administration faces a difficult task at the helm. The U.S. has the highest number of COVID-19 cases in the world (over 28 million as of March 2021), and the prolonged fight against COVID-19 is casting a shadow on the U.S. economy. The Democratic Party secured a majority in both the House and Senate in the congressional elections held on the same day as the presidential election. Although this was a boost for the new administration, the difference in the number of seats between the two parties is minimal in both houses, and it remains to be seen whether the new administration will be able to cooperate with the Republicans in Congress to advance its campaign promises. In addition, the fragmentation of U.S. society is becoming more serious, as was shown by the January 6, 2021, mob attack on the U.S. Capitol, and the administration is charged with the task of uniting the American people.

(2) The Further Rise of China

In recent years, China has made a remarkable rise in various fields, including economy, military and security, and diplomacy.

Due to COVID-19, China's economy temporarily recorded negative growth for the first time since 1992. However, the economy recovered, driven by production, investment and exports. While the economies of major countries experienced negative growth, China had a positive real GDP growth rate in 2020 of 2.3%.

In addition, China's defense spending has increased about 44-fold over the past three decades. According to an annual report released by the U.S. Department of Defense in September, China has already gained capabilities equal to or exceeding those of the U.S. in a number of areas, including shipbuilding, land-based conventional ballistic and cruise missiles, and integrated air defense systems.

Furthermore, China sought to expand its international influence in diplomacy while the former Trump administration advocated "America First." For example, in April, after President Trump announced the suspension of contributions to the WHO, the Government of China announced an additional contribution of 30 million US dollars to the WHO. In addition, China has actively used provision of medical supplies and vaccines for its diplomacy in response to the global spread of COVID-19, with President Xi Jinping announcing that vaccines are a "global public good." Moreover, China has developed legislation to protect its maritime interests. In January 2021, the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress passed the China Coast Guard (CCG) Law, which stipulates the CCG's duty of law enforcement to protect its maritime interests, and this law entered into force the following February.

(3) U.S.-China Relations

U.S.-China relations during the former Trump administration became more tense in 2020. Following on from 2019, the two countries had intense confrontation in a variety of areas, including trade issues and competition over advanced technologies. Their confrontation also extended to the realms of politics, diplomacy, military and security, media and education, and the two countries frequently condemned and sanctioned the other country. For example, the U.S. Congress passed the Uyghur Human Rights Policy Act in June and the Hong Kong Autonomy Act in July, raising calls for strict sanctions and other measures against China. Furthermore, tighter regulations were imposed on many Chinese companies on the grounds of security concerns and other reasons. In addition, when the U.S. closed the Chinese Consulate General in Houston at the end of July, citing it as a base for espionage and intellectual property theft, China responded by closing the U.S. Consulate General in Chengdu. Furthermore, President Trump emphasized China's responsibility for spreading COVID-19, describing it as a

“Chinese virus.” In January 2021, the U.S. determined the human rights situation in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region as constituting “genocide.”

The Biden administration, while maintaining a tough stance toward China, is expected to explore cooperation with China wherever possible, such as issues related to international health and climate change. In February 2021, the first U.S.-China Summit telephone call was held since President Biden took office. The U.S. Department of State announced that President Biden underscored his concerns about China’s coercive and unfair economic practices, crackdown in Hong Kong, human rights abuses in Xinjiang, and increasingly assertive actions in the region, including toward Taiwan. On the other hand, according to the Chinese announcement, President Xi Jinping stated that cooperation is the only right choice for both sides and proposed the reestablishment of various dialogue mechanisms. This shows his expectation to build cooperative relations with the new administration. The establishment of stable relations between the U.S. and China, the world’s first and second largest economies, concerns not only Japan but also the international community as a whole, and future developments will continue to be closely watched.

2 Outlook for Japan's Diplomacy

In the face of major global changes and challenges, Japan must take on a greater responsibility and role than before, while collaborating with other countries. In particular, the role expected of Japan is to uphold its respect for multilateralism and take on a greater leadership role in establishing a free and fair order and rules on both the security and economic fronts, looking ahead to a post-COVID-19 world. Based on this recognition, Japan, while reinforcing its foreign policy implementation apparatus, including by bolstering Japan’s missions overseas in terms of both quantity and quality, will continue to make the

utmost efforts to promote its national interests and contribute to the peace and prosperity of the international community. Furthermore, Japan will further strengthen its public diplomacy to obtain understanding of and support for Japan’s policies, initiatives, and positions.

(1) “Diplomacy with a Sense of Caring and Robustness”

In order to create a desirable international environment that is stable and predictable for Japan, it is important to build trust and cooperative relations with countries worldwide and the international community through diplomatic efforts, to strengthen the basis for stability and prosperity of the international community, and to prevent the emergence of threats in advance. In this respect, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has advanced “diplomacy with a sense of caring and robustness” under the policy of “Proactive Contribution to Peace” based on the principle of international cooperation—diplomacy that respects diversity, in which Japan exerts its ability to coordinate in the international community and stands firm where a resolute response is needed.

Prime Minister Abe visited 80 countries and regions (176 countries and regions in total) since the inauguration of his second Cabinet in December 2012 until his resignation in September 2020. Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, Prime Minister Suga visited Viet Nam and Indonesia for his first overseas visit since taking office in September. Foreign Minister Motegi, since his appointment in September 2019, visited 34 countries and regions (35 countries and regions in total) and held more than 120 telephone calls and video conferences (as of January 2021). As a result, Japan’s presence in the international community has steadily risen, and the personal relationships of trust between Prime Minister Suga and foreign leaders as well as between Foreign Minister Motegi and other foreign ministers have also deepened.

As a stabilizing force in the international community, Japan will continue to build relationships of

trust with other countries' leaders, and while promoting its national interests, lead the international community for peace and prosperity of the world.

(2) The Seven Priority Areas of Japan's Foreign Policy

In order to protect and promote Japan's national interests, Japan will pursue diplomacy with a focus on: (1) strengthening the Japan-U.S. Alliance, the cornerstone of Japan's foreign policy and security; (2) promoting a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)"; (3) diplomacy with neighboring countries, such as China, the Republic of Korea (ROK) and Russia; (4) tackling outstanding issues of concern regarding North Korea; (5) addressing the situation in the Middle East; (6) leading international efforts to create new rules; and (7) addressing global challenges.

[1 Strengthening the Japan-U.S. Alliance, the Cornerstone of Japan's Diplomacy and Security]

The Japan-U.S. Alliance is the cornerstone of Japan's diplomacy and security and plays a significant role in regional and international peace and prosperity. As the security environment surrounding Japan is becoming increasingly severe and uncertain, the Japan-U.S. Alliance is more important than ever.

With the Biden administration, which was inaugurated in January 2021, Japan will further strengthen the Japan-U.S. Alliance and will work closely to realize FOIP as well as resolve regional and international issues, including measures against COVID-19, climate change and North Korea.

With regard to the realignment of U.S. Forces in Japan, including the relocation of Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) Futenma to Henoko and the relocation of the Marine Corps from Okinawa to Guam and other locations outside of Japan, Japan and the U.S. will continue to coordinate closely to mitigate the impact on local communities including Okinawa, while maintaining the deterrence of U.S. Forces in Japan.

[2 Promoting the vision of "Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)"]

The Indo-Pacific region is the core of the world's vitality and supports more than half of the world's population, but is also a region which has seen complex power dynamics of countries and has experienced drastic shifts in the regional power balance. It is essential to ensure peace and prosperity in the entire region and beyond, through establishing a free and open order based on the rule of law.

From this perspective, Japan has been strategically promoting efforts to realize FOIP based on the rule of law, in cooperation with like-minded countries. This vision is now shared by the U.S., Australia, India, ASEAN and major countries in Europe, and is gaining broad support in the international community, with various consultations and cooperation under way. The significance and importance of this vision are further increasing in the transition to the post-COVID-19 era. Japan will seize opportunities for various bilateral and multilateral dialogues, including the Japan-Australia-India-U.S. dialogue, to expand the cooperation to more countries.

[3 Diplomacy with Neighboring Countries, such as China, the Republic of Korea, and Russia]

Building stable relations with neighboring countries is critical in ensuring peace and prosperity in Japan.

(China)

The relations with China, a neighboring country across the East China Sea, is one of Japan's most important bilateral relations. Stable Japan-China relations is vital for peace, stability and prosperity in the region and the international community. The relations will be further strengthened if the two countries jointly address and contribute to regional and international challenges as responsible major countries. Japan and China will continue to maintain close high-level communications, including between the leaders, to build stable bilateral relations.

At the same time, there are various outstanding issues of concern with China, and it is important that Japan continues to firmly maintain its position by taking the opportunities of high-level contacts, such as meetings between the leaders and foreign ministers, all the while strongly requesting China's concrete actions. The ongoing and strengthening attempts by China to unilaterally change the status quo in the East China Sea by force or coercion are absolutely unacceptable. With the determination to defend its territory as well as territorial sea and airspace, Japan will continue to take a calm and resolute approach to the situation while strengthening coordination with the relevant countries.

(Republic of Korea)

The Republic of Korea (ROK) is an important neighboring country, and Japan-ROK and Japan-U.S.-ROK coordination, including in dealing with North Korea, is indispensable for the stability of the region. However, the situation in 2020 and beyond has remained unacceptable to Japan due to issues, including the issue of former civilian workers from the Korean Peninsula (hereinafter referred to as "CWKs") and the issue of comfort women. In particular, the confirmation of the judgment of the Seoul Central District Court of the ROK in the lawsuit filed by former comfort women and others in 2021 is absolutely unacceptable, as it is clearly contrary to the international law and agreements between the two countries. Based on Japan's principled positions on issues between our two countries, the Government of Japan will continue to strongly urge the ROK to take appropriate actions, including remedying the status of its breaches of international law.

(Russia)

Amidst the significant changes in the strategic environment of the Indo-Pacific, the building of stable relations with Russia contributes not only to Japan's national interests but is also extremely important for regional stability and development.

There is no change to Japan's intention to place importance on its relations with Russia. On the other hand, the Northern Territories issue, which is the greatest concern between Japan and Russia, is yet to be resolved even after more than 75 years have passed since the end of World War II. Under the strong leadership of the Japanese and Russian leaders, the Government of Japan will continue to persistently negotiate with Russia to conclude a peace treaty by resolving the issue of attribution of the Four Northern Islands.

[4 Addressing Outstanding Issues of Concern regarding North Korea]

The Government of Japan has been taking various initiatives to realize its basic policy of seeking to normalize its relations with North Korea through comprehensively resolving outstanding issues of concern, such as the abductions, nuclear and missile issues, as well as settlement of the unfortunate past in accordance with the Japan-DPRK Pyongyang Declaration of 2002. Japan will continue to fully implement relevant UNSC resolutions and aim for the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, coordinating closely with the U.S. and the ROK, and cooperating with the international community, including China and Russia.

As well as being a critical issue concerning the sovereignty of Japan and the lives and safety of Japanese citizens, abductions by North Korea constitute a universal issue for the international community as a violation of basic human rights. Japan has positioned the resolution of the abductions issue as the most important issue and will continue to make utmost efforts to realize the return home of all abductees at the earliest possible date while working closely with relevant countries, including the U.S.

[5 Addressing the Situation in the Middle East]

Japan imports approximately 90% of its crude oil from the Middle East, and it is extremely important for Japan's peace and prosperity to promote peace and stability in the Middle East and to

maintain and develop good relations with countries in the region. From this point of view, Japan recently has been striving to strengthen its relations with Middle Eastern countries in a wide range of fields that include not only the economy but also politics and security as well as cultural and people-to-people exchanges. Tensions in the Middle East remain high in recent years. In response to the situation, Japan will continue to make active efforts to ease tensions and stabilize the situation in the region. To ensure the safety of Japan-related vessels, Japan has been conducting information gathering activities by Self-Defense Force vessels and aircraft in Middle Eastern waters since 2020 and will make ongoing efforts to ensure the safety of Japan-related vessels in the region.

[6 Leading International Efforts to Create New Rules]

The world economy faces challenges, such as the rise of protectionism and trade disputes, as well as the stagnation of economic activities, plummeting demand, and restrictions on movement of people due to COVID-19. Under such circumstances, Japan has continued its trade liberalization and rule-making efforts through economic partnerships, signing the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) Agreement in November 2020 and the entry into force of the Japan-UK Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (Japan-UK CEPA) in January 2021. In order to expand the free and fair economic order that will serve as the basis for Japan's peace and prosperity in Japan, Japan will continue to make proactive efforts to ensure the early entry into force and full implementation of the RCEP Agreement, steady implementation and expansion of the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP11 Agreement) as the chair of the TPP Commission in 2021, and negotiation of other economic partnership agreements.

In addition, in the field of digital technology that will gain importance in the post-COVID-19 world,

Japan will globally promote the "Osaka Track," launched on the margin of the G20 Osaka Summit under Japan's presidency, and lead the efforts to develop common rules on data flow. Japan has focused on building international rules in new areas including new domains such as cyberspace and outer space as well as maintaining national security in our economy and technology which has broadened its scope due to technological innovations, through activities at the UN and other fora. This effort is based on the understanding that existing international law applies to these new areas. Furthermore, Japan will continue to exercise international leadership in disseminating and implementing the principles and visions put forward by Japan at the G20 Osaka Summit, including the "G20 Principles for Quality Infrastructure Investment" and the "Osaka Blue Ocean Vision."

[7 Addressing Global Challenges]

One country alone cannot address global challenges, such as peacebuilding, terrorism, disarmament and non-proliferation, the rule of law, human rights, women's empowerment and gender equality, disaster risk reduction, global health, and the environment and climate change, and the international community needs to mount a united response. Japan will continue to advance international contributions under the concept of human security in order to ensure that freedom, democracy, human rights and the rule of law are respected as universal values in the international community, to take good care of socially vulnerable people, and to realize a society where individuals can make the most use of their potential. Japan will also accelerate concrete initiatives domestically and internationally in order to lead the global effort for achieving the SDGs.

(Global Health)

Health is critically essential for the embodiment of human security, which is a concept of protecting individuals and unleashing their potential. In order to promote Universal Health Coverage

(UHC) with the spirit of “leaving no one’s health behind,” Japan has made significant achievements in infectious disease control, maternal and child health and nutrition, in cooperation with other countries and international organizations. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Japan has offered health and medical services to developing countries for coping with COVID-19, as well as necessary support for building quality, resilient and inclusive medical and health systems from a mid- to long-term perspective, including support for establishing the ASEAN Centre for Public Health Emergencies and Emerging Diseases. In 2021, Japan will host the Tokyo Nutrition for Growth Summit 2021 and promote global efforts toward nutrition improvement.

(Climate Change)

Addressing climate change is increasing in importance, also in the context of the recovery from the COVID-19 crisis. At the 24th Session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP24) in 2018, the implementation guidelines of the Paris Agreement were adopted. Regarding negotiations on the implementation guidelines for market mechanisms, however, an agreement was not reached even at COP25 in 2019, and the guidelines are still under review. Japan will continue to lead the international community in the lead-up to COP26 in 2021 in order to realize a decarbonized world, which the Paris Agreement aims for.

(Proactive Initiatives for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation)

As the only country to have ever suffered atomic bombings in war, Japan has the responsibility to lead the international efforts to realize a world free of nuclear weapons. Japan continues to pursue bridge building between nuclear-weapon states and non-nuclear-weapon states through such actions and frameworks as submission of the resolution on nuclear disarmament to the

UN General Assembly, the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (NPDI) and the Group of Eminent Persons for Substantive Advancement of Nuclear Disarmament, and has carried out realistic and practical measures that also involve nuclear-weapon states.

In addition, Japan puts effort into non-proliferation policies, including through maintaining and strengthening international non-proliferation regimes and rules, appropriately implementing non-proliferation measures in Japan, as well as closely coordinating with other countries and providing capacity building assistance. Japan places importance on maintaining and strengthening the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which is the cornerstone of the international nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime, and will make active contributions to international discussions to achieve a meaningful outcome at the NPT Review Conference expected to be held in August 2021.

(Strengthening Cooperation with the UN and International Organizations / UN Security Council Reform)

Japan has played a key role in maintaining international peace and security, making contributions through UN Peace Keeping Operations (PKOs) and serving as a non-permanent member of the UNSC 11 times, the most among the UN Member States. Now, with 75 years having passed since the UN was established, it is an urgent issue to make the body more efficient and effective, and suitable for the 21st century. Japan will continue to make efforts in pursuit of the early realization of UNSC reform and Japan’s admission as a permanent member. Furthermore, in order to continue to contribute to the order of peace and security in the international community prior to its admission as a permanent member, Japan is seeking to be elected in the UNSC non-permanent membership election in 2022.

In addition, Japan has been making policy contributions, assessed and voluntary financial

contributions, as well as personnel contributions in a broad sense for the UN and other international organizations to tackle a variety of issues. Japan will make efforts to encourage the employment of more Japanese staff and their appointment to executive posts at international organizations.

(Africa)

While Africa has made remarkable growth in recent years, it has also faced many challenges. Japan has been contributing to African development through the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD), the pioneering

forum of its kind, launched by Japan in 1993. Japan's initiatives through the TICAD process that support African health and medical systems in the mid- to long-term have shown concrete results in the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. As COVID-19 sheds light on Africa's development issues, including those in the health sector, and looking ahead to TICAD8 to be held in Tunisia in 2022, Japan will continue to strengthen its relations with Africa and to resolutely support African-led development through initiatives that leverage Japan's advantages and its unique characteristics.

Japan-Australia-India-U.S. Foreign Ministers' Meeting

The four countries of Japan, Australia, India and the U.S. share basic values. Moreover, as responsible partners of the region, they share the common goal of reinforcing a free and open international order based on rules. The "Free and Open Indo-Pacific" vision plays an important role toward the achievement of this goal. To that end, the four countries have been engaging in a wide range of discussions aimed at advancing concrete cooperation on common issues, including quality infrastructure, maritime security and counter-terrorism.

Against this backdrop, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Australia Marise Payne, External Affairs Minister of India Subrahmanyam Jaishankar and Secretary of State of the U.S. Mike Pompeo convened on October 6 in the Iikura Guest House in Tokyo, where Mr. Motegi, Minister for Foreign Affairs chaired the Japan-Australia-India-U.S. Foreign Ministers' Meeting and dinner. This is the second meeting of the four foreign ministers after the inaugural meeting held in New York in September 2019, on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly. This was the first meeting held independently and separately from an international conference or other event. Furthermore, as this was also the first international ministerial-level conference to take place in Japan since the outbreak and spread of the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19), it was held with the necessary measures in place to prevent the spread of infections.

At the meeting, the four Ministers exchanged views on the response to various challenges that have come to the fore with the outbreak and spread of COVID-19, and affirmed their intention to continue their cooperation in the areas of health and hygiene and on issues including making new international rules in such areas as digital economy. They affirmed the importance of broadening cooperation with more countries for the realization of a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific," as the vision serves for the peace and prosperity of the region and its importance in the post-COVID-19 world is increasing. They also exchanged views on regional affairs such as North Korea and the East and South China Seas. They then shared the view to regularize this Foreign Ministers' meeting and hold the next one at an appropriate timing next year.

With the global spread of COVID-19, the existing international order is facing challenges in various fields. In light of that, it was timely for the foreign ministers of four countries that share a common purpose to take time and exchange honest views about their recognition of the current situation and response measures for the future.

Japan, Australia, India and the U.S. will continue to steadily advance various forms of cooperation as close partners, in order to achieve a free and open Indo-Pacific and secure the stability and prosperity of the region.



The four foreign ministers attending the Second Japan-Australia-India-U.S. Foreign Ministers' Meeting (October 6, Tokyo)



The foreign ministers of Australia, India and the U.S. paying a courtesy call to Prime Minister Suga before the meeting (October 6, Tokyo; Photo: Cabinet Public Relations Office)



At the Japan-Australia-India-U.S. Foreign Ministers' Meeting (October 6, Tokyo)

Chapter 2

Japan's Foreign Policy by Region

Section 1	Promotion of a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)"	30
Section 2	Asia and Oceania	35
Section 3	North America	98
Section 4	Latin America and the Caribbean	110
Section 5	Europe	120
Section 6	Russia, Central Asia and Caucasus	141
Section 7	The Middle East and North Africa	149
Section 8	Africa	162

Section 1

Promotion of a “Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)”

1 Overview

The Indo-Pacific region, which stretches from the Asia-Pacific across the Indian Ocean to the Middle East and Africa, is the core of the world's vitality and supports more than half of the world's population. At the same time, it is a region which has seen complex power dynamics of countries and has experienced drastic shifts in the regional power balance. The region also faces a variety of threats, such as piracy, terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, natural disasters and illegal fishing. It is essential to ensure peace and prosperity in the entire region and beyond, through establishing a free and open order based on the rule of law.

Japan has long emphasized the importance of taking a holistic view of the Indian and Pacific Oceans, as seen in the “Confluence of the Two Seas” speech regarding the Indian and Pacific Oceans delivered by Prime Minister Abe to the Indian Parliament in 2007. In August 2016, this concept was brought to fruition as the “Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)” vision, which Prime Minister Abe announced to the world in his keynote speech at the 6th Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD VI) in Kenya. In his speech, Prime Minister Abe stated that the key to stability and prosperity of the international community is the dynamism created by combin-

ing “Two Continents”—rapidly-growing Asia and potential-filled Africa—and “Two Oceans”—free and open Pacific and Indian Oceans—and that Japan would work to realize prosperity in Asia and Africa.

In order to materialize FOIP, Japan, as its advocate, initially sought to further strengthen strategic cooperation with India, which historically has had strong ties with East Africa, as well as with the U.S., Japan's allies, and Australia.

With India, during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Japan in November 2016, the two countries shared the view to take initiatives for the stability and prosperity of the Indo-Pacific region by enhancing the synergy between Japan's FOIP and India's “Act East Policy” through collaboration.

With the U.S., during Prime Minister Abe's summit meeting with President Barack Obama in December 2016, the two leaders shared the recognition on the importance of expanding the network of allies, including among Japan, the U.S. and Australia and among Japan, the U.S. and India, in order to realize a “Free and Open Indo-Pacific” and ensure stability and prosperity in the region. In addition, at the summit meeting in November 2017 when President Donald Trump visited Japan as the first stop on his first trip to Asia after taking office, the two leaders shared the view that both countries would work together to promote FOIP.

Prime Minister Abe visited Australia in November 2018 and held a summit meeting with Prime Minister Scott Morrison. The two leaders affirmed that the two countries share the FOIP vision and shared the view on working together for regional stability and prosperity. Prime Minister Morrison expressed his commitment to promoting an “open, inclusive and prosperous Indo-Pacific” in his foreign policy speech in June 2019.

Furthermore, policy documents on the Indo-Pacific have been released by ASEAN in June 2019, France in June 2018, Germany in September 2020, and the Netherlands in November 2020. In particular, the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP), adopted at the ASEAN Summit in June 2019, enshrines the rule of law, openness, freedom, transparency and inclusivity as ASEAN’s principles of action.

In 2020, Japan continued to actively engage in diplomatic activities for the realization of FOIP, even as the global spread of the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) limited in-person diplomatic activities.

Shortly after taking office, Prime Minister Suga held a summit telephone call with President Trump in September, during which the two leaders shared the view that Japan and the U.S. would work closely together to achieve FOIP. In October, Prime Minister Suga visited Viet Nam and Indonesia for his first overseas visit as Prime Minister. He clearly stated that Japan, as an Indo-Pacific nation, would continue to contribute to regional peace and prosperity, based on the belief that ASEAN, located in the center of the Indo-Pacific region, is the cornerstone of the efforts for realizing FOIP. In November, Prime Minister Suga attended the Japan-ASEAN Summit Meeting. At the meeting, the Joint Statement of the 23rd ASEAN-Japan Summit on Cooperation on ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific was adopted, which affirmed that ASEAN’s AOIP and FOIP share fundamental principles and confirmed that Japan and ASEAN would promote concrete cooperation in line with the AOIP.

Foreign Minister Motegi resumed his overseas travels with his visit to the UK in August. Over the course of around half a year to January 2021, Foreign Minister Motegi visited 23 countries in Europe, Southeast Asia, the Middle East, Africa and Latin America. Through in-person meetings in those countries, he advocated the importance of promoting FOIP and gained support from a wider range of countries. In addition to bilateral meetings, Japan held the 2nd Japan-Australia-India-U.S. Foreign Ministers’ Meeting in October, which was the first ministerial-level international conference hosted by Japan since the outbreak and spread of COVID-19. The meeting affirmed the importance of broader coordination with more countries for the realization of FOIP, noting that it is a vision for peace and prosperity of the region, and its importance in the post-COVID-19 world is increasing.

In this way, Japan has strategically promoted efforts to realize FOIP in cooperation with like-minded countries from 2016 to the present. As a result, the vision of FOIP first proposed by Japan is now shared by the U.S., Australia, India, ASEAN and major countries of Europe, and is gaining broad support in the international community. Various consultations and cooperation are also under way. The vision is becoming increasingly important to the post-COVID-19 world, and Japan will continue to pursue wider coordination for its realization.

2 Japan’s Efforts and Cooperation toward FOIP

To contribute to regional peace and prosperity as an Indo-Pacific nation, Japan will cooperate with like-minded countries and strategically implement measures for the realization of FOIP. Specifically, Japan will take measures, including: (1) promoting policy on maritime order and sharing insights on maritime law with the international community; (2) rule-making to expand a free and fair economic area; (3) enhancing connectivity

across the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean; (4) enhancing governance through capacity building; and (5) ensuring maritime security and marine safety.

As for (1), Japan has provided assistance to Southeast Asian countries and Pacific Island countries, including capacity building in maritime law enforcement and seminars on the law of the sea.

As for (2), following the TPP11 Agreement and the Japan-EU Economic Partnership Agreement (Japan-EU EPA), the Japan-U.S. Trade Agreement entered into force in January 2020. In addition, Japan leads the creation of economic and trade rules for the post-COVID-19 era, as shown in the signing of the Japan-UK Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (Japan-UK CEPA) in October and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) Agreement in November.

As for (3), Japan has implemented projects that help strengthen the connectivity of the Southern Economic Corridor, known as “Mekong’s main artery” that connects Ho Chi Minh City, Phnom Penh and Bangkok to the Indian Ocean, and of the East-West Economic Corridor, which connects Da Nang, Viet Nam to Laos and the inland areas of Thailand to the Indian Ocean via Myanmar.

As for (4), in order to support self-sustained and sustainable growth, Japan provides assistance to countries mainly in Asia and Africa, including dispatching macroeconomic advisors for capacity building in fiscal policy and public debt management.

As for (5), in order to establish a free and open international order, Japan actively extends capacity building assistance on maritime law enforcement to the Philippines, Viet Nam and other countries located along Japan’s sea lanes, including provision of patrol vessels, coastal monitoring radars and other equipment, as well as human resource development through the dispatch of experts and trainings.

3 Collaboration and Cooperation with Other Countries

(1) U.S. (See Section 3, 1)

On January 28, 2021, Prime Minister Suga and President Joe Biden held their first summit telephone call. The two leaders affirmed the importance of strengthening the U.S. presence in the Indo-Pacific region, and confirmed that they would work closely together to realize FOIP. On January 27, Foreign Minister Motegi and Secretary of State Antony Blinken held their first foreign ministers’ telephone call and exchanged views on the importance of FOIP. In March, just two months after the inauguration of the Biden administration, Foreign Minister Motegi and Secretary of State Blinken held their first in-person foreign ministers’ meeting. The two ministers reaffirmed that Japan and the U.S. would continue to take the lead in strengthening cooperation to realize FOIP while working together with Australia, India, ASEAN and other partners.

(2) ASEAN (See Section 2, 7)

During Prime Minister Suga’s visit to Viet Nam and Indonesia in October, Prime Minister Suga expressed Japan’s intention to collaborate with ASEAN in creating a peaceful and prosperous future for the Indo-Pacific region, and shared the view on promoting concrete cooperation to this end. In Viet Nam, Prime Minister Suga delivered a speech entitled “Building Together the Future of Indo-Pacific,” in which he expressed strong support for the AOIP announced by ASEAN in 2019 and advocated that Japan and ASEAN work hand in hand to achieve a more prosperous FOIP. At the ASEAN-related Summit Meetings in November, attended by Prime Minister Suga and the ASEAN leaders, Japan and ASEAN released the Joint Statement of the 23rd ASEAN-Japan Summit on Cooperation on ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific, confirming that the AOIP and FOIP promoted by Japan share fundamental principles. Japan and ASEAN will deepen cooperation that

contributes to the realization of FOIP by steadily promoting the Japan-ASEAN Connectivity Initiative, which was unveiled at the Japan-ASEAN Summit Meeting, as well as through other concrete cooperation programs in line with the four priority areas of the AOIP, namely maritime cooperation, connectivity, SDGs, and economic and other possible areas of cooperation.

(3) Australia (See Section 2, 6)

In November, Prime Minister Morrison visited Japan as the first counterpart with which Prime Minister Suga held an in-person summit meeting in Japan since taking office. The two leaders affirmed that Japan and Australia, as “Special Strategic Partners” that share basic values, such as freedom, democracy, human rights and the rule of law, as well as strategic interests, would work together toward realizing FOIP. Foreign Minister Motegi and Foreign Minister Marise Payne also held foreign ministers’ meetings in-person in October and by telephone in February 2021, and they shared the view that they would work closely together as like-minded countries for the realization of FOIP. In February 2021, Prime Minister Suga and Prime Minister Morrison held a telephone call and shared the view to promote bilateral cooperation as well as collaboration with the U.S. and ASEAN toward the realization of FOIP.

(4) India (See Section 2, 5)

During the first telephone call between Prime Minister Suga and Prime Minister Modi in September, Prime Minister Suga expressed Japan’s intention to work with India to play their role for achieving FOIP. At the Japan-India Foreign Ministers’ Strategic Dialogue in October, Foreign Minister Motegi and External Affairs Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar exchanged a wide range of views regarding cooperation for realizing FOIP and affirmed their intention to continue reinforcing the bilateral cooperation, including the Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative promoted by India.

(5) Japan-Australia-India-U.S. (See the Special Feature on page 27)

The four countries of Japan, Australia, India and the U.S. have the shared goal of strengthening a rules-based free and open international order. In order to make tangible progress with FOIP, the four countries share the view on further implementing practical cooperation in various areas, including quality infrastructure and maritime security, and on the importance of expanding cooperation to more countries to realize this vision. The four countries also fully support the AOIP and welcome the proactive efforts by European and other countries toward FOIP. Based on this recognition, the 2nd Japan-Australia-India-U.S. Foreign Ministers’ Meeting was held in Japan in October 2020. The ministers concurred on further developing practical cooperation in various areas and affirmed the importance of broadening cooperation with more countries to make tangible progress with FOIP. In February 2021, following the inauguration of the Biden administration in the U.S., a Japan-Australia-India-U.S. foreign ministers’ telephone call was held, during which the four countries shared the view on continuing to further deepen engagement and cooperation with ASEAN, the Pacific Island countries, Europe and other countries to realize FOIP. In March 2021, the first Japan-Australia-India-U.S. leaders’ video conference was held at the call of the U.S., during which the leaders shared the view to cooperate with a range of partners to realize FOIP at the summit level as well.

(6) Europe

A The EU (See Section 5, 2-(1))

Since around autumn 2020, interest in the Indo-Pacific has increased in Europe, and discussions on the Indo-Pacific started in the EU. In January 2021, Foreign Minister Motegi became the first Japanese foreign minister to attend an EU Foreign Affairs Council meeting in a virtual format, where he explained about FOIP to the EU and Foreign Ministers of EU member states.

In response, Foreign Ministers of many EU member states expressed understanding and support for the importance of a rules-based free and open international order in the Indo-Pacific. Japan and the EU shared the view to further promote cooperation in areas such as connectivity and maritime security.

B The UK (See Section 5, 2-(2))

In August, Foreign Minister Motegi visited the UK as his first overseas visit since the global outbreak of COVID-19. During his meeting with Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab, the two ministers discussed ways to further strengthen their relations in wide-ranging areas, including cooperation to realize FOIP. In September, Prime Minister Suga held a telephone call with Prime Minister Boris Johnson. The two leaders confirmed to collaborate to further deepen their bilateral relations, including strengthening cooperation in the field of security for the realization of FOIP. Furthermore, the two countries affirmed that they would further enhance such cooperation at the Japan-UK Foreign and Defence Ministers' Meeting ("2+2") held in February 2021 for the first time in three years and the Japan-UK summit telephone call held in the same month.

C France (See Section 5, 2-(3))

In October, Foreign Minister Motegi visited France and held a meeting with Europe and Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian. The two ministers confirmed to promote bilateral cooperation

in the Indo-Pacific. During Prime Minister Suga's summit telephone call with President Emmanuel Macron in the same month, the two leaders shared the view that both Japan and France, as Indo-Pacific nations, would cooperate for the realization of a free and open Indo-Pacific.

D Germany (See Section 5, 2-(4))

In September, the German cabinet adopted the "Policy Guidelines for the Indo-Pacific Region," which emphasizes the importance of the principles of freedom of navigation, rule of law and connectivity in the Indo-Pacific. During a video teleconference meeting with Foreign Minister Heiko Maas in October, Foreign Minister Motegi praised Germany's Policy Guidelines, and the two ministers shared the view on strengthening cooperation toward realizing FOIP.

E The Netherlands (See Section 5, Other European Regions on page 136)

In November, the Netherlands released the "Indo-Pacific: Guidelines for Strengthening Dutch and EU Cooperation with Partners in Asia," which underscores the Netherlands' strengthened commitment to the South China Sea and promotion of maritime security in the Indo-Pacific. In December, Prime Minister Suga held a telephone call with Prime Minister Mark Rutte and welcomed the release of the Netherlands' own Indo-Pacific guidelines. In addition, the two leaders shared the view to work together to realize FOIP.

Section 2

Asia and Oceania

1 Overview

(General overview)

The Asia-Oceania region includes not only the second and third largest economies in the world, China and Japan, but also numerous emerging countries with remarkable growth. It is a dynamic region where diverse cultures and races intermingle and influence each other. This region, with an abundance of human resources, drives the world economy and has been enhancing its presence. Of the world population of 7.7 billion, approximately 3.6 billion people live in East Asia Summit (EAS) member states (excluding the U.S. and Russia).¹ This represents about 48% of the world's population.² The combined nominal gross domestic product (GDP) of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) member states, China and India increased by more than 260% over the last ten years, as compared to the world average of 140%.³ Total exports and imports of EAS member states (excluding the U.S. and Russia) are 10.15 trillion US dollars (2019), making it comparable to the EU (11.25 trillion US dollars).⁴ There are close economic ties among these nations, and they have a high degree of economic interdependence.



Prime Minister Suga and his wife visiting Viet Nam (October 19; Photo: Cabinet Public Relations Office)



Prime Minister Suga and his wife visiting Indonesia (October 20; Photo: Cabinet Public Relations Office)

Further economic growth is expected, and this strong growth within the region will also help to bring renewed affluence and vitality to Japan.

Meanwhile, the security environment in the

- 1 ASEAN (member states: Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam), Japan, China, the ROK, India, Australia and New Zealand
- 2 The State of World Population 2019
- 3 World Bank (WB)
- 4 International Monetary Fund (IMF)

Asia-Oceania region is becoming increasingly severe as seen in the following developments: the nuclear and missile development by North Korea; the strengthening and modernization of military forces in a manner that lacks transparency and attempts to change the status quo in the region by force or coercion that goes against the rule of law and openness; and tension within the region growing over the maritime issues. Other factors hindering the stable growth of the region include economic and financial systems still under development, environmental pollution, unstable demand and supply of food and resources, frequent natural disasters, and aging population.

Against this backdrop, Japan practices proactive diplomacy with neighboring countries as a pillar of its diplomacy, and has been actively engaging in diplomacy including at the leaders' and foreign ministers' levels. In 2020, due to the impacts of the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19), visits to other countries were severely restricted, but, even under such circumstances, the prime minister and foreign minister of Japan, in addition to face-to-face diplomacy, actively held telephone calls and teleconferences to maintain and develop good relations with neighboring countries. Regarding relations with Asia-Oceania countries, Prime Minister Abe actively discussed measures against infectious diseases in the region, such as by attending the Special ASEAN Plus Three (Japan-China-ROK) Summit on Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). Prime Minister Abe also held bilateral telephone calls with ASEAN countries and Australia. In July, Prime Minister Abe held a Japan-Australia leaders video teleconference meeting to exchange views on various issues such as responses to COVID-19. Since the inauguration of the new Cabinet in September, Prime Minister Suga has held telephone calls with

Australia, China, the Republic of Korea (ROK) and many other Asia-Oceania countries, and has built relationships of trust with the leaders of each country. In October, Prime Minister Suga visited Viet Nam and Indonesia as his first overseas visits since taking office, and Prime Minister Suga declared that Japan would continue to take the lead in contributing to regional peace and prosperity as an "Indo-Pacific nation," while also clarifying Japan's determination to steadily realize a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)." In November, Prime Minister Suga participated in ASEAN-related Summits that were held via teleconference (the Japan-ASEAN Summit Meeting, the Mekong-Japan Summit Meeting, the ASEAN Plus Three (Japan-China-ROK) Summit Meeting, the East Asia Summit (EAS), and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) Summit). At the Japan-ASEAN Summit Meeting, the "Joint Statement of the 23rd ASEAN-Japan Summit on Cooperation on ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP)⁵" was adopted, and it confirmed that AOIP and FOIP share fundamental principles. Based on the Joint Statement, Japan is pursuing concrete cooperation to support ASEAN's efforts. At the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) Summit, the RCEP Agreement was signed. Furthermore, in the latter half of November, Prime Minister Suga had a summit meeting with Australian Prime Minister Morrison, who was visiting Japan, and also had a summit telephone call with New Zealand Prime Minister Ardern, who was reappointed as Prime Minister. In January, Foreign Minister Motegi visited Viet Nam, Thailand, the Philippines and Indonesia, and in August he visited Malaysia, Singapore, Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar, as well as visited Papua New Guinea in addition to his visits to ASEAN countries. In January, Foreign

5 Adopted at the ASEAN Summit Meeting in June 2019. It is based on the principles of strengthening ASEAN Centrality in the Indo-Pacific region, as well as openness, transparency, inclusivity, a rules-based framework, good governance, respect for sovereignty, non-intervention, complementarity with existing cooperation frameworks, equality, mutual respect, mutual trust, mutual benefit, and respect for international law, such as the UN Charter, the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea and other relevant UN treaties and conventions. Based on this, it promotes cooperation in the areas of maritime cooperation, connectivity, the SDGs, and economic and other possible areas.

Minister Motegi attended the Japan-U.S.-ROK Foreign Ministers' Meeting in the U.S. and also met with Minister of Foreign Affairs Kang Kyung-wha of the ROK. In March, Foreign Minister Motegi participated in the Japan-China-ROK Foreign Minister's Video Teleconference on COVID-19. In September, Foreign Minister Motegi also actively attended ASEAN-related Foreign Minister's Summits that were held via teleconference (the Japan-ASEAN Ministerial Meeting, the ASEAN Plus Three Foreign Ministers' Meeting, the East Asia Summit (EAS) Foreign Ministers' Meeting, and the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) Ministerial Meeting). In October, the Second Japan-Australia-India-U.S. Foreign Ministers' Meeting was held in Tokyo, which was the first ministerial level international conference to be held after the spread of COVID-19, and a Japan-Australia Foreign Ministers' Meeting with Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs Marise Payne and the 13th Japan-India Foreign Ministers' Strategic Dialogue with Indian External Affairs Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar were also held. In November, Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi visited Japan and Foreign Minister Motegi met with him. In parallel with these diplomatic activities and despite the COVID-19 restrictions, Foreign Minister Motegi held telephone calls with many Asia-Oceania countries, maintaining and developing close cooperation with each country.

Japan is strengthening various cooperation in the Asia-Oceania region, and, in addition to continued Japan-ASEAN cooperation on AOIP, Japan will make meaningful use of various cooperative frameworks such as Japan-China-ROK trilateral cooperation focusing on the three areas of the environment, aging society and people-to-people exchanges.

(Japan-U.S. Alliance and Indo-Pacific region)

The Japan-U.S. Security Alliance, with the Japan-U.S. Security Arrangements as its core, is the foundation of peace, prosperity and freedom, not only for Japan but also for the Indo-Pacific

region. In the midst of an increasingly severe regional security environment, the Japan-U.S. Alliance is more important than ever. Since the inauguration of President Trump in January 2017 and until the end of 2020, more than 50 Summit Meetings, including telephone calls, were held. The two countries have been working closely at multiple levels, including at the summit level, to address the various issues of the Indo-Pacific region, including those related to North Korea.

Furthermore, Japan and the U.S., are deepening their cooperation in achieving FOIP, even when the movement of people is restricted due to COVID-19. In July, Mr. Stephen E. Biegun, U.S. Deputy Secretary of State and Special Representative for North Korea of the United States, who was the first foreign dignitary to come to Japan after the spread of COVID-19, paid a courtesy call to Foreign Minister Motegi, and confirmed that Japan and the U.S. will work together to maintain and strengthen the "Free and Open Indo-Pacific" even amidst the spread of COVID-19. In October, when U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo visited Japan to attend the Second Japan-Australia-India-U.S. Foreign Ministers' Meeting, he paid a courtesy call to Prime Minister Suga and confirmed that Japan and the U.S. will work closely with their like-minded countries toward the realization of a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific," including through the initiatives of the Japan-Australia-India-U.S. Foreign Ministers' Meeting. In January 2021, at the Japan-U.S. Summit telephone call between Prime Minister Suga and U.S. President Joe Biden, the two leaders agreed that it is important to strengthen U.S. presence in the Indo-Pacific Region and agreed to work closely toward the realization of a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific" as well as on a variety of regional issues.

(Japan's measures on the comfort women issue)

(See 2(2)A(C) regarding the comfort women issue between Japan and the ROK.)

The Government of Japan has sincerely dealt

with the issues of reparations, property and claims pertaining to the Second World War, including the comfort women issue, under the San Francisco Peace Treaty, which the Government of Japan concluded with 45 countries, including the U.S., the UK and France, and through other bilateral treaties, agreements and instruments. These issues including those of claims of individuals have already been legally settled with the parties to these treaties, agreements and instruments.

On this basis, the Government of Japan has actively taken measures to recover the honor of former comfort women and to provide remedies for them. In 1995, the Asian Women's Fund (AWF) was established with the cooperation of the people and the Government of Japan for the purpose of carrying out atonement and remedy projects for former comfort women. The Government of Japan provided a total of 4.8 billion Japanese yen. In addition, approximately 600 million Japanese yen was donated to the AWF by the people of Japan. The Government of Japan extended maximum cooperation to the AWF, which implemented medical and welfare support projects and provided "atonement money," to offer realistic relief to former comfort women. As part of the AWF's projects, "atonement money" (2 million Japanese yen per person), which was funded by donations from Japanese people, was provided to 285 former comfort women (211 in the Philippines, 61 in the ROK, 13 in Taiwan). Moreover, the AWF provided funds in those countries/areas for medical and welfare support funded with contributions by the Government of Japan (3 million Japanese yen per person in the ROK and Taiwan, 1.2 million Japanese yen per person in the Philippines) (for a total of 5 million Japanese yen per person in the ROK and Taiwan, 3.2 million Japanese yen per person in the Philippines). Furthermore, using funds contributed by the Government of Japan, the AWF extended support for projects to promote social welfare services for elderly people in Indonesia as well as projects to help improve the living conditions of former comfort women in the Netherlands.

When the "atonement money" as well as the medical and welfare support were provided to individual former comfort women, then-Prime Ministers (namely, Prime Ministers Hashimoto Ryutaro, Obuchi Keizo, Mori Yoshiro and Koizumi Junichiro) sent signed letters expressing their apology and remorse directly to each former comfort woman.

As stated in the Statement by the Prime Minister issued in 2015, Japan will engrave in its heart the past, when the dignity and honor of many women were severely injured during wars in the 20th century. Japan will lead the world in making the 21st century an era in which women's human rights are not infringed upon.

Despite such sincere efforts by the Government of Japan, there are claims that can hardly be regarded to be based on historical facts, such as allegations of "forceful taking away" of comfort women and "sex slaves" as well as the figures such as "200,000 persons" or "several hundred thousands" for the total number of comfort women.

The Government of Japan's position regarding these claims is as follows:

"Forceful taking away"

"Forceful taking away" of comfort women by the Japanese military and government authorities could not be confirmed in any of the documents that the Government of Japan was able to identify.

"Sex slaves"

The expression of "sex slaves" contradicts the facts and should not be used. This point was confirmed with the ROK on the occasion of the Japan-ROK Agreement in December 2015 and the expression "sex slaves" is not used in the agreement.

Figures such as "200,000 persons" for the total number of comfort women

The figure "200,000 persons" lacks concrete evidence. As stated in the report of the Government study's result of August 4, 1993, it is virtually impossible to determine the total number of comfort

women as no documents have been found which either indicate the total number or give sufficient ground to establish an estimate.

The Government of Japan has been making efforts to provide clear explanations regarding its sincere efforts and official position in international fora. Specifically, at the United Nations (UN), the Government of Japan has explained its position on a number of occasions such as during the examination of the Seventh and Eighth Periodic Reports by the Government of Japan on the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in February 2016.

Installations of comfort woman statues⁶ have been observed not only in the ROK but also in the U.S., Canada, Australia, China, Germany, the Philippines, Hong Kong and Taiwan. Such moves are extremely regrettable and incompatible with the position of the Government of Japan. In February 2017, the Government of Japan submitted its amicus curiae brief to the U.S. Supreme Court for the trial concerning a comfort woman statue installed in Glendale in the suburbs of Los Angeles, U.S. The Government of Japan will continue reaching out to various people involved in this issue to explain its position.

The below Ministry of Foreign Affairs website details Japan's Efforts on the Issue of Comfort Women.

https://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/postwar/page22e_000883.html



2 Korean Peninsula

(1) North Korea (including the abductions issue)

The Government of Japan has been taking various initiatives to realize its basic policy of seeking to normalize its relations with North Korea through comprehensively resolving outstanding issues of concern, such as the abductions, nuclear and missile issues, and settling the unfortunate past in accordance with the Japan-DPRK Pyongyang Declaration of September 2002.

Continuing from 2019, North Korea launched ballistic missiles four times in March 2020, blew up the Inter-Korean Liaison Office in Kaesong in June, and in October, the military parade for the 75th anniversary of the founding of the Workers' Party of Korea (WPK) featured possible new intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBM) and submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBM). Under such circumstances, Japan will continue to fully implement relevant UN Security Council resolutions and aim for the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, coordinating closely with the U.S. and the ROK and cooperating with the international community, including China and Russia.

With regard to the abductions issue, Japan continues to call on North Korea to implement the May 2014 Japan-North Korea agreement (the agreement in Stockholm)⁷ and will continue to make utmost efforts to realize the return home of all abductees at the earliest possible date, while coordinating closely with relevant countries including the U.S.

A North Korea Nuclear and Missile Issues

North Korea has not carried out the dismantlement of all weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles of all ranges in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner, in accordance with a

⁶ For the sake of practical convenience, they are referred to as "comfort woman statues." However, the use of this term is not a reflection of the recognition that these statues correctly embody the reality of those women at that time.

⁷ In May 2014, Japan-North Korea Intergovernmental Consultations were held in Stockholm, Sweden. North Korea promised to conduct a comprehensive and full-scale investigation on all Japanese nationals, including abductees.

series of relevant UN Security Council resolutions.

A plenary meeting of the Central Committee of the WPK was convened from December 28 to 31, 2019. Chairman of the State Affairs Commission Kim Jong Un reportedly stated at the meeting, “The world will witness a new strategic weapon to be possessed by the DPRK in the near future,” noting it should “conduct the offensive for frontal breakthrough, not to wait for the situation to turn better.” On October 10, 2020, a military parade was held for the 75th anniversary of the founding of the WPK and Chairman Kim stated that “We have built deterrence that can sufficiently control and manage any military threat that we may face” and that “We will continue to strengthen our war deterrent as a justified self-defense measure to deter, control, and manage all dangerous attempts and intimidatory actions by the hostile forces, including their nuclear threats that are continuously aggravating.” Additionally, the 8th Congress of the WPK was held from January 5 to 12, 2021. It was reported that Chairman Kim stated that defense capability must be constantly strengthened as long as the danger of war of aggression continues, referring to nuclear weapons that are smaller and lighter, and that have multiple warheads, and to the development and possession of nuclear submarines, hypersonic weapons and military reconnaissance satellites. Furthermore, the military parade in October 2020 and the military parade to commemorate the 8th Congress of the WPK in January 2021 featured possible new intercontinental ballistic missiles and submarine-launched ballistic missiles in addition to the weapons that can be seen as the ballistic missiles that had been test-launched in 2019.

North Korea repeatedly launched short-range ballistic missiles from May to November 2019, launched short-range ballistic missiles four times in March 2020, and launched ballistic missiles in March 2021. Some of these launches had the characteristic of flying at lower altitudes than conventional ballistic missiles on irregular trajectories. Such launches pose a serious challenge not only

to Japan but also to the international community and are totally unacceptable.

It is crucial that the international community makes concerted efforts to fully implement the UN Security Council resolutions for the dismantlement of all weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles of all ranges in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner by North Korea. As part of the Japan Coast Guard's patrolling activities and the Self-Defense Forces' monitoring and surveillance activities, Japan has been conducting information gathering on the activities of vessels suspected to be violating the UN Security Council resolutions. When the Government of Japan finds activities strongly suspected to be violating the UN Security Council resolutions, including ship-to-ship transfers with North Korean vessels, measures have been taken such as notification to the UN Security Council 1718 Sanctions Committee and other bodies, sharing of information with related countries, and releasing of information to the public. Aircraft of Canada, Australia and New Zealand, in addition to the U.S. engaged in monitoring and surveillance activities against illicit maritime activities, including ship-to-ship transfers, using Kadena Air Base. Furthermore, monitoring and surveillance activities were conducted in waters surrounding Japan including the East China Sea, by naval vessels such as multiple vessels of the U.S. Navy, the Royal Canadian Navy frigate WINNIPEG and the Royal Australian Navy Frigate HMAS ARUNTA. From the perspective of further deepening the multinational cooperation, Japan considers it significant that Japan, the U.S., Australia, New Zealand, Canada, the UK and France are sharing information and coordinating efforts to ensure that UN Security Council resolutions are implemented fully and effectively.

B The Abductions Issue and Japan-North Korea Relations

(A) Basic Position on the Abductions Issue

To date, the Government of Japan has identified 12 separate incidents, involving a total of 17

Japanese abductees, 12 of whom have not yet returned home. North Korea claims that 8 of these 12 abductees have died and that it is unable to confirm that the other 4 ever entered its territory, but as no convincing explanation of this claim has been provided, Japan continues to work toward the resolution of this issue on the assumption that all of the abductees whose whereabouts are unknown are still alive. As well as being a critical issue concerning the sovereignty of Japan and the lives and safety of Japanese citizens, abductions by North Korea constitutes a universal issue among the international community as a violation of basic human rights. Additionally, as the families of the victims continue to age, there is no time to lose before we resolve the abductions issue. Based on the basic recognition that the normalization of its relations with North Korea is impossible without resolving the abductions issue, Japan has positioned its resolution as the most important issue. Accordingly, Japan has strongly urged North Korea to provide a full account of all the abduction cases, to hand over the perpetrators to Japan, and to ensure the safety of all abductees and their immediate return to Japan, irrespective of whether the abductees are officially identified. In January 2021, Prime Minister Suga gave a policy speech where he stated that “concerning the abductions issue, which is a top priority for my administration, I will make utmost efforts to take the lead and collaborate closely with the United States and other countries concerned.”

(B) Initiatives by Japan

Following the nuclear test by North Korea in January 2016 and the launch of the ballistic missile in the following month, which North Korea purported to be a “satellite,” Japan announced its autonomous measures against North Korea in February 2016. In response, North Korea unilaterally announced that it would completely stop the investigations on all Japanese nationals and dissolve the Special Investigation Committee. Japan lodged a serious protest against North Korea,

conveyed its intention of not abandoning the agreement in Stockholm, and strongly demanded that North Korea implement the agreement and return all the abductees home at the earliest possible date.

(C) Japan-North Korea Relations

During the reception of the PyeongChang Olympic Winter Games Opening Ceremony hosted by President Moon Jae-in on February 9, 2018, Prime Minister Abe brought up the abductions, nuclear and missile issues and conveyed Japan’s basic position to Kim Yong Nam, President of the Presidium of the Supreme People’s Assembly of North Korea. Prime Minister Abe strongly urged North Korea to resolve the abductions issue, especially the return of all abductees to Japan. In September, Foreign Minister Kono held a meeting with the North Korean Minister of Foreign Affairs Ri Yong Ho at the UN headquarters.

In September 2020, Prime Minister Suga addressed the 75th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, declaring that “As the new Prime Minister of Japan, I am ready to meet with Chairman Kim Jong Un without any conditions. Establishing a constructive relationship between Japan and North Korea will not only serve the interests of both sides but will also greatly contribute to regional peace and stability.”

(D) Cooperation with the International Community

In order to resolve the abductions issue, it is essential for Japan not only to proactively urge North Korea, but also to gain understanding and support from other countries regarding the importance of resolving the abductions issue. Japan has taken all possible diplomatic opportunities to raise the abductions issue, including at summit meetings, foreign ministers’ meetings and international conferences such as the G7 Summit, the Japan-China-ROK Trilateral Summit, the Japan-U.S.-ROK Foreign Ministers’ Meeting, ASEAN-related Summit Meetings and UN meetings.

With regard to the U.S., President Trump raised the abductions issue with Chairman Kim at the U.S.-North Korea Summit in June 2018, at the request of Prime Minister Abe. At the second U.S.-North Korea Summit in February 2019, President Trump raised the abductions issue with Chairman Kim at the tête-à-tête meeting, which was held first on the first day, and clearly stated Prime Minister Abe's views regarding the abductions issue. In addition, at the small group dinner that followed, President Trump again raised the abductions issue, and a serious discussion was held between the leaders. When President Trump visited Japan in May 2019, he met with the families of the abductees as he had done during his previous visit in November 2017, listened attentively to the emotional pleas by the family members and encouraged them. During the Japan-U.S. Summit telephone call in September 2020, Prime Minister Suga expressed his intention to work resolutely toward the early resolution of the abductions issue, and asked for President Trump's continued full support. In a telephone call with President Biden in January 2021 as well, Prime Minister Suga asked for understanding and cooperation toward the early resolution of the abductions issue and President Biden offered his support.

With regard to China, at the Japan-China Summit Meeting in June 2019, President Xi Jinping stated that he had conveyed Japan's position on Japan-North Korea relations and Prime Minister Abe's views to Chairman Kim during the China-North Korea Summit held in the same month. Prime Minister Abe also gained the strong support of President Xi for the improvement of Japan-North Korea relations, including the abductions issue. During the Japan-China Summit telephone call in September 2020, Prime Minister Suga raised to President Xi the issue of addressing North Korea, including the abductions issue, and they confirmed that Japan and China would continue to cooperate with each other.

The ROK has raised the abductions issue with North Korea at multiple opportunities, including

the Inter-Korean Summit in April 2018. At the Japan-ROK Summit Meeting in December 2019, President Moon Jae-in of the ROK expressed his understanding for Japan's position regarding the importance of the abductions issue and stated that the ROK had repeatedly raised the abductions issue with North Korea. During the September 2020 Japan-ROK Summit telephone call, Prime Minister Suga asked for continued support for the resolution of the abductions issue. In response, President Moon Jae-in expressed his support for Japan's position on the abductions issue, and the two leaders reconfirmed the importance of Japan-ROK and Japan-U.S.-ROK cooperation.

At the United Nations Human Rights Council in June and at the UN General Assembly in December, the EU submitted the Joint Statement on DPRK Human Rights, which was co-sponsored by Japan, and it was adopted without a vote. In December, an informal UN Security Council consultation on the human rights situation in North Korea was held, and afterwards, like-minded countries, including Japan, issued a joint statement urging the early resolution of the abductions issue, particularly the immediate return of the abductees.

Japan will continue to closely coordinate and cooperate with relevant countries, including the U.S., toward the early resolution of the abductions issue.

C North Korea's External Relations, etc.

(A) U.S.-North Korea Relations

From 2018 to 2019, the U.S. and North Korea held two summit meetings as well as a meeting between President Trump and Chairman Kim in Panmunjom, and in October 2019 U.S.-North Korea working-level talks were convened in Stockholm (Sweden). However, in 2020 no concrete progress was made in dialogues between the U.S. and North Korea. On July 10, Kim Yo Jong, First Vice Department Director of the Central Committee of the WPK, issued a statement stating that "Unless there is a decisive change in the

position of the U.S., I think that a summit between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the U.S. is unnecessary this year and beyond, and will continue to be useless, at least to us." Additionally, in a report made at the 8th Congress of the WPK in January 2021, Chairman Kim reportedly stated that "No matter who comes to power in the U.S., the true nature of U.S. policy toward the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will never change. The key to establishing a new Democratic People's Republic of Korea-U.S. relationship is for the U.S. to withdraw its hostile policy."

In January, March, November and December 2020, the U.S. newly designated individuals and entities which are subject to sanctions for their involvement in the dispatch of overseas workers and cyberattacks by North Korea. The sanctions target entities in North Korea, as well as entities and individuals in third countries, including Russia and China.

(B) Inter-Korean Relations

In 2018 there have been great strides in inter-Korean relations, with three inter-Korean Summit Meetings, but, continuing on from 2019, there were no positive developments in inter-Korean relations in 2020.

At the end of January, the ROK and North Korea agreed to temporarily close the Inter-Korean Joint Liaison Office in Kaesong until the danger from COVID-19 was completely eliminated, and ROK officials returned to the ROK.

In June, North Korea intensified its criticism of the ROK because of the release of anti-North Korea leaflets by ROK defector groups, and blew up the Inter-Korean Joint Liaison Office on June 16. North Korea also revealed that it was considering "military action plans" toward the ROK, but at the preliminary meeting for the fifth meeting of the seventh session of the Central Military Commission of the WPK, which was attended by Chairman Kim, it was decided to suspend the plans.

In September, an incident occurred in which the North Korean military shot and killed a South Korean civil servant who was in the North Korean waters of the Yellow Sea, and, following this incident, North Korea sent the ROK a letter from the United Front Department, including an apology by Chairman Kim, to the ROK. In response, President Moon Jae-in said at a Chief of Staff meeting that he would like to take the apology by Chairman Kim as having an extraordinary meaning, create opportunities for dialogue and cooperation, and use it as an opportunity to turn around inter-Korean relations. The Government of the ROK, during its response to this incident, also announced the fact that in early September there had been an exchange of letters between the leaders of the ROK and North Korea. In an address at the UN General Assembly in September, President Moon Jae-in stated that "The Republic of Korea has been steadfast in seeking inter-Korean reconciliation," "I propose today launching a Northeast Asia Cooperation Initiative for Infectious Disease Control and Public Health, whereby North Korea participates as a member along with China, Japan, Mongolia and the Republic of Korea," and "I believe it (peace on the Korean Peninsula) begins with declaring an end to the war, an act that can affirm mutual commitments to peace."

At the military parade for the 75th anniversary of the founding of the WPK, Chairman Kim stated that "I hope that this health crisis would come to an end as early as possible and the day would come when the north and south take each other's hand again."

In a report made at the 8th Congress of the WPK, Chairman Kim reportedly stated that "Inter-Korean relations have regressed to the time before the Panmunjeom Declaration (signed at the April 2018 Inter-Korean Summit)" and that "Depending on the [ROK] attitude, we may return to a new starting point of peace and prosperity in the near future." Six days after the Congress of the WPK, President Moon Jae-in stated at a New Year's press conference that "Our determination to meet

[for an Inter-Korean Summit] at any time and any place and talk even in a contact-free manner remains unchanged” and also showed a positive attitude toward inter-Korean cooperation, including humanitarian cooperation.

(C) China-North Korea and Russia-North Korea Relations

The year 2019 marked the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and North Korea. In January, Chairman Kim visited China, and in June, President Xi Jinping visited North Korea for the first time since he took office. Events were also held both in China and North Korea to commemorate the anniversary. With regard to Russia-North Korea relations, Chairman Kim visited Vladivostok, Russia in April 2019 for the first time since he took office and held a meeting with President Putin.

On the other hand, due to the spread of COVID-19 in 2020, there were no travels by dignitaries between China and North Korea or between Russia and North Korea as before. Trade between China and North Korea, which accounts for approximately 90% of North Korea's entire external trade excluding inter-Korean trade, had also significantly reduced due to traffic restrictions following the spread of COVID-19.

(D) Other Issues

In 2020, a total of 77 drifting or wrecked wooden vessels presumed to be from North Korea were discovered (158 in 2019). The Government of Japan continues its effort to gather and analyze information, with great interest on relevant developments. In September, fishery patrol vessels of the Fisheries Agency confirmed a vessel that appeared to be a North Korean official one in Japan's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) in the west of the Yamatotai bank in the Sea of Japan. As a result of information gathering and analysis by the relevant ministries and agencies, it was identified as a North Korean official vessel, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs conveyed Japan's

position to North Korea. Japan will continue to deal appropriately with these issues in close coordination among relevant ministries and agencies.

D Domestic Political Affairs and Economy

(A) Political Affairs

The 8th Congress, which is the highest decision-making institution in the WPK, was held for eight days from January 5 to 12, 2021. It was the first time in approximately five years since the 7th Congress of the WPK that was held in May 2016.

It was reported that at the Congress of the WPK, Chairman Kim mentioned the continuation of nuclear and missile development and external relations (U.S.-North Korea relations, inter-Korean relations), etc. in an activity summary of achievements/reflections on the past five years and of future issues, and that a new “Five Year National Economic Development Plan” was presented. Personnel affairs such as the appointment of Chairman Kim to the post of “General Secretary of the WPK” were announced along with amendments to the Rules of the WPK, which include articulating to hold a Congress of the WPK once every five years.

On January 14, after the closing of the 8th Congress of the WPK, a military parade was held to celebrate the 8th Congress of the WPK. On January 17, the 4th Session of the 14th Supreme People's Assembly was convened, and it was announced that members of the Cabinet relating to economic issues were appointed, and that legislation related to the “Five Year National Economic Development Plan” was adopted.

(B) Economy

China accounts for the largest trade amount in North Korea's foreign trade, but in 2020 the scale of China-North Korea trade plummeted due to the impact of traffic restrictions following the spread of COVID-19. Additionally, it was reported that natural disasters such as typhoons continuously occurred and caused damage to agricultural land, houses, roads and railroads, etc.

Amidst these circumstances, at the military parade for the 75th anniversary of the founding of the WPK Chairman Kim said that “In the face of shortages of everything due to harsh and long-term sanctions, we are faced with the tremendous challenges and difficulties of having to control the emergency epidemic and recover from natural disasters,” mentioning that “Citizens are mired in inescapable hardships” and that “I am truly sorry for that.”

It was reported that at the 8th Congress of the WPK in January 2021, Chairman Kim stated that the goals listed in the “the five-year strategy for the national economic development” presented at the 7th Congress of the WPK were unable to be achieved due to sanctions, natural disasters and the global health crisis, and it was reported that the new “five-year plan for the national economic development” (2021-2025) was presented.

(C) Response to COVID-19

North Korea has strengthened its epidemic prevention measures following the worldwide spread of COVID-19 since January 2020. At the October 10th military parade for the 75th anniversary of the founding of the WPK, Chairman Kim said that “Nobody in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea is infected with COVID-19.” As of December, North Korea claims that no COVID-19 infection within North Korea has occurred.

On January 30, it was reported that the previous “hygienic and anti-epidemic system” would be converted into the “state emergency anti-epidemic system” to respond to COVID-19. It was followed by suspension of all rail and air services between North Korea and China and Russia, and it was reported that the North Korean authorities took thorough measures to prevent the spread of infections, such as by implementing quarantine measures for individuals who were possibly infected. In July, an emergency enlarged meeting of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the WPK was convened, and a decision was adopted to shift from the “state emergency anti-epidemic

system” to the “maximum emergency system.” At the meeting, it was reported that one North Korean defector who returned to Kaesong City was suspected of being infected with COVID-19, and that a lockdown was imposed on Kaesong. Afterwards, although the lockdown of the city was lifted at the August 13 meeting of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the WPK, it was reported that at the meeting Chairman Kim said “The situation requires to shut the border tighter and carry out strict anti-epidemic work.” At subsequent meetings of the Political Bureau, the necessity for thorough and strengthened epidemic prevention efforts has been repeatedly emphasized, and it was reported that at the 8th Congress of the WPK in January 2021 Chairman Kim stated in his report to the meeting that “We should create a reliable anti-epidemic basis for coping with whatever world health crisis.”

E Other Issues

Defectors who have fled North Korea have to be kept in hiding to avoid being cracked down by the authorities in the countries where they are staying or to avoid being forcibly repatriated to North Korea. The Government of Japan is addressing the protection of and support for these North Korean defectors, in line with the purpose of the North Korean Human Rights Violation Act, taking into account a comprehensive range of factors, including humanitarian considerations, the safety of those concerned, and relations with the countries in which these defectors reside. Relevant ministries and agencies in Japan are closely working together to promote measures aimed at helping the settlement of defectors accepted by Japan.

(2) Republic of Korea (ROK)

A Japan-ROK Relations

(A) Bilateral Relations

The Republic of Korea (ROK) is an important neighboring country. The two countries have built a close, friendly and cooperative relationship based on the Treaty on Basic Relations between

Japan and the Republic of Korea, the Agreement on the Settlement of Problem concerning Property and Claims and on the Economic Co-operation between Japan and the Republic of Korea, and other relevant agreements that the two countries concluded when they normalized their relationship in 1965. In spite of the above, in 2020, unacceptable situation to Japan has continued, including the issue of former civilian workers from the Korean Peninsula (hereinafter referred to as “CWKs”), moves that are contrary to the intent and spirit of the 2015 Japan-ROK Agreement on the issue of comfort women, and military exercises in Takeshima.

Under these circumstances, at the Japan-ROK Summit telephone call held on the occasion of the inauguration of Prime Minister Suga in September, Prime Minister Suga told President Moon Jae-in that Japan-ROK and Japan-U.S.-ROK coordination is important, including for the issue concerning North Korea, and that the relations between Japan and the ROK, which is currently in an extremely difficult situation due to issues, including the issue of CWKs, should not be left as it is, and also urged the ROK to create opportunities to restore sound Japan-ROK relations. Prime Minister Suga also sought continued support for the resolution of the abductions issue.

Although the travel of dignitaries between Japan and the ROK is severely restricted due to the impacts of COVID-19, communication through the diplomatic channels continued, including a total of three Japan-ROK Foreign Ministers' Meetings (including telephone calls) and Japan-ROK Director-General-level consultations on multiple occasions.

Under these circumstances, on January 8, 2021, in the lawsuit filed by former comfort women and others against the Government of Japan, the Seoul Central District Court of the Republic of Korea rendered a judgment which ordered the Government of Japan, inter alia, to pay compensation to the plaintiffs, denying the application of the principle of State immunity under international

law. On January 23, 2021, this judgment was confirmed. This judgment is clearly contrary to the international law and agreements between the two countries, and further exacerbates Japan-ROK relations, which are already in a difficult situation due to issues including the issue of CWKs. This judgment is extremely regrettable and totally unacceptable. Japan strongly urges the ROK to immediately take appropriate measures to remedy the status of its breaches of international law on its own responsibility as a country.

(B) The Issue of Former Civilian Workers from the Korean Peninsula (CWKs)

The Agreement on the Settlement of Problem concerning Property and Claims and on the Economic Co-operation between Japan and the Republic of Korea, which is the core of the normalization of their relationship in 1965, stipulates that Japan shall supply to the ROK 300 million US dollars in grants and extend loans up to 200 million US dollars (Article I). In addition, the Agreement stipulates that the “problem concerning property, rights and interests of the two Contracting Parties and their nationals (including juridical persons) and concerning claims between the Contracting Parties and their nationals [abridged] is settled completely and finally” and that “no contention shall be made” with respect to such claims (Article II).

However, on October 30 and November 29, 2018, the Supreme Court of the ROK gave final judgments ordering Japanese companies to pay compensation for damages to ROK nationals who were said to have worked for the companies during the Second World War. Such judgments are extremely regrettable and totally unacceptable.

These Supreme Court judgments and related judicial procedures clearly violate Article II of the Agreement on the Settlement of Problem concerning Property and Claims and on the Economic Co-operation between Japan and the Republic of Korea and inflict unjustifiable damages and costs on the Japanese companies. Above all, the

judgments completely overthrow the legal foundation of the friendly and cooperative relationship that Japan and the ROK have developed since the normalization of diplomatic relations.

In January 2019, the Government of Japan requested a diplomatic consultation with the Government of the ROK pursuant to Article III-1 in order to settle this issue in accordance with the dispute settlement procedures under the Agreement. However, the Government of the ROK failed to respond to the request. Additionally, the Government of Japan gave notice to the Government of the ROK in May 2019 that it would refer the dispute to arbitration in accordance with Article III-2 of the Agreement, but, although requested to comply with this, the Government of the ROK did not fulfill its obligations regarding the arbitration procedure stipulated in the Agreement, and, as a result, the arbitration board could not be constituted.⁸

In the meantime, based on the plaintiffs' petitions, the ROK courts have advanced the procedures for seizing and liquidizing the assets of the Japanese companies. The Government of Japan has repeatedly emphasized to the Government of the ROK that if the seized assets of Japanese companies were to be liquidated, it would lead to an extremely serious situation for Japan-ROK relations and must be avoided at any cost, and renewed its call for the ROK to remedy the status of its breaches of international law and to urgently provide a solution that is acceptable to Japan.

The Government of Japan will continue to maintain communication through the diplomatic channel between Japan and the ROK, and will continue to strongly urge the ROK to take appropriate actions based on Japan's principled positions on issues between our two countries, including the issue of CWKs.

The below Ministry of Foreign Affairs website details Japan's Efforts on the Issue of CWKs.

https://www.mofa.go.jp/a_o/na/kr/page4e_000947.html



(C) The Issue of Comfort Women

As the issue of comfort women has been a major diplomatic issue in Japan-ROK relations since the 1990s, Japan has sincerely dealt with it. The issue concerning property and claims between Japan and the ROK was settled “completely and finally” in 1965 through the Agreement on the Settlement of Problem concerning Property and Claims and on the Economic Co-operation between Japan and the Republic of Korea. However, from the perspective of facilitating feasible remedies for the former comfort women, the people and the Government of Japan cooperated to establish the Asian Women's Fund in 1995, through which they carried out medical and welfare projects and provided “atonement money” to each former comfort woman in Asian and other countries, including the ROK. In addition, successive Prime Ministers have sent letters expressing their “apology and remorse” to former comfort women. The Government of Japan has made every effort as mentioned above.

Furthermore, as a result of great diplomatic efforts, the Governments of Japan and the ROK confirmed that the issue of comfort women was “resolved finally and irreversibly” with the agreement reached at the Japan-ROK Foreign Ministers' Meeting in December 2015.⁹ Directly after this Japan-ROK Foreign Ministers' Meeting, the Japanese and ROK leaders also confirmed that they would take responsibility as leaders to implement this agreement and that they would deal with various issues based on the spirit of this agreement, and that the Government of the ROK committed to the agreement. This agreement was

⁸ See References on the issue of former civilian workers from the Korean Peninsula (CWKs)

⁹ and ¹¹ See References on the comfort women issue

welcomed by the international community, including then UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and the U.S. Government. In accordance with the agreement, in August 2016, the Government of Japan contributed 1 billion Japanese yen to “the Reconciliation and Healing Foundation” established by the Government of the ROK. As of December 31, 2020, the fund provided financial support to 35 out of 47 former comfort women who were alive at the time of the agreement, and to the bereaved families of 64 out of 199 former comfort women who were deceased at the time. The agreement has been received positively by many former comfort women.

However, in December 2016, a comfort woman statue¹⁰ was installed on the sidewalk facing the Consulate-General of Japan in Busan by a civic group in the ROK. Later, the Moon Jae-in administration was newly inaugurated in May 2017. Based on the results of the assessment made by the Taskforce to Review the Agreement on Comfort Women Issue under the direct supervision of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the ROK, Foreign Minister Kang Kyung-wha announced the position of the Government of the ROK on January 9, 2018, as follows: i) it will not ask for a renegotiation with Japan; and ii) the 2015 agreement, which fails to properly reflect the wishes of the victims, does not constitute a true resolution of the issue. In July 2018, the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family of the ROK announced that it would arrange a reserve budget to “appropriate the full amount” of the 1 billion Japanese yen contributed by the Government of Japan and contribute this amount to “the Gender Equality Fund.” In November 2018, the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family announced that it would proceed with its dissolution of “the Reconciliation and Healing Foundation” and has since moved ahead with the dissolution procedures. While the Government of the ROK, including President

Moon Jae-in, repeatedly stated in public that it “will not abandon the agreement” and “will not ask for a renegotiation with Japan,” the moves to dissolve the Foundation are totally unacceptable for Japan in light of the 2015 Japan-ROK Agreement. Additionally, Japan has been objecting to the ROK having mentioned this issue in such occasions as the United Nations Human Rights Council in recent years, even though the Japan-ROK Agreement confirms that the Government of Japan and the Government of the ROK will refrain from accusing or criticizing each other regarding the comfort women issue in the international community, including at the United Nations .

Moreover, on January 8, 2021, in the lawsuit filed by former comfort women and others against the Government of Japan, the Seoul Central District Court of the Republic of Korea rendered a judgment which ordered the Government of Japan, inter alia, to pay compensation to the plaintiffs, denying the application of the principle of State immunity under international law. On January 23, 2021, this judgment was confirmed.¹¹ Japan has repeatedly expressed its position that this lawsuit must be dismissed because it is not acceptable for the Government of Japan to be subject to the jurisdiction of the ROK in accordance with this principle of State immunity in international law. As mentioned above, the issue concerning property and claims between Japan and the ROK, including the issue of comfort women, was “settled completely and finally,” with the Agreement on the Settlement of Problem concerning Property and Claims and on the Economic Co-operation between Japan and the Republic of Korea of 1965. Furthermore, it was confirmed that the issue of comfort women was “resolved finally and irreversibly” with the agreement between Japan and the ROK in 2015. Therefore, the judgment is extremely regrettable and absolutely unacceptable, as it is clearly contrary to international law

¹⁰ For the sake of practical convenience, they are referred to as “comfort woman statues.” However, the use of this term is not a reflection of the recognition that these statues correctly embody the reality of those women at that time.

and agreements between the two countries. Japan once again strongly urges the ROK to immediately take appropriate measures to remedy the status of its breaches of international law on its own responsibility as a country.

The Japan-ROK agreement in 2015 is an agreement between two countries, and it must be implemented responsibly regardless of the change of government. The ROK has a responsibility to steadily implement the agreement not only to Japan but also to the international community. As stated above, the Government of Japan has implemented all measures it committed to under the Japan-ROK agreement. The Government of the ROK itself also acknowledges that this agreement is an official agreement between the two governments and the international community is closely following the ROK's implementation of the agreement. The Government of Japan will continue to strongly urge the ROK to steadily implement the Japan-ROK Agreement. (see page 37 for the handling of the comfort women issue in the international community.)

The below Ministry of Foreign Affairs website details Japan's Efforts on the Issue of Comfort Women.

https://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/postwar/page22e_000883.html



(D) Takeshima Dispute

Regarding the dispute between Japan and the ROK concerning the territorial sovereignty over Takeshima, Takeshima is indisputably an inherent part of the territory of Japan in light of historical

facts and based on international law. The ROK has continued its illegal occupation of Takeshima with no legal basis in international law, including stationing permanent security personnel. Japan has been keeping the world informed about Japan's position on the issue through various media,¹² and has repeatedly lodged strong protests against the ROK over matters such as landing on the island by South Koreans including members of the ROK's National Assembly, and the ROK's military exercises and marine researches.¹³ In particular, in 2020, military exercises and maritime surveys were also conducted on the island or its vicinity. The Government of Japan considers them unacceptable in view of Japan's position and lodged strong protests.

For a peaceful settlement of the Takeshima dispute, Japan proposed to the ROK that the issue be referred to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in 1954, 1962 and 2012. However, the ROK rejected the proposal in all instances. Japan is determined to continue to engage in appropriate diplomatic efforts to settle the Takeshima dispute in a peaceful manner in accordance with international law.

(E) Update of Licensing Policies and Procedures on Exports of Controlled Items to the ROK

On September 11, 2019, the Government of the ROK requested bilateral consultations with Japan under the World Trade Organization (WTO) dispute settlement procedures, claiming the update by the Government of Japan of the operation of measures related to Japan's export to the ROK of three items for semiconductors (fluorinated

12 In February 2008, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs published a pamphlet entitled "Takeshima: 10 points to understand the Takeshima Dispute." Currently, it is available on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' website in 11 languages: Japanese, English, Korean, French, German, Spanish, Portuguese, Arabic, Russian, Chinese and Italian. Furthermore, since October 2013, videos and flyers about Takeshima have been available on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' website, and they are currently available in the above 11 languages. In addition, Japan has taken initiatives such as distributing a smartphone app that aims to increase awareness of the Takeshima issue. Further details are available on the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs here: <https://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/takeshima/index.html>



13 The ROK Armed Forces conducted military training related to Takeshima in June and December 2019. The Government of Japan immediately conveyed to the Government of the ROK that such an act was unacceptable and extremely regrettable in light of Japan's position on sovereignty over Takeshima, and strongly protested against the act.

polyimide, resist and hydrogen fluoride), and the system for requiring individual export licenses¹⁴, is in breach of the WTO Agreements. The Government of the ROK announced on November 22, 2019, that it suspended the effect of the notification of termination of the Agreement between the Government of Japan and the Government of the Republic of Korea on the Protection of Classified Military Information (GSOMIA), and in doing so said that it would also suspend its WTO dispute settlement procedures while the Japan-ROK Export Control Policy Dialogue would be held as normal. Subsequently Export Control Policy Dialogues were held in December 2019 and March 2020. Despite the fact that the export control authorities of Japan and the ROK shared the view to resolve the issue through dialogue and communication, the Government of the ROK resumed WTO dispute settlement procedures on June 18, and the WTO Dispute Settlement Body decided to establish a panel on July 29.

(F) Exchanges and Travel

In 2018, the number of people making visits between the two countries was approximately 10.49 million people, exceeding 10 million for the first time. In 2019, however, the number was approximately 8.85 million people due to a significant decrease in the number of people visiting Japan from the ROK. Since March, travel between Japan and the ROK significantly decreased due to the strengthening of border measures related to COVID-19, and in 2020, only approximately 920,000 people made trips between the two countries. Under such circumstances and with regards to phased measures toward resuming cross-border travel, Japan and the ROK held discussions and coordinated based on decisions made by the National Security Council and by

the Novel Coronavirus Response Headquarters on July 22, and from October 8, started the “Business Track” and “Residence Track” travel programs¹⁵ (See the Opening Special Feature on page 2). The Governments of Japan and the ROK share the view that, notwithstanding the challenging situation of the bilateral relationship, exchanges between Japan and the ROK are important. In Japan, K-POP and South Korean TV dramas, etc., are widely accepted by people of all ages, and particularly amidst the spread of COVID-19 when citizens are asked to refrain from going out, the drama “Crash Landing on You” was so popular that it was selected as a candidate for a buzzword award and sparked the fourth wave of Korean popularity. In addition, in recent years Korean cuisine has become widespread throughout Japan, and Korean cosmetics and fashion are popular mainly among young Japanese women. The major Japan-ROK grassroots exchange program “Japan-Korea Exchange Festival” (*Nikkan Koryu Omatsuri*) could not invite visitors because of the impacts of COVID-19, so in 2020, it was held online for the first time in both Tokyo and Seoul. The Government of Japan continues to work on promoting mutual understanding primarily between young people and building a friendly and cooperative relationship for the future through Japan’s Friendship Ties Programs (JENESYS 2020), and in 2020, conducted an online exchange program for the first time.

(G) Other Issues

The Governments of Japan and the ROK concluded Agreement between the Government of Japan and the Government of the Republic of Korea on the Protection of Classified Military Information (GSOMIA) in November 2016 in order to strengthen cooperation and coordination

¹⁴ The Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry announced the following updates on July 1, 2019: (1) the amendment of the Export Trade Control Order of the ROK (Note: The ROK was excluded from “Group A.” A revised Cabinet ordinance entered into force on August 28 to effect this change) and (2) switching from bulk licenses to individual export licenses for Fluorinated polyimide, Resist and Hydrogen fluoride.

¹⁵ In response to the spread of COVID-19 variants in various countries, operation has been suspended since January 14, 2021, as a new measure for border enforcement (as of the end of February, 2021).

between the two countries in the field of security and contribute to regional peace and stability. Afterwards, the agreement was automatically extended in 2017 and 2018. However, the Government of the ROK announced on August 22, 2019, its decision to terminate the GSOMIA in connection with Japan's update of licensing policies and procedures on exports (see (E)) and notified the termination on the following day, August 23. Following this and after exchanges between Japan and the ROK, on November 22, the Government of the ROK announced that it would suspend the effect of the notification of termination of August 23. In view of the current regional security environment, the Government of Japan still considers it important for the Agreement to continue operating in a stable manner.

Sea of Japan is the only internationally established name for the sea area concerned, and the UN and governments of major countries such as the U.S. adopt Sea of Japan as the official name. Objections to this name, however, were first raised by the ROK and North Korea in 1992. Since then, the ROK and North Korea have been objecting to the name at the United Nations Group of

Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN),¹⁶ the International Hydrographic Organization (IHO) and other international conferences. These assertions however are groundless, and Japan has firmly refuted these assertions each time they arise.¹⁷

Furthermore, Japan has made requests to the Government of the ROK through its diplomatic channels to return cultural properties that were stolen and are currently in the ROK¹⁸ to Japan as soon as possible. Japan will continue to call upon the Government of the ROK for their prompt return.

Other than these issues, Japan has provided supports and taken measures as much as possible from a humanitarian perspective in a wide range of fields, including responses for ethnic Koreans in Sakhalin,¹⁹ addressing the issue of atomic bomb survivors living in the ROK,²⁰ and helping Hansen's disease patients admitted to sanitariums in the ROK.²¹

B Japan-ROK Economic Relations

The total value of trade between the two countries amounted to approximately 7.60 trillion Japanese yen in 2020. Japan is the ROK's third

¹⁶ A UN conference where experts on place names and geospatial information from each country discuss, from a technical point of view, the definitions of terms related to place names and the notion methods for place names. In 2017, the UN Conferences on the Standardization of Geographical Name, which had been held every five years, and the UN Group of Experts on Geographical Names, which had been held every two years, were integrated into the United Nations Group of Experts on Place Names (UNGEGN).

¹⁷ Ministry of Foreign Affairs website detailing the issue of the name of the "Sea of Japan": <https://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/maritime/japan/index.html>



¹⁸ After being stolen in Tsushima City, Nagasaki Prefecture in 2012 and shipped to the ROK, in April 2016 the Buseoksa Temple in the ROK requested that the Government of the ROK return to Buseoksa Temple the "Kanzeon Bosatsu Statue" that had been collected and stored by the Government of the ROK. The proceedings were filed in the Daejeon District Court, but in January 2017 the Court issued a verdict of the first hearing to the plaintiff's side (Buseoksa Temple). In response to this, the Government of the ROK appealed, and the matter is currently pending at the Daejeon High Court. The "Kanzeon Bosatsu Statue" is still being held by the Government of the ROK and has not been returned to Japan (as of February 2021).

¹⁹ For various reasons, before the end of World War II, people from the Korean Peninsula traveled to what was then known as Minami Karafuto (South Sakhalin) and were compelled to remain there for a long time after the war ended under the de facto rule of the Soviet Union, without being given the opportunity to return to the ROK. The Government of Japan is providing such people with support, such as to enable them to return home temporarily and to visit Sakhalin.

²⁰ This is the issue of provision of support to those who were exposed to the atomic bombs while living in Hiroshima or Nagasaki during World War II and subsequently went to live overseas. To date, Japan has provided support in the form of the Atomic Bomb Victim Health Handbook and allowances based on the Atomic Bombs Survivors' Assistance Act.

²¹ In February 2006, the "Act on Payment of Compensation to Inmates of Hansen's Disease Sanatorium" was amended, and former residents of Hansen's disease sanitariums outside of Japan, which were established by Japan before the end of World War II, were made eligible for compensation, similar to former residents of domestic sanitariums. Additionally, in November 2019, the "Act on Payment of Compensation to Families of Former Patients of Hansen's Disease" was enacted, and the families of former inmates were also made eligible for compensation.

largest trading partner, and vice versa. The ROK's trade deficit with Japan increased by approximately 6.1% from a year earlier, reaching approximately 1.93 trillion Japanese yen (Trade Statistics of Japan, Ministry of Finance). Japanese direct investment in the ROK totaled approximately 0.73 billion US dollars (down 49.2% from the previous year) (figures published by the ROK Ministry of Trade, Industry and Energy), making Japan the ROK's fifth largest source of foreign direct investment (Hong Kong and the Cayman Islands are excluded from the ranking.).

In November, 15 countries, including Japan and the ROK, signed the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) Agreement, which is also the first Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) between Japan and the ROK.

Under WTO dispute settlement procedures, in September 2019, the WTO Appellate Body issued a report that recognized Japan's major claims in "Korea - Anti-Dumping Duties on Pneumatic Valves From Japan," and in August 2020, the measures were abolished. For "Korea - Sunset Review of Anti-Dumping Duties on Stainless Steel Bars," a panel released a report in November, finding that the ROK's measures were in violation of the WTO Agreements and recommended that the measures be remedied. Furthermore, in "Korea - Measures Affecting Trade in Commercial Vessels," bilateral consultations were held in December 2018 and March 2020 based on WTO dispute settlement procedures.

■ Situation in the ROK

(A) Domestic Affairs

A general election of the National Assembly of the ROK was held on April 15, prior to the Moon Jae-in administration entering its fourth year in May 2020. In the election, the ruling party gained support as a result of rapidly quelling the spread of COVID-19 in the ROK in early 2020, and the Democratic Party of the ROK won 180 out of the 300 total seats. However, the ruling party lost the mayoral seats in the ROK's two major cities

with the resignation of Oh Keo-don, the mayor of Busan, in late April, and the suicide of Park Won-soon, the mayor of Seoul, in July respectively due to their misdeeds.

Cabinet reshuffles were conducted by the Moon administration in July, December and January 2021. In the July cabinet reshuffle, President Moon Jae-in appointed Suh Hoon, who had been working on inter-Korean relations as Director of the National Intelligence Service, as the Director of the Office of National Security for the President, and carried out Ministerial personnel affairs with an emphasis on inter-Korean relations. In December, in addition to some Ministerial personnel affairs, Noh Young-Min, Chief of Staff to the President, and Kim Sang-jo, Chief of Staff for Policy, announced their resignations. In January 2021, Chung Eui-yong, the former Director of the Office of National Security for the President, was nominated to succeed Minister of Foreign Affairs Kang Kyung-wha, and Chung Eui-yong was appointed as the Minister of Foreign Affairs in February 2021.

In January, President Moon appointed former Democratic Party of the ROK representative Choo Mi-ae as Minister of Justice in an attempt to advance prosecution reforms, but following the appointment, there was conflict between Minister Choo and Prosecutor General Yoon Seok-youl. On November 24, Minister Choo announced that she would suspend Prosecutor General Yoon's duties and advance disciplinary proceedings, then on December 15, the Disciplinary Committee decided to suspend Prosecutor General Yoon for two months. The following day, December 16, President Moon approved the decision and Minister Choo announced her resignation, but on December 24, the Seoul Administrative Court granted Prosecutor General Yoon's complaint, and suspended the decision to suspend his duties. In January 2021, the Corruption Investigation Office for High-ranking Officials (CIO) was established, which is an organization that investigates cases of fraud involving high-ranking officials, and investigations of cases of fraud involving high-ranking

officials will now be conducted by the CIO instead of by prosecutors in the ROK.

(B) Foreign Policy

Following the outbreak of COVID-19 in early 2020, the Government of the ROK was ahead of other countries in suppressing the outbreak through aggressive PCR testing, contact tracing, and thorough quarantine measure for infected individuals and their close contacts. This know-how was termed as “K-Quarantine,” was promoted both domestically and overseas, and efforts were made to share it with the other governments. Reciprocal visits by dignitaries between the ROK and other countries decreased due to the spread of COVID-19, but the Government of the ROK actively develops diplomacy between leaders and foreign ministers through telephone calls and teleconferences, and has created a framework for resuming travel by businesspeople with Japan, China, the United Arab Emirates, Indonesia, Singapore and Viet Nam. In 2020, President Moon Jae-in did not make any overseas visits.

Although the Government of the ROK was making these efforts in response to the spread of COVID-19, addressing North Korea continued to be a top priority for the Moon Jae-in administration, but in June, the inter-Korean joint liaison office in Kaesong was blown up by North Korea and there were no positive movements in inter-Korean relations (see (1) C (B) for inter-Korean relations).

With regards to relations with the U.S., the U.S.-ROK Combined Forces Command training was held in August at a reduced scale due to the impacts of COVID-19. In 2019 and 2020, the U.S. and the ROK held a total of seven discussions on the 11th Special Measures Agreement (SMA) related to U.S. forces stationing expenses after 2020, but negotiations did not come to a conclusion during 2020, partly due to the U.S. requesting an increase in the ROK’s burden. In addition, following the victory of former Vice President Joe Biden in the U.S. presidential election, a telephone call between President Moon and President-elect Joe

Biden was held on November 12. After the inauguration of President Biden, a U.S.-ROK Summit telephone call was held on February 4, 2021.

With regards to relations with China, the Governments of the ROK and China coordinated a visit by President Xi Jinping to the ROK, but it was not realized during 2020 due to the spread of COVID-19. In August, Yang Jiechi, a Member of the Central Politburo of the Communist Party of China, and in November, Wang Yi, a State Councilor and Foreign Minister, visited the ROK. A China-ROK Summit telephone call was held on January 26, 2021, and the two leaders declared that the two-year period of 2021 and 2022, the 30th anniversary of the normalization of diplomatic relations between China and the ROK, will be “Years of cultural exchange between China and the ROK.”

(C) Economy

In 2020, the GDP growth rate in Korea was impacted by the spread of COVID-19 and was -1.0%, showing a decrease from 2.0% of the previous year. The total amount of exports decreased 5.4% year-on-year to approximately 512.9 billion US dollars, while the total amount of imports decreased 7.2% year-on-year to approximately 467.2 billion US dollars, resulting in a trade surplus of approximately 45.6 billion US dollars (figures published by the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Energy).

As for domestic economic policies, the Moon Jae-in administration inaugurated in May 2017 has stressed the importance of “income-led growth” and “an employment-centered economy” revolving around people, and has significantly increased the minimum wage for two consecutive years since 2018. However, such sharp rises drew growing criticisms for causing job losses, and in August 2020 the administration announced that the minimum wage in 2021 would be 8,720 won (up 1.5% year-on-year).

In recent years, the ROK has had a rapidly declining birthrate and aging population. In 2020,

the total fertility rate was a record low of 0.84 children per woman, making the declining birth-rate issue all the more serious.

The Moon Jae-in administration has implemented policies to curb real estate investment, but due to excessive demand associated with speculative home purchases by owners of multiple homes, condominium prices in Seoul have risen by approximately 50% in the three years since the administration was inaugurated. Real estate prices continue to rise, and addressing this has become one of the most important issues for the administration.

In order to lead changes in the world after the spread of COVID-19, in July, the Government of the ROK announced a comprehensive plan for a Korean version of the New Deal as a national development strategy, centered on strengthening the Digital New Deal, the Green New Deal and the employment safety net.

3 China / Mongolia, etc.

(1) China

A Situation in China

(A) Domestic Affairs

The Third Session of the 13th National People's Congress (NPC) was originally scheduled for March, but was postponed due to the impacts of COVID-19 and held in May. As the impacts of COVID-19 drew attention, Premier Li Keqiang said in the Government Work Report at the session that "We have resolutely won the battle to protect Wuhan and Hubei, and we have achieved decisive results." From October 26 to 29, the fifth plenary session of the 19th Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee was held, and the "14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25) for National Economic and Social Development and the Long-Range Objectives Through the Year 2035" were deliberated and adopted. President Xi Jinping was described as the "core of the Central Committee of the Party" and as the "core of the whole Party," and the leadership of the CPC and the superiority

of the socialist system were re-emphasized. In addition, 2020 was the target year for the realization of building a "moderately prosperous society" and it was mentioned that "victory is imminent," showing confidence that the eradication of poverty would be achieved as planned by the end of the year. In December, President Xi Jinping stressed that China had "lifted nearly 100 million people out of poverty and won a significant victory that impresses the world," and declared that the goal of "zero poverty" had been achieved by its deadline of 2020.

With regards to Hong Kong, the large-scale protests that had been ongoing since 2019 decreased in conjunction with the spread of the COVID-19 epidemic. Meanwhile, in May, the Standing Committee of the NPC enacted the Hong Kong "National Security Law," and decided to apply the law to Hong Kong. In response to this move, in a G7 Foreign Ministers' Statement in June, in which Japan also participated, the Foreign Ministers stated that China's decision is inconsistent with the Hong Kong Basic Law and with China's international commitment under the principles of the legally binding, UN-registered Sino-British Joint Declaration, and expressed grave concern that the law could undermine the principle of 'One Country Two System' framework in Hong Kong. However, despite the concerns of the international community and of Hong Kong citizens, on June 30th the Standing Committee of the NPC enacted the Hong Kong "National Security Law," which stipulated four types of criminal acts to be added, including separatism from the state, subversion of state power, terrorist activity, and colluding with foreign countries or powers and harming national security, and it entered into force on the same day. Since then, Hong Kong's democratic activists and media officials have been arrested based on the law, Hong Kong legislative elections scheduled for September were postponed, Hong Kong Legislative Council members were disqualified based on decisions from the Standing Committee of the NPC, and all pro-democracy members of

the Legislative Council resigned in protest of this. The international community, including Japan, has repeatedly expressed grave concerns about the situation in Hong Kong. The Consulate-General of Japan in Hong Kong, the Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) Hong Office and the Hong Kong Japanese Chamber of Commerce & Industry conducted the “Fifth Survey on the Business Conditions Surrounding Hong Kong” (October 19) targeting full members of the Hong Kong Japanese Chamber of Commerce & Industry, members of the Hong Kong Japanese Restaurant Association, and members of the Hong Kong Wakyokai. 66.8% of all respondents answered that they were “Extremely concerned” or “Concerned” about Hong Kong’s “National Security Law.”

The international community continues to express high interest in the human rights situation in the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region (XUAR). At the UN Human Rights Council in June and the Third Committee of the UN General Assembly in October, joint statements were read out expressing grave concerns about the human rights situation in the XUAR and in Hong Kong, and calling for meaningful access to the XUAR by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. Japan participated in both statements as the only participating country from Asia. Japan is seriously concerned about the human rights situation in the XUAR, and believes that it is important for China to guarantee the universal values of freedom, respect for basic human rights and the rule of law in the international community. As the international community including Japan has been expressing increased interest and concern over the human rights situation in the XUAR, Japan is working at all levels, including when State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi visited Japan in November 2020, to have the Government of China provide transparent explanations on the issue.

(B) Economy

Due to the spread of COVID-19, China’s real GDP in the first quarter of 2020 decreased by

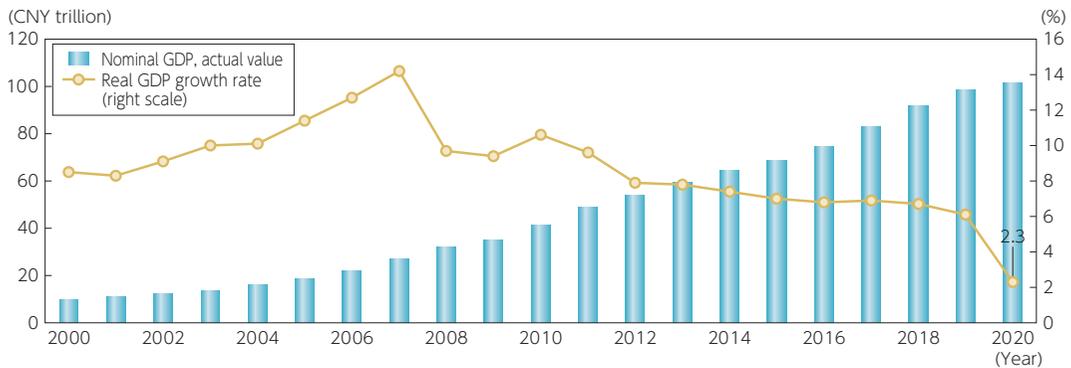
6.8% year on year, the first negative growth rate since 1992, the furthest back that quarterly statistics are available. Production, investment and consumption from January to March all saw negative growth for the first time in the quarter, and exports fell sharply due to a decrease in overseas demand, with COVID-19 having a serious impact on China’s economy. After the first quarter, the Government of China called for an early resumption of economic activities while curbing COVID-19 through means such as tracking users’ behavior and movement history via apps, etc. The economic recovery progressed, driven by production, investment and exports, and the real GDP for 2020 increased by 2.3%.

At the 13th National People’s Congress held in May, Premier Li Keqiang set the main development goals for 2020 as stable employment, poverty alleviation, industrial upgrading and the expansion of domestic demand. On the other hand, a target economic growth rate was not presented because of the unpredictable effects that China’s development was facing due to uncertainty over COVID-19, the economy and trade.

At the 5th plenary session of the 19th CPC Central Committee held in October, in addition to the proposal of the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25) for National Economic and Social Development and the Long-Range Objectives Through the Year 2035, the need to enhance economic self-sufficiency, including a shift to a domestic demand-led economic structure, was emphasized along with the construction of supply chains that are not affected by foreign pressure and the strengthening of science and technology for “independence,” “self-reliance” and “ensuring the security of the national economy.” At the 4th session of the Standing Committee of the NPC held in March 2021, the proposal was specifically established as the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25) for National Economic and Social Development and the Long-Range Objectives Through the Year 2035.

In the drafting process of this proposal, General Secretary Xi Jinping gave an address at an

Development of China's GDP



Source: National Bureau of Statistics of China

internal meeting in April entitled “Major Issues Concerning China’s Strategies for Mid-to-Long-Term Economic and Social Development,” in which he laid out a new development strategy of establishing autonomous domestic circulation while further expanding the 400 million people in the middle-income group, attracting resources from all over the world, attracting international industrial chains to have dependent relationships with China, and maintaining the policy of putting China first in the real economy, such as in the manufacturing industry (this address was published in the Party’s magazine, “Qiushi,” in October).

As for foreign economic policy, it was stated that China will continue to open up to the outside world. In November, the Third China International Import Expo was held, and in terms of economic partnerships, the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) Agreement for East Asia was signed and at the end of December a general agreement was reached on the EU-China Comprehensive Agreement on Investment. Additionally, President Xi Jinping, with regards to the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP11 Agreement), stated that he would “favorably consider” joining it at the APEC Economic Leaders’ Meeting in November.

At the Central Economic Work Conference held in December, it was stated that 2020 was a very special year in the history of the new China,

as China was the only country in the world that achieved positive economic growth, that the main goals and missions of the 13th Five-Year Plan would soon be completed, and that achieving total completion of a “moderately prosperous society” was imminent. In addition, the following were set as priority tasks for economic policy in 2021: (1) strengthening strategic science and technology capabilities, (2) industrial policy (strengthening industrial chain and supply chain control, etc.), (3) expansion of domestic demand, (4) reform and opening up (favorably considering joining the TPP11 Agreement, etc.), (5) agricultural and food policy, (6) competition policy (strengthening antitrust and preventing the disorderly expansion of capital, etc.), (7) housing policy, and (8) environmental policy (peak out carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions, concrete measures to achieve carbon neutrality, etc.)

In order to manage the party and administration stably, it is necessary to ensure constant economic growth while handling all domestic and external issues, and it is worth paying attention to the trends of China’s future economic and financial policies.

(C) Response to COVID-19

COVID-19 spread from China to the rest of the world after the end of 2019. On December 31, 2019 China reported a pneumonia of unknown cause to the WHO office in Beijing, and it was

additionally reported on January 3, 2020 that 44 people had contracted pneumonia of unknown cause. On January 16 it was announced that there were a cumulative total of 41 people who had been infected. Additionally, on January 3, a Wuhan doctor who posted on social media about an epidemic of pneumonia of unknown cause was punished by the Wuhan police authorities.

On January 20, President Xi Jinping gave instructions to resolutely stop the spread of COVID-19. On the same day, Zhong Nanshan, Head of China's COVID-19 Expert team, said in a television interview that "There is certainly human-to-human transmission." Following this, the cumulative number of infected people announced by the Government of China was 291 on January 20 and 11,791 on January 31.

On January 23, the Government of China took steps to seal off the city of Wuhan. Meanwhile, the mayor of Wuhan said on January 26 that more than five million people had already left Wuhan (the population of Wuhan is approximately 11 million).

President Xi Jinping established the "The Central Leading Group for COVID-19 Prevention and Control" on January 25, it held its first meeting the following day on January 26, and full-scale infection prevention measures began. On January 27, an order was issued to cancel all overseas group tours. On January 28, WHO Director-General Tedros visited China, met with President Xi Jinping, and on January 30 the WHO issued a "Public Health Emergency of International Concern." The number of infections in China exceeded 80,000 in March, but the spread of the infection began to subside from mid-March. On March 10 President Xi Jinping visited Wuhan, on March 12 the Chinese health authorities announced that the peak of the infections in China had already passed, and on March 18 the number of new infections in China went to zero for the first time.

(D) Foreign Policy

In 2020, amidst the worldwide spread of COVID-19 from China, China has been actively expanding its external support since March. In June, the State Council Information Office of China published its first white paper on COVID-19, "Fighting COVID-19: China in Action." The white paper mentioned that by May 31 China had dispatched teams of medical professionals to 27 countries and had provided medical supplies, such as masks, protective clothing and ventilators, to 150 countries and four international organizations. Additionally, China actively promoted the domestic development of vaccines and steadily improved its vaccine production systems. At the annual WHO meeting in May, President Xi Jinping announced that, after putting its vaccines into practical use, China would make them a "global public good." Additionally, China actively used its vaccines for foreign policy, such as by promising Chinese-made vaccines to Southeast Asia, Africa and others.

Continuing from 2019, the U.S. and China are confronting each other in a variety of fields, such as trade issues, competition for advanced technologies and COVID-19 response from March, and made frequent criticisms of and sanctions toward each other on multiple fronts, including politics, foreign policy, military and security, the media and education. In the U.S. Congress, as there were increasing calls for measures including strict sanctions against China, the "Uyghur Human Rights Policy Act of 2020" in June and the "Hong Kong Autonomy Act" was enacted in July, and regulations on many Chinese companies were tightened due to security concerns and other reasons. The U.S. closed the Chinese Consulate-General in Houston at the end of July, claiming that it was a base for espionage and intellectual property theft, and in response China closed the U.S. Consulate-General in Chengdu. Furthermore, in January 2021 the U.S. determined that the human rights situation in the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region (XUAR) was genocide. In March 2021, the U.S.,

EU, UK and Canada announced sanctions for human rights violations in the XUAR. In response, China announced countersanctions against the U.S., EU, UK and Canada. As establishing stable relations between the U.S. and China, the first and second largest economies in the world, is an issue not only for Japan, but also for the international community as a whole, Japan will continue to monitor future developments.

(E) Military Affairs and Security

China has been increasing its defense expenditures about 44-fold over the past 30 years, but the breakdown of the budget and the intention behind the increase have not been disclosed sufficiently. Under such circumstances, China is extensively and rapidly enhancing and modernizing its military power centered on its nuclear and missile capabilities and naval and air forces. It is placing importance on ensuring its superiority in new domains of outer space, cyberspace and electromagnetic spectrum. China's expansion of military capability lacking transparency, unilateral actions to change the status quo in the East China Sea and South China Sea, and the expansion and increased vigor of its military activities are strong security concerns in the region, including Japan, and in the international community. China has been demonstrating a proactive stance in continuing to take an active part in United Nations PKOs as well as providing various kinds of humanitarian aid and disaster support, etc.

At the 19th Party Congress (2017), President Xi Jinping stated that China would transform its armed forces into a world-class military by the middle of this century. Additionally, the communique from the 19th CPC Central Committee, published in October 2020, set the new goal of "securing the realization of the centennial goal by 2027, the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA)." In recent years, China has grown to have a great influence on the international community, not only politically and economically, but also militarily.

To dispel any fears of China, there is a pressing need for China to increase transparency regarding its national defense policies and military power through specific and accurate disclosure of information. Japan intends to further promote mutual trust in Japan-China relations through dialogue and people-to-people exchanges, including the Japan-China Security Dialogue, while cooperating with other countries. Japan also intends to urge China to improve its transparency and encourage its positive involvement in the international order based on the rule of law.

B Japan-China Relationship

(A) Bilateral Relations: General

The relationship with China, the neighboring country across the East China Sea, is one of Japan's most important bilateral relationships, and the two countries have close economic relations, as well as people-to-people and cultural exchanges. Stable Japan-China relations are important not only for both countries, but also for the region and the international community. At the same time, there exist a variety of matters of concern with China, and it is important to continue utilizing high-level opportunities such as summit meetings and foreign ministers' meetings to firmly assert Japan's position and to strongly demand China to take concrete actions. As for the state visit invitation to President Xi Jinping made by Prime Minister Abe at the June 2019 Japan-China Summit Meeting, the Governments of Japan and China should first concentrate on containing COVID-19, and currently are not at the stage of making specific schedule arrangements.

In 2020 the travel of dignitaries significantly decreased due to the spread of COVID-19, but even under such circumstances, high-level communication, including between leaders, was continuously conducted, such as through telephone calls. While strengthening cooperation on COVID-19 responses, Japan and China exchanged opinions on a wide range of topics, from bilateral relations to regional and international affairs.



Japan-China Foreign Ministers' Meeting with Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi (February 15, Munich, Germany)

With regard to COVID-19, Japan and China worked together closely from the perspective of preventing the spread of the virus in China and protecting Japanese nationals, which included a Japan-China Foreign Ministers' telephone call on January 26, 2020, a Japan-China Foreign Ministers' Meeting during the Munich Security Conference on February 15, a Japan-China Foreign Ministers' telephone call on February 26, and Member of the Central Politburo of the Communist Party of China Yang Jiechi's visit to Japan on February 28 in which he affirmed cooperation to help stop the spread of the disease. In addition, based on the Japan-China Foreign Ministers' telephone call on January 26, a total of five charter planes were sent to Wuhan Airport to evacuate Japanese nationals in Hubei province who wanted to return to Japan. Japan also delivered approximately 90,000 pairs of gloves, 41,000 sets of goggles, 40,000 protective suits, and 2,000 disinfection products to China, carrying them on board these five flights. China expressed its gratitude for these efforts. On April 21 and July 29, Foreign Minister Motegi and State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi also had telephone calls about responses to COVID-19. At the meetings, the two Foreign Ministers confirmed that Japan and China will continue to cooperate through a variety of channels, such as between diplomatic authorities, including information sharing on lessons and knowledge in a free, transparent and prompt manner, and cooperation in international public health measures. Additionally,



Japan-China Foreign Ministers' Meeting with Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi (November 24, Tokyo)

at the telephone call in July, the two Foreign Ministers confirmed that they would coordinate to resume travel between the two countries as soon as possible.

On September 25, Prime Minister Suga and President Xi Jinping realized their first Japan-China Summit telephone call. Prime Minister Suga stated that a stable relationship between Japan and China is extremely important not only for the two countries, but also for the region and the international community, while conveying his hope that both countries would fulfill their responsibilities. The two leaders confirmed that their countries would continue to collaborate through various channels regarding COVID-19, and that they would continue to consult for the resumption of cross-border business travel as soon as possible. In addition to pending bilateral issues, the leaders discussed the challenges facing the region and the international community. Prime Minister Suga reiterated the situation in the East China Sea, including the waters around the Senkaku Islands, and stated that going forward he would like to discuss issues that are of great interest to the region and to the international community.

Although the travel of dignitaries between Japan and China was interrupted by the spread of COVID-19, State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi visited Japan on November 24 and the first high-level face-to-face meeting after the inauguration of the Suga administration was held. Foreign Minister Motegi had a total of more than

three hours of Japan-China Foreign Ministers' meetings with State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi, including one-on-one talks, and they exchanged frank opinions on the direction of Japan-China relations, items of mutual concern in bilateral relations, regional conditions including North Korea, and issues facing the international community, such as climate change, trade and investment. During these meetings, Foreign Minister Motegi clearly conveyed Japan's position on the South China Sea, the situation in Hong Kong, the Xinjiang Uygur issue, etc. in addition to bilateral issues such as the situation in the East China Sea, including the waters around the Senkaku Islands, the import restrictions on Japanese food and the detentions of Japanese nationals. Foreign Minister Motegi strongly urged China to take concrete actions, and firmly conveyed Japan's position and idea that China should take responsibility for various issues in the region and in the international community. With regard to the Senkaku Islands in particular, Foreign Minister Motegi conveyed Japan's strong concerns over individual incidents and strongly urged China not to take such actions as China's longest-ever intrusion into Japan's territorial waters, China's navigation through the contiguous zone surrounding the Senkaku Islands and China's approaching to Japanese fishing vessels..

On November 25, Prime Minister Suga received a courtesy call from State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi. Prime Minister Suga once again strongly urged China to take positive measures with regard to maritime and security issues such as in the East China Sea and in the waters surrounding the Senkaku Islands, the early removal of import restrictions on Japanese food, and, furthermore, the realization of the resumption of Japanese beef exports and exports of polished rice. Prime Minister Suga also conveyed Japan's concerns regarding the situation in Hong Kong and requested cooperation in dealing with North Korea, including on the abductions issue.

Based on a 2020 memorandum of understanding regarding the preparation of an annual plan

for exchanges and cooperation, practical dialogue between the diplomatic authorities has been promoted, such as the Japan-China Strategic Dialogue (January) and the Japan-China Policy Planning Discussion (September, in an online format). Additionally, on December 14 there was a teleconference between Minister of Defense Kishi and State Councilor of China and Defense Minister Wei Fenghe, and on December 15 there was a teleconference between Speaker of the House of Representatives Oshima Tadamori and Chairman of the Standing Committee of the NPC Li Zhanshu.

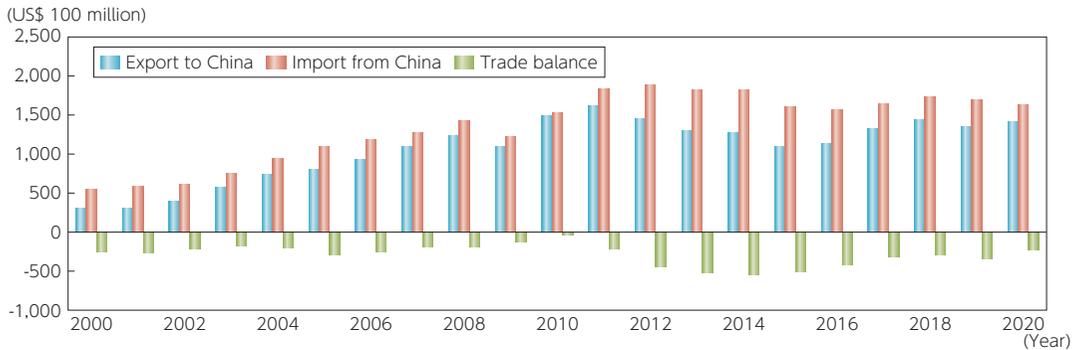
Stable Japan-China relations are important for the peace, stability and prosperity of the region and the international community. Japan and China, working together as responsible powers on and contributing to a variety of issues in the region and international community, will lead to further strengthening of Japan-China relations. Japan will continue close cooperation at a high level, including between leaders, to build a stable relationship with China.

(B) Japan-China Economic Relations

Economic relations between Japan and China, including trade and investment, are very close. Therefore, the spread of COVID-19 in China and the two-and-a-half month lockdown of Wuhan had a major impact on the economies of Japan and China. In particular, many medical supplies and automobile parts are manufactured in China, which led to a shortage of medical supplies such as masks in Japan and reduced automobile production. Additionally, the global spread of COVID-19 severely restricted business travel between Japan and China.

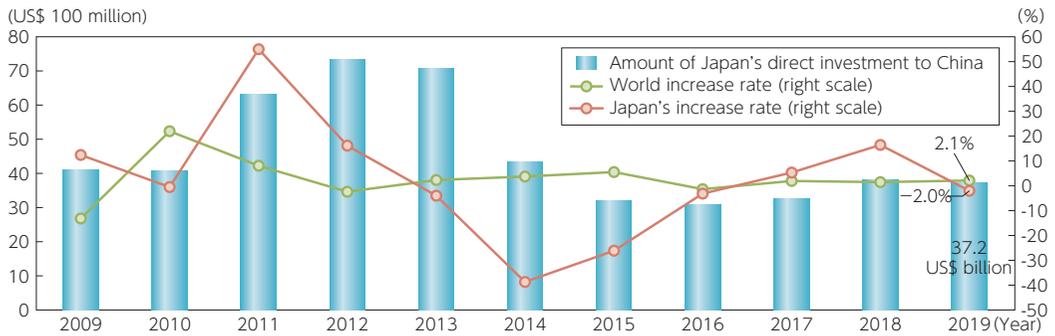
Under such circumstances, economic activities between Japan and China have continued, and the total trade between Japan and China (excluding Hong Kong) amounted to about 304.8 billion US dollars in 2020 (0.3% increase year on year), and China has been the largest trading partner for Japan for 14 consecutive years. Moreover,

Change in Japan's Value of Trade with China



Source: Ministry of Finance and Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO)

Change in amount of Japan's direct investment to China



Source: Ministry of Commerce of China

Note: Increase rate is estimated based on published amounts of investment

according to Chinese statistics, Japan's direct investment in China increased to about 3.72 billion US dollars (2.0% decrease year on year, as estimated from officially published information on investment) in 2019. Figures for 2020 have yet to be announced as of March 2021. Japan ranks third in terms of the amount of direct investment to China (Singapore ranks first, the ROK second, and the U.S. fourth).

As for economic dialogue between Japan and China, Japan-China Economic Partnership consultation were held online in November, and there was an extensive exchange of opinions on future issues and cooperation between Japan and China, including the current state of the economy in Japan and China, travel and tourism, medicine and healthcare, the environment and energy conservation, and agricultural trade, as well as on multilateral issues and cooperation, including

development, financial cooperation and debt issues, and trade and investment such as the WTO and RCEP. Japan raised to China the issues of ensuring the legitimate business activities of Japanese companies and a level-playing field in China, particularly with regard to protecting intellectual property, industrial subsidies and forced technology transfers, cyber data-related regulations, the Export Control Law, etc., and additionally once again strongly urged China to remove import restrictions on Japanese food.

At the Japan-China Foreign Ministers' Meeting held in Tokyo in November, with regard to economic areas, Japan and China agreed to promote cooperation together in fields where both sides have the same interests and direction, such as agricultural trade, travel and tourism, and the environment and energy conservation. Foreign Minister Motegi once again demanded that China protect

the business activities of Japanese companies and ensure a level-playing field. Additionally, as a private-sector-level economic exchange, the Third Japan-China Business Leaders and Former High-Level Government Officials Dialogue (Japan-China CEO Summit) was held online in December.

(C) Promotion of Mutual Understanding Between Japanese and Chinese People

(Current situation of people-to-people exchanges between Japan and China)

As COVID-19-related border measures, from February the Government of Japan designated Hubei Province, Zhejiang Province, and all of China as areas from which to refuse landings. From March, China also suspended visa exemption measures for Japan. As a result, travel between Japan and China dropped significantly, and the number of visitors to Japan from China went from a record high of 9.59 million in 2019 to approximately 1.07 million in 2020 (provisional value from the Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO)). The Government of Japan lifted the landing refusal designation for China from November 1, and on November 30 began operation of “Business Track” and “Residence Track” travel programs (see the Opening Special Feature on page 2). It is expected that the resumption of travel will contribute to the revitalization of the Japanese and Chinese economies and promote mutual understanding.

(Japan-China youth exchange, etc.)

The year 2020 was designated as the “Japan-China Culture and Sports Exchange Promotion Year.” Japan solicited and verified events suitable for the purpose, and supported the strengthening of exchanges. Due to the impacts of COVID-19, related events were postponed or canceled in both Japan and China, but a total of 51 events were held after taking proper measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19, including holding them online. Japanese and Chinese youth who had participated last year in the “JENESYS2019” youth



Online Japanese quiz tournament sponsored by the Consulate-General of Japan in Chongqing
First year Japanese language students from eight universities in Sichuan participated (June 14)

invitation program interacted again online and actively exchanged opinions on a variety of themes while enjoying conversation on their experiences at the program. Even amidst the COVID-19 epidemic, the youth exchanges between Japan and China continued through these efforts to explore new ways of conducting exchanges.

At the Japan-China Foreign Ministers’ Meeting held in November, both Japan and China confirmed that they would cooperate for the success of the Olympic and Paralympic Games Tokyo 2020 in the summer of 2021 and then for the Olympic and Paralympic Games Beijing in the winter of 2022. Bearing in mind that 2022 is the 50th anniversary of the normalization of Japan-China relations, the promotion of exchanges between both countries was discussed, and it was confirmed that both countries would support youth exchanges for the development of bilateral relations over the medium to long term.

(D) Specific Pending Issues

(Situation Surrounding the East China Sea)

In the East China Sea, China Coast Guard vessels continue to intrude into the Japanese territorial sea around the Senkaku Islands. Also, the Chinese military has been rapidly expanding and increasing its activities in quality and quantity at sea and in the airspace over the East China Sea.

The Senkaku Islands are indisputably an inherent part of the territory of Japan in light of

historical facts and based upon international law. Indeed, the Senkaku Islands are under the valid control of Japan. Thus, there exists no issue of territorial sovereignty to be resolved concerning the Senkaku Islands. From 1895, when the Senkaku Islands were incorporated into Japanese territory by lawful means under international law, until the 1970s, when the islands became the focus of attention after it was suggested that there might be oil reserves in the East China Sea, China had not raised any objections to Japan's sovereignty over the Senkaku Islands. Moreover, China has never explained why it had not expressed objections until then.²²

China Coast Guard vessels continue to intrude into the Japanese territorial sea, recording 24 incidents during 2020 (the numbers were 32 in 2019, and 19 in 2018). In May, July, August, October, November and December, China Coast Guard vessels intruded into the Japanese territory of the Senkaku Islands, and incidents occurred in which the China Coast Guard vessels attempted to approach Japanese fishing boats that were navigating in the area. In the incident in October, the intrusion into Japan's territorial waters lasted for more than 57 hours, which is the longest amount of time to date. Additionally, from April to August, the number of days in which Chinese Coast Guard vessels consecutively navigated in the contiguous zone surrounding the Senkaku Islands reached a record high of 111 days, and the situation is becoming more severe, with the number of days in 2020 in which Chinese Coast Guard vessels navigated in the contiguous zone around the Senkaku Islands reaching a record high of 333 days. The activities of the China Coast Guard vessels, which make their own assertions in Japan's territorial waters around the Senkaku Islands, are in violation of international law to begin with, and

the Government of Japan has repeatedly lodged strong protests and requested the withdrawal of Chinese vessels through diplomatic routes. With the determination to defend Japan's territory as well as territorial sea and airspace, Japan will continue to take a calm and resolute approach to the situation.

In June, the "Law of the People's Republic of China on the People's Armed Police Force," which regulates the authority and duties of the People's Armed Police Force, was amended and "protection of interests at sea and law enforcement" was stipulated as a duty of the People's Armed Police Force. The Government of China is proceeding with the development of legal systems for securing Maritime Rights and Interests protection. In November a draft of the "Coast Guard Law of the People's Republic of China" was announced, which stipulated enforcement of the Maritime Rights and Interests Protection Act as a duty of the China Coast Guard, and it was enacted into law by the Standing Committee of the NPC in January 2021 and took effect in February 2021. The China Coast Guard Law contains provisions that have problems from the viewpoint of consistency with international law, such as ambiguities in the maritime areas where it can be applied and in the authority to use weapons. Japan believes that the China Coast Guard Law should not undermine the legitimate interests of relevant countries, including Japan, and will continue to convey these serious concerns to China.

In addition, Chinese naval vessels and aircraft have also been accelerating their activities in the sea and airspace around Japan. In January 2018, a submarine and ship navigated into Japan's contiguous zone around the Senkaku Islands. We expressed serious concerns, issued a serious protest, and strongly requested that it would not happen

²² Ministry of Foreign Affairs website detailing the position of the Government of Japan on the Senkaku Islands: <https://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/senkaku/index.html>



again, through diplomatic routes. Furthermore, aircraft activities also continue to be active, and the number of times the Air Self-Defense Force had to scramble jets in response to Chinese military aircraft since autumn 2012 has remained high. In response to these recent activities by the Chinese military, Japan has been raising the issues through diplomatic routes.

Furthermore, China has been continuing its unilateral activities to develop natural resources while the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and the continental shelf between Japan and China in the East China Sea remain pending delimitation. The Government of Japan has confirmed 12 new structures built between June 2013 and May 2016, making it a total of 16 structures including those confirmed before then, on the Chinese side of the geographical equidistance line. Such unilateral development activities are extremely regrettable, and every time such moves by China are detected, Japan has strongly requested China to cease its unilateral development and to immediately resume negotiations on the implementation of the “2008 Agreement” regarding the cooperation between Japan and China on the development of natural resources in the East China Sea. At the summit meeting between Prime Minister Abe and President Xi Jinping in June 2019, the two leaders shared the view of promoting and implementing the “2008 Agreement” regarding resource development in order to achieve the goal of making the

East China Sea a “Sea of Peace, Cooperation and Friendship.”

Moreover, in recent years numerous activities by China to carry out surveys in the waters around Japan, including the East China Sea, without obtaining Japan's approval, have been seen, and in order to deal with these concerns appropriately, both Japan and China have been promoting dialogue and exchanges between the authorities concerned. The Maritime and Aerial Communication Mechanism was concluded during the visit to Japan by Premier Li Keqiang in May 2018, and in June 2018 the defense authorities of Japan and China began operation of the Mechanism, which is highly significant for promoting mutual understanding between both countries and avoiding and preventing accidental collisions. Japan and China intend to accelerate their coordination toward the early establishment of a “hotline between the defense authorities of Japan and China.” Also, the Japan-China Maritime Search and Rescue (SAR) Agreement was signed during Prime Minister Abe's visit to China in October 2018, which creates a legal framework regarding Japan-China cooperation for the maritime search and rescue field, and is expected to enable smoother and more efficient search and rescue activities.

As Japan has stated on repeated occasions, including at Japan-China Summit Meetings, true improvement in Japan-China relations cannot be achieved without stability in the East China



Chinese maritime structures confirmed to have been built near the geographical equidistance line between Japan and China (Photo: Ministry of Defense)
For details, see https://www.mofa.go.jp/a_o/c_m1/page3e_000356.html



Sea. It is highly meaningful from the perspective of building trust and bolstering cooperation for diplomats from both countries to meet in person and exchange opinions frankly, such as at the 12th Japan-China High-Level Consultation on Maritime Affairs that was held in February 2021 or via other discussions between related authorities of both countries. The Government of Japan will strive to improve relations with China, while asserting Japan's position on individual issues through steady dialogue and continued bolstering of communication, in an effort to turn the East China Sea into the "Sea of Peace, Cooperation and Friendship."

(Abandoned Chemical Weapons Issue)

The Government of Japan, in accordance with the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), has been working on the destruction of chemical weapons abandoned by Japan in China. In 2020, even amidst the impacts of COVID-19, on-site investigations, excavation and recovery operations were carried out in various locations across China, with destruction works carried out in Haerbing District in Dunhua, Jilin Province and also in Harbin, Heilongjiang Province. Projects such as transporting shells were also conducted (as of December, approximately 58,000 abandoned chemical weapons have been destroyed).

(Cases of Detainment of Japanese Nationals)

In regard to cases of detainment of Japanese nationals, the Government of Japan has been working toward their early release on various occasions between Japan and China, including summit meetings. One Japanese national detained in September 2019 was released in November 2019. Since then, the Government of Japan has strongly requested, at all levels and at every occasion, the Government of China to ensure transparency in executing the law and the judicial process, properly safeguard the rights of Japanese nationals, ensure impartial justice, and provide humane treatment to detainees. At the Japan-China Foreign

Ministers' Meeting in November 2020 between Foreign Minister Motegi and State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi, Foreign Minister Motegi strongly requested again that China take positive action.

(Japanese Food Import Restrictions Issue)

Regarding the import restrictions placed on food and agricultural products from Japan by the Government of China, Japan has taken every opportunity to urge China to remove as soon as possible the import restrictions placed on Japanese food products, including at the February Japan-China Foreign Ministers' Meeting, the July telephone call between the Japan and China Foreign Ministers, the November Japan-China Foreign Ministers' Meeting, and the courtesy call to Prime Minister Suga by State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi. In particular, at the Japan-China Foreign Ministers' Meeting in November, Japan strongly requested the early removal of import restrictions in light of the fact that March 2021 marks the 10th anniversary of the Great East Japan Earthquake. As a result of these efforts, it was agreed at the meeting with State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi to accelerate discussions to solve this issue, and the launch of the "Japan-China Agricultural and Fishery Products Trade Cooperation Mechanism" was agreed upon.

(Yamato Bank)

Numerous illegal operations by Chinese fishing vessels have been conducted in the waters around the Yamato Bank in the Sea of Japan. Japan has expressed concerns and has strongly and repeatedly urged China to take effective steps, including strengthening measures such as providing guidance to those engaged in fishing. At the November Japan-China Foreign Ministers' Meeting in November 2020, Foreign Minister Motegi also made strong requests to State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi.

(2) Taiwan

A Domestic Affairs

President Tsai Ing-wen, who was reelected in the January 2020 presidential election with the highest number of votes in history, was inaugurated for her second term on May 20 (Vice President is Lai Ching-te, former premier, Executive Yuan). At the inauguration ceremony, President Tsai Ing-wen thanked citizens for their cooperation in measures against COVID-19, and emphasized that since January 2020 Taiwan has surprised the international community with (1) its democratic elections and (2) the results from its COVID-19 measures. In fact, as COVID-19 measures, Taiwan rapidly implemented restrictions on entry from infected areas, and carried out a stable supply of masks by using the latest information processing techniques and IT technologies, and considerably suppressed infections, as compared with the international community. President Tsai Ing-wen also presented (1) industrial development, (2) social stability, (3) security, and (4) deepening democracy, as directions for the next four years.

In March, the Kuomintang, the largest opposition party, elected Johnny Chiang as Chairman of the Kuomintang in a by-election to replace former Chairman Wu Den-yih, who resigned after losing the presidential election.

Taiwan's economy is showing a recovery from the impacts of COVID-19 due to strong exports of 5G communications equipment, etc., and the real GDP growth rate in 2020 was 2.98% year on year (preliminary figure).

B Cross-strait Relations and Foreign Affairs

Since the 2016 inauguration of the Tsai Ing-wen administration, the direct cross-strait exchanges through the official route (Chinese side: Taiwan Affairs Office of State Council, the Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Strait, Taiwan side: Mainland Affairs Council, the Straits Exchange Foundation, Mainland Affairs Council) presumably have been discontinued. Under these circumstances, President Xi Jinping delivered an

important speech in January 2019 in which he called for cross-strait unification under 'One Country Two System' framework, but President Tsai Ing-wen declared that an absolute majority of Taiwanese people would not accept 'One Country Two System' framework.

Taiwan was an observer at the World Health Organization (WHO) general assembly from 2009 to 2016, but has not been able to participate since 2017, and has also not been able to participate in the general assembly of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and other international organizations. Furthermore, Taiwan is only able to participate in some technical and expert meetings (Taiwan participated in WHO expert meetings on COVID-19 in 2020).

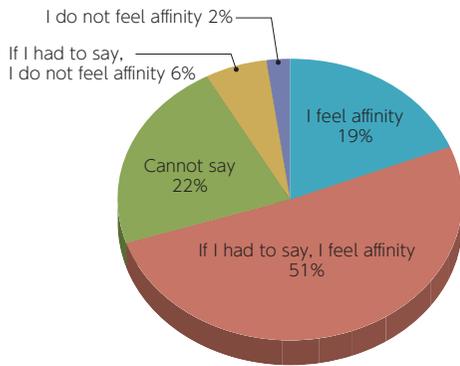
Japan has traditionally considered that there should be no geographical gap in responding to international health issues. Japan also recognizes that it is important to widely share the information and knowledge of each country and region in a free, transparent and prompt manner, particularly for diseases such as COVID-19 that have an enormous impact on the entire world. From this perspective, Japan has consistently supported Taiwan's participation as an observer to the WHO General Assembly.

Following São Tomé and Príncipe in 2016, Panama in 2017, Dominican Republic, Burkina Faso, and El Salvador in 2018, and the Solomon Islands and Kiribati in September 2019, who have severed diplomatic relations with Taiwan and established or re-established diplomatic relations with China, there are a total of 15 countries who have diplomatic relations with Taiwan (seven countries have cut diplomatic relations with Taiwan since the inauguration of the Tsai administration).

C Japan-Taiwan Relationship

For Japan, Taiwan is an extremely crucial partner and an important friend, with which it shares fundamental values such as freedom, democracy, basic human rights and the rule of law, and enjoys

Affinity of the people of Taiwan for Japan



Source: Japan-Taiwan Exchange Association

close economic relations and people-to-people exchanges. The relationship between Japan and Taiwan is maintained on the basis of working relations at the non-governmental level in accordance with the 1972 Joint Communiqué between Japan and China. The sentiments of Japanese and Taiwanese citizens toward each other are generally favorable. In a survey conducted in February 2019 by the Japan-Taiwan Exchange Association, a private Japanese agency, 70% of Taiwanese respondents said they “felt close to Japan” or “relatively felt close to Japan.” Reflecting such favorable sentiments toward Japan, the number of visitors to Japan from Taiwan in 2019 exceeded 4.89 million, marking a record high and demonstrating close people-to-people exchanges, but visitors significantly decreased in 2020 due to the impacts of COVID-19.

In July, former President Lee Teng-hui passed away. He made great contributions to the promotion of friendship between Japan and Taiwan and made extremely important contributions to the consolidation of fundamental values in Taiwan such as freedom and democracy. In response, former Prime Minister Mori Yoshiro led a delegation to express condolences, and visited Taiwan twice to attend the funeral ceremonies.

Taiwan has continued to impose import restrictions on Japanese food products after the Great East Japan Earthquake, and Japan has repeatedly strongly requested the removal and

relaxation of the restrictions on the basis of scientific evidence.

(3) Mongolia

A Domestic Affairs

In May an amended constitution came into effect, which ensures the maintenance and continuation of parliamentary democracy, strengthens the authority of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, amends the term and mandate of the President, and strengthens guarantees of judicial independence.

In the general election held in June for the 8th State Great Khural (unicameral system, four-year term of office, 76 members), the ruling Mongolian People’s Party overwhelmingly won. In July it was decided that Prime Minister U. Khurelsukh would continue in his role, and a new Cabinet was inaugurated. Prime Minister Khurelsukh, in response to the worldwide spread of COVID-19, introduced strict immigration controls and epidemic prevention measures at an early stage to contain domestic outbreaks (the first case of community transmission was confirmed in November).

On the other hand, the COVID-19 epidemic directly impacted the domestic economy. In November, government economic statistics recorded a 14.3% decrease in tax revenue, a 2.8% decrease in exports, a 12.5% decrease in imports, and a 12.8% decrease in mining production compared to the same period in the previous year. The Government of Mongolia is implementing large-scale emergency economic measures.

B Japan-Mongolia Relations

2020 was a year in which Japan and Mongolia confirmed that they would further strengthen cooperation to strengthen their “Strategic Partnership,” with Mongolia as an important regional partner sharing universal values with Japan.

In May while the travel of dignitaries was suspended due to the COVID-19 epidemic, Foreign Minister Motegi held a telephone call with Minister for Foreign Affairs D. Tsogtbaatar. In October,



Japan-Mongolia Foreign Ministers' Meeting with Minister for Foreign Affairs N. Enkhtaivan (October 9, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia)

shortly after the inauguration of the Suga administration, Foreign Minister Motegi visited Mongolia, held a meeting with new Minister for Foreign Affairs N. Enkhtaivan, and paid a courtesy call to President Kh. Battulga and Prime Minister U. Khurelsukh. The visit was greatly welcomed as Mongolia's first dignitary visit from a "third neighbor country (note: major countries, other than the neighboring countries of China and Russia, with which Mongolia pursues to strengthen relationships and cooperation)" after the spread of COVID-19, and Mongolia thanked Japan for its consistent support for Mongolia. During the visit, Japan and Mongolia agreed to further expand their "Strategic Partnership," looked forward to celebrating the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations in 2022, agreed to newly develop a "Mid-term Action Plan," and agreed on a policy of strengthening efforts toward the realization of a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific." In addition, cooperation for the smooth opening and operation of the New Ulaanbaatar International Airport was confirmed.

As strategic partners sharing universal values, Japan and Mongolia will deepen exchanges and relationships in all fields and will further strengthen cooperation in regional and international fields.

4 Southeast Asia

(1) Indonesia

As a major country in the Southeast Asia region

with the fourth largest population in the world (at approximately 267 million people), Indonesia plays a leading role in ASEAN. In addition, it has been showing initiative for various challenges facing the international community as a G20 member.

President Joko's second administration, which started in October 2019, is a stable administration where the ruling party controls approximately 74% of the seats in the People's Consultative Assembly, and, as priority issues, is implementing (1) infrastructure development, (2) human resources development, (3) investment promotion, (4) government reforms, and (5) appropriate execution of the state budget. Additionally, following the spread of COVID-19, since spring, large-scale social restrictions and economic measures are being implemented. With regard to investment promotion, the Government of Indonesia enacted an omnibus law on job creation in November for the purpose of attracting investment, which collectively amends related laws in 11 fields, such as employment, investment and simplification of authorization procedures for business.

Japan is actively promoting cooperation with Indonesia in the fields of infrastructure development and human resources development, which are priorities of the second Joko administration, and also cooperating to strengthen Indonesia's health and medical systems and as measures against COVID-19, including the provision of medical equipment, financial support loans and the provision of Avigan.

As for high-level bilateral exchanges with Japan, Foreign Minister Motegi visited Indonesia in January and held a Japan-Indonesia Ministerial-Level Strategic Dialogue. Even after the worldwide spread of COVID-19 restricted travel, two summit telephone calls and two foreign ministers' telephone calls were held, and opinions were closely exchanged on COVID-19 measures. In October, Prime Minister Suga visited Indonesia as part of his first overseas visit since taking office, and at the Summit Meeting with President Joko, Prime

Minister Suga confirmed coordination in politics, security, the economy, infrastructure development, oceans, disaster prevention, etc., and confirmed the further strengthening of cooperation on regional issues such as the South China Sea and North Korea (see the article on page 74).

(2) Cambodia

Cambodia is located at a strategic point along the Southern Economic Corridor, and is a key country in strengthening connectivity and narrowing the development gap in the Mekong-Southeast Asia region. Under a development policy centered on strengthening governance, Cambodia has continued to grow at an average rate of 7% for the past 20 years, and is aiming to become an upper middle-income country in 2030. In 2020, the sewing, tourism and construction industries, which are the driving forces for Cambodia's growth, declined due to COVID-19, and it is expected that growth will be negative for the first time since the establishment of the Royal Government of the Kingdom of Cambodia in 1993.

In 1992 Cambodia was the first country to which Japan deployed full-scale PKO and is the starting point for Japan's "Proactive Contribution to Peace." Bilateral relations, which have been cultivated based on cooperation in peace and subsequent reconstruction and development, were elevated to a "Strategic Partnership" in 2013, and are still deepening. In August 2020, Foreign Minister Motegi visited Cambodia as the first overseas dignitary since the spread of COVID-19, and he made a courtesy call to Prime Minister Hun Sen and held a Foreign Ministers' Meeting with Minister of Foreign Affairs Prak Sokhonn. A Foreign Ministers' telephone call was also held in October.

Regarding domestic affairs, the ruling Cambodian People's Party monopolized all seats in the 2018 National Assembly elections as the largest opposition, the Cambodia National Rescue Party, was dissolved the previous year. In a statement at the end of 2018, the Cambodian government announced

measures to improve the democratic environment, such as promoting domestic dialogue and expediting judicial proceedings, and has been proceeding since then. In January 2020, trial of opposition leaders who had been arrested in 2017 began, but was adjourned due to COVID-19 since March.

Japan is advancing efforts such as inviting young politics-oriented Cambodians including members of the ruling and opposition parties to support Cambodia's democratic development, and held the fourth round of invitations in January.

In the Khmer Rouge Tribunal, which Japan has been supporting for many years, it was confirmed in August that one suspect in the investigation would not be prosecuted, and if the other two cases under investigation are not prosecuted then it is highly likely that the tribunal will be completed with the ruling on the appeal of case 2-02, in which the defendant is a former head of state, scheduled for the end of 2022.

(3) Singapore

Singapore is the most economically advanced country within ASEAN. Based on its omnidirectional foreign policy, the country maintains friendly relations with major countries including the U.S. and China.

In Singapore, although the People's Action Party (PAP), led by Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, won 83 of the 93 seats in the election in July and continues to occupy the overwhelming majority of seats in the Parliament, the PAP's overall share of the vote was only 61.24%, which was lower than the 69.86% in the previous 2015 election.

In 2020, although opportunities for travel decreased due to the impacts of COVID-19, high-level exchanges between the two countries are continuing through a summit telephone call and two foreign ministers' telephone calls. In August, Foreign Minister Motegi visited Singapore as his first visit to Asia after the spread of COVID-19, made a courtesy call to Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, and had a meeting with Minister for Foreign Affairs Vivian Balakrishnan. At the meeting, both



Japan-Singapore Foreign Ministers' Meeting
(August 13, Singapore)

countries agreed that, as gradual measures to resume international travel after strengthening border measures because of COVID-19, they would aim to start both a “Business Track” enabling business activities with a limited range of activities for 14 days after entry, and a “Residence Track” that is mainly focused on expatriates who are staying for the medium- to long-term.

The two countries have worked together to provide developing countries with technical assistance through the “Japan-Singapore Partnership Program for the 21st Century (JSPP21),” which was signed in 1997. To date they have provided training approximately 400 times with roughly 7,000 participants from ASEAN countries and other regions.

The Japan Creative Centre (JCC), which was opened in Singapore in 2009 as a platform to promote Japanese culture, distributed a variety of information and held events while taking measures against COVID-19 infections.

(4) Thailand

Thailand is one of the original member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), which was born of the “Bangkok Declaration” in 1967. It is located in the center of the Mekong region and is a geopolitically important country.

Japan and Thailand are said to have a long history of exchanges over 600 years, and have traditionally maintained a friendly relationship. The establishment of diplomatic relations dates back



Courtesy call to Thai Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha by
Foreign Minister Motegi (January 7, Bangkok, Thailand)

to the “Declaration of Amity and Commerce between Japan and Siam (Declaration of Amity)” in 1887. The current bilateral relationship is a “Strategic Partnership” in which both countries cooperate not only bilaterally, but also in the region and the international community. In addition, as a result of many years of official development assistance and investment by private companies from Japan, Thailand has become a major production center for Japanese companies, including the automobile industry, and today Thailand is an indispensable part of the Japanese economy as a part of the global supply chain, with more than 5,000 Japanese companies operating in Thailand and more than 70,000 Japanese nationals living in Thailand.

In 2013, following the introduction of a visa exemption measure for Thai nationals for short-term stay activities, the number of Thai tourists visiting Japan rapidly increased, and was approximately 1.32 million in 2019, before the spread of COVID-19. Thai nationals visiting Japan are ranked sixth in the number of travelers to Japan by country. In January, Foreign Minister Motegi visited Thailand, made a courtesy call to Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha, and met with Minister of Foreign Affairs Don Pramudwinai. Although there was no travel of dignitaries after this visit due to the restrictions by the spread of COVID-19, high-level exchanges were continued through three telephone calls between Foreign Minister Motegi and Minister of Foreign Affairs

Don (note: concurrently serving as Deputy Prime Minister as well from August) across May, June and October.

On the domestic front of Thailand, against a background of economic and social disparities and the deterioration of the economic situation due to the spread of COVID-19, protests against the government and the monarchy have become active, especially among young people, and the unstable situation is continuing.

(5) Timor-Leste

Timor-Leste, the first country to achieve independence in the 21st century (in 2002), is a strategically important country in the Indo-Pacific region, and is situated in an important sea lane between Australia and Indonesia. The country has realized peace and stability with the support of the international community and has been building the nation based on democracy. As its economy is highly dependent on natural resources such as petroleum and natural gas, the country has been working to diversify its industry as a matter of the highest national priority.

There are continuing efforts to coordinate with ASEAN countries so that Timor-Leste can join ASEAN, which is the most important foreign policy issue for Timor-Leste.

Domestically, the ruling party and President Francisco Guterres Lu-Olo continued to face off with each other, and national affairs were stagnant, but since January new coalitions have been sought between the political parties, triggered by

the division within the ruling coalition. As a result, by May 29 the VIII Constitutional Government had been formed by a new four-party National Assembly majority, which included the People's Liberation Party (PLP) led by Prime Minister Taur Matan Ruak as well as the Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor (Fretilin) led by President Lu-Olo, and the confrontation was resolved as a result of the cabinet reshuffle.

In January, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs Nakayama Norihiro visited Timor-Leste for a ceremony to celebrate the 20th anniversary of Japan's support for Timor-Leste, and also attended a ceremony for the completion of a new school building for the Faculty of Engineering Building of The National East Timor University and for the Dili Port ferry terminal, which were constructions via Japanese ODA. In doing so, together with President Lu-Olo, Prime Minister Ruak, and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation Dionisio Babo, the two sides strengthened bilateral cooperation in areas such as education, human resource development, people-to-people exchanges, as well as economy and infrastructure. They also enhanced the trilateral cooperation among Japan, Timor-Leste and Indonesia in the maritime field and others, as well as regional coordination.

In response to COVID-19, Japan is also providing support, such as the provision of medical equipment, to strengthen the health and medical system.

(6) The Philippines

The Philippines has consistently maintained a high growth rate of 6% or more since 2012, but in 2020 a negative growth rate is expected due to the impact of reduced remittances from overseas workers and restrictions on domestic economic activities that were introduced because of the spread of COVID-19. President Rodrigo R. Duterte has gained high public confidence for new COVID-19 countermeasures, and has demonstrated strong leadership in responding to priorities



Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs Nakayama meeting Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation Babo (January 14, Dili, Timor-Leste)



Japan-Philippines Foreign Ministers' Meeting
(January 9, Manila, Philippines)

such as anti-corruption, security and counterterrorism. As for the Mindanao Peace Process, the work for establishing an autonomous government for 2022 is continuing, and as of March, 12,000 people, equivalent to 30% of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) soldiers, have retired and relinquished their weapons.

In order to further strengthen the “Strategic Partnership” between Japan and the Philippines, in January Foreign Minister Motegi visited Manila, paid a courtesy call to President Duterte, met with Secretary of Foreign Affairs Teodoro Locsin and with Secretary of Finance Carlos Dominguez, visited the Philippine Coast Guard, and inspected a patrol boat whose construction the Government of Japan had supported through an ODA yen loan. Even after international travels were disrupted by the impacts of COVID-19, there were active exchanges among dignitaries, and two summit telephone calls and a foreign ministers’ telephone call were held.

On the security front, in August a contract to deliver warning and control radars to the Philippines was signed as the first overseas transfer of domestically-produced finished equipment, further promoting cooperation. Meanwhile, on the economic front, in January the Government of the Republic of the Philippines decided to remove all import restrictions on Japanese food products, which had been in place after the Great East Japan Earthquake. Furthermore, in October, Japan continued to provide powerful

support to the Government of the Republic of the Philippines’ robust infrastructure development policy, “Build, Build, Build,” by way of holding the 10th Japan-Philippines High Level Joint Committee on Infrastructure Development and Economic Cooperation, a mechanism that was launched to steadily implement Prime Minister Abe’s January 2017 pledge to render public and private assistance to the tune of 1 trillion Japanese yen over five years. In addition, Japan is cooperating in providing medical equipment, financial support loans and Avigan tablets for disaster response and COVID-19 countermeasures.

(7) Brunei

Its abundance in natural resources has enabled Brunei to realize a high economic standard and generous social welfare. As such, the country enjoys political and economic stability. Although it is a constitutional monarchy and has a Legislative Council, the Sultan concurrently serves as the Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economy, Minister of Defence and Minister of Foreign Affairs, and therefore holds an impressively strong authority. Located in the center of Southeast Asia, the country is one of the claimant countries in the South China Sea and has adopted a balanced diplomacy built on the pillar of promoting ASEAN unity and centrality.

Although Brunei’s economic growth rate is projected to remain positive in 2020, supported by a joint oil refining venture with China, the Government of Brunei is aiming for economic diversification to avoid overreliance on energy resources.

Since Japan and Brunei established diplomatic relations in 1984, the two countries developed excellent bilateral relations in various areas that include politics, defense, economy, culture and personal exchanges. In addition, the two countries enjoy a close relationship between the imperial and royal families, and His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah visited Japan in October 2019 to attend the Ceremony of the Enthronement of

His Majesty the Emperor. Brunei is an important country for the stable supply of energy resources to Japan. Around 60% of Brunei's liquefied natural gas (LNG) exports are bound for Japan, and LNG from Brunei makes up around 5% of the total LNG import to Japan. Japan has decided to support Brunei, which will become the Chair of ASEAN in 2021, to improve its counter-terrorism capabilities through the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

(8) Viet Nam

Located next to sea lanes in the South China Sea and sharing a long border with China, Viet Nam is a geopolitically important country. Given that the country embraces the third largest population in Southeast Asia, and is experiencing a surge in the number of people in middle-income brackets, Viet Nam is a promising market. The country is currently striving to achieve stable economic growth through the stabilization of the macroeconomy including control of inflation, the promotion of foreign investment by the development of infrastructure and the improvement of the investment environment. Moreover, the Government has been engaging actively in administrative reform and anti-corruption measures. In 2020, Viet Nam served as the ASEAN chairman and as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council, expanding its role in the international community.

Japan and Viet Nam have been advancing cooperation in a variety of areas under the Extensive Strategic Partnership for Peace and Prosperity in Asia. High level officials have made frequent visits to each country. In January, Foreign Minister Motegi visited Viet Nam, met with Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc, with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Pham Binh Minh, and with Minister of Industry and Trade Tran Tuan Anh. In March and June telephone calls were held between Foreign Minister Motegi and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Minh, and in May and August telephone calls were held between Prime Minister Abe and



Prime Minister Suga visiting Viet Nam
(October; Photo: Cabinet Public Relations Office)

Prime Minister Phuc. In October, in addition to a telephone call between Prime Minister Suga and Prime Minister Phuc, Prime Minister Suga visited Viet Nam as his first overseas visit since being inaugurated. During his visit to Viet Nam, Prime Minister Suga and Prime Minister Phuc agreed in a summit meeting to begin operating a “Business Track” and to resume regular two-way passenger flights in order to recover from COVID-19. Additionally, Prime Minister Suga met with General Secretary and President Nguyen Phu Trong, Chairwoman of National Assembly Nguyen Thi Kim Ngan, and President Pham Minh Chinh of the Viet Nam-Japan Parliamentary Friendship Association, and gave a policy speech at the Vietnam-Japan University, wherein he declared that Japan would continue to lead contributions to regional peace and prosperity as an “Indo-Pacific State” (see the article on page 74).

Viet Nam has essentially been a country with great affinity toward Japan. The number of Vietnamese visiting Japan grew from about 40,000 in 2011 to over 490,000 in 2019. The number of Vietnamese living in Japan rose from about 40,000 in 2011 to about 420,000 in June 2020, the third largest group of foreign residents after China and South Korea.

(9) Malaysia

Comprised of the Peninsular Malaysia of the Malay Peninsula and East Malaysia of Borneo, Malaysia is a geopolitically important country facing the South China Sea and the Strait of

Prime Minister Suga Visits Viet Nam and Indonesia

From October 18 to 21, Prime Minister Suga visited Viet Nam, which held the ASEAN Presidency in 2020, and Indonesia, a core country in ASEAN, as the first overseas visits since his inauguration. During the visits he deepened Japan's relationship of trust with ASEAN, which is both a friend and a Strategic Partner, and the trip was also an important opportunity to declare Japan's determination to steadily realize a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)" while in close cooperation with ASEAN countries, which are critical to realizing FOIP.

During his visit to Viet Nam, Prime Minister Suga held a summit meeting with Prime Minister Phuc, and agreed to begin operation of a "Business Track" and to resume regular two-way passenger flights in order to recover from COVID-19. The two leaders also agreed to strengthen cooperation between Japan and Viet Nam, such as by diversifying supply chains and supporting Vietnamese residents in Japan who are facing difficult living situations amidst the COVID-19 epidemic. Additionally, they confirmed the strengthening of bilateral relations, such as cooperation in the security field, including the agreement in principle on the transfer of defense equipment and technology, economic cooperation such as infrastructure development, disaster prevention and cooperation in the agriculture field. Furthermore, Prime Minister Suga and Prime Minister Phuc confirmed that they would work closely on the regional situation and fully support the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP), which has many essential similarities with FOIP.

During his visit, Prime Minister Suga also had a meeting with General Secretary of the Communist Party of Viet Nam and President Trong and Chairwoman of National Assembly Ngan, and received a courtesy call from President Chinh of the Viet Nam-Japan Parliamentary Friendship Association. Additionally, an exchange of opinions with students was conducted at the Vietnam-Japan University, and Prime Minister Suga provided a foreign policy speech for the first time since his inauguration with "building together the future of the Indo-Pacific" as the theme. Prime Minister Suga's speech confirmed the strong partnership between Japan and ASEAN through cooperation on connectivity and human resources development. He also emphasized that the AOIP and FOIP share essential principles, that Japan fully supports AOIP, and the importance of the rule of law. Japan-Viet Nam relations are formed through a "Strategic Partnership" of 16 agreements, etc., in a wide range of public and private fields, and taking the opportunity of Prime Minister Suga's visit, the two countries praised the dramatic development that has resulted across the board, such as in politics, the economy, culture and person-to-person exchanges.

In Indonesia, following the visit to Viet Nam, Prime Minister Suga had a summit meeting with President Joko, exchanged opinions with Japanese companies, paid a courtesy call to former Japanese students, and offered flowers at the Kalibata Heroes Cemetery.

At the Japan-Indonesia Summit Meeting, Prime Minister Suga conveyed Japan's full support for AOIP, which shares many essential points with FOIP, and both leaders agreed to cooperate as maritime states toward the realization of a free and open maritime order. Additionally, they agreed on cooperation in the political and security fields and on strengthening cooperation to improve the investment environment in Indonesia, including the early implementation of a Foreign and Defense Ministers' Meeting ("2+2"), the promotion of remote island development, infrastructure cooperation and human resources development, and expanding cooperation between the two countries to recover from COVID-19, including by strengthening the health sector and supply chains.

As an "Indo-Pacific State," Japan will continue to work with ASEAN to create a peaceful and prosperous future for the Indo-Pacific region.

Malacca that is situated in a crucial spot in the Indian Ocean and Pacific Ocean. In addition, it is a federal state comprised of 13 states and three federal territories, and also a multiethnic state comprised of Bumiputra (Malay including indigenous peoples) (69%), Chinese (23%) and Indian people (7%), among others.

In February, following the resignation of Prime Minister Mahathir bin Mohamad due to internal administration conflicts, Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin has been focusing on anti-COVID-19 measures immediately after he took office in March. Although the impacts of COVID-19 have decreased the bilateral travel of dignitaries when compared to a normal year, a foreign ministers' telephone call was held, and in August Foreign Minister Motegi visited Malaysia as part of his first visit to Asia since the worldwide spread of COVID-19, and had a meeting with Minister of Foreign Affairs Hishammuddin Hussein and Senior Minister and Minister of International Trade and Industry Mohamed Azmin bin Ali.

In terms of specific cooperation between the two countries, Japan and Malaysia agreed to maritime cooperation, such as oil prevention and anti-piracy measures, cooperation amidst the spread of COVID-19, and to begin a "Residence Track" that enables traffic between the two countries of primarily medium- to long-term residents. Additionally, Japan supported Malaysia through the provision of Avigan as well as technical assistance and healthcare supply assistance through international organizations.

In the field of human resources development, through the Look East Policy, which serves as a foundation for the good bilateral relationship between Japan and Malaysia and was proposed by Prime Minister Mahathir in 1981, approximately 26,000 Malaysian people have studied or have been trained in Japan so far. The two countries have been cooperating in making the Malaysia Japan International Institute of Technology (MJIIIT), which was opened in September 2011, a base for Japanese-style engineering education

in ASEAN countries. In addition, discussions are being held to establish a branch school of the University of Tsukuba in Malaysia, and, if realized, it will be the first overseas branch school to be established by a Japanese university.

On the economic front, Japan is the biggest investor to Malaysia (2019), and roughly 1,500 Japanese companies have been operating in Malaysia, which demonstrates a continued close relationship between the two countries.

(10) Myanmar

In Myanmar, the National League for Democracy (NLD) gained the support of the majority of the people in the 2015 general elections, and a new administration led by State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi was inaugurated in March 2016. Since then it has been making efforts for the consolidation of democracy, national reconciliation, and economic development. A general election was held in November 2020, and the NLD once again won an overwhelming victory.

In holding the November 2020 general election, the Government of Japan provided special ink to prevent double voting, dispatched an election monitoring team headed by Sasakawa Yohei, Special Envoy of the Government of Japan for National Reconciliation in the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, and confirmed that free and fair elections were peacefully held.

However, after the general election, the Myanmar Armed Forces repeatedly claimed that there was election fraud, such as duplication of voter list information. The Union Election Commission, the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw legislature, and the Government of Myanmar did not accept these claims, and before dawn on February 1, 2021 the Myanmar Armed Forces detained NLD leaders, including State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi and President Win Myint, and a number of legislators. On the same day, the acting president (Vice President of the Myanmar Armed Forces) declared an emergency and delegated full authority to Senior General Min Aung Hlaing. The people

opposed the coup d'état by the Myanmar Armed Forces, and disobedience movements spread nationwide. Demonstrations of tens of thousands of people were held on consecutive days in addition to boycotts by bureaucrats at public institutions. In response, the Myanmar Armed Forces announced a curfew in the Yangon region and other areas, and instituted a ban on gatherings of five or more people in public places. The Myanmar Police Force also suppressed the protesters by using water cannons, tear gas and rubber bullets in some cases. Japan has grave concerns that the process of democratization is being undermined, and issued a statement by the Foreign Minister on the day of the coup d'état. Japan strongly urges the Myanmar Armed Forces to immediately cease violent responses to civilians, to release detained officials including State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi, and to restore the democratic political system as soon as possible.

Japan has provided full-fledged support to Myanmar's democratic nation building by bringing together the public and private sectors, based on the recognition that the stability and development of Myanmar, which has a historical friendship with Japan, has huge potential for economic development, and its geopolitical importance is directly related to stability and prosperity throughout the entire region. The total contribution of 800 billion Japanese yen from the public and private sectors over five years, which was announced by Prime Minister Abe in 2016, has been implemented in a wide range of fields centered on Yangon urban development, electrical power and transportation infrastructure.

In Myanmar's western state of Rakhine, more than 700,000 people were displaced to Bangladesh due to armed groups' attacks on Myanmar security forces' bases in August 2017. Together with the international community, Japan has been urging the Government of Myanmar to implement the "safe, voluntary, and dignified" return of displaced persons and create an environment conducive to repatriation with the involvement of the UN. In

addition, Japan has provided humanitarian aid and infrastructure development assistance to displaced persons and residents in Rakhine State, and has also provided humanitarian aid for displaced persons and host communities on the Bangladesh side. Furthermore, with regard to the allegations of human rights violations in Rakhine State, Japan is urging the Government of Myanmar and the Myanmar Armed Force to investigate and prosecute in a transparent manner based on the recommendations of an independent investigative team established by Myanmar, and to steadily implement the provisional action order by the International Court of Justices.

In Myanmar, achieving peace with ethnic armed groups, who have been fighting against the Myanmar military since its independence, has also been a pressing issue, and until now ten ethnic armed groups had signed the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA). In order to achieve a lasting ceasefire and regional stability, Japan is providing indirect support for peace dialogues between stakeholders, centered around Sasakawa Yohei, Special Envoy of the Government of Japan, and is providing reconstruction and development support to improve the lives of local residents and realize a ceasefire.

Japan will take necessary measures while closely monitoring the situation.

(11) Laos

Laos is a land locked country bordering the five countries of China, Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia and Viet Nam, and therefore is a key country in connecting the Mekong region. Domestically in 2020, while stable administration operation was carried under the one-party rule of the People's Revolutionary Party, preparations were made at the central and local levels for the 11th People's Revolutionary Party Congress, scheduled for 2021. In terms of economy, while working on fiscal stabilization as a top priority, the effects of COVID-19 have impacted tourism and other service industries, and it is predicted



Japan-Laos Foreign Ministers' Meeting (August 23, Laos)

that the Laos's economic growth rate, which has maintained a high level of approximately 6~7%, will decline.

In March, Japan and Laos celebrated the 65th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations and marked the fifth anniversary of their "Strategic Partnership." In August 2020, Foreign Minister Motegi visited Laos as the first overseas dignitary since the spread of COVID-19, and in addition to meeting with Prime Minister Thongloun Sisoulith and Minister of Foreign Affairs Saleumxay Kommasith, in October Foreign Minister Motegi and Minister of Foreign Affairs Saleumxay had a telephone call. Japan and Laos also implemented a variety of cooperative actions in the field of economic cooperation. For financial stabilization support, which was strongly requested by the Government of Laos, policy proposals that would be the results of the support were compiled in January, and cooperation was continued by dispatching experts. Japan has supported the drafting of the Civil Code since 2012, and in May it was enacted, becoming a culmination of many years of legal development support for Laos. When Foreign Minister Motegi visited Laos in August, a ceremony was held for the delivery of medical equipment and materials with grant aid as part of support for measures against COVID-19, and it was decided to implement further grant aid in fields such as teacher training and urban transportation. In this way, steady progress has been seen for the "Japan-Lao PDR Joint Development Cooperation Plan" announced by both leaders in

September 2016, and numerous efforts have been made to realize a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific." Regarding cultural exchange, the "Japan Festival" was held in Vientiane in January, which deepened mutual understanding by the people of both countries.

5 South Asia

(1) India

Geopolitically speaking, India is an extremely important country as it faces the Indian Ocean, which connects Asia and Africa, and is positioned in the center of sea lanes. Additionally, India has the third largest economy in Asia, with the world's second largest population and a huge middle-income group. In recent years, India has been implementing a variety of economic initiatives, including "Make in India," and has been realizing steady economic growth. Although India's economy has significantly contracted due to the spread of COVID-19, it is aiming for an economic recovery through the promotion of its manufacturing industry with the new "Self-reliant India" campaign. In diplomatic relations, the "Act East" policy has been laid down in implementing active diplomacy to promote concrete cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region, thereby enabling India to gain more influence in the international arena as a global power.

Japan and India are the two largest democratic countries in Asia, sharing common fundamental values, such as democracy and the rule of law, as well as strategic interests, and under the "Japan-India Special Strategic and Global Partnership," have broadly deepened cooperation in their economies, security, people-to-people exchanges, etc. The Japan-India relationship is the most promising bilateral relationship in the world, and its importance is increasing as the uncertainty of the existing international order increases. Additionally, India is an important partner in realizing a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific," and multilateral cooperation, such as between Japan, Australia, India and



13th Japan-India Foreign Ministers' Strategic Dialogue (October 7, Tokyo)



the U.S., is progressing. The deepening of bilateral and multilateral cooperation between Japan, which faces the Pacific Ocean, and India, which is located in the center of the Indian Ocean, will greatly contribute to the peace and prosperity of the Indo-Pacific region. India is also an indispensable player in building the economic order in the Indo-Pacific region, and in that sense, it is expected that India will return to the RCEP Agreement in the future.

In 2020, amidst the response to COVID-19, Japan and India continuously had high-level exchanges of opinions, including Japan-India Summit telephone calls. At the summit telephone call held in September immediately after Prime Minister Suga took office, both Prime Ministers shared their view to contribute to advance the partnership between Japan and India. In October, Japan and India seized the opportunity of the Second Japan-Australia-India-U.S. Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Tokyo and held a face-to-face Japan-India Foreign Ministers' Strategic Dialogue, where they reaffirmed the importance of cooperation toward the realization of a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific," Japan-India cooperation in third countries, such as ASEAN and Southwest Asian countries, and the steady progress on the high-speed rail project. Additionally, concrete cooperation frameworks are progressing, such as the signing of the Agreement Between the Government of Japan and the Government of the Republic of India Concerning Reciprocal Provision of Supplies and Services Between the Self-Defense Forces of Japan

and the Indian Armed Forces (Japan-India ACSA) in September. India is the sixth country that Japan has signed an ACSA Agreement with, after the U.S., Australia, the UK, Canada and France. If the agreement is concluded in the future, then it is expected that not only will it promote cooperation between the Self-Defense Forces of Japan and the Indian Armed Forces on the ground, but also Japan and India will contribute even more actively to international peace and security.

In response to the spread of COVID-19, Japan is also cooperating in strengthening India's health and medical systems through the provision of emergency yen loans of 50 billion Japanese yen and grant aid of 1 billion Japanese yen for the purpose of providing medical equipment at the end of August.

(2) Pakistan

Pakistan is located in a strategic position connecting Asia and the Middle East. Thus, its political stability and economic development are essential for the stability and growth of the region. Pakistan is also one of the most important countries in the context of international counterterrorism measures. Furthermore, the country embraces a population of more than 200 million, and approximately 60% of the total population is under 25 years old, thus making its economic potential high. In foreign relations, the India-Pakistan relationship has remained tense since August 2019 when the Government of India decided to revoke Article 370 of the Constitution, which recognized the special status

of Jammu and Kashmir. Furthermore, under the “All Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership,” the relationship with China has been enhanced in a wide range of fields toward the construction of an economic corridor between China and Pakistan (CPEC), which is an important constituent element of China’s “Belt and Road” initiative. The relationship with the U.S. remained stagnant for a period of time, with Pakistan being criticized by name in the Trump administration’s new South Asia strategy, but has been improving with the cooperative relationship developed for bringing peace to Afghanistan since July 2019 when Prime Minister Imran Khan visited the U.S. and established a personal relationship with U.S. President Donald Trump. On the economic front, the growth rate in FY2018/2019 of 3.3% sharply dropped to -0.4% in FY2019/2020 due to the impact of COVID-19. The Khan administration has faced a serious shortage of foreign currency reserves since its inauguration, and it has been working on negotiations for support from its friendly countries and the implementation of IMF programs.

With regard to the relations with Japan, Federal Minister for Economic Affairs Division Muhammad Hammad Azhar visited Japan in January and met with Finance Minister Aso Taro and State Minister for Foreign Affairs Wakamiya Kenji. Following this, even under the impact of COVID-19, Foreign Minister Motegi held a telephone call with Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi in May, and Defense Minister Kono Taro held a telephone call with Chief of Army Staff Qamar Javed Bajwa in August, maintaining and strengthening bilateral relations.

(3) Bangladesh

Bangladesh, in which Muslims account for around 90% of the population, is a democratic country located in the Bay of Bengal and is geopolitically very important as an intersection between India and ASEAN. Furthermore, with the deterioration in peace and order in Rakhine State of Myanmar since August 2017, more than 700,000



Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs Kokuba attends the Donor Conference on Sustaining Support (teleconference) for responses to the displaced persons from Rakhine State of Myanmar (October 22, Tokyo)

displaced persons have flooded into Bangladesh, but their return has not yet been realized. There are concerns that their prolonged displacement will put a growing burden on the host community and that local peace and order will deteriorate. On the economic front, the country maintained high growth and recorded a steady economic growth rate of around 8.13% in 2019, thanks to robust exports mainly of textile products.

Bangladesh was impacted by COVID-19 in the first half of 2020 but has been on a recovery trend since then. With a population of around 165 million people, Bangladesh has a production base with abundant low cost and high-quality labor, and the high potential of its market including considerable infrastructure demand is continuing to attract attention. The number of Japanese-affiliated companies developing business in the country has increased from 61 in 2005 to 315 in 2020. However, the securing of a stable supply of electric power as well as infrastructure improvement remain as challenges for foreign companies investing in the country.

As for relations with Japan, Prime Minister Abe held a telephone call with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in August, confirming cooperation to bring COVID-19 to a close and the further strengthening of bilateral relations, and additionally had a close discussion on the issue of displaced persons from Rakhine State of Myanmar. In October a donor conference was held in support of the displaced persons, co-sponsored by the U.S., EU, UK and the

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs Kokuba Konosuke explained Japan's support for improving the environment for the return of the displaced persons in Rakhine State of Myanmar, and Japan's support for the host communities and the displaced persons in Bangladesh.

(4) Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka is located in a strategic position on the sea lanes in the Indian Ocean. The country is traditionally one of the friendliest countries to Japan and its geopolitical and economic importance is note-worthy. With regard to domestic politics, after President Gotabaya Rajapaksa was elected in the November 2019 presidential election, in the general election which was postponed to August 2020 due to the impact of COVID-19, the ruling Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna party led by Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa won with 145 seats, greatly exceeding a majority (113 seats) in parliament, and solidified the political system. On the economic front, after the end of the conflict, the economy of Sri Lanka was growing at an annual rate of 7%, and it continues to maintain steady annual growth of over 3% in recent years, with GDP per-capita recorded at 3,852 US dollars in 2019. Economic growth in 2019 was only 2.3% due to the effects of terrorist bombings that occurred that year, and in 2020 the economy was depressed due to the impacts of COVID-19, but given the geopolitical importance of the country and its access to the Indian market, an even higher growth rate is expected.

In relations with Japan, the 4th Sri Lanka-Japan Dialogue on Maritime Security, Safety and Oceanic Issues was held via teleconference in October.

(5) Nepal

Nepal has geopolitical importance as an inland state in South Asia between the great powers of China and India. For many years, Japan has been a major donor to Nepal and the two countries have traditionally built friendly relations through

a variety of exchanges including between the imperial family and the former royal family, and through mountaineering. In domestic affairs, under the new constitution, the first federal, local and regional elections were held in 2017, and in February 2018, Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli was inaugurated. In the economy, particularly amidst the spread of COVID-19, Nepal is taking economic measures to reduce or exempt tariffs and corporate taxes on small and medium-sized enterprises and to create jobs for 700,000 people.

Regarding the relationship with Japan, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs Nakayama Norihiro visited Nepal in January and paid a courtesy call to President Bidhya Devi Bhandari and Prime Minister Oli. In March, a direct flight between Narita and Kathmandu went into service, and there were moves to promote people-to-people exchanges.

In June Japan also exchanged notes regarding grant aid of 300 million Japanese yen for the provision of health and medical equipment, and provided support via international organizations.

(6) Bhutan

Bhutan sets Gross National Happiness (GNH) as a guideline of the administration and is working on the priority issues of reducing poverty, improving the quality of healthcare and education, gender equality, the preservation of the environment, culture and traditions, stabilization of the macroeconomy, etc., under the 12th Five-Year Plan (from July 2018 until June 2023).

In June, Japan exchanged notes with Bhutan, where there has been a concern about the impact of COVID-19, regarding grant aid of 300 million Japanese yen for the provision of health and medical equipment, and provided support via international organizations.

(7) The Maldives

Located in a strategically important location in the Indian Ocean, the Maldives is an important partner to Japan in achieving a "Free and Open

Indo-Pacific.” Economic growth in the Maldives is mainly led by fishing and tourism, which account for about 30% of GDP, and the country’s per-capita GDP has reached the highest level in South Asia. However, the economy has sharply fallen since the spread of COVID-19, primarily from the shock to the tourism industry. In domestic affairs, the Solih administration was launched in November 2018. In the parliamentary election held in April 2019, the ruling Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP) captured two-thirds of the seats in parliament, thus solidifying the political footing of the administration of President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih. Since his inauguration, President Solih has been promoting a foreign policy of strengthening cooperation with every country that hopes to build mutually beneficial relations, and of advancing cooperation with other countries in the region including India.

Regarding the relationship with Japan, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Wakamiya Kenji and Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdulla Shahid held a telephone call in April and confirmed that the two countries would work in close coordination on measures against COVID-19, and such efforts are continuing to strengthen bilateral relations.

6 Oceania

(1) Australia

A Brief Summary and Overview

In the Foreign Policy White Paper issued by the Australian Government in November 2017, it was announced that as the guidelines for foreign policy of the next 10 years, Australia will, among others, promote an open, inclusive and prosperous Indo-Pacific region, oppose protectionism, promote and protect international rules, while also strengthening cooperation with partners including Japan. This foreign policy has continued to be upheld even after Prime Minister Scott

Morrison replaced Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull in August 2018.

With the region facing a variety of issues, the



Japan-Australia Summit Meeting
(November 17, Tokyo; Photo: Cabinet Public Relations Office)

“Special Strategic Partnership” between Japan and Australia, which share fundamental values and strategic interests, is more important than ever. The two countries’ strategic visions toward maintaining and strengthening a free and open international order based on the rule of law in the Indo-Pacific region are aligned in wide-ranging areas. With the Prime Ministers’ annual mutual visits and close coordination between the Foreign Ministers serving as the basis, the two countries have been further deepening multi-layered cooperation and collaboration in all areas toward stability and prosperity of the international community. Furthermore, multilateral coordination and partnerships such as the Japan-U.S.-Australia, and Japan-U.S.-Australia-India relations are being steadily strengthened.

The two countries are promoting free trade, including the TPP Agreement. Australia is the fifth largest trading partner for Japan, and Japan is the second largest trading partner for Australia. The two countries are further developing mutually complementary economic relations based on the Japan-Australia Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA), which marks the sixth anniversary of its effectuation, and the TPP11 Agreement that entered into force at the end of 2018.

At the September Japan-Australia Summit telephone call with Prime Minister Morrison, which was the first telephone call with a foreign leader since the inauguration of Prime Minister Suga, Japan and Australia confirmed that, as “Special

Bushfires in Australia; Dispatch of Japan Disaster Relief (JDR) Self-Defense Force Units

1. Outbreak and damage of bushfires

The worst bushfires in history spread across the whole of Australia from September 2019. The fires, which continued to rage until March 2020, resulted in the loss of 33 lives and the destruction of more than 3,100 homes, among other damages that extended across more than 12 million hectares of land, larger than the whole of the Kanto and Koshinetsu region. This area of damage was 25 times that of the damage in the bushfires of 2009, which had been recognized as the worst in Australian history. The bushfires also resulted in many deaths among Australia's indigenous animal species that live in unique ecosystems, such as koalas. Direct damage alone is estimated to have reached close to 100 billion Australian dollars (approximately 7.6 trillion Japanese yen). Smoke from the bushfires also led to the closure of port facilities and construction sites, while the amount of private insurance claims associated with the bushfires has reached 1.9 billion Australian dollars. During this period, the number of foreign tourists fell by 10 to 20%, and the resulting loss of profits from tourism was estimated to be 4.5 billion Australian dollars.

2. Response by the Government of Australia

For the first time in history, the Government of Australia issued a compulsory call-up to 3,000 reservists from the Australian Defense Force to provide assistance in responding to the bushfires, while up to 6,500 personnel from the Australian Defense Force provided various forms of assistance in the areas of transportation, evacuation of residents, and the provision of relief supplies.

The National Bushfire Recovery Agency was established to manage at least 2 billion Australian dollars of funds over two years from 2020, with the aim of providing financial assistance to victims. In addition, a total of 60 million Australian dollars of assistance was disbursed to 42 municipalities that had suffered serious damage. The Government of Australia also decided to provide 76 million Australian dollars for the support of victims' mental health, 50 million Australian dollars for the support of industries in the affected regions, and 76 million Australian dollars for the support of the tourism industry.

A royal commission was also set up to evaluate the causes of the bushfires and the government response.

3. Support from Japan and other countries

To respond to these bushfires, Japan, as well as the U.S., Canada, New Zealand and other countries extended their assistance to Australia.

Based on the Act on Dispatchment of the Japan Disaster Relief Team, the Government of Japan decided to dispatch Self-Defense Force (SDF) personnel and two JASDF C-130H Transport Aircraft to provide assistance in responding to the bushfires, as well as to provide emergency relief supplies, such as dust respirator masks, through the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). In response to this, about 70 SDF personnel and two transport aircraft provided transportation for approximately 11 tons of vehicles and fire extinguishing equipment, as well as approximately 600 people including Australian Defense Force personnel, firefighters and victims. Respecting the Australian government's assessment that the imminent threat had been mitigated and that it was possible for the Australian forces to respond on their own, the SDF concluded its activities on February 8. Japan's assistance was also covered in reports by the major TV stations in Australia, and articles published by the respective news agencies recorded an unprecedented number of hits and received numerous positive comments from the people of Australia.

Furthermore, the Japan Meteorological Agency continued providing observation images and data obtained from the meteorological satellite Himawari from November 2019 till the end of January 2020. Private Japanese corporations have also donated a total of about 5 million Australian dollars to the Government of Australia and other organizations, and contributed to the bushfire response. Japan's assistance on this occasion has left a strong mark on the friendly relations between the two countries.



Transportation of Australian Defense Force vehicles by the SDF transport aircraft (Photo: Ministry of Defense)



Australian Firefighters boarding the SDF aircraft (Photo: Ministry of Defense)

Strategic Partners,” both countries will further develop their complementary economic relationship, and, in anticipation of COVID-19 being brought to a close, confirmed that they would deepen cooperation for the realization of a “Free and Open Indo-Pacific” and for the stability and prosperity of the international community as a whole, and they also confirmed the importance of collaborating with like-minded countries in the region. Additionally, at the summit meeting held when Prime Minister Morrison visited Japan in November, which was the first visit of a foreign leader since the spread of COVID-19 and since the inauguration of Suga administration, the two leaders confirmed that the two countries had reached an agreement in principle on the “Japan-Australia Reciprocal Access Agreement,” which they had been negotiating to elevate security and defense cooperation between Japan and Australia to a new level. With regard to the economy, they confirmed that they will continue to collaborate on WTO reform including the reforms to the Appellate Body, rule-making on electronic commerce, and issues of “developing countries.” In addition to celebrating the signing of RCEP, they agreed to work closely and to play leading roles in Japan and Australia for RCEP’s early entry into force, and the leaders also confirmed that they will continue to cooperate toward the steady implementation and expansion of the TPP11 Agreement.

As for between foreign ministers, Foreign Minister Motegi held a meeting with his Australian counterpart Marise Payne, who visited Japan for the Second Japan-Australia-India-U.S. Foreign Ministers’ Meeting in October. With regard to security and defense cooperation, they affirmed the need not only to deepen their cooperation, but also to widen its scope in order to tackle contemporary new challenges. In regard to the economy, the Ministers discussed ways to resume travel between the two countries while maintaining preventive measures against the spread of COVID-19 as a way to develop economic relations between the two countries.

In a typical year, the forest fire season lasts from September until March in Australia. But the forest fire that broke out in the fall of 2019 was the most massive ever, keeping Prime Minister Morrison fully occupied with it. For its part, Japan deployed a Disaster Relief Team and Japan Self-Defense Force units between January 15 and February 8, 2020 and provided emergency assistance supplies (masks) (see the Special Feature on page 82).

B Cooperation in the Security Field

To ensure peace and prosperity of the Indo-Pacific region, Japan and Australia have continued to steadily strengthen and expand cooperation in the field of security.

To date, Foreign and Defense Ministerial Consultations have been held with Australia on eight occasions, where the two sides have held discussions on promoting bilateral security and defense cooperation, in light of the importance of cooperation between the two countries, which have both the willingness and ability to actively contribute to regional stability and prosperity. At the Japan-Australia Summit Meeting in November, the two leaders confirmed that the two countries had reached an agreement in principle on the Japan-Australia Reciprocal Access Agreement, and the two countries are accelerating the remaining necessary work toward an early signing. Additionally, Japan and Australia aim to strengthen economic security cooperation in fields such as telecommunications and critical minerals. Furthermore, Japan and Australia, as allies of the U.S., continue to further strengthen cooperation between Japan, the U.S. and Australia.

C Economic Relations

As shown by Japan and Australia spearheading the TPP11 Agreement, which entered into force in December 2018, the two countries are working closely and demonstrating leadership in promoting the regional free trade order, including the RCEP Agreement. Mainly industrial products such as automobiles are being exported from Japan to

Australia, while mainly energy resources such as coal and natural gas, and agricultural products such as beef are being imported into Japan from Australia, in a mutually complementary economic relationship that has been developed steadily over the years. In recent years new cooperation efforts have been progressing, such as hydrogen-related efforts. Since the spread of COVID-19, the movement of goods, funds and people between Japan and Australia has been stagnating, the two countries are discussing ways to develop economic relations in a way that is compatible with measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

D Cultural and People-to-People Exchanges

There exists a foundation for affinity toward Japan in Australia cultivated over many years, as shown by the fact that approximately 400,000 people in Australia learn the Japanese language (the fourth largest group in the world), and that there are over 100 sister city relations. Until travel restrictions were enforced due to the spread of COVID-19, a variety of initiatives had been implemented in order to strengthen the foundation of Japan-Australia relations, including the promotion of mutual understanding through JENESYS, the exchange program including young people, and the “New Colombo Plan” as well as the Young Political Leaders Exchange. Both Japan and Australia will continue to work on the appropriate and steady operation of the Japan-Australia Working Holiday Program, which celebrated its 40th anniversary in 2020.

E Cooperation in the International Community

In order to make an active contribution to peace and stability in the international community, the two countries have been strengthening cooperation in wide-ranging areas. In particular, cooperation has been deepened in addressing various issues facing the Indo-Pacific region such as maritime security and nuclear and missile development by North Korea. Australia deployed the Royal Australian Navy frigate ARUNTA to

undertake monitoring and surveillance activities in the adjacent ocean areas around Japan, including the East China Sea since late October, by doing so, for the fourth time since 2018, Australia has engaged in monitoring and surveillance activities against illicit maritime activities, including ship-to-ship transfers with North Korean flagged vessels, which are prohibited by UN Security Council resolutions. In addition, from late September through late October, Australia engaged in monitoring and surveillance activities for the seventh time since 2018 by aircraft, using Kadena Air Base.

(2) New Zealand

A Brief Summary and Overview

Japan and New Zealand share fundamental values, such as democracy and a market economy. The two countries have been maintaining good relations over the years. In recent years, under the “Strategic Cooperative Partnership,” the two countries have been strengthening bilateral cooperation in areas including the economy, security and defense cooperation and people-to-people exchanges, as well as cooperative relations on issues facing the region and the international community. In the general election in October, the ruling Labour Party, led by Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern, signed a cooperation agreement (non-Cabinet participation cooperation agreement) with the Greens, and a new administration was inaugurated.

B Telephone Calls with Dignitaries

Amidst the global spread of COVID-19, Japan and New Zealand, through telephone calls at the summit and foreign ministers’ levels, have been conducting close exchanges of opinions on responses to COVID-19, on cooperation in the Pacific Island region and on regional affairs. In November, Prime Minister Suga held a summit telephone call with the reappointed Prime Minister Ardern. As important “Strategic Cooperative Partners” in the Indo-Pacific region sharing common values, the leaders encouraged cooperation

between Japan and New Zealand on efforts to realize a “Free and Open Indo-Pacific,” on the expansion of a free and fair economic order through WTO reform and mechanisms such as the TPP11 Agreement and the RCEP Agreement, and in the field of security.

As for between foreign ministers, Foreign Minister Motegi held three telephone calls with his New Zealand counterpart Winston Peters (in April, June and September) to exchange opinions on issues such as responses to COVID-19, and they agreed that both countries would continue to cooperate, including in regional situations, under the “Strategic Cooperative Partnership” between Japan and New Zealand. Additionally, in December a foreign ministers’ telephone call was held with Minister of Foreign Affairs Nanaia Mahuta, newly appointed in November, and they confirmed that they will continue to strengthen bilateral relations and to promote cooperation in the international arena.

C Economic Relations

The two countries enjoy a complementary economic relationship and have closely cooperated on the steady implementation of the TPP11 Agreement, which entered into force in December 2018, and the promotion of free trade structures including the RCEP Agreement and WTO reforms. Furthermore, in the fields of food and agriculture, the “New Zealand Hokkaido Dairy Collaboration Project” designed to improve the profitability of dairy farming in Japan was implemented from 2014 to 2018. The “New Zealand Hokkaido Sheep Collaboration Project” was launched in 2018 with the aim of vitalizing the sheep industry in Hokkaido.

D Cultural and People-to-People Exchanges

People-to-people exchanges between Japan and New Zealand, such as for youths, take place through exchange programs like JENESYS, and more than 1,100 people had participated by 2019 before travel restrictions were enforced because

of the spread of COVID-19. Additionally, the 44 sister city relationships that have been cultivated between Japan and New Zealand over many years are fertile ground for people-to-people exchanges, and networking between sister cities is making progress with the aim of promoting mutual understanding among youth. Furthermore, the New Zealand Government sponsored “Game On English,” which extends support to English language education for Japanese students through rugby and boating.

E Cooperation in the International Community

The two countries are cooperating closely for the peace and stability of the international community, including the UN. In particular, against illicit maritime activities, including ship-to-ship transfers with North Korean-flagged vessels, which are prohibited by UN Security Council resolutions, in October New Zealand engaged in monitoring and surveillance activities for the third time since 2018 by aircraft, using Kadena Air Base. Furthermore, Japan and New Zealand have collaborated in regional cooperation frameworks such as the East Asia Summit (EAS), the ASEAN Regional Forum, Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) and the Pacific Islands Leaders Meeting (PALM). They are also cooperating over economic development in the Pacific Island region. Through these efforts, the two countries are playing a proactive role for the regional stability and development.

(3) Pacific Island Countries

A Brief Summary and Overview

Pacific Island countries and Japan are bound by the Pacific Ocean, have deep historical ties, and are important partners in such areas as cooperation in the international arena and the supply of fishery and mineral resources. They are becoming increasingly important as a cornerstone of a “Free and Open Indo-Pacific,” as they are located at the heart of the Pacific Ocean. Japan has been holding the Pacific Islands Leaders Meeting (PALM) once every three years since 1997. In February

2020, senior officials from Japan and the Pacific Island countries exchanged views in Tokyo on cooperation with the Pacific Island region as part of preparations for the Ninth Pacific Islands Leaders Meeting (PALM9) in 2021. The meeting was co-chaired by Mr. Takata Toshihisa, Ambassador for the Pacific Island Region, and Mrs. Camilla Solomon, Secretary for Foreign Affairs and Trade of Republic of Nauru, and was attended by senior officials from Pacific Island countries and regions, and there were frank exchanges of opinions on cooperation with the region. In addition, at the PALM Ministerial Interim Meeting in October 2020 that was held via teleconference, Foreign Minister Motegi co-chaired the meeting with Mr. Simon Kofe, Minister of Justice, Communications and Foreign Affairs of Tuvalu, and they followed up on the Eighth Pacific Islands Leaders Meeting (PALM8) that was held in 2018. At the Ministerial meeting, the Ministers confirmed to continue to work closely for the success of PALM9 in 2021.

B Interagency Committee for the Promotion of Cooperation with Pacific Island Countries

In 2020, the fourth, fifth and sixth meetings of the Interagency Committee for the Promotion of Cooperation with Pacific Island Countries, which is comprised of relevant governmental ministries and agencies, were held under the leadership of Special Advisor to the Prime Minister Kihara Minoru and Special Advisor to the Prime Minister Izumi Hiroto. In addition to discussing specific measures for strengthening policies toward Pacific Island countries, it was confirmed that further discussions would be held in preparation for PALM9 in 2021, in order for relevant ministries and agencies to continue to cooperate and to promote “All Japan” efforts.

C Meetings with Dignitaries.

In February 2020, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs Nakayama Norihiro led a public-private joint economic mission to Fiji, and had a meeting with Prime Minister Josia Voreqe



Foreign Minister Motegi meets with Prime Minister Marape (August 21, Papua New Guinea)



Video message from Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs Nakanishi on the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Japan and Fiji (October 22, Tokyo)

Bainimarama and Foreign Affairs Minister Inia Seruiratu. In July, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs Nakayama had a meeting with Mr. Ishikeli Uluinairai Mataitoga, Ambassador of Fiji to Japan, Mr. Francis Mariur Matsutaro, Ambassador of the Republic of Palau to Japan, and Dr. Tevita Suka Mangisi, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Tonga to Japan.

In August 2020, Foreign Minister Motegi visited Papua New Guinea and met with Prime Minister James Marape. At the meeting, Foreign Minister Motegi discussed Japan's support of more than 1 billion Japanese yen to strengthen health care systems, including medical supplies and equipment supplies, as well as budgetary support for early recovery of the PNG economy, which has been impacted by COVID-19. In response, Prime Minister Marape expressed his gratitude for Japan's robust support. Foreign Minister Motegi and Prime Minister Marape also signed the “Statement of Intent to Further Promote

Bilateral Relations between Japan and Papua New Guinea.” In December, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs Nakanishi Satoshi held a lunch meeting at the Iikura House with the Ambassadors to Japan from Micronesia, Fiji, the Marshall Islands, Palau, Samoa and Tonga. 2020 was the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Japan and Fiji, and in October a large-scale cultural event hosted by the Embassy of Japan in Fiji was held. Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs Nakanishi sent a congratulatory video message.

▣ Cultural and People-to-People Exchanges

As part of efforts to invigorate and enhance the people-to-people exchanges announced at PALM8 in 2018, people-to-people exchanges were promoted among students through JENESYS. Furthermore, from FY2016 Japan commenced the Pacific Leaders’ Educational Assistance for Development of State (Pacific-LEADS) for young government administrators of Pacific Island countries. Currently renamed the SDGs Global Leader Program, the program continues to accept young government officials from Pacific Island countries at graduate schools in Japan.

7 Regional and Inter-regional Cooperation

In the Indo-Pacific region, the world’s growth center, it is important to ensure peace and prosperity for the entire region, and by extension for the world, by realizing a free and open order based on the rule of law. From this perspective, Japan strategically advances initiatives toward realizing a “Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)” through various regional cooperative frameworks, including Japan-ASEAN, Japan-Mekong cooperation, ASEAN Plus Three (Japan, China and the Republic of Korea (ROK)), East Asia Summit (EAS), Japan-China-ROK trilateral cooperation and Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), while maintaining the Japan-U.S. Alliance as the

cornerstone of its foreign policy. Based on this idea, Japan has been collaborating with like-minded countries. In particular, the “ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific” (AOIP), which was adopted by ASEAN in 2019, shares fundamental principles with FOIP, such as the rule of law, freedom and openness. While respecting the centrality and unity of ASEAN, Japan, as an “Indo-Pacific State,” intends to embody Japan-ASEAN cooperation in line with the AOIP and contribute to the stability and prosperity of the entire Indo-Pacific region.

(1) The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)

Located in the center of the vast Indo-Pacific, ASEAN is key to the realization of a “Free and Open Indo-Pacific.” At the ASEAN-related Summit Meetings held in November 2015 (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia), it was declared that the three councils of the “ASEAN Political-Security Community Council,” the “ASEAN Economic Community Council” and the “ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Council” would be established within 2015 (2015 Kuala Lumpur Declaration on the Establishment of the ASEAN Community). Also, “ASEAN2025: Forging Ahead Together” was adopted as a guiding policy for the ASEAN Community for the 10 years from 2016 to 2025. In June 2019, the “ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific” was adopted, which sets forth principles such as openness, transparency, inclusivity and a rules-based framework.

In East Asia where ASEAN plays an important role as a center of regional cooperation, multi-layered regional cooperation, such as ASEAN Plus Three (Japan, China and the ROK), East Asia Summit (EAS) and ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), is operating with ASEAN at its center, and cooperative relationships in a wide range of areas including politics, security and the economy have been established.

On the economic front, ASEAN has concluded the ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA) as well as other EPAs and FTAs with various countries

including Japan, China, the ROK and India, thereby expanding the ASEAN centered free trade zone. At the 4th RCEP Summit in November 2020, the negotiations came to fruition after approximately eight years, and the RCEP Agreement was signed by 15 countries, including Japan and 10 ASEAN countries. While aiming for the early entry into force of the RCEP Agreement, Japan will continue to play a leading role for the future participation of India to the Agreement, as India declined signing this time.

(2) Issue of the South China Sea

The issue with regard to the South China Sea is directly related to the peace and stability of the region and is a legitimate concern of the international community. As a stakeholder that makes use of the South China Sea, the issue is also an important matter of interest for Japan, which depends on sea transport for most of its resources and energy. It is necessary for the international community to cooperate toward the maintenance and development of open and stable seas.

In 2020, China announced the establishment of new administrative districts called the “Nansha District” and the “Xisha District,” and has continued and strengthened its unilateral changes to the status quo that go against the rule of law and openness, such as the further militarization of reclaimed features (see Chapter 4, Section 2, 3 (4)). Actions that increase tensions in the region such as repeated military exercises and missile launches can also be seen. Furthermore, China has not changed its position of not accepting the Arbitral Tribunal’s award²³ to the Philippines and China, and has continued to assert maritime claims that are inconsistent with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

The international community, including Japan, has expressed serious concerns about China’s unilateral attempts to change the status quo and render them *faits accomplis*. Amidst this, Japan, from the standpoint that the three principles of the rule of law at sea should be consistently adhered (see Chapter 4, Section 2, 6 (2)), has also emphasized the importance of all the concerned parties related to the South China Sea to work toward peaceful settlement of disputes based on international law, in particular UNCLOS. Additionally, Japan has pointed out that China’s assertions regarding baselines in the South China Sea are not based on relevant provisions of UNCLOS and that it is important to protect the freedom of navigation and overflight, including in the sea and airspace surrounding and above maritime features found to be low-tide elevations that do not have territorial sea and territorial airspace of their own according to the award of the Arbitral Tribunal. Japan has also pointed out that the basis of the “historical rights” claimed by China is not clear under international law, and the Arbitral Tribunal ruled that the “historical rights” based on the “nine-dash line” claimed by China were found to be contrary to UNCLOS and were clearly denied.

In 2018, negotiations on the Code of Conduct (COC) in the South China Sea commenced between China and ASEAN. Japan considers that the COC should be effective, substantive, consistent with UNCLOS and respect the legitimate rights and interests of all stakeholders who use the South China Sea, and has advocated for the importance of such efforts leading to demilitarization of the area and to the realization of a peaceful, open South China Sea.

23 In January 2013, the Government of the Philippines instituted arbitral proceedings under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) as to the disputes between the Philippines and China regarding the South China Sea under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). The Arbitral Tribunal organized by these proceedings rendered the final award on July 12, 2016. Japan issued a statement by the Foreign Minister on the same day, stating, “As the Tribunal’s award is final and legally binding on the parties to the dispute under the provisions of UNCLOS, the parties to this case are required to comply with the award. Japan strongly hopes that the parties’ compliance with the award will eventually lead to the peaceful settlement of disputes in the South China Sea.”

(3) Japan-ASEAN Relations

Located in the center of the vast Indo-Pacific, ASEAN is key to the realization of a “Free and Open Indo-Pacific.” Realizing a more stable and prosperous ASEAN is absolutely essential to the stability and prosperity of the region as a whole. Based on this recognition, Japan has announced that it will actively support ASEAN’s efforts in accordance with “ASEAN Community Vision 2025” for further integration even after the establishment of the ASEAN Community, while steadily implementing the “Vision Statement on ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation” and the “Joint Statement” that were both adopted at the ASEAN-Japan Commemorative Summit Meeting held in Tokyo in 2013.

In 2020, through the Japan-ASEAN Foreign Ministers’ Meeting in September held under Viet Nam, the ASEAN Chair, via teleconference, and the 23rd Japan-ASEAN Summit Meeting held in November, the participants affirmed that they would continue to further strengthen cooperative relations over a broad range of fields and that Japan-ASEAN cooperation in the four priority areas of the AOIP will be materialized. At the Japan-ASEAN Summit Meeting in November, Prime Minister Suga stated that the “ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP),” which ASEAN adopted in 2019 under its own initiative, sets forth the rule of law, openness, freedom, transparency and inclusivity as ASEAN’s principles of action, and he announced Japan’s full support for the AOIP, saying that it has many fundamental commonalities with Japan’s “Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP),” and that sharing these fundamental principles is the cornerstone of cooperation between Japan and ASEAN.

In addition to the Chair’s Statement, the Joint Statement of the 23rd ASEAN-Japan Summit on Cooperation on the AOIP was issued with the support of all ASEAN member countries. It states that the AOIP and FOIP share relevant fundamental principles in promoting peace and cooperation, and confirms that the Japan-ASEAN Strategic

Partnership will be further reinforced in the four areas outlined in the AOIP, namely, maritime cooperation, connectivity, the UN Sustainable Development Goals 2030 and economic and other possible areas of cooperation. On that basis, Japan announced specific cooperation projects in the four areas of the AOIP, and for connectivity in particular, Prime Minister Suga launched the “Japan-ASEAN Connectivity Initiative,” with a focus on two trillion-Japanese yen worth of ongoing quality infrastructure projects. Prime Minister Suga also announced that Japan would strengthen the connectivity of land, sea, and air corridors through infrastructure development, together with capacity building projects for 1,000 individuals over the next three years.

Japan announced its full support for the ASEAN Centre for Public Health Emergencies and Emerging Diseases at the Special ASEAN Plus Three Summit on COVID-19 in April, and at the Japan-ASEAN Summit Meeting an establishment event for the Centre was held. The establishment of the Centre was officially announced by Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc of Viet Nam (the ASEAN Chair, and the Coordinating Country for Japan) at the event, based on the results of the Feasibility Study, which was conducted following the Special ASEAN Plus Three Summit on COVID-19, in light of the ASEAN’s needs and with input from experts in the region. Prime Minister Suga stated that Japan would continue to make every effort to provide support, including through technical cooperation by JICA through dispatching experts and providing training, to help the Centre develop into a strong organization that, as a hub for the region’s fight against infectious diseases, protects the people of ASEAN from the threat posed by infectious diseases.

Through these series of meetings, ASEAN expressed gratitude for Japan’s cooperation in responding to COVID-19, such as the establishment of the Centre and the contribution of one million US dollars to the COVID-19 ASEAN Response Fund.

Special
FeatureASEAN Centre for Public Health Emergencies and Emerging Diseases;
Strengthening ASEAN's Regional Capabilities to Infectious Diseases through
Japan-ASEAN Cooperation toward the Realization of a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific"

The novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) has been raging across the world and has greatly impacted societies and economies in the Indo-Pacific region. The number of infected people and deaths is still increasing around the world as of the end of December, and the large-scale lockdowns and other restrictions are having severe impacts on citizens' lives.

ASEAN^{*1}, which has been a long-term partner of Japan, is no exception. Even in the ASEAN region, which had recorded a low number of infections at the start of the year, the number of infections increased rapidly in some countries around April, highlighting the importance of countermeasures against infectious diseases. This region has close geographical, social and economic ties with Japan, and many Japanese companies have expanded their businesses in the region. Strengthening ASEAN's regional capabilities to cope with infectious diseases not only contributes to the region as a whole, but is also extremely important from the perspective of ensuring the safety of Japanese people living in the region as well as preventing the spread of infectious diseases in Japan. Furthermore, for Japan, which promotes a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific" as a pillar of its diplomacy, supporting efforts to strengthen the infectious disease response system in ASEAN countries, which is key to achieving the goal, is a top priority.

Under these circumstances, at the Special ASEAN Plus Three (Japan-China-ROK) Summit on Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) held via video conference on April 14, at the request of the ASEAN Secretariat, Prime Minister Abe expressed that Japan will provide strong support for ASEAN based on three pillars: the strengthening of infectious disease response capability, the ASEAN Centre for Public Health Emergencies and Emerging Diseases, and support for strengthening the resilience of the economy.

The ASEAN Centre for Public Health Emergencies and Emerging Diseases, positioned as a regional resource hub, aims to strengthen ASEAN's preparation, detection and response capabilities to public health emergencies and emerging diseases. Specifically, it is planned to enhance surveillance and field epidemiology, create regional reference laboratory networks^{*2} and conduct training for personnel responsible for public health emergencies and emerging diseases, among others. Japan has contributed approximately 5.5 billion Japanese yen (50 million US dollars) to the Japan-ASEAN Integration Fund (JAIF) for the establishment of this Centre.

With a view to establishing the Centre as soon as possible without losing momentum, Japan has conducted a feasibility study (FS) from June, in cooperation with experts from ASEAN as well as various regions and organizations, including the U.S., Australia and the World Health Organization (WHO).

Preparations for the establishment of this Centre have been moving forward together with ASEAN, with full respect for ASEAN's needs and intentions, and the ASEAN member states have shown great interest in the initiative. The Mekong countries welcomed Japan's cooperation at the Mekong-Japan Foreign Ministers' Meeting held in July, while ASEAN member states commended Japan's cooperation at the Japan-ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting and expressed that they were looking forward to the official announcement of the establishment of this Centre at the upcoming Japan-ASEAN Summit Meeting. It was officially announced at an event to mark the establishment of the Centre following the 23rd Japan-ASEAN Summit Meeting in November. On this occasion, the leaders of the ASEAN member states expressed their deep appreciation for Japan's support.

To develop the ASEAN Centre for Public Health Emergencies and Emerging Diseases into an organization that protects the people of ASEAN from the threat of infectious diseases as a regional hub for public health emergencies and emerging diseases, Japan will spare no effort in providing continuous support to accelerate this initiative while offering its knowledge to the greatest extent. Going forward, Japan, as a true friend of ASEAN, will continue to work together with the region to overcome this difficult time and advance firmly toward realizing greater prosperity for a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific."



At the 23rd Japan-ASEAN Summit Meeting where the establishment of the ASEAN Centre for Public Health Emergencies and Emerging Diseases was announced (November 12, Tokyo; Photo: Cabinet Public Relations Office)

^{*1} ASEAN comprises the following 10 member states: Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Viet Nam. (Singapore and Brunei are not eligible to receive official development assistance (ODA).)

^{*2} A network of reference laboratories with a view to realizing early testing of pathogens among others

As for regional and international affairs, with regard to North Korea, Prime Minister Suga said that there is no time to lose before we resolve the abductions issue, calling for the continued understanding and cooperation of each country toward the early resolution of the abductions issue, and ASEAN expressed their support. On the South China Sea issue, Prime Minister Suga expressed serious concerns about unilateral attempts to change the status quo and stated that legitimate rights under international law, including freedom of navigation and overflight, should be respected.

In the economic field, through official development assistance (ODA) and the Japan-ASEAN Integration Fund (JAIF), Japan has been supporting the further deepening of ASEAN integration and unity in a variety of fields, such as support for narrowing the development gap in the region through strengthening ASEAN connectivity. At the Japan-ASEAN Summit meeting in November, Prime Minister Suga announced that, through the “Japan-ASEAN Economic Resilience Action Plan” that was issued at the Special ASEAN Economic Minister (AEM)-METI Consultations in July, Japan would support the strengthening of supply chains and businesses that promote social change through utilizing digital technologies. Additionally, Prime Minister Suga stated that Japan would like to accelerate a “virtuous cycle of economic growth and environmental protection” through innovation, and that Japan would cooperate with ASEAN countries to realize a decarbonized society as called for by the Paris Agreement.

(4) Mekong-Japan Summit Meeting **(Participating Countries: Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, Viet Nam and Japan)**

The Mekong region (Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam) is the core of the Indo-Pacific and is Japan’s Strategic Partner with strong economic growth and potential. Peace and

prosperity in the Mekong region are extremely important to Asia as a whole, including Japan, since it will contribute to narrowing the development gap in the region and promoting regional integration within ASEAN. Japan has been holding the Mekong-Japan Summit Meeting every year since 2009 in order to steadily implement Mekong-Japan cooperation. This year, 2021, is the once in three year time when the Mekong-Japan Summit Meeting is held in Japan, and Japan and the Mekong countries will lead the region during the year as the “Japan-Mekong Year.”

At the 12th Mekong-Japan Summit Meeting held via video conference in November, Prime Minister Suga reiterated that Japan, as an “Indo-Pacific State,” will continue to contribute to the peace and prosperity of the region, and the Mekong countries welcomed the steady progress of Mekong-Japan cooperation and thanked Japan for its efforts. At the Summit Meeting, Japan announced its “Five Points of Cooperation” ((1) Promotion of loans and investment for the private sector, (2) Grant assistance for grass-roots human security projects that pervade through small communities, (3) Cooperation concerning the rule of law, (4) Cooperation concerning the ocean, and (5) Cooperation concerning strengthening supply chains). The Joint Statement adopted at the Summit Meeting highly evaluated Japan’s strong commitment to the Mekong region, including Prime Minister Suga’s visit to Viet Nam in October and Foreign Minister Motegi’s visit to Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar in August, and additionally reaffirmed the determination of the leaders to work together to accelerate the realization of the Ayeyawady-Chao Phraya-Mekong Economic Cooperation Strategy (ACMECS). Japan will continue to contribute to the prosperity and development of the region as a reliable partner for Mekong region countries (see the Special Feature on page 92).

Special
Feature

Mekong-Japan Cooperation

The five countries of Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam, located along the Mekong River basin on the Indochina Peninsula of Southeast Asia are known as the Mekong countries. These five countries cover a total area of about 1.94 million km² (about five times of Japan's land area) and have a total population of about 244 million people. There are great expectations for the development of this region as one with especially great future potential even within fast-growing Asia. This region is also connected to China, India, and the South China Sea, and is strategically positioned at the center of Asia's land and sea transportation routes. Japan has close economic and trade relations with the Mekong countries, and strengthening relations with these countries that are the core of the Indo-Pacific region is of great diplomatic importance for Japan.

To ensure the steady implementation of Mekong-Japan cooperation, the Mekong-Japan Foreign Ministers' Meeting and the Mekong-Japan Summit Meeting have been held every year since 2008 and 2009 respectively. Of these, the future course for Mekong-Japan cooperation is updated every time when a Summit Meeting is held in Japan (about once every three years). 2021 is the year when this Mekong-Japan Summit Meeting is due to be held in Japan and a very important year when the leaders of the Mekong countries visit Japan to set out the future course of Mekong-Japan cooperation for the next three years. It will truly be the "Mekong-Japan year," in which Japan and the Mekong countries will lead the region.

The past three years of Mekong-Japan cooperation began in October 2018 with the convention of the 10th Mekong-Japan Summit Meeting in Tokyo and the adoption of the Tokyo Strategy 2018 for Mekong-Japan Cooperation, which sets out the direction of Mekong-Japan cooperation for the future. This Strategy establishes the following three pillars for advancing cooperation: (1) vibrant and effective connectivity; (2) people-centered society; and (3) realization of a green Mekong. Toward the realization of a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific," efforts have been made to promote cooperation in line with this Strategy in areas such as infrastructure development, human resource development and digitalization.

The "Mekong-Japan Initiative for SDGs toward 2030" was announced at the 11th Mekong-Japan Summit Meeting held in Bangkok (Thailand) in November 2019. This Initiative aims to draw out the Mekong region's potential in an optimal manner. While making use of quality infrastructure investment in accordance with international standards, Japan intends to address the following three fields as areas of priority: (1) environmental and urban issues; (2) sustainable natural resource management and utilization; and (3) inclusive growth.

At the 12th Mekong-Japan Summit Meeting held via video teleconference in November, Prime Minister Suga announced "Five Points of Cooperation" as Japan's tangible contribution ((1) promotion of loans and investment for the private sector; (2) grant assistance for Grass-Roots Human Security Projects that pervades through small communities; (3) cooperation concerning the rule of law; (4) cooperation concerning the ocean; and (5) cooperation concerning strengthening supply chains), and expressed his determination to continue vigorously promoting Mekong-Japan cooperation.

Mekong-Japan cooperation, which has been progressing steadily through these efforts, will be elevated to new heights through the Mekong-Japan Summit Meeting that will be held in Japan in 2021. As an Indo-Pacific nation, Japan will stand by the people and societies of the Mekong countries while deepening the mutually strengthening partnership going forward.



12th Mekong-Japan Summit Meeting (November 13. Photo: Cabinet Public Relations Office)



Mekong River (November, Krong Kracheh, Cambodia)

(5) ASEAN Plus Three (Participating Countries: 10 ASEAN countries and Japan, China and the ROK)

The Asian financial crisis in 1997 prompted the launch of ASEAN Plus Three, in the form of adding the three countries of Japan, China and the ROK to ASEAN. ASEAN Plus Three has been developed with a focus on areas such as finance and food security. It currently covers cooperation in 24 fields, including finance, agriculture and food, education, culture, tourism, public health, energy and the environment. Under the “ASEAN Plus Three Cooperation Work Plan (2018-2022)” adopted in August 2017, the ASEAN Plus Three countries have been making further progress on cooperation in various fields.

In April at the behest of Viet Nam, the ASEAN Chair for 2020, the Special ASEAN Plus Three (Japan-China-ROK) Summit on Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) was held, and Prime Minister Abe announced three support measures for ASEAN: (1) strengthening capabilities to control infectious diseases, (2) establishing an ASEAN Centre for Public Health Emergencies and Emerging Diseases, and (3) supporting economic resilience. He said that through strong cooperation the leaders should confront the virus, which was already spreading across national borders, and was supported by participating countries. Additionally, he emphasized that the flow of goods should be maintained even during the crisis, stated that any measures should be consistent with WTO rules, and received the support of participating countries. A joint statement was issued after the meeting, which reaffirmed the common commitment to strengthen solidarity, cooperation and mutual support among the ASEAN Plus Three countries to control and contain the spread of the pandemic.

At the 23rd ASEAN Plus Three Summit Meeting (teleconference) held in November, as a follow-up to the support measures announced at the Special ASEAN Plus Three Summit in April, Prime Minister Suga (1) regarding medical cooperation,

expressed Japan’s intention to provide assistance worth more than 200 million US dollars in medical supplies and equipment as well as extending technical cooperation for medical research institutions and others, and additionally, (2) mentioned that the establishment of the ASEAN Centre for Public Health Emergencies and Emerging Diseases had been formally announced at the Japan-ASEAN Summit Meeting, and that Japan would continue to provide support in order to ensure that the Centre, as a hub for the region’s fight against infectious diseases, develops into an organization that will protect ASEAN’s people from the threat posed by infectious diseases, and furthermore (3) on support to revitalize the economy, explained that Japan had provided a total of approximately 2.5 billion US dollars’ worth of financial assistance in yen loans to ASEAN countries.

Furthermore, Prime Minister Suga said that in addition to the 300,000 US dollars donated collaboratively from the ASEAN Plus Three Cooperation Fund to the “COVID-19 ASEAN Response Fund” as a follow-up to the Special ASEAN Plus Three Summit Joint Statement adopted in April, Japan had decided to make its own contribution of one million US dollars. With regard to the ASEAN Plus Three Emergency Rice Reserve, Prime Minister Suga stated that Japan had improved the management of the rice reserve so that it could be effectively used to respond to COVID-19, and that Japan would like to cooperate with each country so that the rice reserve could be used more effectively. In addition to these items, Prime Minister Suga said that Japan was aiming for the early entry into force of the RCEP Agreement, and that in ASEAN Plus Three cooperation, Japan would promote the creation of rules based on “Data Free Flow with Trust,” and would promote measures against marine plastic debris.

With regard to North Korea, Prime Minister Suga emphasized the full implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolutions (UNSCRs), including by addressing “ship-to-ship transfers,” is essential to achieving the complete, verifiable and

irreversible dismantlement (CVID) of all weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles of all ranges of North Korea. He said that Japan's policy of seeking normalization of its relationship with North Korea through comprehensively resolving the outstanding issues of concern, such as the abductions, nuclear and missile issues, as well as settling the unfortunate past, remains unchanged, and that he is determined to meet directly with Chairman Kim Jong-un without any preconditions, and furthermore, asked for continued understanding and cooperation toward the early resolution of the abductions issue. In response to this, many countries emphasized the importance of the complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and the implementation of the UNSCRs.

(6) East Asia Summit (EAS) (Participating Countries: 10 ASEAN countries and Japan, China, the ROK, Australia, New Zealand, India, the U.S. and Russia)

Launched in 2005, the EAS is the premier forum of the region, which aims to facilitate candid dialogue among leaders on issues of importance to the region and the international community, and to promote leaders-led cooperation in politics, security and economy. Moreover, many democratic nations take part in the EAS, and it is expected that the EAS will contribute to the sharing of fundamental values in the region, including democracy and the rule of law, as well as to strengthening international rules and norms concerning trade and investment.

At the 10th East Asia Summit Foreign Ministers' Meeting (teleconference) held in September, Foreign Minister Motegi stated that the vision for the Indo-Pacific outlined in the "ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP)" and Japan's concept of a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)" share many fundamental values in common, including openness, transparency and the rule of law, and reaffirmed Japan's intention to fully support the AOIP. Foreign Minister Motegi also stated Japan's position on the situation in North Korea, the East



Foreign Minister Motegi speaking at the 10th East Asia Summit Foreign Ministers' Meeting (teleconference) (September 9, Tokyo)

China Sea, the South China Sea and Hong Kong.

With regard to North Korea, Foreign Minister Motegi emphasized the need to maintain and strengthen measures to ensure the full implementation of UNSCRs, including by countering "ship-to-ship transfers" in order to achieve the complete, verifiable and irreversible dismantlement of all weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles of all ranges in accordance with the UNSCRs. Foreign Minister Motegi also asked for continued cooperation of each country toward the early resolution of the abductions issue.

Foreign Minister Motegi, with regard to the East China Sea and the South China Sea, stated that Japan shares serious concerns about the continuing situation of attempts to unilaterally change the status quo with the EAS participating countries, and called on the participating countries to take constructive actions to improve the situation. In addition, on the issue of the South China Sea, he emphasized the need to uphold legitimate rights based on international law such as freedom of navigation and overflight as reflected in UNCLOS, and expressed support for the manifestation by ASEAN countries of their legal positions based on UNCLOS. Furthermore, Foreign Minister Motegi stated that the Code of Conduct for the South China Sea must not prejudice the rights of third parties and must be consistent with UNCLOS. As for the recent situation surrounding Hong Kong, Foreign Minister Motegi expressed Japan's grave and growing concern over the recent series of

developments, including the enactment and subsequent implementation of the national security law, and stated that it is important that Hong Kong upholds a free and open system, the freedoms and rights of the people in Hong Kong, as well as people and businesses from all countries, are respected, and that Hong Kong will continue to develop in a democratic and stable manner under the “One Country Two System” framework.

At the 15th East Asia Summit (teleconference) held in November, there were discussions on the state of the Indo-Pacific and on politics and security. Prime Minister Suga said that the “ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP),” issued by ASEAN, shares many fundamental commonalities with a “Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)” promoted by Japan, and that Japan fully supports the AOIP, and called on each country for their support. In addition, at the Japan-ASEAN Summit, Prime Minister Suga stated that Japan and ASEAN confirmed they would proceed with concrete projects, in line with the AOIP and FOIP, and that Japan, as an “Indo-Pacific State,” would continue to lead efforts for peace and prosperity in the region. Furthermore, Prime Minister Suga said that Japan would strongly support the ASEAN Centre for Public Health Emergencies and Emerging Diseases, the establishment of which was announced following the Japan-ASEAN Summit, and that Japan would promote the provision of medical supplies and equipment and technical cooperation to ASEAN countries.

With respect to the regional situation, Prime Minister Suga pointed out that developments contrary to the rule of law and openness have been unfolding. In the East China Sea, there have been continuing activities that infringe on Japan’s sovereignty and in the South China Sea, actions that increase tensions such as ballistic missile launches and further militarization of the features, and claims that are inconsistent with UNCLOS. The COC in the South China Sea should be consistent with UNCLOS, and should respect the legitimate rights and interests of all stakeholders. Prime



Prime Minister Suga attending the 15th East Asia Summit (EAS) (teleconference) (November 14, Prime Minister’s Office; Photo: Cabinet Public Relations Office)



Foreign Minister Motegi attending the Japan-China-ROK Foreign Ministers’ Video Teleconference on COVID-19 (March 20, Tokyo)

Minister Suga stated that Japan shares serious concerns with other countries about the current situation in the South China Sea and once again emphasized the importance of the rule of law and peaceful means. At the Summit, many countries mentioned the importance of freedom of navigation and overflight and the peaceful resolution of disputes in accordance with international law as reflected in UNCLOS. In addition, several countries expressed their concerns over recent situations on the ground and referred to the importance of non-militarization and self-restraint. As for Hong Kong, Prime Minister Suga said that Japan has grave and growing concerns over the series of developments such as the enactment of the national security law, and that it is important that Hong Kong upholds a free and open system, the freedoms and rights of the people in Hong Kong, as well as people and businesses from all countries, are respected, and that Hong Kong will continue to develop in a democratic and stable

manner under the “One Country Two System” framework.

Regarding North Korea, Prime Minister Suga stated that the full implementation of UNSCRs, including by addressing “ship-to-ship transfers,” is essential to achieve the complete, verifiable and irreversible dismantlement (CVID) of all weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles of all ranges of North Korea. In addition, Prime Minister Suga asked for continued understanding and cooperation toward the early resolution of the abductions issue. In response to this, participating countries referred to the importance of the complete denuclearization and a peaceful solution through dialogue, condemned missile launches, and mentioned the importance of complying with the UNSCRs.

(7) Japan-China-ROK Trilateral Cooperation

Trilateral cooperation among Japan, China and the ROK continues to be vital from the perspective of promoting exchanges and mutual understanding among the three countries that enjoy geographical proximity and share deep historical ties. Furthermore, as economies that play a major role in the world economy and serve as the force driving prosperity of the East Asian region, trilateral cooperation among Japan, China and the ROK is one of the areas of cooperation that has huge potential in efforts to tackle various issues in the international community.

In March, a Japan-China-ROK Foreign Ministers' Video Teleconference on COVID-19 was held with the participation of Foreign Minister Motegi from Japan, Minister of Foreign Affairs Kang Kyung-wha from the ROK, and State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi from China. Foreign Minister Motegi stated that the cooperation of the three countries responsible for the peace and stability of the region is important in responding to COVID-19, and both China and the ROK agreed on the importance of trilateral cooperation. Additionally, Foreign Minister Motegi stated that the cooperation of the health authorities in the

three countries is important to bring the situation to a close, and that a Health Ministers' Meeting should be held as soon as possible, and in May, the 12th Tripartite Health Ministers' Meeting (THMM) was held. Furthermore, Japan received support from China and the ROK to hold the Olympic and Paralympic Games Tokyo 2020.

(8) Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) (See Chapter 3, Section 2, 2)

Consisting of 21 economies (countries and regions) in the Asia-Pacific region, APEC promotes regional economic integration and cooperation across the region among the member economies on a voluntary basis. As the Asia-Pacific region is positioned as the “world's growth center,” strengthening economic cooperation and trust in the economic aspect in this region is crucial in pursuing Japan's further economic development.

At the 2020 Malaysia APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting, which was held as a virtual meeting for the first time, a Leaders' Declaration was adopted for the first time in three years. Additionally, the “APEC Putrajaya Vision 2040” was adopted, which represents APEC's direction after the Bogor Goals. Prime Minister Suga, who attended the Meeting, in addition to stating the particular importance of accelerating digital transformation and realizing a decarbonized society, promoting free trade, strengthening connectivity, and inclusive economic trade for economic growth in the “With COVID-19” and “Post COVID-19” eras, also emphasized Japan's active contribution to the realization of the new APEC Vision.

(9) South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC)

SAARC was officially inaugurated in 1985 with multiple objectives such as enhancing the welfare of citizens of the South Asian countries, and cooperation and collaboration in economic and social development and cultural areas. As of 2020, SAARC has eight member states (India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan, Maldives

and Afghanistan) and nine observer countries and institutions including Japan. As a relatively loose framework of regional cooperation, SAARC has worked primarily on economic, social and cultural areas, through summit meetings and meetings

of the Council at the ministerial level (foreign ministers' meetings). As part of youth exchange between Japan and SAARC, Japan has invited around 3,615 people to date.

Section 3

North America

1 United States

(1) Situation in the U.S.

A Politics

The greatest focus of U.S. politics in 2020 was the presidential election, which took place against the backdrop of the rapid spread of the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and intensifying protest movements against racism.

Although President Donald Trump was impeached by the House of Representatives over allegations concerning Ukraine in December 2019, the Senate acquitted him in the impeachment trial in February. Amidst this political situation, in preparation for the presidential election in November, President Trump used various opportunities, including his State of the Union address, to actively communicate to the U.S. people the achievements of his administration, including jobs increases and the decline in unemployment, the rise in stock prices, and the entry into force of the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA). On the other hand, former Vice President Joseph Biden, who had struggled in the early stages of the presidential primaries that began in February, gained momentum with his victory in the South Carolina primary, won a major victory on Super Tuesday in March, gained support from other candidates who had withdrawn, and secured the nomination in April over leftist Senator Bernie Sanders.

During this period, in late January, the first case of COVID-19 in the U.S. was confirmed in the state of Washington. On January 31, President Trump declared a public health emergency and banned entry into the U.S. from February 2 by foreign nationals with a history of staying anywhere in China, except Hong Kong and Macao, within 14 days prior. However, in March, COVID-19 infections began to spread rapidly in the U.S. By late March, the cumulative number of infected people had surpassed that of China, making the U.S. the country with the most COVID-19 infections in the world. As a result, lockdown orders and restrictions on economic activities were implemented across the country, placing limitations on people from gathering with family and friends. The U.S. economy, which had been doing well until then, slowed down significantly. Public education institutions such as schools were closed or shifted to online classes. Additionally, hospitals faced a serious shortage of beds, raising concerns about a crisis with a collapse of the medical system.

Meanwhile, on May 25 in Minneapolis, Minnesota, an incident occurred in which a black man named George Floyd was held with pressure applied to his neck by the knee of a white police officer for about nine minutes. Mr. Floyd died after being transported to a hospital. Videos spread of Mr. Floyd pleading, "I can't breathe" as he was held down on the ground, and protests against racism

spread across the U.S. as the “Black Lives Matter” movement. Many people were arrested due to clashes with police and other such incidents, and there were casualties in some cities. Statues of Confederate military leaders from the Civil War and other historical figures were removed or destroyed one after another. In addition, on August 23, a black man named Jacob Blake was shot by a white police officer in Kenosha, Wisconsin. This reignited the protests and intensified discussions about the need to address structural racism and police reform.

President Trump and former Vice President Biden took different approaches to these events. In regard to COVID-19, President Trump emphasized China’s responsibility for the spread of the virus and the importance of continued economic activity, while repeatedly insisting that a vaccine would be developed and provided quickly within the year. In response, former Vice President Biden accused President Trump of lying to the public and failing to take necessary measures to prevent the spread of infection, as he knew that the virus was deadly, resulting in the loss of many lives. In regard to the “Black Lives Matter” movement, President Trump took the position that he would protect the people from riots by the far left and anarchists, and that he would take a severe response to maintain “law and order” as his top priority. In response, former Vice President Biden, while indicating his opposition to all forms of violence, reproached President Trump for inciting hatred and division without showing empathy for racial inequality. Consequently, COVID-19 countermeasures, the economy and social security, racial inequality, and maintaining “law and order” became major issues in the presidential election.

In relation to economic policies, former Vice President Biden raised the slogan of “Build Back Better” in response to President Trump’s handling of the economy. Specifically, he pledged to make large-scale investments in environmental and infrastructure areas, increase corporate taxes and taxes on the super-wealthy, and raise the federal

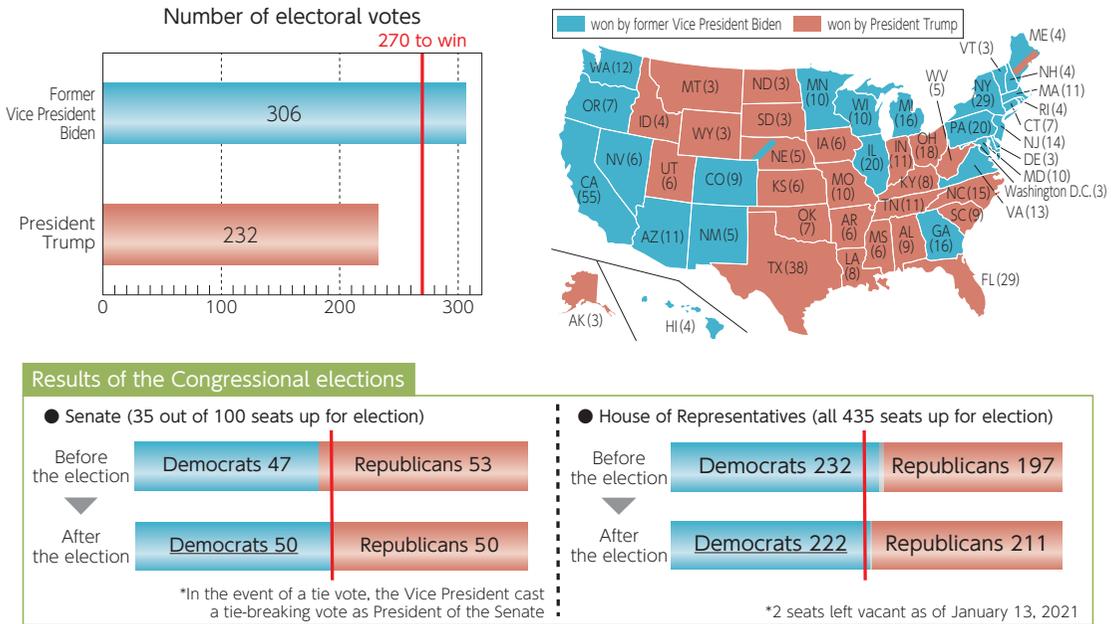
minimum wage, claiming that he would rebuild the middle class. In addition, on the diplomatic front, in response to President Trump’s America First policy, former Vice President Biden clarified his stance focused on multilateral cooperation and alliance relations, arguing that the U.S. would need to revive its leadership in the world. His pledges included returning the U.S. to the Paris Agreement and the World Health Organization (WHO). On the other hand, there was no major gap between the two candidates’ stances on the need to withdraw or reduce the number of U.S. troops stationed in the Middle East and other areas and to take a tough position on China.

Amidst these circumstances, the Democratic Party and the Republican Party held their party conventions from August 17 and 24, respectively, and officially nominated their candidates for President and Vice President. Just before the Democratic convention, former Vice President Biden chose Senator Kamala Harris as his vice-presidential running mate, making her the first black woman to be nominated for Vice President. Due to the spread of COVID-19, the conventions of both parties had to be scaled down with use of online formats, which was an unusual situation.

In September, Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, who was known for being liberal, passed away. President Trump quickly nominated as her replacement Amy Coney Barrett, a female judge of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit, who is considered to be a conservative. The appointment of Supreme Court justices, who make decisions on cases that affect U.S. society and the lives of its citizens, is a matter of great public interest. Because the Democratic Party had taken the position that the next president should make the nomination, this became a major issue in the election. In late October, Justice Barrett was confirmed by the Republican-majority Senate and assumed her position.

COVID-19 continued to spread in the U.S. with the second wave beginning in July and the third wave beginning in October (as of the end of Janu-

Presidential and Congressional election results in the United States



ary 2021, the cumulative number of infected people was approximately 25 million and the number of deaths was approximately 400,000). Amidst constraints on his campaigning and fundraising, President Trump resumed his in-person political rallies early on and placed importance on methods of directly appealing to his supporters. On the other hand, former Vice President Biden conducted markedly different campaigning activities, including making greater use of methods such as online rallies and television ads out of concern for the spread of COVID-19 infections. In this situation, on October 2, President Trump announced that he had been infected with COVID-19. He left the hospital only three days after his hospitalization and resumed his rallies on October 10. There was much criticism that his infection prevention measures were not adequate, including of infections at a White House event. In addition, President Trump's response to the pandemic and his own infection once again made COVID-19 a point at issue in the presidential election.

Former Vice President Biden won the presidential election on November 3 with a total of 306 Electoral College votes against President Trump's

232 votes. Former Vice President Biden won in three "Rust Belt" states (Pennsylvania, Michigan, and Wisconsin), Arizona, and Georgia, which President Trump had won in 2016. Due in part to a large increase in mail-in voting because of COVID-19, the total number of votes cast was over 150 million, the largest number ever, indicating the high level of interest among the American people. Former Vice President Biden received over 81 million votes, the most in history. President Trump received about 74 million votes, an increase of over 10 million votes from his number in the 2016 election, and more than any previously elected president.

In addition, a major characteristic of the 2020 election was that early voting including mail-in voting, which increased significantly, accounted for about two-thirds of all votes cast. Tallying the votes took a long time in various states because of this, and former Vice President Biden was not declared the winner until November 7, four days after election day. Making various claims including about the existence of voter fraud in the early voting, President Trump would not concede even after November 7. He maintained a stance of

contesting the legitimacy of the election results by demanding recounts and filing lawsuits in states where he lost in close races. Although many of these lawsuits were dismissed as baseless, President Trump completely refused to admit defeat in the presidential election. He did not allow the administration to conduct formal transition procedures until November 23. This gave rise to an unusual situation of delays, including for the implementation of briefings from the current administration to the President-elect and for the disbursement of federal funds to the administration transition team.

In response to the election results, President-elect Biden set four top priorities for his new administration: COVID-19 countermeasures, rebuilding the economy, racial equality and climate change countermeasures. After nominating Ronald Klain as his Chief of Staff on November 11, he also announced a series of appointments to his incoming administration's Cabinet and high-level officials, including Jacob Sullivan as National Security Advisor, Antony Blinken as Secretary of State, Janet Yellen as Secretary of the Treasury, and Lloyd Austin as Secretary of Defense. The lineup's characteristics include the appointment of former aides who have long supported Biden, such as Mr. Klain and Mr. Blinken, to key posts; the appointment of many high-ranking Obama administration officials with experience, such as former Secretary of State John Kerry in the priority climate field and former National Security Advisor Susan Rice for domestic policy; and the appointment of many women and racial minorities.

In regard to the congressional elections held on the same day as the presidential election, the Democrats maintained their majority in the House of Representatives but lost seats. In the Senate, the Republicans won 50 seats, half of the total, but the outcome of the Georgia run-off on January 5, 2021 for two seats determined which party would have the Senate majority. In the much-anticipated election, the Democratic candidates defeated the Republican incumbents in both seats,

creating an even 50-50 split in Senate seats. Because the party of the Vice President, who serves as President of the Senate, becomes the majority party in the event of an even split, the Democrats regained the majority in the Senate for the first time in six years, securing majorities in both the Senate and House of Representatives. The results of the congressional elections were a tailwind for the new Biden administration. But with only a small difference in the number of seats held by the parties in both houses of Congress, attention will be focused on whether the Biden administration will also be able to cooperate with congressional Republicans in order to advance its pledges.

The results of the November presidential election were officially confirmed at a joint session of Congress held on January 6, 2021. However, during the process, supporters of President Trump who did not accept the election results formed a mob and invaded the U.S. Capitol Building. As a result, several people died and congressional deliberations were temporarily suspended. A curfew was imposed in the U.S. capital of Washington, D.C. due to the breakdown in security and the National Guard was mobilized. In addition, protests broke out in other states, and a chaotic situation arose. President Trump was severely criticized for calling on his supporters to rally in the capital, and inciting a riot through his speech just before the outbreak of the incident. The House of Representatives decided to impeach him for the second time before the end of his term.

In his victory speech on November 7, President-elect Biden emphasized that he "doesn't see red and blue states, but a United States," and stressed the need for unity in U.S. society. However, the violence by President Trump's supporters once again exposed the division of U.S. society. It will be noteworthy in U.S. politics how the new Biden administration will respond to this major challenge after the inauguration on January 20, 2021, and what direction the Republican Party will take after President Trump leaves office.

B Economy

(A) Current economic situation

In 2020, the U.S. economy sustained major damage due to the spread of COVID-19. The unemployment rate, which hit about a 60-year low (3.5%) in February before the spread of infections, rapidly deteriorated to the worst level in the postwar era (14.7%) in April, just two months later. Real GDP in 2020 decreased year on year by 3.5%, the second-highest decrease in the postwar era after the decrease of 11.6% in 1946. In terms of the components of GDP, all of them set record declines. The decline in consumer spending, which accounts for 70% of the U.S. economy, was particularly significant, as restrictions on economic activities and layoffs due to the spread of COVID-19 rapidly cooled consumer spending in the service industry and other industries. The U.S. Congressional Budget Office (CBO) predicted that GDP will recover to the level before the spread of COVID-19 by mid-2021 (with a year-on-year GDP growth rate of 4.6% for the full year of 2021) due to the expectation that economic activities will resume with the increase in vaccinations.

(B) Economic policy

In regard to trade relations between the U.S. and third-party countries in 2020, in January, the U.S. signed the “Phase One Agreement” with China, in which the U.S. promised to lower some of its additional tariffs and China promised to increase its imports from the U.S. by at least 200 billion US dollars over two years. On the other hand, in September, the World Trade Organization (WTO) determined that the U.S. imposition of additional tariffs under Section 301 of the U.S. Trade Act on imports from China violated the WTO Agreement (GATT) and recommended that the measures concerned be corrected. However, the U.S. objected and appealed the decision to the Appellate Body.

In regard to relations with Canada and Mexico, the USMCA entered into force on July 1.

With respect to relations with the European

Union (EU), the EU agreed to eliminate tariffs on lobsters in August, but other than that, there has been no significant progress in trade negotiations between the U.S. and the EU. In October, the WTO decided to allow the EU to take a countermeasure of tariffs on U.S. imports worth 4 billion US dollars per year in regard to U.S. subsidies to the Boeing Company, which had been a longstanding point of contention. Based on this decision, the EU imposed additional tariffs on imports from the U.S.

In addition, as a move to impose additional tariffs under Section 232 of the U.S. Trade Expansion Act, in May the Department of Commerce launched new investigations on transformers, mobile cranes and vanadium.

In 2020, amidst the worst unemployment rate in the post-war period due to the spread of COVID-19, the U.S. implemented measures totaling 3 trillion US dollars to support individuals including expansion of unemployment benefits and stimulus checks, support for small and medium-sized enterprises, support for medical institutions, and support for state governments financially exhausted by COVID-19 measures. Due to this, the budget deficit for FY2020 (October 2019 to September 2020) was about 3 trillion US dollars (according to the U.S. Department of the Treasury), more than double the 1.4-trillion-US-dollar budget deficit recorded in FY2009 when the global financial crisis occurred. The federal debt also expanded to about 26 trillion US dollars, more than 120% of GDP. Despite this, Chairman Jerome Powell of the Federal Reserve Board (FRB) has consistently argued for the need for fiscal policy rather than reducing the budget deficit.

The FRB also made a major shift in its monetary policy in 2020 in response to the spread of COVID-19. It revived its zero-interest rate policy, which had been in place from the 2008 financial crisis until December 2015, and developed proactive monetary policy by introducing for the first time a program to purchase corporate bonds in cooperation with the Department of the Treasury.

Furthermore, it shifted its policy target for the inflation rate from “2%” to a rate that “averages 2% over time” and changed its policy to allow temporary inflation of over 2%, in an effort to dispel market concerns.

(2) Japan-U.S. Political Relations

In 2020, frequent policy coordination at high levels continued between Japan and the U.S., including five summit meetings (all of which were telephone calls) and five foreign ministers’ meetings (of which three were telephone calls), even in the difficult situation with restrictions on international travel due to COVID-19. The Japan-U.S. Alliance has become stronger than ever. In particular, even during critical periods in the administrations of Japan and the U.S., the two countries have closely cooperated in their responses for resolving various regional and international issues, including the response to North Korea, and toward achieving a “Free and Open Indo-Pacific” (FOIP), by holding meetings such as the August telephone call between Prime Minister Abe and President Trump, the September telephone call between Prime Minister Suga and President Trump, and the November telephone call between Prime Minister Suga and President-elect Biden.

From January 13 to 16, Foreign Minister Motegi visited San Francisco to participate in the Japan-U.S.-ROK Foreign Ministers’ Meeting and to meet with Secretary of State Michael Pompeo. During the Japan-U.S. Foreign Ministers’ Meeting, the two foreign ministers confirmed the importance of continuing diplomatic efforts toward easing tensions and stabilizing the situation in the Middle East. Regarding the situation in North Korea, the foreign ministers also completely shared the view that Japan and the U.S., as well as Japan, the U.S. and the ROK, will continue to cooperate more closely and work together toward the resolution of the abductions, nuclear and missile issues.

In the midst of the spread of COVID-19, Prime Minister Abe and President Trump, as well as Foreign Minister Motegi and Secretary of State

Pompeo respectively held telephone calls on March 13 and 20 and exchanged views on the infection situations and measures to prevent the spread of infections in both countries. In the Japan-U.S. Summit telephone call on March 13, during the leaders’ discussion on both countries’ efforts, President Trump expressed his appreciation for Japan’s efforts to host the Olympic and Paralympic Games Tokyo 2020. The two leaders also exchanged views on the regional situation, including North Korea.

During the Japan-U.S. Summit telephone call on March 25, Prime Minister Abe explained that during his March 24 telephone call with International Olympic Committee (IOC) President Thomas Bach, they agreed to postpone the Tokyo 2020 Games by approximately one year until the summer of 2021 at the latest. President Trump stated that postponing the Games was a great and wise decision and that he would fully support Prime Minister Abe’s position. The two leaders confirmed that they would work closely together to ensure that the 2020 Tokyo Games would be held in a “complete form” as proof of mankind’s victory over COVID-19. They also agreed to continue close coordination on bilateral cooperation and information sharing, including in developing cures and vaccines. The two leaders also exchanged views on the situation surrounding North Korea.

On May 8, Prime Minister Abe held a Japan-U.S. Summit telephone call with President Trump under the recognition of the need for constant communication at the Japan-U.S. summit level regarding the response to COVID-19. The two leaders confirmed close bilateral coordination on the situations in both countries, measures to prevent the spread of infections, development of therapeutics and vaccines, measures to restart the economy, and other efforts. They also shared the recognition that the international community, including China, needs to work as one to prevent the spread of infections. The two leaders also exchanged views on regional affairs including North Korea.

Mutual visits by foreign dignitaries, including

from the U.S., were halted due to the spread of COVID-19. Amidst this, particularly in consideration of the strong need for a frank, in-person exchange of views between Japan and the U.S., Deputy Secretary of State and Special Representative for North Korea Stephen Biegun visited Japan as the first foreign dignitary to do so after the spread of COVID-19. He paid a courtesy call to Foreign Minister Motegi on July 10. Foreign Minister Motegi stated that it is important for Japan and the U.S. to cooperate to strengthen FOIP even amidst the global spread of COVID-19. Deputy Secretary of State Biegun expressed gratitude for the coordination conducted by the Government of Japan for his visit to Japan. He also stated that the Japan-U.S. Alliance is the cornerstone of peace, stability and prosperity in Asia, and that he would like to further develop it in line with the new era. Foreign Minister Motegi and Deputy Secretary of State Biegun also held an extensive exchange of views, confirming that Japan and the U.S. will cooperate and work together to address regional situations, including the situation surrounding North Korea, and common issues of the international community under the strong Japan-U.S. Alliance.

On August 31, due to Prime Minister Abe's decision to resign from his position as Prime Minister, he and President Trump as well as Foreign Minister Motegi and Secretary of State Pompeo respectively held telephone calls. During the Japan-U.S. Summit telephone call, Prime Minister Abe expressed his gratitude to President Trump for

making the Japan-U.S. relationship stronger than ever before through numerous mutual visits and telephone calls based on the deep personal trust between the two leaders. In response, President Trump repeatedly expressed his appreciation for his special friendship with Prime Minister Abe and for Prime Minister Abe's strong leadership. Prime Minister Abe also expressed his gratitude for President Trump's cooperation on the abductions issue and asked for his continued support toward its resolution.

Prime Minister Suga, who took office on September 16, held his first Japan-U.S. Summit telephone call after his inauguration with President Trump on September 20. Prime Minister Suga stated that the Japan-U.S. Alliance is the cornerstone of peace and stability in the region and the international community, and that he would like to further strengthen the Japan-U.S. Alliance, which had become stronger than ever under the deep personal trust between former Prime Minister Abe and President Trump. In response, President Trump congratulated him on his appointment as Prime Minister and said that he expressed his wish to further consolidate the Japan-U.S. relationship with Prime Minister Suga. Prime Minister Suga also expressed his intention to work resolutely toward the early resolution of the abductions issue, and asked for continued full support toward its resolution.

On October 6, Prime Minister Suga received a courtesy call from Secretary of State Pompeo, who



Japan-U.S. Foreign Ministers' Meeting (October 6, Tokyo)

was visiting Japan to attend the Japan-Australia-India-U.S. Foreign Ministers' Meeting. This courtesy call was Prime Minister Suga's first in-person meeting with a foreign dignitary since his inauguration. Prime Minister Suga and Secretary of State Pompeo shared recognition of the increasingly severe regional situation, and agreed to further strengthen the Japan-U.S. Alliance and closely cooperate with like-minded countries to realize FOIP. They also exchanged views on the situation surrounding North Korea, including the abductions issue. In response to Prime Minister Suga's request for full support toward the early resolution of the abductions issue, Secretary of State Pompeo stated that he would continue to fully support Japan's efforts to resolve the abductions issue.

In addition, on the same day, Foreign Minister Motegi and Secretary of State Pompeo held a Japan-U.S. Foreign Ministers' Meeting. Bearing in mind the discussions in the Japan-Australia-India-U.S. Foreign Ministers' Meeting to be held on the same day, the two foreign ministers reaffirmed that continuing coordination among like-minded countries including Japan and the U.S. is important for realizing FOIP. As the foreign ministers exchanged views on the situations surrounding the East China Sea, South China Sea and North Korea, Foreign Minister Motegi stated that the abductions issue is a top priority for the Suga administration, and the two foreign ministers shared the view to continue to closely coordinate toward the resolution of the abductions, nuclear and missile issues concerning North Korea.

On November 12, Prime Minister Suga held a telephone call with President-elect Biden to convey congratulations on his victory in the U.S. presidential election. Prime Minister Suga stated that the Japan-U.S. Alliance plays a pivotal role in maintaining peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific region, which is becoming increasingly unstable due to the abductions, nuclear and missile issues concerning North Korea, and that he would like to coordinate toward realizing FOIP. In response, President-elect Biden expressed his commitment

that Article 5 of the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty applies to the Senkaku Islands, and stated that he would cooperate with Prime Minister Suga for peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific region, including strengthening the Japan-U.S. Alliance. In addition, Prime Minister Suga requested cooperation on the abductions issue.

President Biden was inaugurated on January 20, 2021. Foreign Minister Motegi and Secretary of State Blinken held their first telephone call since the Biden administration inauguration on January 27, and Prime Minister Suga and President Biden held their first telephone call since the Biden administration's inauguration on January 28. During the Japan-U.S. Summit telephone call, the leaders agreed to work closely together in order to further strengthen the Japan-U.S. Alliance. President Biden expressed his unwavering commitment to the defense of Japan, including the application of Article 5 of the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty to the Senkaku Islands. The two leaders also shared the view on the importance of strengthening the U.S. presence in the Indo-Pacific region, and affirmed that they would work side-by-side to address regional challenges and to realize FOIP. During the Japan-U.S. Foreign Ministers' telephone call, the foreign ministers confirmed that they would closely coordinate to further strengthen the Japan-U.S. Alliance, and exchanged views on the regional situation including China, North Korea and the ROK, as well as the importance of FOIP. In addition, they confirmed close coordination between Japan and the U.S., as well as with like-minded partners including Australia and India, on challenges facing the region and the international community.

On March 16, Foreign Minister Motegi held his first Japan-U.S. Foreign Ministers' Meeting with Secretary of State Blinken, who was visiting Japan on his first overseas visit since assuming his position as Secretary of State. The two foreign ministers reaffirmed that Japan and the U.S. will continue to take the lead in strengthening cooperation to realize the FOIP concept in cooperation



Japan-U.S. Foreign Ministers' Meeting (March 16, 2021, Tokyo)

with Australia, India, ASEAN and others. They also exchanged views on regional situations including China, North Korea, the ROK, Myanmar and Iran. Furthermore, the foreign ministers also exchanged views on common issues of the international community, such as COVID-19 countermeasures and climate change. Secretary of State Blinken supported Japan's determination to hold the Olympic and Paralympic Games Tokyo 2020, and the two foreign ministers agreed to continue to closely cooperate for the success of the Games. They agreed that Foreign Minister Motegi would visit the U.S. and hold a Foreign Ministers' Meeting at the earliest possible date while assessing the situation of COVID-19.

From April 15 to 18, Prime Minister Suga was the first world leader to visit Washington, D.C. since President Biden's inauguration and hold an in-person Summit Meeting with President Biden. The two leaders noted their shared universal values, including freedom, democracy, human rights and the rule of law, and they shared the view on strengthening the Japan-U.S. Alliance, which is the cornerstone of peace and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific region, while strengthening their relationship of personal trust. They also confirmed that Japan and the U.S. will strengthen their unity and cooperation while partnering with like-minded countries such as Australia, India and ASEAN countries toward the realization of FOIP.

After the meeting, a Japan-U.S. Joint Leader's Statement titled "Japan-U.S. Global Partnership



Japan-U.S. Summit Joint Press Conference (April 16, 2021, Washington, D.C.; Photo: Cabinet Public Relations Office)

for a New Era" was issued. The two leaders also agreed on the "Japan-U.S. Competitiveness and Resilience (CoRe) Partnership" to lead "Build Back Better" in the world. They also shared the view on promoting competitiveness and innovation including in the digital and science and technology fields, common priorities to both countries, and cooperating in areas such as the COVID-19 response, green growth, and climate change. Furthermore, the leaders decided to launch the "Japan-U.S. Climate Partnership on Ambition, Decarbonization, and Clean Energy" to further strengthen cooperation on the implementation of the Paris Agreement, clean energy technology, and decarbonization in developing countries.

(3) Japan-U.S. Economic Relations

Japan-U.S. economic relations are one of the three pillars of the Japan-U.S. Alliance, together with security and people-to-people exchanges. The Japan-U.S. Trade Agreement, which entered into force on January 1, not only expanded bilateral trade between Japan and the U.S., which covers approximately 30% of global GDP, in a strong, stable and mutually beneficial manner, but also created a free economic sphere covering approximately 80% of global GDP together with the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP11 Agreement) and the Japan-EU Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) that had already entered into force, as well as the Japan-UK Comprehensive Economic Part-

nership Agreement and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) Agreement. In addition, in the context of the world economy becoming increasingly data-driven, the Japan-U.S. Digital Trade Agreement, which entered into force on January 1, established high-standard rules in digital areas, and will be the foundation for Japan and the U.S. to play leading roles in global rule-making concerning digital trade.

In addition, of particular note in Japan-U.S. economic relations is the investment by Japanese companies in the U.S. In 2019, Japan surpassed the UK to become the country with the largest amount of investment in the U.S. in terms of direct investment (approximately 619.3 billion US dollars (U.S. Department of Commerce statistics)). Japan's direct investment is contributing to the regional economy of the U.S. in the form of employment creation by Japanese companies in the U.S. (approximately 950,000 people in 2018 (U.S. Department of Commerce statistics)). Japan also ranks first in investment in R&D (corporate R&D activities) (2018 (U.S. Department of Commerce statistics)), and in greenfield investment (investment in the form of establishing a new corporation, etc.) and job creation in the U.S. (2019 (U.S. Department of Commerce statistics)). The strengthening of the multifaceted bilateral relationship through vigorous investment and employment creation has become a rock-solid foundation for Japan-U.S. relations that are better than ever before.

Japan and the U.S. are advancing economic cooperation in infrastructure, energy and digital sectors.

In the infrastructure sector, Japan and the U.S. are advancing cooperation through efforts such as seminars for third-party countries, including the presentation by the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC) on quality infrastructure at the Indo-Pacific Business Forum held by the Government of the U.S. in Hanoi, Viet Nam in October 2020, in order to spread and establish the G20 Principles for Quality Infrastructure Investment that were approved at the G20 Osaka Summit in

June 2019. In addition, in regard to cooperation in third-party countries to promote FOIP, knowledge sharing on infrastructure development and ideal Japan-U.S. cooperation were discussed at the Third Japan Infrastructure Investment Forum held in Texas in February concerning infrastructure cooperation between Japan and the U.S.

In the energy sector, U.S. monthly oil export volume in September 2019 exceeded the import volume for the first time, and the U.S. became a net exporter of oil. On the other hand, oil futures prices turned negative for the first time in history in April, affected by lower demand and higher inventories due to COVID-19. In regard to liquefied natural gas (LNG), acquisitions of export license approval for all projects in which Japanese companies participate were completed in June 2014. Production and shipments started for the Cove Point LNG project in Maryland, the Cameron LNG project in Louisiana, and the Freeport LNG project in Texas by December 2019. LNG import from the U.S. is expected to gain momentum. It is hoped this will result in significantly contributing to the energy security and stable supply of energy not only of Japan but also of the region, including Southeast Asia, which is a rising LNG market. In addition, to promote FOIP, the Japan-U.S. Strategic Energy Partnership (JUSEP) was launched in 2018, and two JUSEP meetings were held in 2020 to discuss specific projects in each region. Moreover, in September, on the occasion of the one-year anniversary of the Japan-U.S. Mekong Power Partnership (JUMPP), the Japan-U.S. Joint Ministerial Statement on JUMPP was released. It was decided to identify opportunities for JUMPP to further accelerate Mekong sub-regional power infrastructure connectivity, promote private investment, and expand capacity building and technical assistance among partners to grow cross-border energy trade. Furthermore, in February, both governments signed the Memorandum of Cooperation (MOC) on Strengthening Energy and Infrastructure Finance and Market Building, and are promoting finance-related cooperation.

With respect to the digital sector, Japan and the U.S. is advancing cooperation in areas such as 5G generation mobile communications systems, smart cities and cyber security. At the 11th meeting of the U.S.-Japan Policy Cooperation Dialogue on the Internet Economy (IED) in September, there were discussions on a wide range of matters concerning the internet economy between Japan and the U.S., including promotion of open, secure, trustworthy and resilient 5G networks and services, international coordination on areas such as sharing best practices of IoT (internet of things) security, promotion of data free flow and public-private partnerships to support for responsible stewardship of trustworthy AI (artificial intelligence). In addition, as for third-country cooperation to promote FOIP, Japan and the U.S. have been discussing the ways to realize Japan-U.S. cooperation in the digital sector, including the launch of the Working Group on the Japan-U.S. Strategic Digital Economy Partnership (JUSDEP) in 2019 whose fifth meeting was held in September 2020. Since the fourth meeting in January, discussions have focused on important areas such as smart cities, 5G and optical submarine cables, and the formation of projects is underway.

Furthermore, cooperation at the regional level, including with various U.S. states, is also advancing. Cooperation is being conducted based on the memorandums of cooperation concerning economic and trade relations between Japan and municipal governments such as states of Washington, Maryland and Indiana as well as the city of Chicago. Moreover, a memorandum concerning reciprocal partial exemptions of driver's license tests was created with the state of Virginia in February, to the states of Maryland, Washington and Hawaii. The memorandums reduce the burden associated with acquiring a driver's license for local Japanese nationals.

Since the launch of the Government Taskforce on Strengthening Japan-U.S. Ties at the Grass Roots in 2017, the Government of Japan has undertaken efforts based on a tailor-made approach

that accords with the characteristics of each region and the level of interest in Japan of the target regions, under the recognition that it is important to implement grassroots initiatives that reach members of the general public to strengthen Japan-U.S. ties further. In 2020, various events, such as seminars and receptions, and information dissemination focusing on Japan-U.S. economic relations were implemented. Since the spread of COVID-19, various efforts have been made under the cooperation between various ministries, agencies and organizations such as the promotion of Japanese food products and dissemination of Japanese culture through online events and video streaming, and the holding of webinars on the theme of Japan-U.S. economic relations. A wide range of all-Japan initiatives will continue to be implemented to boost Japan-U.S. economic relations and promote understanding of Japan at a grassroots level.

2 Canada

(1) Situation of Canada

There has also been a large number of COVID-19 cases in Canada, mainly in metropolitan areas of such provinces as Quebec, Ontario, Alberta and British Columbia (as of the end of January 2021, the cumulative number of infected people in Canada was approximately 750,000, and the number of deaths was approximately 20,000).

In March, all provinces and territories declared states of emergency. The Federal Government implemented a series of measures one after another, including the issuance of travel advisories restricting Canadians from non-essential travel to anywhere in the world, the prohibition of entry into Canada in principle by foreign nationals, and temporary prohibition of non-essential travel between the U.S. and Canada (all these measures are still in effect as of the end of January 2021).

Although Canada's domestic economy was greatly affected by the spread of COVID-19, employment and GDP recovered relatively quickly

due to factors including the Trudeau administration's successive activation of government spending to support people's lives, including benefits, wage subsidies and cash flow support, and the resumption of economic activity during the summer. On the other hand, growth is expected to slow down from September onward, as the number of infected people increases again as schools reopen and economic activity picks up (as of the end of October, the Bank of Canada's real GDP growth rate for 2020 was negative 5.7%).

On the diplomatic front, the Trudeau administration has been strengthening participation in the Indo-Pacific region, in addition to the areas that Canada placed importance on in the past such as the U.S.-Canada relations, the UN, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the G7, the G20 and the Organization of American States (OAS). In particular, Canada has been active in monitoring and surveillance activities against illicit maritime activities, including ship-to-ship transfers with North Korean-flagged vessels prohibited by the UN Security Council resolutions. Canada resumed dispatching Royal Canadian Navy vessels to waters surrounding Japan including the East China Sea in October, and also resumed monitoring and surveillance activities by aircraft from November to December. Meanwhile, Canada-China diplomatic relations, which marked its 50th anniversary in 2020, remained weak following on from 2019, posing a major challenge for Canada. Positive sentiment toward China in Canada has seen a major drop, due to the lack of progress in the case of the arrest of the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) of Huawei by the Government of Canada, and that of the detention of two Canadian citizens by the Government of China afterward, both of which occurred at the end of 2018; as well as factors such as distrust of China's COVID-19 response; and the deteriorating situation in Hong Kong.

On the economic front, the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) entered into force in July. In addition, in November, Canada

and the UK concluded an agreement under which the Canada-EU Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) will continue to apply on an interim basis after the end of the transition period for the UK's withdrawal from the EU.

(2) Japan-Canada Relations

Between Japan and Canada, even though in-person high-level meetings were not held in 2020 due to the spread of COVID-19, four summit telephone calls and two foreign ministers' telephone calls were held. During the Japan-Canada Foreign Ministers' telephone call in February, Foreign Minister François-Philippe Champagne expressed his gratitude for Japan's response to the Canadian passengers on board the cruise ship "Diamond Princess." Foreign Minister Champagne and Foreign Minister Motegi shared the view on continuing close communication and cooperation to respond to COVID-19. In the telephone call of Prime Minister Suga with Prime Minister Trudeau held immediately after his inauguration in September, the two leaders reaffirmed cooperation between the two countries and the two leaders.

On the economic front, two years have passed since the entry into force of the TPP11 Agreement, which is the first economic partnership agreement between Japan and Canada, and trade and investment relations are expected to deepen further. 2020 saw a major drop in exports to Canada in April and May due to the impact of COVID-19, but this has been on a recovery trend since the summer. In addition, the impact on Canada's exports to Japan, consisting mainly of primary commodities, remained small. International travel between Japan and Canada, however, has been severely affected due to COVID-19, and all airlines have reduced direct flights between the two countries. In December, Japan held the 30th Meeting of the Japan-Canada Joint Economic Committee online, during which there were discussions on international trade conditions, as well as bilateral economic cooperation toward FOIP and Priority Areas of Cooperation.

Section 4

Latin America and the Caribbean

1 Overview

(1) Situations in Latin America and the Caribbean

The Latin American and Caribbean (hereafter referred to as “LAC”) region mostly consists of countries that share universal values with Japan such as democracy, the rule of law, and human rights. It has a population of about 640 million. It is a major production area for natural resources such as minerals and energy as well as food and has considerable economic potential including its large market.

In 2020, the LAC region economy greatly slumped due to the contraction of economic activities, decrease in exports and overseas remittances, increase in debt burden, and other factors caused by the global spread of the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19). On the political front, although instability was seen in some countries, stable order was generally maintained, and democratic elections were held peacefully in many countries. On the other hand, in Venezuela, confrontations are continuing between the administration and the opposition parties. The number of Venezuelans who have fled to neighboring countries as refugees due to the worsening political, economic, and social situation in Venezuela exceeded 5.4 million as of December, and receiving these refugees continues to be a regional challenge.

In addition, in the LAC region, there are communities of Japanese immigrants and descendants (the Nikkei community) numbering over two million, or about 60% of the world's Nikkei population. The Nikkei community has fostered a sense of affinity toward Japan in LAC countries through contributions to the local community for more than 100 years. On the other hand, generations have transitioned over 100 years since the Japanese migration began, and the younger generation with relatively little connection to Japan is growing in number.

(2) Japanese Diplomacy toward Latin America and the Caribbean Countries

Japan's diplomacy toward the LAC region has developed under the guiding principle of the three “Juntos” (together) announced by Prime Minister Abe in 2014. In December 2018, Prime Minister Abe summarized the results under this principle for the entire region, and announced the concept of the Initiative to Enhance Connectivity between Japan and Latin America and the Caribbean as the guideline for further cooperation. Japan is aiming to deepen cooperative relations with the LAC countries toward realizing the concept. In 2020, although international travel was restricted due to the effects of COVID-19, policy dialogues continued to be held at various levels, including through telephone calls, and Japan worked to

strengthen bilateral relations and cooperation to resolve various issues in the international arena.

On the economic front, supply chain connections are strengthening, as shown in the doubling of the number of Japanese companies operating in the LAC region since 2011. Japan is working on promoting free trade together with LAC countries including through the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP11 Agreement), in which Mexico, Peru, and Chile participate.

In the LAC region, countries that have already “graduated” or will “graduate” from the status of recipient countries by achieving economic growth are carrying out South-South cooperation. Japan is promoting triangular cooperation with these countries. In addition to the serious damage caused by COVID-19, there is not an insignificant number of countries in the LAC region with vulnerable healthcare systems. Within the bilateral cooperation framework, Japan has provided grant aid (totaling about 7.9 billion yen) to 18 LAC countries for the provision of health- and medical-related equipment that contributes to COVID-19 countermeasures and the strengthening of healthcare and medical systems. In addition, within the multilateral framework, Japan provided support through the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB). In November, Japan provided emergency relief supplies and emergency grant aid to Nicaragua, Honduras, Guatemala, and Colombia, which sustained damage from hurricanes. In January 2021, Foreign Minister Motegi visited five countries in the LAC region for the first time since assuming his position.

2 Regional Organizations

In addition to the Forum for East Asia-Latin

America Cooperation (FEALAC) and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC¹), the following regional organizations in the LAC region conduct policy coordination on various issues. In March, Japan invited seven young officials from FEALAC member states to exchange views on the utilization of science and technology to achieve the SDGs.

(1) Pacific Alliance

The Pacific Alliance (Chile, Colombia, Mexico, and Peru; hereafter referred to as “PA”) aims to conclude a comprehensive free trade agreement with Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and Singapore, and is currently conducting negotiations toward an early conclusion of the agreement. In addition to these four countries, the Republic of Korea (ROK) and Ecuador are expressing interest in participating in the negotiations.

Japan places importance on cooperation with the PA, with which Japan shares fundamental values. In November, Japan participated in a teleconference meeting between the PA and observer countries, and confirmed the importance of cooperation between the PA and Japan.

(2) Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR²)

MERCOSUR is a customs union composed of Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay, and Venezuela.³ With a few exceptions, tariffs have been eliminated for all goods traded within the region since January 1995. In addition, Bolivia is an Associated State.⁴

Japan has held the “Dialogue to Strengthen the Economic Relationship between Japan and MERCOSUR” a total of four times since 2012, and conducts exchanges of views on trade policies and investment.

¹ CELAC: Comunidad de Estados Latinoamericanos y Caribeños (Community of Latin American and Caribbean States)

² MERCOSUR: Mercado Común del Sur (Southern Common Market)

³ Venezuela’s participation qualifications have been suspended as of December 2020

⁴ Bolivia signed the participation protocol in December 2012, and is awaiting approval by the National Congress of Brazil

(3) Caribbean Community (CARICOM)

CARICOM was founded by 14 Caribbean nations for its economic integration and foreign policy coordination. It has a large presence in the international arena for their coordinated actions. Although CARICOM countries include many countries with relatively high incomes, they are threatened by natural disasters such as catastrophic hurricanes almost every year, and also have vulnerabilities particular to small island states due to the small size of their populations and economies.

Japan is leading its diplomacy in accordance with the three pillars for Japan-CARICOM cooperation ((1) Cooperation toward sustainable development, including overcoming the vulnerabilities particular to small island states; (2) Deepening and expanding fraternal bonds of cooperation and friendship; and (3) Cooperation in addressing challenges of the international community). Japan is also providing support to high income level countries based on their development needs and economic capabilities. In the Juntos!! Japan-Latin America and the Caribbean Exchange Program held from January to February, 11 young diplomats were invited from CARICOM countries to deepen their understanding of Japan through visits to facilities related to the environment and disaster prevention, and to facilities related to the Olympic Games. In addition, under the cir-



Juntos!! Japan-Latin America and the Caribbean Exchange Program (young diplomats and government officials for CARICOM member states) (February 2, Japan Olympic Museum; Photo: JTB)

cumstances in which international travel was restricted due to the impact of COVID-19, Japan strengthened relations with each country and Japan-CARICOM relations utilizing online methods. Teleconference meetings were held between State Minister for Foreign Affairs Suzuki Keisuke and the Foreign Minister of Haiti (July), and also between State Minister for Foreign Affairs Uto Takashi and the Foreign Ministers of Trinidad and Tobago as well as Guyana (October), and Antigua and Barbuda (November).

3 LAC Countries (See 2 (3) for CARICOM Countries)

(1) Mexico

Approximately 1,300 Japanese companies operate in Mexico, making it the biggest economic base for Japan in the LAC region. In recent years particularly, bilateral relations in the economic field have further been strengthened, driven by the Japan-Mexico Economic Partnership Agreement (Japan-Mexico EPA), which marked its 15th anniversary in 2020. Mexico, which is also a member of the TPP11 Agreement that entered into force at the end of 2018, held the third meeting of the TPP Commission (ministerial level) online as its Chair in August.

In terms of Mexico's relations with its neighboring country, the United States, the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA), which replaces the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), entered into force in July. On the occasion of the agreement's entry into force, President López Obrador visited Washington D.C. on his first official visit abroad since taking office and held a summit meeting with U.S. President Donald Trump. Mexico places importance on the agreement as a means to stimulate its economy, which has been stagnant due to the spread of COVID-19.

Regarding the USMCA, there are concerns about its effects on Japanese companies operating in the region, as the regional content rate for

automobiles is going to be increased compared to the NAFTA rate. At the Tenth Meeting of the Joint Committee of the Japan-Mexico Economic Partnership Agreement held online in December, the Japanese side requested the Mexican side to provide sufficient information on the operation of the USMCA, in addition to requests related to the business environment faced by Japanese companies operating locally.

In addition, in January 2021, Foreign Minister Motegi visited Mexico and held meetings with Secretary of Foreign Affairs Marcelo Ebrard and Secretary of Economy Tatiana Clouthier. At the meetings, the ministers confirmed the further strengthening of strategic cooperation with Mexico, which has close relations with the U.S. where a new administration will be formed, and also affirmed cooperation with Mexico, which will be a member of the United Nations Security Council in 2021 and 2022, on various issues of the international community and the region. Minister Motegi requested the improvement and stabilization of the business environment, as well as support for Japanese companies operating in the country amidst the spread of COVID-19. The ministers also confirmed continued cooperation for the steady implementation and expansion of the TPP11 Agreement and World Trade Organization (WTO) reform.

(2) Central America (El Salvador, Guatemala, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Nicaragua, Panama, Belize, and Honduras)

2020 marked the 85th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Japan and five countries of Central America. A friendship commemoration ceremony between Japan and the Central American Integration System (SICA) was held and coffees produced in each Central American country were presented as a gift to Japanese medical personnel. Ambassador on Special Mission Yamaguchi Taimei (member of the House of Representatives) attended the inau-



Japan and Central American Integration System (SICA) friendship commemoration ceremony (September 15, Tokyo)

guration ceremony of the President of Guatemala in January.

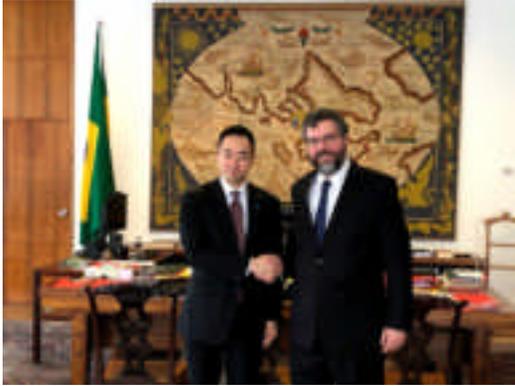
In response to the enormous damage caused by the strong Hurricanes Eta and Iota to Central American countries in November, Foreign Minister Motegi issued a message of condolence, and provided assistance such as emergency relief supplies to Nicaragua, Honduras, and Guatemala, which had suffered serious damage.

(3) Cuba

Due to the global spread of COVID-19, Cuba's economy, including the major industry of tourism, was damaged, and the lives of the people became more difficult. On the other hand, Cuba supported various countries on COVID-19 countermeasures by dispatching about 4,000 medical personnel to about 40 countries and regions. In November, a signing ceremony was held in Havana for a memorandum of cooperation between Japan's Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare and Cuba's Ministry of Public Health.

(4) Brazil

Since April, when COVID-19 began to spread in Brazil, President Jair Bolsonaro has been criticized by domestic and foreign media for his COVID-19 countermeasures, coupled with the political turmoil in the country. Furthermore, even though President Bolsonaro himself was infected with COVID-19 in July, he has not changed his stance of emphasizing the importance of economy since taking office. On the other hand, in April, as the COVID-19 pandemic continued worsening,



State Minister for Foreign Affairs Suzuki meeting with Foreign Minister Araujo of Brazil (February 14, Brasilia, Brazil)



Signing ceremony for the "Memorandum of Cooperation in the field of technologies related to the Production and Use of Niobium and Graphene" and the "Tomé-Açu Memorandum of Cooperation on the Sustainable Use of the Biodiversity of the Amazon" during the visit to Brazil by Foreign Minister Motegi (January 8, 2021, Brasilia, Brazil)

Brazil's Supreme Court ruled that local governments are the ones who make the final decisions on COVID-19 countermeasures. Under this ruling, strict measures were taken in municipalities, including the compulsory closure of all facilities except for services essential for daily life.

In terms of relations with Japan, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Suzuki visited Brazil in February. Later, while the official visits of the dignitaries were restricted due to the COVID-19 pandemic, a Japan-Brazil foreign ministers' telephone call was held in October. The two ministers confirmed that Japan and Brazil would further deepen their good bilateral relations in extensive areas and cooperate in the international arena as "Strategic Global Partners" that share fundamental values and have bonds through Nikkei people (Japanese immigrants and their descendants). Furthermore,

the first Japan-U.S.-Brazil Exchange (JUSBE) was held in-person in Brasilia in November, and it was confirmed that the countries will continuously pursue specific cooperative relations based on shared values such as freedom, democracy and the rule of law. In January 2021, Foreign Minister Motegi visited Brazil and reaffirmed the shared fundamental values such as democracy, as well as the traditional bonds of Nikkei people, with the Bolsonaro administration promoting new diplomacy that emphasizes the importance of the cooperation with the U.S. and Japan. Foreign Minister Motegi also confirmed the further strengthening of strategic cooperation to maintain and strengthen the free and open international order, including the use of JUSBE, and agreed to further deepen bilateral cooperative relations in a wide range of areas, including the economy, environment, and people-to-people exchanges.

(5) Argentina

The Alberto Fernández administration, which was inaugurated in December 2019, criticized the previous administration as being too liberal. As Argentina faces the spread of COVID-19, the administration has been implementing measures advocating dialogue with all sectors in the country, equitable development, and protection of the vulnerable population. On the economic front, the restructuring of private debt has become essential. As a result of consultations with creditors led by Minister of Economy Martín Guzmán, debt restructuring agreements were reached with almost all creditors in August, and negotiations on sovereign debt restructuring with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and other institutions will be an important issue going forward. Argentina's economy continues to face a difficult situation, and attention is focused on the economic policies of the current administration.

In terms of relations with Japan, Japan and Argentina held a policy dialogue online in December and agreed on matters including continuing to strengthen bilateral cooperation. In January 2021,

Column

Brazil's Nikkei Community

Marco Tullio Toguchi, President of the Japanese-Brazilian Association of Goias

2020 marked the 125th anniversary of the conclusion of the Treaty of Commerce and Navigation between Japan and Brazil. The two countries have a history of mutual cooperation in the area of migration, particularly in their mutual welcome of migrants from Japan and migrants from Brazil. Japanese migrants in Brazil have preserved the traditions of Japanese culture, and built up a heritage of honor, dedication, and integrity.

The Nikkei (Japanese immigrants and their descendants) community was formed across the whole of Brazil, and various Japan-related associations exist for the purpose of passing on the Japanese culture to future generations in Brazil. The Brazilian national anthem as well as the Japanese national anthem, "Kimi Ga Yo," are played at the start of traditional events organized by such associations, such as events on Japanese culture and Japanese cuisine. When the Nikkei people hear these anthems, they feel deeply moved.

The Nikkei people feel a sense of pride and gratitude toward their forefathers, and I believe this is what drives thousands of Nikkei people to volunteer in the activities of the Nikkei community, so that they can pass on the heritage built by the Japanese migrants to future generations.

Japanese culture lives on in the state of Goias through the efforts of the Japanese-Brazilian Association of Goias (ANBG), and the Nikkei people remain united. ANBG offers a variety of enjoyable courses on a nonprofit basis, including Japanese language classes, arts such as *ikebana*, *origami*, *kendo*, and *taiko*, and sports such as gateball, soccer, volleyball, table-tennis, and tennis. The community here has continued to engage actively in activities through groups for women, the elderly, students, and youths, and members collaborate to organize cultural and food events with the aim of promoting Japanese culture in Goias. Among these, the activities by the groups of young people are worthy of special mention, and their continued involvement in ANBG's activities bring hope for the sustained efforts by ANBG into the future.

In addition to the Goias Japanese Language Model School, ANBG is also planning to establish the Goias Social Integration and Japanese Culture Research Center that includes a library and resource center on Japanese migration. Through these initiatives, it aims to encourage the Brazilian people to become better acquainted with Japanese culture, and to ensure that it is passed on and spread across Brazil.

ANBG is also engaged in activities related to sports exchanges and exchanges among young people. For example, it launched the "Ganbatte! Seinen!" (to cheer up the youth) project in 2019. Its first guest was Mr. Yamada Akira, Ambassador of Japan to Brazil, who also has guardianship over the project. 10 editions of the project have been held to date. Through dialogues with guest lecturers from the Nikkei community across the whole of Brazil, it is evoking pride among youths in their identity as Nikkei.

Worthy of special mention is the "Juntos!! Japan-Latin America and the Caribbean Exchange Program," an important initiative promoted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan in which participants are invited to visit Japan with the aim of strengthening the Nikkei community, as well as the cooperation of diplomats at the Embassy of Japan in Brazil who are constantly striving to strengthen Nikkei associations and support the causes of the Nikkei community. I, too, participated in the abovementioned invitational program in 2019, and the experience was both beneficial and motivating.

Through the increasing involvement of the younger generation, I hope that initiatives by the Nikkei community will continue to produce positive results, that the traditions of Japan will be passed on, and that the history of our forefathers will not be forgotten.



Bon Odori dance event organized by ANBG (2019)



ANBG's Japanese drum (*taiko*) group (the author is in the back row, second from left) (2019)



Sports meet organized by ANBG (2019)



Japan-Argentina Foreign Ministers' Meeting (January 7, 2021, Buenos Aires, Argentina)

Foreign Minister Motegi visited Argentina and held the first Japan-Argentina Foreign Ministers' Meeting since the inauguration of the Fernández administration. During Minister Motegi's visit, Japan and Argentina, as "Strategic Partners" that share fundamental values, confirmed, that the two countries will maintain and strengthen the free and open international order and further strengthen cooperation on international matters such as COVID-19 countermeasures and WTO reform. The two ministers also confirmed that they would further strengthen bilateral relations in various areas including the economy, such as improving the business environment for Japanese companies operating in Argentina. Japan and Argentina also confirmed the further strengthening of cooperation with the Nikkei community, which serves as a "bridge" connecting the two countries.

(6) Peru

President Martín Vizcarra, who was inaugurat-

ed in 2018, dissolved Congress in September 2019 in a context of conflict, and an election for the members of Congress was held in January 2020. Despite his focus on COVID-19 countermeasures, his relationship with Congress did not improve and he was removed from office in November due to corruption allegations. Following this, Congress President Manuel Merino was inaugurated as President in accordance with the Peruvian Constitution, but resigned just five days later. Afterwards, Francisco Sagasti was elected as Congress President and inaugurated as the new President of Peru. A presidential election is scheduled to be held in April 2021.

In terms of relations with Japan, a Japan-Peru Summit telephone call was held in May, a foreign ministers' telephone call was held in October, and the second policy dialogue was held online in December. On these occasions, it was agreed that Japan and Peru will continue to closely collaborate and cooperate in a bilateral context and the international arena.

(7) Chile

Triggered by the raising of subway fares in October 2019, anti-government activities developed into protest activities against socioeconomic hierarchies. Due to the effects of this, the APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting and APEC Ministerial Meeting, as well as the 25th session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP25) that were scheduled to be held at the end of 2019

in Chile were cancelled. In response to public demand, a national referendum was held in October 2020 to determine whether or not to establish a new constitution and the form of the constitutional convention. Nearly 80% of the people approved the establishment of a new constitution and the adoption of a constitutional convention elected by the people. Going forward, the process of establishing the new constitution by the constitutional convention (elections are scheduled to be held on April 11, 2021) will begin.

In terms of relations with Japan, the ninth policy dialogue was held online at the end of November, and the two sides agreed to continue strengthening cooperative relations as “Strategic Partners.”

(8) Uruguay

The Lacalle Pou administration, which was inaugurated on March 1, has been highly evaluated by the public and has maintained a high approval rating, mainly because of the various measures it has been taking to combat COVID-19 since its inauguration, including the declaration of a national health emergency on March 13.

In terms of relations with Japan, House of Representatives member Kawamura Takeo attended the presidential inauguration ceremony in March as an Ambassador on Special Mission and met with President Luis Lacalle Pou. Furthermore, a director-general-level talk was held online in September. In January 2021, on the occasion of the



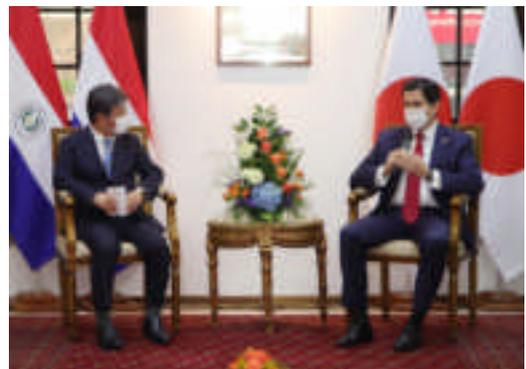
Announcement of the logo to commemorate the 100th anniversary of Japan-Uruguay diplomatic relations during Foreign Minister Motegi's visit to Uruguay (January 6, 2021, Montevideo, Uruguay)

100th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Japan and Uruguay, Foreign Minister Motegi made the first visit in 35 years to Uruguay as a Japanese Foreign Minister. He confirmed that Japan and Uruguay, which is a model for the establishment of democracy and a promoter of free trade, will further strengthen their strategic cooperation to maintain and strengthen the free and open international order. Foreign Minister Motegi also confirmed that Japan and Uruguay will strengthen bilateral cooperation in various areas, especially the economy, and signed the Customs Mutual Assistance Agreement (CMAA) between Japan and Uruguay.

(9) Paraguay

The Mario Abdo Benítez administration is continuing to maintain its free and open economic policies. With the centenary of diplomatic relations between Japan and Paraguay in 2019 as a stepping stone, Japan and Paraguay have maintained friendly relations even during the spread of COVID-19, and Japan has provided assistance such as support for improving water and sanitation.

Bilateral relations have steadily progressed, including the holding of the Japan-Paraguay Policy Dialogue in October. In January 2021, Foreign Minister Motegi made the first bilateral visit to Paraguay as a Japanese Foreign Minister. Japan and Paraguay, which places particular importance on fundamental values such as democracy and



Japan-Paraguay Foreign Ministers' Meeting (January 7, 2021, Asunción, Paraguay)

has traditional bonds of Nikkei people, agreed to cooperate to maintain and strengthen the free and open international order, and confirmed that they would strengthen collaboration to expand and deepen bilateral relations in diverse areas such as infrastructure, science and technology, and trade and investment. During his visit, Foreign Minister Motegi also conveyed Japan's policy of providing 9.3 billion yen in yen loans for the electric power sector.

(10) Colombia

President Iván Duque, who was inaugurated in August 2018, worked to implement the 2016 peace agreement in Colombia⁵ and has promoted anti-corruption measures, pension reform, and the like. In 2020, COVID-19 spread centered on large metropolises and port cities, making revitalizing the Colombian economy an urgent issue. On the diplomatic front, Colombia's official accession to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) was announced in April, and in December Colombia assumed the *pro tempore* presidency of the Pacific Alliance, which promotes free trade.

In terms of relations with Japan, the Fourth Policy Dialogue was held online in October, in which the two countries agreed to continue strengthening cooperative relations.

(11) Venezuela

The inauguration ceremony for President Nicolás Maduro was held in January 2019 amidst doubts about the legitimacy of the presidential election held in May 2018. During the same month, the President of the National Assembly Juan Guaidó (opposition party) was sworn in as Interim President based on the provisions of the constitution, which intensified conflict between the administration and the opposition party. In December 2020, the election for Venezuela's Na-

tional Assembly was held without participation of the main opposition parties, and Maduro's party was declared the winner. In response, people in Venezuela, including the main opposition party, as well as the international community reacted against the election, claiming that it lacked legitimacy. In addition, due to the worsening economic, social, and humanitarian situation in the country, Venezuelan nationals have been flowing into neighboring countries as refugees, and receiving them has become a regional challenge. Japan has been providing support to the Venezuelan people, including people fleeing from Venezuela, as well as to the neighboring countries affected.

(12) Bolivia

In October 2019, President Evo Morales, who had been President since 2006, declared his victory in the presidential election despite suspicions of fraud on election procedure. In November, he resigned and fled Bolivia due to protests, criticism from the international community, alienation from the military, and other factors, and the right wing administration of the pro-U.S. Interim President Jeanine Áñez was inaugurated. The election was held again in October 2020, and former Minister of Economy and Public Finance Luis Arce, a close ally of former President Morales, won. Mr. Arce was inaugurated as Bolivia's new President in November and the left-wing government was restored.

(13) Ecuador

Since March, Ecuador's economy has sustained major damage from falling oil prices and shrinking demand caused by the spread of COVID-19. However, in August, negotiations on restructuring the country's external debt were concluded, and economic reforms are progressing under the leadership of President Lenín Moreno. In terms of relations with Japan, a policy dialogue was held

⁵ Then-President Santos started the peace talks with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), the largest guerilla organization in Colombia, in 2012 in order to end the domestic strife that had lasted for over half a century. The peace agreement was announced in 2016.

in Quito, capital city of Ecuador in January, and Japan and Ecuador confirmed that they would further deepen economic relations and promote cooperative relations going forward.

(14) Collaboration with Nikkei Communities

The Nikkei community has fostered a sense of affinity toward Japan in LAC countries. Nevertheless, generations have transitioned over 100 years since Japanese immigration to LAC countries began, and the younger generation with relatively little connection to Japan is growing in number. Amid this situation, in addition to inviting young Nikkei people to visit Japan, Japan also implements measures toward strengthening coopera-

tion with Nikkei communities, including providing support for holding events by young Nikkei people in various countries and support for creating networks among young Nikkei people. Japan is also working on cooperation with Nikkei communities that transcends national borders, including the attendance by State Minister for Foreign Affairs Suzuki at the opening ceremony of the 24th Nikkei International Sports Fraternity (CONFRA) in February, and the message by State Minister for Foreign Affairs Uto for the Former MOFA trainees Association Latin America meeting, which is made of up people invited by MOFA and was held online in November.

Section 5

Europe

1 Overview

<The Importance of Cooperation with Europe, with which Japan Shares Fundamental Values and Principles>

The European Union (EU) and European countries are important partners for Japan, and share fundamental values and principles such as freedom, democracy, the rule of law, and human rights. Amidst the spread of the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19), cooperation with a unified EU is necessary to respond to the challenges faced by the international community and to realize fundamental values in the international community.

European countries pursue common policies across a wide range of fields such as diplomacy and security, economy, and state finance, through various frameworks including the EU. They also play an important role in formulating standards in the international community utilizing international frameworks. The countries also influence international opinion benefiting from their language, history, cultural and artistic activities, and through communication activities utilizing major media organizations and think tanks. Cooperation with Europe is important in enhancing Japan's presence and influence in the international community.

<Response to COVID-19 in Europe>

COVID-19 has been rapidly spreading in Europe since March 2020. This has made responding to COVID-19 the biggest challenge for European countries and the new EU leadership inaugurated in December 2019.

Since March 2020, European countries implemented strict national restrictions, including lockdowns. Within Europe, there were moves by Schengen States to introduce border control measures within the Schengen Area, in which national borders have been abolished based on the Schengen Agreement, which ensures freedom of movement between European countries. However in May, the EU called for the gradual lift of measures at EU internal borders and member states responded to ensure freedom of movement within the area once again. In regard to measures at the EU external borders, the EU issued guidelines on border measures in March while emphasizing cooperation within the area. Based on these recommendations, EU member states and Schengen-associated countries implemented restrictions on entry from outside the area, which were gradually eased starting in July.

Since autumn of the year, there was a resurgence in the spread of COVID-19 infections with the number of new cases exceeding the first wave. In response to this, European countries have reintroduced strict national restrictions. In December,

a new variant of COVID-19 was identified in the UK, and some countries reintroduced national entry restrictions. As being illustrated, Europe faces the difficulty of balancing freedom of movement and economic activity with preventing the spread of infections.

In the series of responses to COVID-19, the EU was pointed out to be slow to take initial response. Indeed, there was a gap in opinions about how to provide assistance to member states, making it a challenge for the EU to strengthen European unity through specific measures. On the other hand, the EU has been providing support to non-EU countries as international cooperation in response to COVID-19 since April, and hosted a pledging conference in May. In July, the EU leaders led by France and Germany demonstrated European unity by agreeing on the recovery plan for Europe, a recovery instrument and the next seven-year budget of the EU, toward Europe's economic recovery. In regard to vaccines, the EU negotiated with several pharmaceutical companies on behalf of the member states. As a result, the vaccines secured by the EU began to be administered in member states in late December.

<Brexit and Negotiations on Future Relations>

Along with the response to COVID-19, Brexit and the subsequent negotiations on the future relations between the EU and the UK were one of the largest pending issues for Europe. The UK left the EU on January 31, 2020, and a transition period began in February 2020 during which EU law continued to apply to the UK after Brexit. The transition period's deadline was the end of 2020, and in June, both the EU and the UK confirmed that it would not be extended. Negotiations on the future relations between the EU and the UK began in March. However, difficulties were encountered in the negotiations over a level playing field, governance (dispute resolution), and the fishing industry. In December, the EU and UK leaders held successive in-person meetings and telephone calls. The conclusion of the negotiations

was announced on December 24, just before the deadline for the transition period. Although the deliberations in the European Parliament were postponed until 2021, it was decided that the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement would be provisionally applied from January 1, 2021, following the procedures of both the EU and the UK.

<Relations with Countries and Regions Outside Europe>

In regard to relations with countries and regions outside Europe, relations with Russia continue to be a priority issue for Europe, as they have implications for Europe's security environment, including the response to the situation surrounding Ukraine, the arms control system, and cyber. Although China has provided support and publicity to Europe regarding COVID-19, a sense of vigilance against China is growing due to matters such as the situation concerning Hong Kong and human rights issues. In her State of the Union Address in September, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen described the EU's relationship with China as simultaneously one of the most strategically important and one of the most challenging. There is also growing concern in Europe about disinformation.

During the Meeting of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Ministers of Foreign Affairs in December, there was discussion on the changing global balance of power, including the situation in Asia, and the need for like-minded democratic nations to protect common values and to cooperate was emphasized.

In regard to relations with the U.S., European countries welcomed the election of President-elect Biden. In December, the European Commission released "A new EU-US agenda for global change," expressing hope for stronger U.S.-European relations in a wide range of areas, including climate change, economy, digital and trade. In neighboring areas of Europe, focus was on ensuring the unity of Europe in the field of diplomacy related to the situation concerning Belarus after the

presidential election and Turkey with regard to its actions in the Eastern Mediterranean Sea. Lastly, in the Indo-Pacific region, interest in the Indo-Pacific within the EU is growing, including the release of policy papers concerning the region by Germany and the Netherlands respectively in September and November.

<Multilayered, Attentive Diplomacy with Europe>

In Europe, the spread of COVID-19 has raised awareness of the importance of fundamental values such as freedom, democracy, and human rights. However, there have been differences in the views of countries on matters such as the recovery instrument, the rule of law, and relations with countries outside the region. While Europe has become a “mosaic” in terms of which policy to take in the field of security, free trade, and relations with non-European countries, Japan supports a strongly united Europe and conducts multilayered, attentive diplomacy with them. In 2020, despite limitations on in-person visits by dignitaries due to COVID-19, diplomacy using teleconference meetings and telephone calls was actively developed.

In regard to bilateral relations with European countries, high-level dialogues were held to confirm matters including cooperation on responding to COVID-19. With the UK, Prime Minister Abe held a summit telephone call with Prime Minister Boris Johnson in March. Foreign Minister Motegi visited the UK in August as a first foreign visit since the spread of COVID-19, and held various meetings including Japan-UK Foreign Ministers' Meeting. For France, Prime Minister Abe held a summit telephone call with President Emmanuel Macron in March. From September to October, Foreign Minister Motegi visited France following Portugal, and held a Foreign Ministers' Meeting and other meetings. With Germany, Prime Minister Abe held a teleconference meeting with Chancellor Angela Merkel in July. Since his inauguration in September, Prime Minister Suga has held summit telephone calls with the leaders of

the UK, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and more to exchange views on responding to COVID-19 and on a “Free and Open Indo-Pacific” (FOIP).

In the context of Japan-EU relations, close cooperation is conducted based on the Japan-EU Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA), which entered into force in February 2019, and the Japan-EU Strategic Partnership Agreement (SPA), of which the provisional application started at the same time. In May, Prime Minister Abe held a Japan-EU Leaders Video Teleconference Meeting with President von der Leyen of the European Commission and President Charles Michel of the European Council to confirm Japan-EU cooperation on COVID-19 countermeasures and other issues. Prime Minister Suga held telephone calls with each of the two EU leaders after his inauguration in September. In addition to close cooperation on the situation in East Asia, the three leaders confirmed cooperation for the further development of Japan-EU relations in a wide range of areas, including digital, environment and climate change. Concerning relations with NATO, the Individual Partnership and Cooperation Programme Between Japan and NATO was revised in June. At the Meeting of NATO Ministers of Foreign Affairs in December, Japan made a statement by Foreign Minister Motegi read out through the Ambassador of Japan to NATO, stating that NATO is a reassuring partner for the severe security environment in East Asia and FOIP, which is promoted by Japan.

Regarding the regions of the Visegrad Group (V4), the Baltic States, and the Western Balkans, multilayered diplomacy was implemented with promotion of cooperation through bilateral relations and the EU as well as promotion of cooperative relations through dialogue with Japan.

Furthermore, Japan conducts public diplomacy activities including dispatching experts, cooperation with European think tanks and Japan's Friendship Ties Programs “MIRAI” for intellectual and people-to-people exchange that allows young



Japan-EU Leaders Video Teleconference Meeting
(May 26, Tokyo; Photo: Cabinet Public Relations Office)

people from Europe to visit Japan. These activities are aimed to promote the right picture of Japan and Asia and mutual understanding. Particularly by utilizing online exchanges, Japan is working on strengthening relations with Europe by conducting information-sharing and exchanges of views with European countries, organizations, and experts in a wide range of fields such as politics, security, economy, business, science and technology, education, culture and art.

2 Regional Situations in Europe

(1) The European Union (EU)

The EU is a political and economic union consisting of 27 member states with a total population of about 446 million. Sharing fundamental values and principles, the EU is an important partner for Japan in addressing global issues.

<Recent Developments of the EU>

The new EU leadership began in December 2019, including the inauguration of President of the European Council Michel and President of the European Commission von der Leyen. Response to COVID-19 and Brexit were the top priorities for the new EU leadership. In 2020, the European economy was majorly impacted by the unprecedented crisis of the global outbreak of COVID-19. In March, COVID-19 spread rapidly in Europe, beginning from Italy. It was pointed out that the EU's initial response was slow, which called into question the unity of Europe as a whole. Borders

within the EU were revived as member states closed their own borders, which impeded freedom of movement, a cornerstone of the EU, and caused confusion and damage to the market within the EU.

The EU set forth a variety of measures and countermeasures including economic support since mid-March. In April, the EU announced that it would support non-EU countries and lead international support events as part of its international cooperation in response to COVID-19. A schedule for Europe's economic recovery was announced, and discussions on the creation of a recovery instrument began. In May, the European Commission proposed the recovery plan for Europe totaling 1.85 trillion euro comprising NextGenerationEU (the so-called recovery instrument) (750 billion euro) and the next Multiannual Financial Framework (EU budget for 2021-2027) (about 1.1 trillion euro). On July 21, the European Council agreed to a package of 1.824 trillion euro, consisting of the recovery instrument (750 billion euro) and the next EU budget (1.074 trillion euro), demonstrating the unity of Europe. In November, a political agreement was reached with the European Parliament on the recovery plan for Europe package. However, Hungary and Poland indicated that they would refuse to approve it because of its conditionality on the "rule of law," a fundamental principle of the EU, and discussions and negotiations continued. A compromise agreement was reached with the European Parliament on December 11. The recovery instrument and the budget for the next period were approved respectively in the European Parliament on December 16 and in the European Council on December 17.

In addition, in response to moves by member states to revive their internal borders, the EU issued guidelines in March on strengthening border measures with the rest of the world, emphasizing cooperation within the Schengen Area, although the member states have authority over their border control. In accordance with the guidelines, member states began to impose restrictions on

entry from outside the region. The restrictions were started in March and extended until the end of June, and then relaxed in July for some countries, including Japan, in accordance with the recommendation that the restrictions should be eased in a gradual and coordinated manner.

On the economic front, the Eurozone economy in 2020 suffered a severe shock in the first half of the year. Although it recovered strongly in the third quarter due to the gradual easing of containment measures, the resurgence of COVID-19 led to a slowdown in economic activity.

<Brexit>

At the end of January, the UK left the EU. In February, a transition period began in which EU laws continued to apply to the UK after its exit from the EU. In March, negotiations began on future relations, including a trade agreement between the EU and the UK. In order to minimize the negative impact of Brexit on Japanese companies operating in the UK and EU member states, the Government of Japan encouraged both the EU and the UK to conclude negotiations within the transition period. The negotiations were concluded on December 24, just before the end of 2020, which was the deadline for the transition period. Following the procedures in both the EU and the UK, the provisional application of the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement began on January 1, 2021. The UK Parliament completed its procedures by the end of 2020, and the agreement is expected to enter into force with the approval of the European Parliament in the first half of 2021.

<Japan-EU Relations>

Japan and the EU are strengthening their cooperation under the Japan-EU EPA, which entered into force in February 2019, and the Japan-EU SPA, of which provisional application started at the same time. The impact of COVID-19 made it difficult to hold in-person meetings. However, during the Japan-EU Leaders Video Teleconference Meeting

in May, there was an exchange of views centered on COVID-19 countermeasures, including economic measures for recovery. It was confirmed to promote cooperation based on fundamental principles and shared values, and to strengthen cooperation in order to contribute to the resolution of regional issues including North Korea, the East China Sea and the South China Sea. Following his inauguration, Prime Minister Suga held Japan-EU Leaders' telephone calls with President Michel of the European Council in September and with President von der Leyen of the European Commission in October. In addition, Foreign Minister Motegi held a Japan-EU foreign ministers' telephone call with High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Josep Borrell in November, in which they shared the views on the importance of cooperation between Japan and the EU for realizing FOIP. Furthermore, Foreign Minister Motegi became the first Japanese Foreign Minister to attend virtually the EU Foreign Affairs Council, which was held in January 2021. During the meeting, he explained Japan's views and initiatives for FOIP. In response, many EU member states expressed their understanding and support for the importance of a rules-based international order in the Indo-Pacific, and Japan and the EU shared the view to further promote cooperation in areas such as connectivity and maritime security.

On the economic front, economic ties between Japan and the EU have become even stronger with the legal basis of the Japan-EU EPA, which entered into force in February 2019. In order to ensure the steady implementation of the Agreement, the Japan-EU EPA Joint Committee as well as the specialized committees and working groups covering 12 fields established under the EPA have been reviewing the implementation status of the Agreement and discussing future initiatives to further promote trade between Japan and the EU. As COVID-19 spread in 2020, the second meetings of the specialized committees and working groups established under the Agreement were held in turn virtually. At each meeting, the status

of implementation of each item stipulated in the EU-Japan EPA and matters of mutual interest between Japan and the EU were confirmed, and future initiatives and cooperative systems between Japan and the EU were discussed. Going forward, Japan will continue to further develop Japan-EU economic relations by ensuring the steady implementation of the Agreement and through other Japan-EU dialogue frameworks.

Furthermore, on June 22, Japan and the EU signed the Agreement on Civil Aviation Safety between the European Union and Japan. This agreement aims to reduce the burdens on the aviation industry and promote the free flow of civil aeronautical products by removing duplication in inspections and other procedures for the import and export of aircraft and other civil aeronautical products.

(2) United Kingdom

In the UK, so-called lockdown measures were introduced when COVID-19 began to spread in March. Infections began to slow down following that, but began to resurge since summer. In December, a new variant of COVID-19 emerged in the UK. At the beginning of the outbreak of COVID-19, the Johnson administration's approval rating temporarily increased, but it subsequently declined due to the increase in the number of deaths in the UK and the growing criticism over the administration's measures. On the other hand, Mr. Jeremy Corbyn, the opposition Labour Party's leader, resigned following the party's defeat in the general election at the end of 2019, and a new leader, Mr. Keir Starmer, took office in April. Mr. Starmer, who is considered to be centrist, harshly criticized the Johnson administration's COVID-19 response, and the Labour Party's approval rating rose to almost equal with that of the Conservative Party.

Brexit has been one of the biggest issues in the UK-EU relationship since the UK's June 2016 referendum on leaving the EU. Following parliamentary approval on both sides for the Withdrawal



Japan-UK Foreign Ministers' Meeting (August 5, London, UK)

Agreement between the UK and the EU, the UK left the EU on January 31, 2020. Negotiations on the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement after Brexit began in March and were concluded on December 24. The bill to implement the draft Withdrawal Agreement was passed by both houses of UK Parliament on December 30. The Withdrawal Agreement was provisionally applied from January 2021, thus avoiding a situation of tariffs being established between the UK and the EU following the end of the transition period at the end of December.

As for Japan-UK relations, the UK has been strengthening its involvement in the Indo-Pacific region. Even as COVID-19 spreads, dialogue and exchanges have continued at various levels between Japan and the UK, including at the summit level and the foreign minister level, and bilateral relations have been strengthened. Prime Minister Abe held summit telephone calls with Prime Minister Johnson in March and September, in which they exchanged views regarding matters such as COVID-19 countermeasures. Prime Minister Suga also held a summit telephone call with Prime Minister Johnson in September, during which Prime Minister Johnson congratulated Prime Minister Suga on his appointment. The leaders confirmed that they would cooperate to further develop bilateral relations, including strengthening cooperation in the security field toward the realization of FOIP. They also agreed to cooperate toward the Olympic and Paralympic Games Tokyo 2020.

Column

Japan-UK Season of Culture

Japan and the UK have a history of exchange spanning more than 400 years, since the English sea captain and pilot, William Adams (Miura Anjin), first drifted to present-day Oita Prefecture on a Dutch ship in 1600.

Japan-UK relations are important in a wide variety of fields including politics and economy, but cultural exchange is indispensable for strengthening the bonds between the people of the two countries. In August 2017, then-Prime Minister Abe and then-Prime Minister Theresa May agreed to hold “the Japan-UK Season of Culture” as an event that bridged the Rugby World Cup 2019 and the Olympic and Paralympic Games Tokyo 2020. Under this initiative, the “Japan Season of Culture in the UK” showcases the multi-faceted appeal of modern Japan from its culture and art to innovation and cutting-edge technology in areas such as medicine, science and industry. Building on ongoing grassroots exchanges and local community activities, various events have been held to strengthen the ties between the citizens of the two countries in the long term.

A large-scale exhibition project held under this program is the “Manga” exhibition held at the British Museum from May to August in 2019. This exhibition drew about 180,000 visitors and recorded the largest number of visitors per day among the special exhibitions put up by the British Museum in 2019. The exhibition projects of 2020 were significantly impacted by the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. One of these projects, the “Kimono: Kyoto to Catwalk” exhibition held at the Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A) in London in February, shifted to an online exhibition and seminar when it was temporarily suspended due to the pandemic. After the on-site exhibition resumed, it remained so popular that booking slots were filled every day until it closed in October.

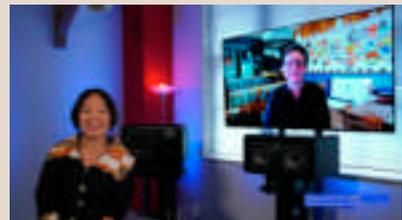
Many people from the UK visited Japan during the Rugby World Cup 2019. Following that, the “Rugby and the Olympics Special Exhibition” was held from November 2019 to August 2020 at the World Rugby Museum in London, further contributing to Japan-UK exchanges. In addition, a cooperation project has begun in which private Japanese organizations will donate more than 5,000 cherry trees all over the UK, as a symbol of friendship between the two countries.

The “Japan Matsuri Presents 2020” project held online in September drew the participation of about 50 groups and organizations from both Japan and the UK and featured Japanese culture and topics from many different facets, succeeding as a new online initiative. For example, the Tomioka Dance Club from Osaka Prefectural Tomioka High School harnessed new ideas and communication tools to present new dances, expressing how Japanese high school students strive hard toward their goals despite the circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic. Japan House London also organized a wide variety of online events, including seminars covering topics such as Japan-UK relations and the COVID-19 response by the two countries, and Japanese language speech contest for junior and senior high school students. Japan-related online events are involving the remote participation of many organizations, including universities and research organizations, making it possible for people to experience exchanges while remaining in their own homes.

The “Japan Season of Culture in the UK” has been extended till the end of 2021 since many events were postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. While it is unfortunate that various events have had to be postponed in 2020 due to the unexpected spread of COVID-19, various exchanges are still taking place mainly through online platforms. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, such continued exchanges made possible through the zeal of people from both Japan and the UK reflect the strong ties between the two countries that have lasted for more than 400 years.



Performance by the Tomioka Dance Club in “Japan Matsuri Presents 2020” (September, online event, Photo: Tomioka Dance Club)



Japanese cuisine demonstration in “Japan Matsuri Presents 2020” (September, online event, Photo: Japan Matsuri)

Foreign Minister Motegi held the Eighth Japan-UK Foreign Ministers' Strategic Dialogue with Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs Dominic Raab, who visited Japan in February, and confirmed the strengthening of bilateral cooperation in light of Brexit. In August, Foreign Minister Motegi visited the UK on his first overseas visit since the spread of COVID-19. He held a foreign ministers' meeting with Foreign Secretary Raab and negotiated the Japan-UK Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement with Secretary of State for International Trade Elizabeth Truss. After an agreement in principle was reached in September and being signed in October, the Agreement entered into force on January 1, 2021 (see the Special Feature on page 180).

With regard to culture, taking into account the effects of COVID-19, various events took place in Japan and the UK as part of the "Japan-UK Season of Culture," the period which bridges the two major sports events of the Rugby World Cup 2019 and the Olympic and Paralympic Games Tokyo 2020 (see the Column on page 126).

(3) France

Since he took office in May 2017, President Macron has promoted various reforms such as reform of labor laws, and he has achieved success in improving France's competitiveness and restoring public finances. On the other hand, the government's decision on the fuel tax increase in November 2018 brought about large-scale demonstrations known as the "yellow vests movement." In response to these demonstrations, President Macron implemented the "grand débat" to have direct dialogue himself with citizens throughout France, which resulted in improving his approval rating. However, in December 2019, large-scale strikes over the pension system reform proposal caused his approval rating to drop again. Amidst this situation, COVID-19 began to spread in France in February and March. President Macron made a televised speech explaining the restriction



Japan-France Foreign Ministers' Meeting
(October 1, Paris, France)

measures and calling for national unity. Due to this response, President Macron's approval rating rose again. In July, President Macron nominated Mr. Jean Castex, who had been in charge of easing restrictions related to the COVID-19 measures, as the new Prime Minister. In October, terrorist attacks occurred in France over caricatures of the Prophet Mohammed of Islam and other issues, making countermeasures against terrorism and extremism an urgent issue. With respect to external affairs, France continues to have a stance of placing importance on multilateralism. In response to the COVID-19 crisis, President Macron called for European unity and demonstrated his leadership by spearheading the establishment of the EU recovery instrument with Germany.

As for Japan-France bilateral relations, Prime Minister Abe held a summit telephone call with President Macron in March and confirmed that they would cooperate on responding to COVID-19. In May and June, Foreign Minister Motegi held telephone calls with Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs Jean-Yves Le Drian and confirmed that Japan and France would cooperate on responding to COVID-19 and in the international arena, and advance Japan-France cooperation in the Indo-Pacific. In October, Foreign Minister Motegi visited France and held a foreign ministers' meeting with Minister Le Drian. They confirmed the promotion of bilateral cooperation in responding to COVID-19 and in the Indo-Pacific, and the continued close cooperation on regional issues

surrounding the East China Sea, the South China Sea and North Korea. In the same month, Prime Minister Suga held a summit telephone call with President Macron, in which President Macron congratulated Prime Minister Suga on his appointment. They confirmed that, as “Indo-Pacific nations,” Japan and France will cooperate to further develop bilateral relations, including strengthening cooperation to realize a free and open Indo-Pacific. They also confirmed cooperation toward the Olympic and Paralympic Games Tokyo 2020.

(4) Germany

Before the spread of COVID-19, the approval rating for the federal grand coalition consisting of the Christian Democratic Union and Christian Social Union (CDU/CSU) and the Social Democratic Party (SPD) had been declining due to dissatisfaction with its refugee policy and other issues, repeated defeats in state elections, and the resignation of the leader of the CDU, whom Chancellor Merkel had nominated as her successor. However, Chancellor Merkel took necessary measures at a relatively early stage in response to the spread of COVID-19, and the number of new infections and deaths was kept at a lower level than in neighboring countries in Europe. In addition, in her first televised address to the nation in her 15-year tenure, Chancellor Merkel demonstrated leadership by calling for national unity, saying that the COVID-19 crisis was the greatest challenge for Germany since World War II. This caused the approval ratings for Chancellor Merkel and the CDU to rise significantly.

On July 1, Germany assumed the EU Presidency and played a leading role in Europe's response to the spread of COVID-19, including by contributing to the passage of the recovery plan for Europe in coordination with France.

In September, the Government of Germany indicated its intention to strengthen its engagement in the Indo-Pacific region by approving its Policy Guidelines for the Indo-Pacific, which emphasize the importance of freedom of navigation, the rule



Japan-Germany Foreign Ministers' Video Teleconference Meeting (October 1, France)

of law, and connectivity in the region, stating that “more than anywhere else, the shape of tomorrow's international order will be decided in the Indo-Pacific”

With regard to Japan-Germany bilateral relations, despite restrictions on international travel due to the spread of COVID-19, high-level exchanges continued, including two summit meetings and two foreign ministers' meetings held either as teleconference meetings or telephone calls. During the Japan-Germany Leaders Video Teleconference Meeting in July, in addition to exchanging views on cooperation on COVID-19 countermeasures, the two leaders agreed to cooperate to revitalize Japan-Germany relations toward the 160th Anniversary of Japan-Germany Friendship of the following year. During the Japan-Germany summit telephone call in September, Chancellor Merkel congratulated Prime Minister Suga on his inauguration, and the two leaders confirmed that they would closely cooperate on matters including realizing FOIP. During the Japan-Germany Foreign Ministers' Video Teleconference Meeting held in October following their telephone call in March, Foreign Minister Motegi praised the Policy Guidelines for the Indo-Pacific formulated by Germany, and the two ministers agreed to strengthen bilateral cooperation for the realization of FOIP.

(5) Italy

Although the Five Star Movement and the

Democratic Party formed an alliance and the second Conte Cabinet was inaugurated in August 2019, Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte needed to strike a balance between the ruling coalition parties, which have different political opinions. In addition, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Luigi Di Maio resigned as the leader of the Five Star Movement following the party's crushing defeat in local elections and internal problems. Although the constitutional amendment to reduce the size of the Italian Parliament promoted by the Five Star Movement was approved by a majority in a referendum in September, the party's approval rating declined. In January 2021, Italia Viva, one of the ruling coalition parties, withdrew from the government due to the conflict between the ruling coalition parties over the use of the European Stability Mechanism (ESM) in the healthcare field and the management of the European recovery instrument. In response, the Chamber of Deputies and Senate of the Republic held a vote of confidence for the Conte administration, and both votes were approved. On the other hand, as a result of the failure to secure an absolute majority in the Senate of the Republic, Prime Minister Conte announced his resignation. President Sergio Mattarella called on all the political parties to give confidence to a non-party cabinet to deal with the emergency situation, and former European Central Bank President Mario Draghi was inaugurated as Prime Minister in February 2021.

The initial spread of COVID-19 within Europe began in Italy, where two Chinese tourists were confirmed as the first positive cases at the end of January. The government declared a state of emergency on January 30. Infections spread to northern Italy at the end of February, and a nationwide lockdown was implemented in March. Due to his leadership in the health and hygiene crisis, Prime Minister Conte's approval rating remained in the 60% range. Various ordinances since March have announced large-scale economic measures centered on sectors affected by COVID-19. However,

in the second wave after November, the approval rating for Prime Minister Conte's administration declined as he lost the support of people who were economically disadvantaged by the restrictive measures.

As for Japan-Italy relations, in March, Foreign Minister Motegi held a telephone call with Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Di Maio. The ministers explained the efforts being made by Japan and Italy in relation to COVID-19 and confirmed that both countries would discuss and cooperate on COVID-19 countermeasures in the international arena, including the G7 Foreign Ministers' Meeting. In October, Prime Minister Suga held a summit telephone call with Prime Minister Conte. They shared the view to closely cooperate on various issues facing the international community, including the response to COVID-19 at the G20, for which Italy assumed the Presidency in 2021. They also confirmed the cooperation to realize FOIP.

(6) Spain

In January, the second term administration of Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez was inaugurated, becoming the first coalition government since the democratization of Spain. A state of alarm was declared in response to the spread of COVID-19 in Spain beginning in early March. The minority ruling coalition government managed to extend the state of alarm and have economic and social relief measures approved in the Congress, gaining cooperation of other parties. It has maintained a certain level of support by the public after the spread of COVID-19.

In regard to Japan-Spain relations, Foreign Minister Motegi held a foreign ministers' telephone call with Minister of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation Arancha González Laya in May, and Prime Minister Abe held a summit telephone call with Prime Minister Sánchez in June. Japan and Spain shared the view to continue to cooperate on COVID-19 countermeasures, and to further deepen their strategic partnership

Column

100th Anniversary of Japan-Czech Republic and Japan-Slovakia Relations

The year 2020 marks the 100th anniversary of relations between Japan and the Czech Republic as well as the Slovak Republic.

Looking back to 1918, a century ago, the Austria-Hungary dual monarchy was dissolved following the end of World War I, and Czech and Slovak nations, which had been under the control of this empire, formed a joint state. This was how Czechoslovakia was founded. In October 1919, Foreign Minister of Czechoslovakia Edvard Beneš sent a letter to Foreign Minister of Japan Uchida Kosai, requesting for Japan's agreement on the dispatch of the first envoy extraordinary to Japan in order to establish diplomatic relations with Japan. In January 1920, Japan decided to accept the request and diplomatic relations were established.

Czechoslovakia went through a turbulent history after that, before achieving democracy in the Velvet Revolution of 1989 and peaceful separation and independence as the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic in 1993. Japan established diplomatic relations once again with the two countries respectively.

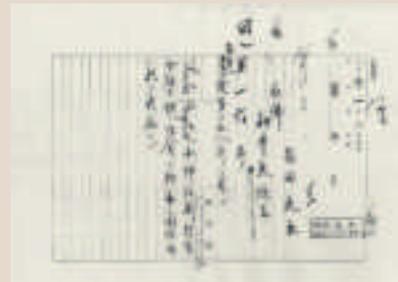
In marking the 100th anniversary of relations with the two countries that have overcome many difficulties, the global spread of the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) has unfortunately placed severe restrictions on the opportunities for Japan to commemorate the anniversary with the two countries. For example, it has become impossible to realize anticipated high-level mutual visits, and many cultural events have had to be suspended. Despite such circumstances, the relevant personnel have implemented commemorative projects as far as possible while assessing the situation of infections and putting the necessary measures in place.

In the Czech Republic, "Nagomi-Kyogenkai Czech," a traditional Japanese theater performance (*kyogen*) group under the Shigeyama Sengoro family of *kyogen* actors, held a performance in September that was cosponsored by the Senate of the Parliament of the Czech Republic and the Embassy of Japan in the Czech Republic. This *kyogen* group has given more than 800 public performances since its establishment in 2000. In spite of the serious pandemic situation, strong support from the Senate helped to realize an outdoor live performance with a small audience as well as a live streaming of the performance. The performance was attended by representatives of the Senate and Government of the Czech Republic, including President of the Senate Miloš Vystrčil and Foreign Minister Tomáš Petříček, as well as recipients of Japanese decorations, while the livestream drew as many as 5,000 viewers. Hence, the performance was an excellent opportunity for creating a strong impression of the friendly relations between the two countries. In addition, other projects that allow people to celebrate the anniversary from their homes were also held on the dedicated website. These included a photo contest and interviews of people who have made significant contributions to the development of relations with Japan over many years.

In Slovakia, a project to plant cherry trees, a symbol of Japan, in various parts of the country was held in cooperation with many involved parties, with the hope that the friendly relations between the two countries will last for a long time into the future. Eventually, in consideration of the COVID-19 situation at the local sites and other factors, approximately 450 cherry trees were planted in various parts of Slovakia.



100th anniversary commemorative logo for the two countries



Official telegram approving the dispatch of the first envoy extraordinary of Czechoslovakia to Japan, Karel Pergler (collection of the Diplomatic Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan)

Among these, the commemorative ceremony held in October at the Museum of Slovak National Uprising (SNP), located in the Banská Bystrica Region of central Slovakia, was attended by Minister of Foreign and European Affairs Ivan Korčok, and served as a valuable opportunity for further promoting friendly relations between Japan and Slovakia, as well as further revitalizing mutual exchanges.

Despite the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic had on the anniversary and the difficult situation faced by the two countries, it was still a year of strong affirmation that Japan and the two countries are important partners that share fundamental values. Taking the opportunity of this anniversary year, Japan will continue to deepen exchanges in various areas to realize further development of the long friendly ties between the two countries.



Kyogen performance at the Senate of the Czech Republic



Tree-planting by Ambassador of Japan to the Slovak Republic, Nakagawa Makoto, and Minister of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic, Ivan Korčok

and cooperate toward further developing bilateral relations, including further strengthening Japan-Spain economic relations, promoting cooperation toward realizing FOIP, and expanding people-to-people exchanges when exchanges could be restarted.

3 Collaboration with European Regional Institutions, and the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM)

(1) Cooperation with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)

As a military alliance that aims at providing collective defense for its 30 member countries, NATO provides collective defense for its member countries, and also provides engagement in cooperative security efforts with non-EU countries and organizations and in crisis management outside of the region that could pose a direct threat to the security of the territories and peoples of NATO member countries, including security-keeping operations in Kosovo, support in Afghanistan, and counter-terrorism efforts. At the Meeting of

NATO Ministers for Foreign Affairs held online in December, there were discussions on NATO's policy for 2030 as well as on Afghanistan, Russia and the situation concerning Asia. A statement by Foreign Minister Motegi was read out by Ambassador of Japan to NATO, stating that the security environment in East Asia today has become increasingly severe due to unilateral attempts to change the status quo, and that NATO is a reassuring partner for the FOIP vision promoted by Japan.

Japan and NATO are partners that share fundamental values, and both have been taking specific steps toward collaboration based on the Individual Partnership and Cooperation Programme (IPCP) (revised in May 2018 and June 2020), which was signed in May 2014. Japan has participated as an observer in NATO's crisis management exercises (CMX), as well as training exercises related to humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HA/DR). Japan has also dispatched a female Self-Defense Force official to the NATO headquarters for the third time since November 2019 in order to promote Japan-NATO cooperation on cyber issues,

women, peace and security (WPS) and other fields. Through the Partnership for Peace (PfP) Trust Fund, a project that aims to promote arms control and disarmament, as well as democratization and regional stabilization, utilizing NATO's specialized military expertise, Japan has also been providing support to process unexploded ordnance in Ukraine, and to help capacity building for demilitarization of Serbia's Ministry of Defense arsenal.

(2) Cooperation with the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)

OSCE is a regional security organization with 57 participating States across Europe, Central Asia, and North America, that works to bridge differences between member countries and foster trust through conflict prevention, crisis management, and post-conflict recovery and reconstruction in these regions through a comprehensive approach. Japan has taken part in OSCE activities since 1992 as an Asian Partner for Co-operation. Japan provides support for preventing terrorism by means such as strengthening border patrol in Afghanistan and Central Asia through the Border Management Staff College (a capacity building organization) in Tajikistan, and also gives support in conducting election monitoring as well as to the projects that promote women's social advancement. Considering that the OSCE plays an important role in improving the situation in Ukraine. Japan provides financial support to the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission (SMM) and intermittently dispatched experts to the SMM from August 2015. At the Council of Foreign Ministers meeting held online in December, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Uto Takashi issued a video message, stating that Asia and Europe need to share recognition of the security environment amidst increasing transnational threats, and that the OSCE's trust-building function plays an

important role for such need. He also explained the severe security environment in East Asia, including the East China Sea, the South China Sea and North Korea, and introduced Japan's efforts toward realizing FOIP.

(3) Cooperation with the Council of Europe (CoE)

The CoE is an international organization comprising 47 member states in Europe. It has played a key role in establishing international standards in areas concerning democracy, human rights, and the rule of law. As the CoE's sole observer country in Asia, Japan has made active contributions to a range of CoE activities since it began participating in the organization in 1996. In the meetings on artificial intelligence (AI) held in July and December, university professors and expert government officials from Japan attended online and delivered keynote speeches and policy statements. In addition, Japan provided financial support for the meetings related to the Cybercrime Convention Committee held from November 30 to December 3 in the video teleconference format.

(4) Cooperation through the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM)

ASEM was established in 1996 as the sole forum for dialogue and cooperation between Asia and Europe. It currently comprises 51 countries and two institutions, and works through summit meetings, ministers' meetings, seminars, and other activities focused on three pillars, namely (1) politics, (2) economy, and (3) society and culture.

In September, a statement on COVID-19 by the foreign ministers of the ASEM host nation and regional coordinator countries¹ was released. As an ASEM partner, Japan contributed to the discussions from the beginning, and the statement was a timely confirmation of cooperation for responding to COVID-19.

¹ Cambodia (host nation), regional coordinator countries (EU, Germany (representing Europe), Singapore (representing ASEAN) and Russia (representing Asia except ASEAN))

The 13th ASEM Summit was scheduled to be held in Cambodia in November. However, due to the global spread of COVID-19, a decision was made to postpone the meeting to June 2021.

The Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF), ASEM's only permanent institution, is located in Singapore and is responsible for activities in the fields of society and culture, which is one of ASEM's pillars. In August, Mr. Morikawa Toru took office as the first Japanese Executive Director of ASEF (see the Special Feature on page 134).

Japan supports the ASEF's public health activities such as the ASEM Initiative for the Rapid Containment of Pandemic Influenza and works together with ASEF on emergency operations to provide ASEM partners with stockpiled items in order to respond to the outbreak of infectious diseases in their countries, as well as on workshops on capacity-building to tackle public health emergencies. In February, in response to the outbreak

of COVID-19, Japan provided protective gowns, safety goggles, examination gloves, alcohol disinfectant and other supplies from the ASEF's stockpile to China, Cambodia, the Philippines, Laos and Mongolia.

Furthermore, taking into account that a rapid spread of COVID-19 or other diseases would have a significant impact on the Japanese economy and global economy, Japan decided to contribute approximately 5.7 billion yen to the ASEF for the Support Project for Prevention of Spread of COVID-19 and Other Diseases in ASEM Partners to stockpile medical use personal protective equipment (PPE) and antiviral drugs necessary for infection countermeasures and to provide them promptly upon request from ASEM partners.

In addition, Japan contributed to the activities of ASEM through cohosting with the ASEF Classroom Network Conference (October-December) online, and through the financial contributions to ASEF.

Special
FeatureElection of Ambassador Morikawa Toru,
as the Executive Director of the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF)

The member states of the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) extend over Asia and Europe, and their populations make up approximately 60% of the world's population, while they contribute to more than 50% of the global GDP. It is important to further strengthen not only economic relations, but also people-to-people exchanges and cooperative relations, between two such influential regions. The Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF), was founded in 1997, the year after the inaugural ASEM was convened, as the sole permanent body of ASEM. It plays an important role in promoting mutual understanding extensively between Asia and Europe, and conducts exchange activities in a wide range of areas including culture, education, media, governance, environment, international health, and human rights.

The ASEF Executive Director and Deputy Executive Director are elected alternately from Asian and European member countries. In August, Mr. Morikawa Toru, a diplomatic official, became the first Japanese Executive Director of ASEF.

Around the same time, the spread of the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) placed severe constraints on people-to-people exchanges between Asia and Europe, raising questions about the future and ideal role for ASEF. The economies of all countries have been seriously impacted, and they could very well become inward-looking. This is precisely the time when it is vital for the people of Asia and Europe to revitalize exchanges and share wisdom in order to join hands to overcome this unprecedented crisis while harnessing their mutual individuality. While it has become difficult for the stakeholders to meet in person for many of ASEF's projects, ASEF is taking this opportunity to actively implement projects via online tools, and put creative effort into contributing to the further expansion and deepening of people-to-people exchanges between Asia and Europe.

Executive Director Morikawa holds a clear vision on the role and ideal state of the organization, and values universally applicable logic and a posture of respecting diversity. Ambassador Morikawa said as follows, "ASEF, which has been promoting various exchanges with 'diversity' as a key word, is called upon to fully utilize what it has built up to date and fulfill its role as a common platform for exchanges between Asia and Europe. To that end, it faces the challenges of further promoting digital transformation for projects, which advanced rapidly due to the COVID-19 pandemic, expanding its networks with civil society, and strengthening collaboration with the ASEM process." With this in mind, he is working tirelessly to strengthen ASEF's activities.

ASEF celebrates the 25th anniversary of its foundation in 2021. We are facing a question of how to picture the world after the COVID-19 pandemic. As we move toward the reconstruction of this post-pandemic world, there are many challenges that Japan is expected to contribute toward through ASEF, including international health and medical care, climate change and other environmental issues, and human rights under the new social conditions. In these circumstances, Japan aims to contribute further to the expansion of exchanges between Asia and Europe in a wide range of fields. ASEF's activities are expected to be further strengthened under the leadership of Executive Director Morikawa, and Japan will continue advancing its cooperation with ASEF.



Executive Director Morikawa giving a speech at the seminar organized by ASEF (December 10, Singapore; Photo: ASEF)



Photograph with participants of the seminar organized by ASEF (Center: Executive Director Morikawa) (December 10, Singapore; Photo: ASEF)

Other European Regions

[Nordic countries]

Denmark: In August, Foreign Minister Motegi held a telephone call with Foreign Minister Jeppe Kofod. They exchanged views on cooperation for various issues facing the international community, including COVID-19 countermeasures, and concurred to deepen bilateral cooperative relations based on the Strategic Partnership between Japan and Denmark.

Finland: In November, on a foreign minister's telephone call, Foreign Minister Pekka Haavisto expressed to Foreign Minister Motegi his will to cooperate in realizing FOIP. They also shared the view to closely cooperate on issues facing the international community, including climate change and international health issues.

Norway: In November, Foreign Minister Motegi held a telephone call with Foreign Minister Ine Eriksen Sørdeide. They shared the view to strengthen cooperation in the areas of climate change and the marine environment, exchanged views on international cooperation in COVID-19 countermeasures, and confirmed to closely cooperate in the international arena in light of Norway becoming a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council from 2021. In December, Prime Minister Suga held a summit telephone call with Prime Minister Erna Solberg. They confirmed cooperation for the High-Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy led by Norway and for COVID-19 countermeasures, as well as other cooperation in the international arena including the UN Security Council.

Sweden: In April, Prime Minister Abe held a summit telephone call with Prime Minister Stefan Löfven. They exchanged views on COVID-19 countermeasures, and confirmed close cooperation between Japan and Sweden.

Iceland: In May, Foreign Minister Motegi held a telephone call with Foreign Minister Guðlaugur Þór Þórðarson, during which they exchanged views on COVID-19 countermeasures.

They also exchanged views on the promotion of women's empowerment and cooperative relations in the Arctic. They shared the view to further promote exchanges following the end of COVID-19 and to strengthen bilateral relations.

[Benelux countries]

The Netherlands: In May, Foreign Minister Motegi held a telephone call with Foreign Minister Stef Blok. They exchanged views on bilateral relations and the response to COVID-19. In December, Prime Minister Suga held a summit telephone call with Prime Minister Mark Rutte, in which they confirmed the strengthening of bilateral relations and cooperation in the international arena. Prime Minister Suga also welcomed the Netherlands' release of its own Indo-Pacific Guidelines, and the two leaders confirmed their cooperation in realizing FOIP.

Belgium: In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, an agreement was reached among seven parties (the Dutch-speaking and French-speaking socialist, liberal, and ecologist parties as well as the Dutch-speaking Christian party), and the new cabinet of Prime Minister Alexander De Croo was formed on October 1. It took 493 days to form the cabinet after the general election in May 2019. In terms of relations with Japan, Foreign Minister Motegi held a telephone call with Foreign Minister Philippe Goffin in July, in which they exchanged views on the response to COVID-19 and cooperation in the international arena.

Luxembourg: In May, Prime Minister Abe held a summit telephone call with Prime Minister Xavier Bettel, in which they shared the view to continue rules-based international cooperation on the response to COVID-19. In addition, Prime Minister Bettel expressed his hope that the Olympic and Paralympic Games Tokyo 2020 would show victory over COVID-19, and they shared the view to further develop bilateral relations going forward.

Andorra: In commemoration of the 25th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Japan and Andorra in 2020, Foreign Minister Motegi and Foreign Minister Maria Ubach Font released a joint document on strengthening bilateral relations in December.

Portugal: In August, Prime Minister Abe and Prime Minister António Luís Santos da Costa exchanged messages to commemorate the 160th anniversary of the signing of the Peace, Friendship and Trade Treaty between Portugal and Japan in 2020. In September, Foreign Minister Motegi visited Portugal as a Japanese Foreign Minister for the first time since 2002. Foreign Minister Motegi and Foreign Minister Augusto Ernesto Santos Silva shared the view to further strengthen bilateral relations on the occasion of the 160th anniversary of the Treaty.

Malta: In September, the Embassy of Malta was opened in Tokyo and Ambassador André Spiteri was appointed as the first Maltese Resident Ambassador in Tokyo.

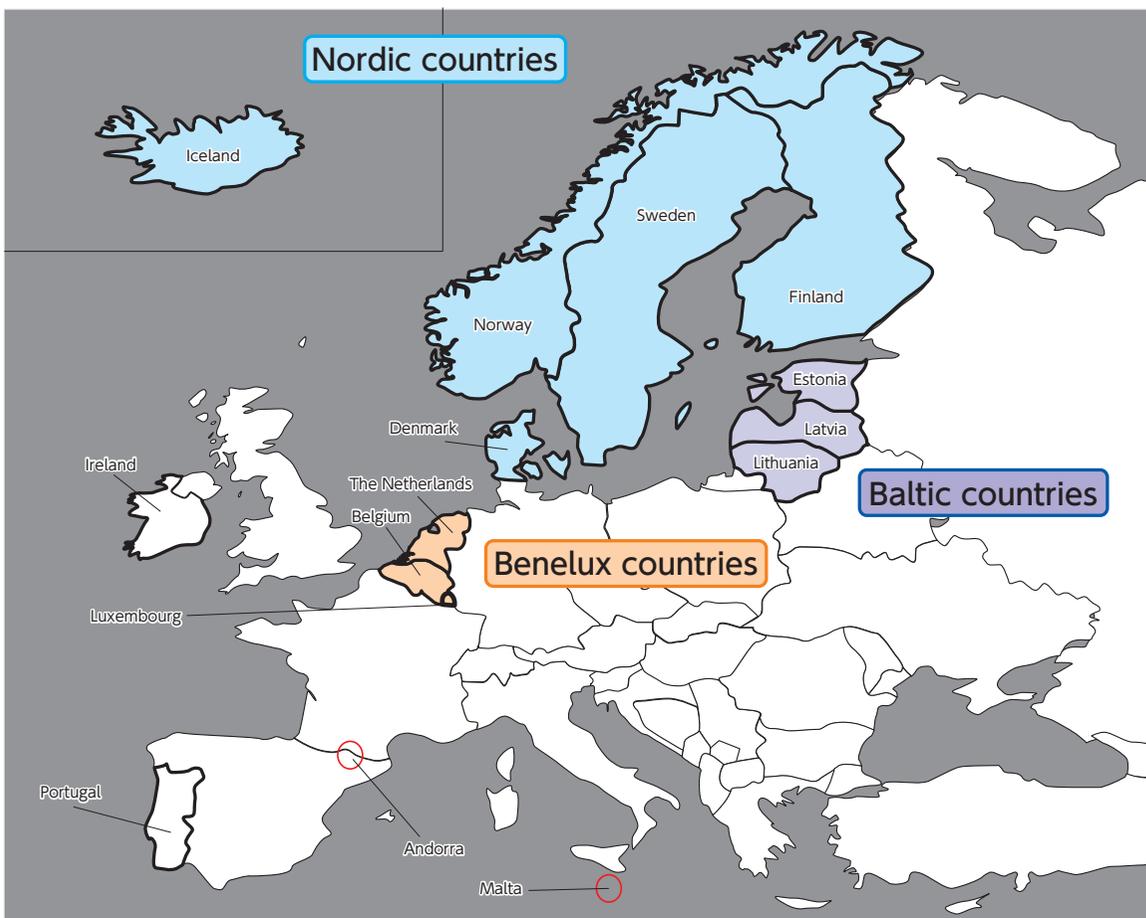
[Baltic countries]

Latvia: Japan and Latvia concurred to hold commemorative events in 2021 to mark the 100 years of friendship between Japan and Latvia.

Lithuania: In commemoration of the 80th anniversary of the activities of former Vice Consul Sugihara Chiune, who saved many lives by issuing visas to Jewish people to pass through Japan, Lithuania designated 2020 as "the year of Chiune Sugihara" and held various commemorative events in cooperation with Japan. On the occasion of the "Beyond Duty - Visas for Life," a high level diplomatic event, held by the Government of Lithuania in Kaunas in September, Foreign Minister Motegi issued a video message expressing his desire to cooperate with the international community to protect a peaceful and prosperous society in the midst of the global spread of COVID-19. The two countries also concurred to hold commemorative events in 2022 to mark the 100th anniversary of friendly bilateral relations.

Estonia: In February, Prime Minister Abe held a summit meeting and dinner banquet with Prime Minister Jüri Ratas during his visit to Japan. They exchanged views on bilateral relations, including strengthening economic relations and cyber cooperation, as well as on cooperation in the international arena and regional situations. A ceremony for the exchange of three memoranda of cooperation between Japanese and Estonian companies was held with the two leaders in attendance. In May, Foreign Minister Motegi held a telephone call with Foreign Minister Urmas Reinsalu, in which they exchanged views on bilateral relations and cooperation in the UN Security Council. In addition, Japan and Estonia concurred to hold commemorative events in 2021 as the 100 years of bilateral friendship.

Ireland: In November, Foreign Minister Motegi held a telephone call with Minister for Foreign Affairs and Defence Simon Coveney, in which they shared the view to closely cooperate in the international arena in light of Ireland becoming a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council in 2021-22. Minister Coveney also expressed his intention to cooperate with Japan in the process of future discussions on the Indo-Pacific in the EU.



[V4]

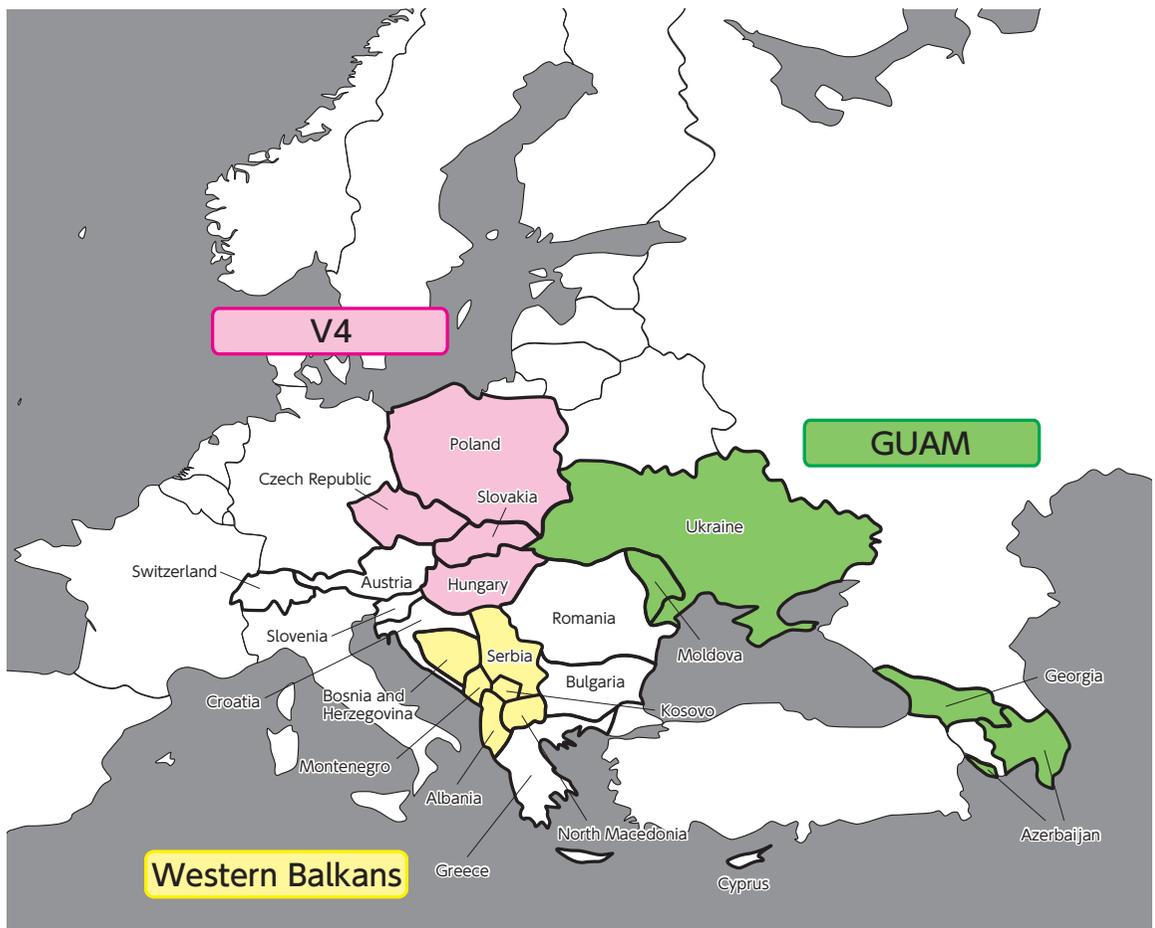
Bilateral relations between Japan and the Visegrád Group (V4) have a long history and are traditionally friendly. Japan places emphasis on its cooperative relationship with the V4 regional cooperative framework of the four countries of Poland, Hungary, Slovakia and the Czech Republic, which share fundamental values and are increasing their presence in Europe against the backdrop of steady economic growth. Japan and the V4 are closely cooperating even amidst the spread of COVID-19 through online seminars and other means.

Poland: In January, Prime Minister Abe held a meeting with Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki, who was visiting Japan. In April, Foreign Minister Motegi held a telephone call with then Foreign Minister Jacek Czaputowicz following the repatriation of about 150 Japanese nationals aboard a chartered Polish Airlines flight amid the spread of COVID-19. Poland assumed the V4 Presidency in July. The year 2020 marked the 100th anniversary of the rescue with Japan's cooperation and arrival in Japan of Polish orphans who had been left behind in Siberia, and related events and publicity were conducted.

Hungary: In May, Foreign Minister Motegi held a telephone call with Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade Péter Szijjártó. They confirmed the significance of Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's visit to Japan in December 2019. They also confirmed their intention to follow-up on matters agreed on in that meeting, thereby steadily advancing bilateral relations.

Slovakia: In 2020, Japan and Slovakia celebrated the 100th anniversary of relations, with various commemorative events were held in both countries (see the Column on page 130).

Czech Republic: The Czech Republic held the V4 Presidency until June. In 2020, Japan and the Czech Republic celebrated the 100th anniversary of bilateral exchanges, with various commemorative events held in both countries (see the Column on page 130).



[The Western Balkans]

Although there still remains ethnic divisiveness, overall progress can be seen for stability and development in the Western Balkan region owing to each country's commitment to reforms toward European integration. Prime Minister Abe visited Serbia in January 2018, the first visit ever by a Japanese Prime Minister. During the visit, he announced the Western Balkans Cooperation Initiative designed to advance cooperation with the Western Balkans (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia), which aims for EU membership. Japan has promoted cooperation with the entire Western Balkan region in areas such as youth and economic exchanges. In February, Japan held the Civil Society Summit in cooperation with the Western Balkans Fund in Albania's capital city of Tirana, with participants from countries throughout the Western Balkans.

[GUAM (Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Moldova)]

GUAM was established by four countries of the former Soviet Union to promote democracy and stable economic development. Japan established the "GUAM+Japan" cooperation framework in 2007. Through holding foreign minister-level and vice-minister-level meetings, as well as theme-based workshops with professionals and experts from GUAM countries invited to Japan, Japan places importance on ensuring that fundamental values take root in the international community through the stability and economic development of GUAM countries.

Ukraine: The Second Japan-Ukraine Cybersecurity Consultations were held in January. President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, who was inaugurated in May 2019, continues to make efforts to resolve the situation concerning eastern Ukraine and the Crimea issue through negotiations in the framework of the Normandy Format and other means. Based on its consistent position of respecting Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, Japan continues to promote bilateral cooperation and support domestic reforms for Ukraine.

Slovenia: Japan-Slovenia relations have gained momentum due to former Foreign Minister Kono's visit to Slovenia in 2019, which was the first by a Japanese foreign minister, and President Borut Pahor's subsequent visit to Japan. Economic relations have also developed in recent years, including the holding of the Japan-Slovenia Business Seminar in Tokyo in February. It is expected that bilateral relations will make further progress toward the 30th anniversary of the establishment of Japan-Slovenia diplomatic relations in 2022.

Romania: A Japan-Romania Foreign Ministers' telephone call was held in October. They confirmed to strengthen cooperation toward the 100th anniversary of the establishment of Japan-Romania diplomatic relations in 2021, as agreed upon during the visit to Japan by President Klaus Iohannis in October 2019.

Bulgaria: Since Prime Minister Abe became the first Japanese Prime Minister to visit Bulgaria in January 2018, there has been an increase in mutual visits by dignitaries in recent years, including reciprocal visits by the foreign ministers and the visit to Japan by President Rumen Radev during the "Triple anniversary" in 2019 (the 110th anniversary of the beginning of bilateral contacts, the 80th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations and the 60th anniversary of the resumption of diplomatic relations). Cooperation under the "Western Balkans Cooperation Initiative" is being advanced.

Croatia: In July, Foreign Minister Motegi held a telephone call with Foreign Minister Gordan Grlić Radman. Foreign Minister Motegi congratulated Croatia on its leadership in holding the EU Presidency in the first half of 2020, and they confirmed to steadily develop bilateral relations, including in the economy field.

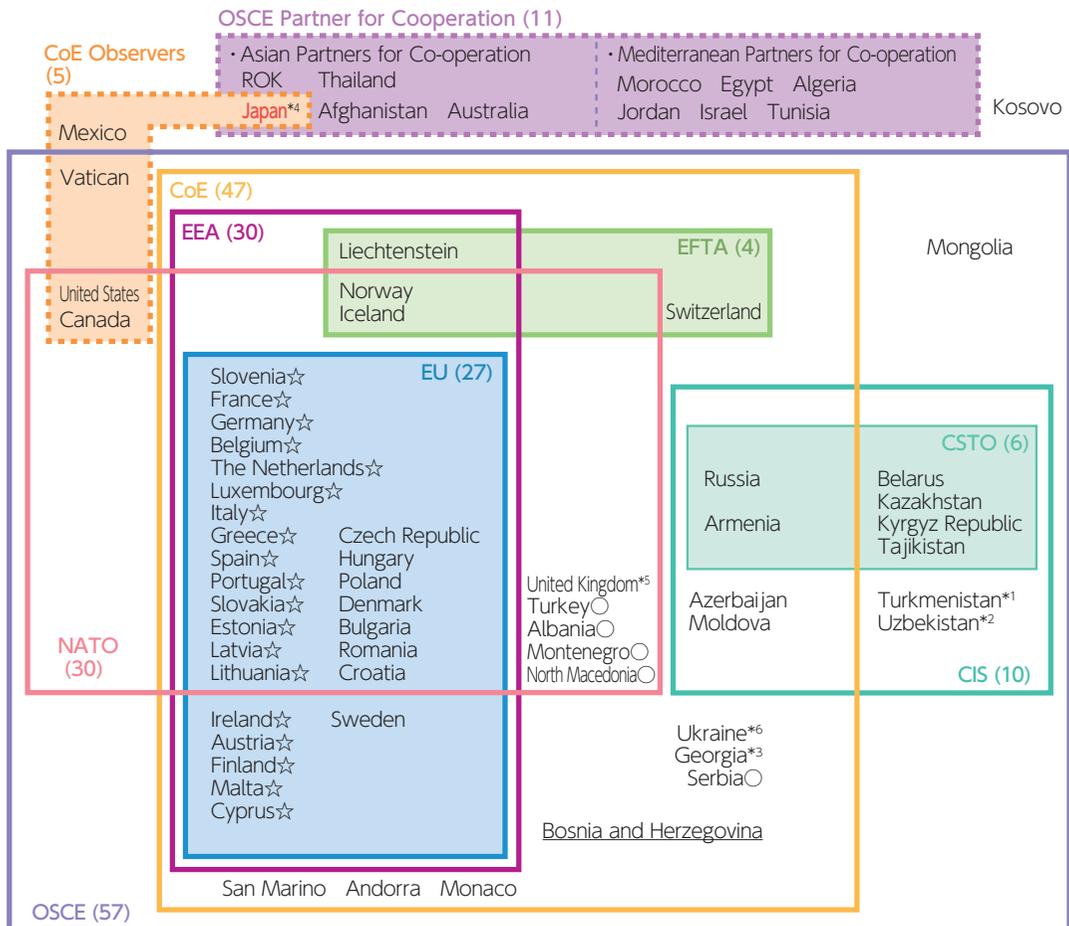
Austria: In September, Prime Minister Abe held a telephone call with Chancellor Sebastian Kurz.

Switzerland: In November, Foreign Minister Motegi held a telephone call with Foreign Minister Ignazio Cassis, in which they agreed to further expand exchanges between Japan and Switzerland on the occasion of the Olympic and Paralympic Games Tokyo 2020.

Greece: In January, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Wakamiya Kenji held a meeting with Deputy Minister for Economic Diplomacy and Openness Kostas Fragogiannis during his visit to Japan, in which they agreed on cooperation for the success of the Olympic and Paralympic Games Tokyo 2020.

Cyprus: Continuing on from the opening of the Embassy of Japan in Cyprus in January 2018, the Embassy of Cyprus in Tokyo was opened. There are expectations for further strengthening of relations toward the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations in 2022.

Major Frameworks of Europe



<Legend> Number of member countries in ()
 ○ : Candidate to be an EU member (5)
 ☆ : Euro member states (19)
 - : Members of the Membership Action Plan (MAP) (2)

*1 Turkmenistan has been an associate member of the CIS since 2005.
 *2 Uzbekistan ceased its membership in the CSTO in 2012.
 *3 Georgia notified the CIS of its decision to leave the organization on August 18, 2012, and formally withdrew from the CIS on August 18, 2009.
 *4 Japan is a partner country of NATO.
 *5 The UK withdrew from the EU on January 31, 2020.
 *6 Ukraine signed a Presidential Decree in April 2018 to withdraw from the CIS.

<Abbreviations>
 CoE (Council of Europe): (47)
 CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States): (10)
 CSTO (Collective Security Treaty Organization): (6)
 EEA (European Economic Area): (30)
 EFTA (European Free Trade Association): (4)
 EU (European Union): (27)
 NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization): (29)
 OSCE (Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe): (57)

Section 6

Russia, Central Asia and Caucasus

1 Russia

(1) Situation in Russia

A Internal Situation in Russia

On January 15, President Vladimir Putin appealed in his annual Address to the Federal Assembly for the need to amend the constitution in order to accomplish purposes such as a reform of state institutions. Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev announced the intention of the Cabinet to resign en masse in order to realize such a constitutional amendment. On the following day President Putin appointed Mikhail Mishustin as the new prime minister, and the Mishustin Cabinet was inaugurated.

The work to amend the constitution began following his appointment, and federal and local parliaments approved an amendment bill in March. However, voting in the referendum on the bill scheduled for April was forced to be postponed due to the spread of the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19). In addition, the military parade for the 75th anniversary of the victory of the Great Patriotic War (against Germany) scheduled for May 9 was also postponed but took place on June 24 with attending foreign leaders limited to some former Soviet Union countries. The postponed referendum on the constitutional amendment took place on July 1, and the revised constitution came into effect on July 4.

Regarding COVID-19, a new COVID-19 vaccine developed in Russian laboratories was approved in August ahead of other countries without waiting for the end of Phase 3 clinical trials. In December, nationwide vaccinations began.

B Russian Economy

Russia was forced to make hard decisions on balancing COVID-19 measures and the economy amid a sharp decline in crude oil prices for a period of time, upon which the Russian economy is highly dependent, due to a failure to reach joint cooperative production cuts at the OPEC Plus meeting in early March and the COVID-19 pandemic. The effects of the pandemic began to appear in economic statistics after April, and in 2020, economic growth declined for the first time since 2015 (Russian Federal State Statistic Service: -3.1%, preliminary figures). Unstable factors for the economy still remain, such as the continued sanctions on Russia by European countries and the U.S.

C Russian Diplomacy

Sanctions on Russia by European countries and the U.S. continued, although there was some practical cooperation between Russia and these countries, such as measures to counter COVID-19. Moreover, the G7 issued a foreign ministers' statement in September on the poisoning of Russian opposition figure, Alexey Navalny, which was

followed by heated exchanges with European countries and the U.S. over the case, and signs of improving relations were yet to be seen.

Although Russia held no annual summit meeting with China due to the spread of COVID-19, both countries continued to maintain close ties with each other, such as via active telephone calls between the leaders and foreign ministers. In addition, in December, there were also movements by Russia appealing for closer military cooperation between Russia and China, picking up from July 2019, such as the second joint flight by Russian and Chinese bombers from the Sea of Japan to the East China Sea.

Regarding the former Soviet Union countries, in the turmoil surrounding the Belarusian presidential election, Russia supported the Lukashenko administration and frequent communication was conducted between the leaders. In addition, in the Nagorno-Karabakh issue, Russia actively mediated the armed confrontation between Azerbaijan and Armenia that occurred from the end of September and reached a ceasefire agreement among the leaders of the three countries that included stationing of the Russian peacekeeping contingent.

Russia also chaired the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa), whose meetings were held online.

(2) Japan-Russia Relations

A Japan-Russia Relations in the Indo-Pacific Region

Amidst the significant changes in the strategic environment of the Indo-Pacific, the building of stable relations with Russia contributes not only to Japan's national interests but is also extremely important for regional stability and development. There is no change to Japan's intention to place importance on its relations with Russia. On the

other hand, the Northern Territories issue, which is the greatest concern between Japan and Russia, is yet to be resolved even after more than 75 years have passed since the end of World War II.

Given this situation, the Government of Japan will further deepen cooperation considering the potential of bilateral relations in order to build a suitable relationship as an important partner in the region. Japan will also develop the overall Japan-Russia relationship across a broad range of fields, including politics, economy, as well as people-to-people exchanges, including the issue of concluding a peace treaty, and work to resolve the Northern Territories issue.

B The Northern Territories and Negotiations on Peace Treaty

The greatest concern between Japan and Russia is the Northern Territories issue. The Northern Territories are islands over which Japan has sovereignty. Holding frequent dialogues between the two leaders and Foreign Ministers, the Government of Japan has been energetically continuing negotiations with Russia to conclude a peace treaty through the resolution of the issue of the attribution of the Four Northern Islands.¹

In 2020, in-person discussions became difficult due to the spread of COVID-19 following the Japan-Russia Foreign Ministers' Meeting which took place in Munich in February. Under the circumstances that in-person discussion became difficult due to the spread of COVID-19 after that, three Summit Telephone Calls and two Japan-Russia Foreign Ministers' Telephone Calls were held between the two countries. At the Japan-Russia Foreign Ministers' Meeting in February, Foreign Minister Motegi conveyed his thoughts more concretely regarding ways for advancing the negotiations following the December 2019 Foreign Ministers' Meeting in which Japan and Russia were able

¹ Refer to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs website for the position of the Government of Japan on the Northern Territories issue:
<https://www.mofa.go.jp/region/europe/russia/territory/index.html>





Japan-Russia Foreign Ministers' Meeting
(February 15, Munich, Germany)

to commence full-fledged consultations on peace treaty negotiations. During the Japan-Russia Summit Telephone Call and the Foreign Ministers' Telephone Call in May, Japan and Russia shared the view to proceed steadily with consultations and cooperation between the two countries, including on the negotiations on a peace treaty.

Following the inauguration of the Suga administration, at the Japan-Russia Summit Telephone Call held in September, President Putin said that he intended to continue discussing all bilateral issues, including the issue of concluding a peace treaty. Prime Minister Suga stated that he attached great importance to Japan-Russia relations and would like to develop the overall relationship between Japan and Russia, including the issue of concluding a peace treaty. In addition, the two leaders reconfirmed that Former Prime Minister Abe and President Putin had agreed to accelerate negotiations on a peace treaty on the basis of the Japan-Soviet Joint Declaration of 1956 at the summit meeting in Singapore in November 2018. During the Japan-Russia Foreign Ministers' Telephone Call in October, the two Foreign Ministers shared the view to continue frank discussions at the foreign minister level as well, in order to advance consultations and cooperation including negotiations on a peace treaty.

Regarding the joint economic activities on the Four Northern Islands on which the leaders agreed² to commence discussions during President Putin's visit to Japan at the end of 2016, Japan and Russia have continued discussions at vice-ministerial level talks and director-general-level working group meetings, in addition to talks at the summit and foreign ministerial levels in order to materialize the five candidate projects³ designated at the Japan-Russia Summit Meeting in September 2017.

The Government of Japan is actively working on projects contributing to the improvement of the atmosphere for the resolution of the Northern Territories issue, such as the four-island exchange program, free visits and visits to graves. In 2019, as part of humanitarian measures for the former island residents of the Northern Territories, a temporary additional entry/exit point was established on the occasion of a grave visit by ship, and furthermore, a grave visit by airplane was realized for a third year in a row. During the grave visits, the former island residents were able to visit places they had been unable to go to in recent years. Japan and Russia shared the view to continue to simplify the relevant procedures. The circumstances surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic made it difficult to implement programs in 2020, but the Government of Japan intends to continue consultations between the Japanese and Russian governments and between the implementing organizations of our side and on the four islands in order to implement programs as soon as possible.

In addition, the Government of Japan is approaching and coordinating with the Russian side in order to ensure safe operations of Japanese fishing vessels around the Four Northern Islands and to continue the fishing of salmon and trout using alternative fishing methods to driftnet fishing prohibited by Russia. At the same time, Japan is

² As a result of the Japan-Russia Summit Meeting in December 2016, the two leaders expressed their sincere determination to resolve the peace treaty issue, agreed to commence discussions on joint economic activities on the Four Northern Islands, and agreed to improve procedures for grave visits by former island residents.

³ (1) Propagation and aquaculture of marine products, (2) Greenhouse cultivation, (3) Development of tours compatible with the islands' features, (4) Wind power generation, (5) Waste management

taking appropriate actions against Russia's moves to build up military forces in the Four Northern Islands, on the grounds that such moves are contradictory to the Government of Japan's position regarding the territorial issue.

Under the strong leadership of the Japanese and Russian leaders, the Government of Japan will continue to persistently negotiate with Russia to conclude a peace treaty by resolving the issue of the attribution of the Four Northern Islands.

C Japan-Russia Economic Relations

Trade volume between Japan and Russia in 2020 was affected by lower demand due to COVID-19, and the trade volume from January to December decreased by 24.3% year on year. In particular, the transaction volume of mineral fuels (crude oil, natural gas, coal, etc.), which are major import items, decreased by 37.7% year on year (the total trade volume in the January-December 2020 statistics is approximately 1.7738 trillion yen (Source: Trade Statistics of Japan, Ministry of Finance)).

The volume of direct investment from Japan to Russia increased from 168.8 billion yen (2018) to 239.5 billion yen (2019) (Source: Balance of Payments Statistics, Bank of Japan).

With regard to the Eight-point Cooperation Plan for Innovative Reform in the Fields of Industry and Economy and a Favorable Living Environment of Russia proposed by Prime Minister Abe in May 2016, despite various restrictions on bilateral business cooperation due to the COVID-19



Meeting between the Co-chairs of the Japan-Russia Intergovernmental Committee on Trade and Economic Issues (December 21)

pandemic, various private-sector projects have been established in the development of trade and economic cooperation between the two countries, such as the joint development of virus rapid test kits by Japanese and Russian companies.

In December, Japan and Russia continued dialogues online through the following frameworks: the 12th meeting of the Trade and Investment Subcommittee of the Japan-Russia Intergovernmental Committee on Trade and Economic Issues and the 9th Meeting of the Subcommittee on Region-to-Region Cooperation, which are vice-ministerial level talks, and the Meeting of the Co-chairs of the Japan-Russia Intergovernmental Committee on Trade and Economic Issues, between Foreign Minister Motegi and Minister of Economic Development Maksim Reshetnikov. At the meeting, the two ministers shared the view to continue to promote bilateral trade and economic cooperation under the Eight-point Cooperation Plan.

Furthermore, the Japan Centers operating in six cities in Russia carry out business matching between companies from both countries and hold management courses. To date, a total of some 94,000 Russian people have taken the courses and about 6,000 of them have visited Japan for training.

D Cooperation between Japan and Russia in Various Fields

(A) Security, Defense Exchanges and Maritime Security

The leaders of Japan and Russia have shared the recognition that they will further advance cooperation in dealing with “non-traditional threats” such as drugs. In February, Japan, Russia and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) held a training course (“Domodedovo Project”) for counter-narcotics officers of Afghanistan and Central Asian countries, as a part of the project conducted since 2012 (“Domodedovo Project”). Similarly, regarding a project for a construction of the Narcotics Canine (K9) Center in Kabul which Japan, Russia and UNODC have advanced, they held

a ground-breaking ceremony to mark the start of construction of the Center in September.

Japan and Russia have conducted the Japan-Russia Foreign and Defense Ministerial Consultation (“2+2” Ministerial Meeting), various dialogues between defense authorities, an annual meeting based on the Japan-Russia Incidents at Sea Agreement, and the Japan-Russia Search and Rescue Exercise (SAREX) from the perspective of building trust between Japan and Russia through defense exchanges. In January, the Japan-Russia Security Consultations took place, during which both parties held candid discussions on their security policies and various issues related to international and regional security. Also in January, Japan conducted the second joint counter-piracy exercise with Russian Navy vessels in the Gulf of Aden. In addition, though in-person discussion became difficult due to the spread of COVID-19, communication at the working level continued through the methods such as online formats.

(B) Cultural and People-to-people Exchanges

It became difficult to hold many in-person events due to the spread of COVID-19, but with regard to the Japan-Russia Youth Exchange Program, exchanges took place in a variety of formats, including online, in a broad range of fields.

The “Japan-Russia Year of Regional and Sister-City Exchanges (Japan-Russia Regional Exchange Year),” being held from 2020 to 2021, is also being advanced online. More than 140 Japan-Russia Regional Exchange Year programs



“Introduction to Japanese Culture (Sakhalin Calligraphy Class),” Japan-Russia Grassroots Exchange Program (October, Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk, Russia)

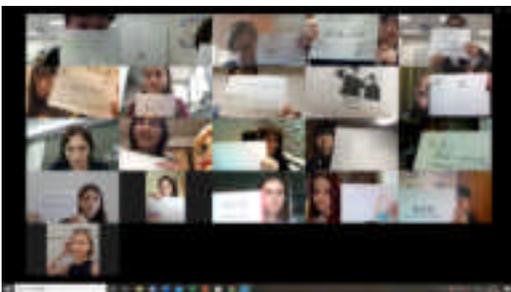
have been accredited in Japan, with over 386,000 participants that included the online introduction to Japanese culture program “J-FEST” in which approximately 216,000 people participated.

2 Countries in Central Asia and Caucasus, etc.

(1) Overview

Countries in Central Asia and Caucasus are situated in a location of geopolitical importance that connects Asia, Europe, Russia and the Middle East, and have abundant natural resources such as oil, natural gas and uranium. Stability of the region as a whole, including these countries, has significant importance in addressing key challenges that the international community faces such as fighting against terrorism and countering illicit drugs. Japan continues to work to strengthen bilateral ties with these countries through high level talks, and will be continuing initiatives to promote regional cooperation using the framework of the “Central Asia plus Japan” Dialogue.

The year 2020 saw the spread of COVID-19 in Central Asian and Caucasus countries as well. Since the end of February, the spread was initially suppressed by the implementation of strict measures, but the virus rapidly spread in several countries when they introduced mitigation measures. The pace of infections then slowed due to the re-imposition of regulatory measures, and the pandemic was under control in the region as a whole from August to September. However, the



Exchanges between High School Students through Online Japanese Language Courses, one of the Japan-Russia Youth Exchange Programs (November; Photo: Japan-Russia Youth Exchange Center)

infection spread again in some countries from around October due to the relaxing of measures and the spread of the virus in neighboring countries. Japan is actively advancing cooperation, such as the grant aid of health and medical equipment, technical support through international organizations, the provision of Avigan tablets, and the exchange of opinions among medical professionals, in order to support the control of infectious diseases in countries in the region.

(2) Central Asian Countries

Japan supports the “open, stable and self-sustained” development of Central Asia, and is promoting diplomacy as a “catalyst” for the development of regional cooperation aiming to contribute to regional peace and stability. The pillars of Japan’s diplomacy in Central Asia consist of (1) steadily strengthening bilateral relationships, (2) encouraging regional cooperation and contribution to the common issues of the region through the “Central Asia plus Japan” Dialogue, and (3) cooperating in the global arena.

In January, the 5th Expert Meeting (Tourism Sector) under the “Central Asia plus Japan” Dialogue was held, and opinions were exchanged between business experts from five Central Asian countries and Japan. Following that, while official travel and diplomatic events were severely restricted due to the spread of COVID-19, a Foreign Ministers’ Meeting of the “Central Asia plus Japan” Dialogue was held online in August, chaired by Foreign Minister Motegi. At the meeting, the foreign ministers held active exchange of opinions on regional cooperation within Central Asia and cooperation between Central Asian countries and Japan amid the worldwide spread of COVID-19, the way forward for cooperation toward the upcoming 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations with Japan in 2022, and the direction of



Foreign Ministers’ Special Video Conference of the “Central Asia plus Japan” Dialogue (August 11, Tokyo)



Meeting between Foreign Minister Motegi and Deputy Prime-Minister and Minister of Investments and Foreign Trade of Uzbekistan Umurzakov (December 15, Tokyo)

the discussions toward the 8th Foreign Ministers’ Meeting of the “Central Asia plus Japan” Dialogue⁴ to be held in Japan. Foreign Minister Motegi noted that, even under the circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic, Japan’s basic diplomatic stance that has been developed toward Central Asian countries was unwavering. Furthermore, the Minister noted on the unchanging importance of a free and open international order, to which the foreign ministers expressed their support.

Regarding relations with Uzbekistan, the Tax Convention between Japan and Uzbekistan entered into force in October. In December, after taking necessary measures to protect against infection, Deputy Prime-Minister and Minister of Investments and Foreign Trade of Uzbekistan

⁴ Japan launched the “Central Asia plus Japan” Dialogue framework in 2004 from the perspective that regional cooperation for solving common regional issues is indispensable for the stability and development of Central Asia, with Japan as a “catalyst” to promote regional cooperation. In addition to the seven foreign ministers’ meetings, various discussions have been held with the participation of experts and business people. More than 15 years have passed since its establishment, and in recent years it has focused on practical cooperation.

Sardor Umurzakov visited Japan to meet with Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister Aso Taro, Foreign Minister Motegi, and Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry Kajiyama Hiroshi. Foreign Minister Motegi expressed Japan's intention to further deepen and expand the bilateral strategic partnership with Uzbekistan. In response, Deputy Prime-Minister Umurzakov appreciated assistance from Japan, including that for COVID-19 response. He stated Uzbekistan's intention to continue working on the implementation of the agreement between the two countries made on the occasion of President Shavkat Mirziyoyev's visit to Japan in December 2019.

In relations with Kazakhstan, Foreign Minister Motegi and Minister of Foreign Affairs Mukhtar Tileuberdi held telephone calls in May and October. The Ministers shared the view on further strengthening the bilateral strategic partnership and touched on cooperation for COVID-19 measures.

Regarding relations with the Kyrgyz Republic, Minister of Foreign Affairs Chingiz Aidarbekov participated in the Foreign Ministers' Meeting of the "Central Asia plus Japan" Dialogue (online) in August chaired by Foreign Minister Motegi. At the meeting, the ministers discussed how to overcome the adverse effects on the economy caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, and the importance of cooperation and sharing of knowledge for effective measures. In the Kyrgyz Republic, due to political change after the parliamentary election in October, the Cabinet and President Sooronbay Jeenbekov resigned. In the presidential election held in January 2021, Sadyr Zhaparov, who temporarily served as acting president and prime minister after the political change, was elected winning about 80% of the votes.

Regarding relations with Tajikistan, Foreign Minister Motegi and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sirojiddin Muhriddin held a telephone call in July. Foreign Minister Motegi stated that Japan continues working with Tajikistan in spheres, such as developing human resources and strengthening border control. Foreign Minister Muhriddin ex-

pressed his gratitude and expectation for further assistance from Japan. In the Tajikistan presidential election held in October, incumbent President Emomali Rahmon won in a landslide, marking his fifth consecutive win.

Regarding Turkmenistan, Prime Minister Abe held a summit telephone call with President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov in September. President Berdimuhamedov expressed his gratitude for the stronger-than-ever relationship built between the two countries under Prime Minister Abe, while Prime Minister Abe thanked him for his cooperation so far. In December, Turkmenistan celebrated its 25th anniversary of the Permanent Neutrality of Turkmenistan, with Japan's State Minister for Foreign Affairs Uto Takashi delivering a video message and Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs Nakanishi Satoshi attending a celebration ceremony in Tokyo.

In recent years, efforts toward advancing regional cooperation have become active among Central Asian countries. In 2020, while official travel was difficult due to the COVID-19 pandemic, a variety of meetings were held online. The Supreme Eurasian Economic Council of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) was held in May and December, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Summit was held in November, and the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) Summit and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) Summit were held in December. During the political change in the Kyrgyz Republic in October, leaders of Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan issued a joint statement intended to strengthen solidarity in Central Asia, calling for preserving peace and restoring stability in the Kyrgyz Republic.

In addition, foreign ministers' meetings with one country added to the five Central Asian countries were actively held mainly online. The five Central Asia countries held foreign ministers' meetings with the U.S. and the EU in June, China in July, Japan in August, Russia and India in October, and the EU and the Republic of Korea (ROK) in November.

(3) Caucasus Countries

The Caucasus region has a potential to be a gateway connecting Asia, Europe and the Middle East, and geopolitical importance that directly affects the peace and stability of the international community. Japan is developing its diplomacy based on basic policy for this region, which is comprised of two pillars announced in the Caucasus Initiative in 2018: (1) assistance for human resources development of architects for state building (human resources development) and (2) assistance for paving the way to “Appealing Caucasus” (infrastructure development and business environment improvement).

On September 27, an armed confrontation between Armenia and Azerbaijan occurred over Nagorno-Karabakh. Japan expressed serious concern about the armed confrontation and the loss of lives, and urged all parties concerned to cease any military actions immediately, exercise maximum self-restraint and resume a dialogue. On November 9, the leaders of Russia, Azerbaijan and Armenia reached a ceasefire agreement, but thousands were killed until this agreement was reached. The international community is paying attention to whether this agreement will be maintained and adhered to, and whether it will lead to a peaceful solution to the Nagorno-Karabakh issue.

Regarding relations with Georgia, Foreign Minister Motegi and Minister of Foreign Affairs David Zalkaliani held a Foreign Ministers' telephone call in May. Both Ministers shared the view to promptly conclude a Japan-Georgia bilateral investment agreement and to further revitalize mutual exchanges in the fields of economy and others after convergence of COVID-19. In October, the two governments agreed in principle on the Tax Convention between Japan and Georgia.

(4) Republic of Belarus

Prior to the presidential election held on August 9, three leading candidates were unable to run for election for reasons of illegal acts or

flaws in procedures. Following the election, the authorities announced that incumbent President Alexander Lukashenko received about 80% of the vote, while Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, who had garnered attention as a leading opposition candidate, received about 10% of the vote. In response large-scale protests broke out in various parts of Belarus and protesters clashed with security forces over calls that the election was fraudulent. The protests continued as a large-scale demonstration every weekend, with Belarusian authorities violently and arbitrarily detaining a large number of participants and restricting the activities of some media outlets and reporters.

The opposition have set up a “Coordination Council,” which demands to stop the violence and re-hold the election, but core members have been interrogated and detained by the authorities, and a part of the opposition has been forced into exile. Even after moving its base of operation to Lithuania, Ms. Tsikhanouskaya continues to appeal to the international community for the transfer of power and the legitimacy of protests by engagement through video messages and dialogue with high-level officials of the European and U.S. governments, and participating in online meetings such as the European Parliament and the UN Security Council.

Many Western countries have repudiated the presidential election results and the legitimacy of President Lukashenko, while also criticizing the violence by the authorities. The U.S., Canada, the EU, the UK and other countries have imposed sanctions against Belarus such as travel restrictions and asset freezes.

Japan has issued four foreign press secretary statements on the situation in Belarus and has strongly urged the authorities of Belarus to immediately cease the arbitrary detention and forceful oppression of citizens, engage in national dialogue that respects the principles of the rule of law and democracy, and make an earnest effort in responding to the situation.

Section 7

The Middle East and North Africa

1 Overview

The Middle East and North Africa (hereinafter, “the Middle East”) is located in a geopolitically important area: the crossroads of Europe, sub-Saharan Africa, Central Asia and South Asia. The region is a vital supplier of energy, representing approximately 50% of the world’s oil reserves and 40% of the world’s natural gas reserves and also a market with high potential, pursuing the diversification of economy especially in the Gulf countries, against a backdrop of a high population growth rate in recent years.

Meanwhile, the region has gone through various conflicts and disputes along its history, and still faces a number of destabilizing factors and challenges. Regional tension is growing over Iran, and political turmoil continues in various regions since the “Arab Spring” in 2011. Fighting continues in Syria, resulting in a large number of refugees and internally displaced persons, and it has made a great impact on the stability of the entire region, including its neighboring countries. In Yemen, severe security and humanitarian conditions continue as the Houthis clash with the Yemeni Government and the Arab Coalition (led by Saudi Arabia, etc., at the request of the Yemeni Government). The risk of the spread of violent extremism such as the “Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL)” also remains in some

areas. On the other hand, some changes from the current situation were seen in 2020. In the context of the Middle East Peace, which has been a historical issue since the founding of Israel in 1948, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Sudan and Morocco have agreed to normalize diplomatic relations with Israel. Regarding Afghanistan, the U.S. and the Taliban reached an agreement in February, and the Afghan government has been engaged with the peace negotiation with the Taliban since September.

The Biden administration of the U.S., inaugurated in January 2021, has announced that it will hold talks with Iran to return to the Iran nuclear deal, from which former President Donald Trump had withdrawn. Regarding the Middle East Peace, the Biden administration is also making efforts to improve relations with Palestine, and these policies are worth noting in terms of the impact over the region.

Japan imports approximately 90% of its crude oil from the Middle East, and it is extremely important for Japan’s peace and prosperity to promote peace and stability in the Middle East and to maintain and develop good relations with countries in the region. From this point of view, Japan in recent years has been striving to strengthen relations with Middle Eastern countries in a wide range of fields, not just the economy, but also politics, security, culture and people-to-people



Prime Minister Abe meeting with Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman (January 12, Ulah, Saudi Arabia; Photo: Cabinet Public Relations Office)

exchanges, among others. In January, as tensions increased in the Middle East against the backdrop of the conflict between the U.S. and Iran, Prime Minister Abe visited the three countries of Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Oman as part of diplomatic efforts to avoid further worsening of situations.

In addition, while diplomatic activities have been restricted due to the spread of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19), Japan is providing assistance to the Middle East with approximately 122 million US dollars in ODA to counter COVID-19. Japan has been introducing such assistance and stressing the importance of addressing the issue based on the concept of human security especially in vulnerable regions, at international conferences by ministers.

2 Situation in the Middle East

(1) Middle East Peace Process

A Developments in the Middle East Peace Process

The Middle East Peace Process has stagnated since negotiations between Israel and Palestine faltered in April 2014. While Israeli settlement activities in the West Bank of the Jordan River continue, periodic rocket attacks continue from the Gaza Strip, and resumption of dialogue has not yet been realized.

Since its inauguration, the U.S. Trump administration implemented a series of pro-Israel

policies, including relocating the U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem and announcing its Vision for Peace in January. In May, the coalition agreement between the Likud Party and the Blue and White Party, which formed the basis for the inauguration of a new Israeli administration, mentioned the process of Israel's "application of sovereignty" after July 1 in accordance with the description of the vision. This has provoked a backlash from Palestine, and raised tension in the region.

In August, there was a historic move such as the suspension of "application of sovereignty" by Israel over the West Bank and the normalization of diplomatic relations between Israel and the United Arab Emirates. Following the United Arab Emirates having become the third Arab country to have diplomatic relations with Israel after Egypt and Jordan, Bahrain, Sudan and Morocco also agreed to normalize diplomatic relations with Israel. With an expectation that these agreements would ease and stabilize regional tensions, Japan supports a "two-state solution" based on dialogues between Israel and Palestine on the issue of the Middle East Peace and will continue to make progress through the efforts described below.

B Efforts by the Government of Japan

Toward the achievement of a "two-state solution" that would enable Israel and Palestine to coexist in peace, Japan, in cooperation with the international community, has actively contributed through the three pillars of political dialogue with stakeholders, confidence building among the concerned parties, and financial support for Palestinians. As Japan's unique initiative, the Jericho Agro-Industrial Park (JAIP) was launched as a flagship project of the "Corridor for Peace and Prosperity" initiative, aiming at facilitating economic self-reliance of Palestine over the mid- and long-term through regional cooperation among Japan, Palestine, Israel and Jordan. As of the end of 2020, 16 Palestinian private companies are operating in JAIP, creating approximately 200 jobs.

In addition, Japan is mobilizing the resources and economic development knowledge of East Asian countries to support Palestinian nation building through the Conference on the Cooperation among East Asian countries for Palestinian Development (CEAPAD).

(2) Israel

Israel excels in the development of advanced technology and innovation, and holds importance for the Japanese economy as well as for the stability of the Middle East.

In Israel, after three general elections in a year (April, September 2019, and March 2020), the coalition government (national unity government to deal with an emergency situation) was formed in May 2020, amid the urgent need for responding to COVID-19. However, since July, growing public disapproval of the government's COVID-19 response, its handling of the economic crisis, and corruption allegations against Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu (formally charged in January 2020 on three counts of alleged bribery, fraud, and breach of trust), resulted in demonstrations against the prime minister and the government in various parts of the country. Discussions on COVID-19 countermeasures that imposed socio-economic costs provoked disagreement within the Cabinet, resulting in no budget being approved in December, which forced the parliament to be dissolved and another election to be held in March 2021. It is expected that the situation will continue to be uncertain in terms of domestic affairs, including the response to COVID-19.

Regarding relations with Japan, while the impact of COVID-19 made severe restrictions on travels and led to postponement of launching of a direct flight service by El Al Airlines scheduled for 2020 to 2021, active exchanges continued at various levels even under the COVID-19 pandemic, such as summit telephone calls held in September and December and a foreign ministers' telephone call held in July.

(3) Palestine

Based on the Oslo Accords of 1993 and other agreements, the Palestinian Authority (PA) began self-government rule in the West Bank and Gaza Strip from 1995. Prime Minister Abbas assumed office as President after the presidential elections held in January 2005. After that, however, relations between the Fatah led by President Abbas and Hamas deteriorated, and Hamas seized control of the Gaza Strip by military force. Through Egypt's mediation efforts, Fatah and Hamas reached an agreement in-principle in October 2017 toward the transfer of power in the Gaza Strip to the PA. However, the agreement has not been implemented and the division remains, with the West Bank of the Jordan River still held by Fatah and the Gaza Strip remaining under Hamas's de facto control.

Since May 2020, the Palestinian Authority has opposed Israel's "application of sovereignty" over the West Bank, and Palestine has announced that it would suspend various cooperation with Israel. Although it refused to receive taxes revenues collected by Israel on its behalf, consequently the Palestinian Authority struggled financially. In November, after receiving a letter from the Israeli government stating that it would comply with past agreements, the Palestinian Authority announced the resumption of cooperation with Israel.

Regarding relations with Japan, Dr. Ahmad Abu-Holi, Member of PLO Executive Committee and Director General for Refugee Affairs of Palestine visited Japan in January and exchanged views on support for Palestinian refugees with State Minister for Foreign Affairs Suzuki Keisuke. In addition, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Suzuki attended the "Ad Hoc Liaison Committee (AHLIC) Ministerial Meeting" held online in May, where he announced Japan would continue to advance its own efforts, such as the "Corridor for Peace and Prosperity" initiative, to contribute to the creation of an environment conducive to the Middle East Peace, while emphasizing the importance of cooperating with the international community to support Palestine against the spread of COVID-19.

(4) Iran

Iran is a major Shiite regional power with land of approximately 4.4 times the size of Japan with a population of about 83 million and is blessed with abundant natural resources. Tensions heightened as January saw the killing of Qasem Soleimani, Commander of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps-Quds Force by the U.S., and Iranian attacks on U.S. military bases in Iraq. Subsequently, although both the U.S. and Iran announced their intention to ease tensions and managed to diffuse the extreme tension, the high tension continues against the background of the conflict between the U.S. and Iran. In April, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard announced that it had successfully launched Iran's first rocket carrying a military satellite, and Islamic Revolutionary Guard vessels dangerously approached a U.S. Navy ship sailing in open waters in the Persian Gulf. In July, a fire broke out at a uranium enrichment facility in Iran. In November, a nuclear scientist was killed in Iran.

Regarding the Iranian nuclear issue, since July 2019, Iran has taken steps to suspend its obligations, claiming that it has not received the estimated economic benefits that would have been obtained by the Iran nuclear deal (Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA)), due to the U.S. withdrawal from the deal and the subsequent resumption of sanctions on Iran by the U.S. In January 2020, Iran announced that it would remove any restrictions on its uranium enrichment



Japan-Iran Foreign Ministers' Meeting
(February 15, Munich, Germany)

activities. In response to these developments, the three JCPOA participant states of the UK, France and Germany, announced the same month that they would start a dispute resolution process based on the agreement to maintain the deal. The U.S. notified the UN Security Council in August of Iran's significant non-performance of commitments under the JCPOA, prior to the lifting of the Iranian arms embargo based on the JCPOA and the United Nations Security Council resolution in October 2020, which is five years after the "date of adoption" (October 2015) of the agreement. The U.S. asserted that the JCPOA had been effectively abolished by its notification since September 20 under the provisions of Security Council resolution 2231 and that the UN Security Council sanctions against Iran prior to the nuclear deal have been reapplied. However, the other states to the JCPOA have taken the position that the notification by the U.S., which had already withdrawn from the nuclear deal, has no effect and that the nuclear deal remains valid. In December, the Iranian parliament passed a bill requiring Iran to produce uranium enriched up to 20%. Iran subsequently began producing uranium enriched up to 20% in January 2021.

President-elect Joe Biden, who won the U.S. presidential election in November 2020, stated the possibility that the U.S. would rejoin the nuclear deal, subject to Iran's strict compliance with the deal. The situation surrounding Iran after the inauguration of the Biden administration is drawing attention.

From the perspective of having an alliance with the U.S. and maintaining its positive and long-standing relationship with Iran for many years, Japan has made diplomatic efforts to ease tensions and stabilize the situation in the Middle East, including Prime Minister Abe's visit to Iran in June 2019 and Iranian President Hassan Rouhani's visit to Japan in December that year. In January 2020, as tensions heightened in the Middle East, Prime Minister Abe visited the three countries of Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and

Oman, which have great influence in the region, as part of diplomatic efforts to ease the situation. In February, Foreign Minister Motegi held a meeting with Minister of Foreign Affairs Mohammad Javad Zarif. Even in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, Japan urged self-restraint to avoid actions that would heighten tensions in the region and called for Iran to comply with the nuclear agreement during the Japan-Iran Summit telephone call in May, and the Japan-Iran Foreign Ministers' telephone call in March and October.

(5) Turkey

Turkey is a geopolitically important regional power. As a member country of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), Turkey plays a significant role in regional security while proactively pursuing multifaceted diplomacy with Western countries, Russia, states in the Middle East, Asia and Africa. Turkey has traditionally been one of the friendliest countries with Japan, as typified by episodes such as the Ertugrul Frigate¹ incident in 1890.

After the presidential election in June 2018, Turkey moved from a parliamentary cabinet system to an executive presidential system in which the entire executive authority belongs to the president. Although the president's approval rating is stable, there have been developments such as the formation of a new party by former Deputy Prime Minister Ali Babacan and the former Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu, who have left the ruling party. The spread of COVID-19 has had a negative impact on the economy, and the Minister of Finance and the governor of the central bank have been replaced.

With regard to diplomacy, tensions arose with Greece and the European Union (EU) over the deployment of Turkish research vessels to explore energy resources in the eastern Mediterranean.



Prime Minister Abe attends the opening ceremony for Başakşehir Çam and Sakura City Hospital (May 21) (Photo: Sojitz Corporation)

The U.S. has imposed sanctions on Turkey due to the introduction of a Russian-made missile defense system (S-400), which remains an issue of concern in Turkey-U.S. bilateral relations. On the other hand, Russia and Turkey have a close relationship in the energy field, such as with the construction of gas pipelines and nuclear power plants. Turkey was in close communication with Russia over the situation in Syria as well as the conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh. In November, Turkey decided to deploy personnel to the Turkish-Russian center to oversee a ceasefire in and around Nagorno-Karabakh.

Regarding bilateral relations with Japan, close communications were maintained online, despite the fact that official travels and holdings of in-person meetings are restricted due to COVID-19. In April, Prime Minister Abe held a telephone call with President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and both leaders shared the view to maintain close collaboration in countering COVID-19. In May, Prime Minister Abe attended the opening ceremony of

¹ For details for the Ertugrul Frigate incident, please refer to https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/ms/da/page22_001052.html (Only in the Japanese language)



the Başakşehir Çam and Sakura City Hospital, built in the suburb of Istanbul, via teleconference, with President Erdogan. The large polyclinic hospital was built by a Japanese company and a major Turkish construction company through a public-private partnership (PPP). It also accepted COVID-19 patients. Furthermore, close exchanges were maintained when Prime Minister Abe resigned (in September) and when Prime Minister Suga took office (in October), through telephone calls with President Erdogan on both occasions. In Turkey, Prime Minister Suga and Foreign Minister Motegi expressed their sympathies and condolences over the earthquakes that struck Elazığ in February and Izmir in October which caused many casualties.

(6) The Gulf States and Yemen

The Gulf States² are important partners for Japan from the perspective of Japan's energy security. In recent years, the Gulf States have been working toward social and economic reforms, prioritizing issues such as industry diversification, human resources development and departure from dependence on oil, and Japan has been cooperating and supporting the realization of these reforms in order to contribute to the long-term stability and prosperity of the Middle East. Specifically, these efforts include cooperation based on the "Japan-Saudi Vision 2030," which was formulated by Japan and Saudi Arabia as a compass for bilateral cooperation modeled after the "Saudi Vision 2030," Saudi Arabia's initiative for industry diversification and departure from dependence on oil, and on the "Comprehensive Strategic Partnership Initiative" between Japan and the United Arab Emirates.

In January, Prime Minister Abe visited Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Oman amid heightened tensions in the region, where he shared the view with each country that all parties concerned respond with self-restraint to prevent



Japan-Saudi Arabia Foreign Ministers' Meeting
(October 3, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia)



Japan-Kuwait Foreign Ministers' Meeting
(October 3, Kuwait, Kuwait)

the situation from deteriorating. Prime Minister Abe also shared the view that every diplomatic effort should be made, and shared awareness of the importance to foster momentum for peaceful and dialogue-based solutions to various issues in the region. In addition, Prime Minister Abe sought to strengthen bilateral relations with each country, and made condolence calls to Oman on the demise of Sultan Qaboos.

In October, Foreign Minister Motegi visited Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. During the visit to Saudi Arabia, the Ministers of the two countries shared the view that the two countries will continue to further strengthen the strategic partnership

² Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Oman, Qatar, Kuwait and Bahrain

in a wide range of areas. They affirmed the success of the G20 Riyadh Summit and cooperation for peace and stability in the Middle East. During the visit to Kuwait, Foreign Minister Motegi paid a condolence call following the demise of Amir Sheikh Sabah and shared the view to advance the development of a comprehensive partnership.

While official travel was reduced due to the effects of COVID-19, Prime Minister Suga held telephone talks with Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman of Saudi Arabia (November) and Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan (December). Japan also held foreign ministers' telephone calls with Qatar (April), Kuwait (April), Saudi Arabia (July and September) and the United Arab Emirates (July). During each call, the leaders and ministers affirmed to strengthen bilateral relations and work toward easing tensions and stabilizing the situation in the Middle East. In December, the "Saudi-Japan Vision 2030" ministerial meeting was held online to confirm the progress of cooperation and exchange opinions on future cooperation policies.

In Yemen, the Houthis have continued to fight against the Yemeni Government and the Arab Coalition despite the international mediation efforts led by Mr. Martin Griffiths, Special Envoy of the United Nations Secretary-General. In addition, clashes continued between the central government and the Southern Transitional Council (STC), which aimed for autonomy in the southern part of the country, but in December, a new cabinet was formed based on the Riyadh Agreement which stipulated the establishment of a new government composed of the Yemeni Government and the STC. The severe humanitarian situation in Yemen has continued due to the impact of the prolonged conflict, and since January 2015, Japan has provided assistance of more than 300 million US dollars in total to Yemen through cooperation with UN agencies and others. At the High-Level Pledging Event for the Humanitarian Crisis in Yemen, which was held online in June, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Suzuki announced

that Japan would continue to contribute to improving the humanitarian situation and realizing a political solution in Yemen.

(7) Iraq

The situation in Iraq was heavily affected throughout 2020 by regional tensions against the backdrop of the conflict between the U.S. and Iran. On January 3, the U.S. killed Qasem Soleimani, Commander of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps-Quds Force and Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, Deputy Chairman of the Iraq Popular Mobilization Forces and others. On January 5, the Iraqi parliament passed a resolution to end the stationing of foreign troops in Iraq. On January 8, Iran launched ballistic missiles at bases in Iraq, where U.S. military troops were stationed, in a retaliatory attack. In March, an attack by rockets on a base, where U.S. troops were stationed, killed and injured U.S. and other soldiers, and the U.S. bombed Shi'a armed groups' sites. In addition, there were frequent attacks targeting the U.S. embassy and bases where U.S. troops are stationed.

In parallel with this, the Coalition forces led by U.S., that have supported the Iraqi armed forces and security agencies in operations to wipe out the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), have handed over its mission to the Iraqi armed forces since the end of March and have withdrawn from several bases due to the progress of the operations in Iraq and the spread of COVID-19. As a result, the U.S. has reduced its troops to 2,500 by January 15, 2021. However, sporadic terrorist attacks by ISIL are still continuing in central and northern Iraq, including Baghdad, and the focus of attention is on the response of the new Biden administration regarding the U.S. military stationed in Iraq. In northern Iraq, Turkish troops have been conducting military operations against the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) since June, including ground fighting.

In domestic affairs, Prime Minister Abdul Mahdi resigned in the middle of his term in December 2019 while public demonstrations continued, and

in May 2020, a new cabinet was established with Mustafa Al-Kadhimi as the prime minister. Since taking office, Prime Minister Al-Kadhimi has been working on many issues, such as dealing with the financial difficulties caused by falling oil prices and the spread of COVID-19, improving the lives of citizens, and restoring the security situation.

Japan has continued to provide assistance to Iraq since 2003. In 2020, Japan provided assistance of approximately 40 million US dollars for reconstruction of areas liberated from ISIL and assistance for the return of refugees through international organizations.

(8) Afghanistan

In 2020, there were significant developments in the peace process in Afghanistan. The U.S. and the Taliban, who have been in direct talks for about a year and a half, signed an agreement on February 29 that included the conditions-based U.S. troop withdrawal in Afghanistan and the start of intra-Afghan negotiations (peace negotiations). The agreement came following a one-week “violence reduction” period that drastically reduced combat activities throughout Afghanistan. That same day, Afghanistan and the U.S. announced a joint declaration in Kabul confirming the content of the U.S.-Taliban Agreement.

Both the Afghan government and the Taliban began peace talks in Doha, Qatar on September 12, after the mutual release of prisoners as a confidence-building measure premised on peace talks under the U.S.-Taliban Agreement. State Minister for Foreign Affairs Suzuki attended the opening ceremony of the peace negotiations online, where he welcomed the start of the peace talks. He stated that Japan would support the Afghan-led peace process and expressed strong expectations that the peace negotiations would progress steadily.

Following the first ceasefire in June 2018, temporary ceasefires were established between Afghan security forces and the Taliban in line with Islamic holidays in May and July 2020, but fierce fighting continued even after the start of peace talks. In



Foreign Minister Motegi delivers a video message at the Afghanistan Conference in Geneva (November 24)
(Photo: UN Photo/Violaine Martin)

addition, the security situation remains unstable, with frequent terrorist attacks by ISIL-affiliated organizations. The policy moving forward for the NATO-led “Resolute Support Mission (RSM)” under the new Biden administration is the focus of attention as the U.S. is proceeding with its gradual withdrawal of troops stationed in Afghanistan, reducing the number of troops to 2,500 by January 15, 2021.

In domestic affairs, the final result of the September 2019 presidential election was announced in February 2020, confirming the re-election of President Ashraf Ghani. However, opposing candidate and former Chief Executive Abdullah claimed the election was fraudulent and declared himself president on the day of Ashraf Ghani's second inauguration, sparking a political crisis. There were appeals both domestically and in the U.S. in response, and both parties signed a political agreement to establish an inclusive government in May, and Dr. Abdullah became chair of the new High Council for National Reconciliation.

Japan has provided more than 6.8 billion US dollars in assistance to Afghanistan since 2001, and is a major donor contributing to the reconstruction of Afghanistan. At the Japan-Afghanistan Foreign Ministers' telephone call held in November, Minister of Foreign Affairs Mohammad Haneef Atmar expressed his deep appreciation for Japan's support. At the Afghanistan Conference in Geneva held online in November, Foreign Minister Motegi announced in a video message that Japan would

work on providing assistance from 2021 to 2024, which was 180 million US dollars per year, maintaining the amount comparable to the past four years, assuming Afghanistan's own reform efforts. In December, President Ghani released a video message on the one-year anniversary of the death of Dr. Nakamura Tetsu in a terrorist shooting. Dr. Nakamura was instrumental in supporting Afghanistan and the message honored his achievements.

(9) Lebanon

Large-scale anti-government demonstrations, triggered such as by the opposition to the introduction of tax increases, have taken place across Lebanon since October 2019, forcing Prime Minister Saad Hariri to resign. Although the Diab Cabinet was formed in January 2020, the infection of COVID-19 has spread in Lebanon since February, and the economy has become further deteriorated due to the stagnation of economic activity with the pandemic. In March, the government announced that it would postpone repayment of foreign currency-denominated government bonds.

Under these circumstances, a massive explosion at the port of Beirut occurred in August, which killed 190 people, injured more than 6,500 and left about 300,000 homeless. The total damage is estimated to be about 15 billion US dollars. There was also a large-scale anti-government demonstration blaming the government for its long-standing negligence and corruption as the cause of the explosion, and Prime Minister Hassan Diab resigned in the same month. Since then, formation of a cabinet in the new administration has been at a standstill, and there are no prospects of stabilizing internal affairs or implementation of the administrative and financial reforms. Under these circumstances, the international community is urging the Lebanese government to promptly implement administrative and financial reforms and anti-corruption measures, while providing the necessary humanitarian assistance to Lebanon.

Since 2012, Japan has provided more than 220 million US dollars in assistance for the refugee and host communities to help the deteriorating humanitarian conditions in Lebanon.

Japan also provided emergency relief supplies in response to the explosion at the port of Beirut in August, and emergency grant assistance of 5 million US dollars through international organizations in September. Moreover, Japanese NGOs are conducting grassroots humanitarian assistance programs of approximately 1.2 million US dollars with financial support from Japan. Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs Nakayama Norihiro at the International Conference on Assistance and Support for Beirut and the Lebanese People held online in August, as well as State Minister for Foreign Affairs Washio Eiichiro, who attended the International Conference in Support of the Lebanese People held online in December, delivered their statements introducing the support and assistance.

(10) Syria

A Changes in the situation

The Syrian crisis, which began in 2011, has spanned a decade, sees neither prospects of stabilization nor political resolution, and is still considered to be the century's worst humanitarian crisis.

In the Idlib region, fighting has intensified from April 2019, between the dissidents and the Syrian government forces, which receives support from Russia, causing a deterioration of humanitarian conditions and forcing more than 960,000 persons internally displaced. In February 2020, Syrian government forces took over the Damascus-Aleppo highway (M5) for the first time since 2012. As the fighting in the Idlib region continued, Turkey started Operation "Spring Shield" in March, while the Russia-Turkey summit meeting was held in the same month, and the two countries agreed to an additional protocol centered on a ceasefire, the establishment of a "secure corridor," and performing joint patrols in the Idlib region. Since the agreement, the ceasefire in the Idlib region has

been largely maintained, but sporadic fighting and air strikes have continued, and the situation in Idlib remains in the balance.

While the Syrian economy has deteriorated due to the devastation of social and industrial infrastructure from the prolonged conflict, in 2020 in particular, the economic deterioration has been further accelerated due to the economic crisis in Lebanon and the spread of COVID-19 in Syria, and caused the fall of the value of the Syrian currency sharply. Given these circumstances, the Syrian people are facing a sharp rise in prices, a decline in purchasing power due to lower income and unemployment, and a shortage of food and daily necessities. As effective measures have not been taken by the Syrian government to stabilize prices, there are concerns that the humanitarian situation in Syria will become even severer.

B Political Process

As for the political process, Syrian dialogue has been suspended since 2018, but in October 2019 a constitutional committee started operating through the mediation of the UN. The committee aims to discuss reforms to the Syrian Constitution through discussions among Syrians themselves, but although several meetings have been held, no concrete progress has been made in the discussion. In this regard, with the Syrian People's Assembly election to be held in July 2020, and the Syrian presidential election expected to be held in 2021 based on the current constitution, the international community continues to call on the Syrian government to be constructively involved in advancing the political process in line with UN Security Council resolution 2254, which calls for a political solution to the Syrian crisis.

C The Japanese Government's Efforts

Japan has consistently maintained its position that the crisis in Syria cannot be resolved by any military means, and a political solution is indispensable. At the same time, Japan also attaches importance to providing continuous support for

improving humanitarian conditions. From this standpoint, since the aggravation of the situation in Syria, Japan has provided total assistance worth more than 2.9 billion US dollars to Syria and neighboring countries from 2012 for humanitarian assistance.

In March 2020, Japan provided 4.7 million US dollars in emergency humanitarian assistance to the northwest region, where the humanitarian situation has been deteriorating since 2019. In December, Japan decided on the provision of new support of 6 million US dollars for establishing sustained health care services at Qamishli National Hospital, the main hospital in northeastern Qamishli province, through the restoration of the hospital and the provision of medical equipment. In addition, Japan also decided to provide 7.2 million US dollars in new emergency humanitarian assistance for food and preparations for winter.

(11) Jordan

The situation in Jordan remains relatively stable compared to other parts of the continuously turbulent Middle East region, despite the spread of COVID-19. Jordan has, under the leadership of His Majesty King Abdullah II, played an important role in promoting the peace and stability of the region, such as with countermeasures against extremists, its acceptance of a large number of Syrian refugees, and active involvement in the Middle East Peace. The country's role is highly regarded by the international community.

With regard to Jordan's relations with Japan, a foreign minister's telephone call and a summit telephone call were held in April, and the two countries shared the recognition that close cooperation is important so as not to destabilize the Middle East amid the spread of COVID-19. In addition, Japan and Jordan held active dialogues at the leader and ministerial levels, such as another summit telephone call in September upon the resignation of Prime Minister Abe. The two countries have been working on further developing bilateral relations under a strategic partnership in a wide

range of fields such as diplomacy, security and the economy, to promote cooperation for the stability of the Middle East. With regard to COVID-19, in June, Jordan provided medical supplies such as medical masks to Japan, while Japan provided Jordan with grant assistance in the field of health and medical care.

Japan attaches importance to its relations with Jordan, a cornerstone of regional stability. Security cooperation is ongoing as the Second Politico-Military dialogue was held in October. In August, the Japan-Jordan Investment Agreement came into effect, and economic cooperation is also developing. In addition, Japan continuously supports the Jordanian economy and administration via disbursement of 100 million US dollars in March and another 100 million US dollars in December out of the 300 million US dollars of development policy loans signed during King Abdullah II's visit to Japan in November 2018.

3 The Situation in North Africa (Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Morocco and Algeria)

(1) Egypt

Egypt is a major power in the region, playing a significant role in the stability of the Middle East and North Africa, and President El-Sisi maintains stable administration. On the economic front, whereas COVID-19 had a negative impact (tourism decrease, fewer remittances from overseas workers, etc.), the impact on the economy was limited compared with neighboring countries, and maintained positive GDP growth, due in part to the fact that the economy was originally robust after recent macroeconomic reforms.

Steady progress has been seen in Japan-Egypt relations since President El-Sisi's visit to Japan in February 2016. Cooperation covers various areas such as strengthening support for the Egypt-Japan University of Science and Technology (E-JUST), and the construction program of the Grand Egyptian Museum (GEM). In addition, at the Japan-Egypt Foreign Ministers' telephone call in

December, Foreign Minister Motegi stated that preparations were underway for a development policy loan to support the energy sector as a contribution to the revitalization of socio-economic activities affected by the spread of COVID-19. The Notes concerning this project were signed and exchanged in February 2021.

Regarding the two SDF personnel of the Multinational Force and Observers (MFO) stationed in the Sinai Peninsula who have been dispatched since April 2019, a second rotation of personnel was conducted in July to continue to contribute to regional peace and stability.

(2) Libya

In Libya, following the collapse of the Qadhafi administration in 2011, the parliament and the government have split apart in the east and west of the country, and the situation remains unstable. In April 2019, Field Marshal Khalifa Haftar, powerful commander of the "Libyan National Army" (LNA) in the east, ordered an advance on Tripoli, which developed into an armed conflict including air strikes against forces under the Government of National Accord (GNA). Since May 2020, the GNA, with the support of Turkey, has launched counterattacks, and the LNA has withdrawn from the suburbs of Tripoli, resulting in a standoff along a line connecting the central coastal city of Sirte and the inland city of Jufra. However, there were some positive developments, such as the signing of the permanent ceasefire agreement between the GNA and the LNA in October, and no major fighting has occurred since then.

On the political front, a UN-led Libyan Political Dialogue Forum was held in Tunis in November with 75 Libyan representatives, and a basic agreement was reached to hold a series of elections on Libya's Independence Day on December 24, 2021. Following the agreement, in February 2021, a unified interim executive authority responsible for conducting a series of elections was elected at the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum and is scheduled to be approved by the House of Representatives

by mid-March. Japan has supported such UN-led political dialogue.

(3) Maghreb Countries

The Maghreb is of great economic importance in the African continent, due to its geographical advantage of being the crossroads of Europe, the Middle East and Africa, and its high potential based on a cheap abundant young labor force. In addition, each country has overcome the “Arab Spring” and maintained political stability in its own way. On the other hand, due to the impact of COVID-19, the decline in energy revenue that supports state finances is becoming more serious in Algeria, and regional disparities and high unemployment rates are challenges to overcome in Morocco and Tunisia. In addition, there are concerns about the security implications of the flow of weapons and illegal immigrants from Libya and the Sahel region.

In the Republic of Tunisia, following the results of the election for the Assembly of the Representatives of the People in October 2019, the new Elyes Fakhfakh Cabinet was established in February 2020, but later resigned in July as disagreements between political parties could not be resolved. The Hichem Mechichi Cabinet was later established in September, and attention is focused on whether economic and social policies will be implemented in a stable manner. Regarding relations with Japan, Foreign Minister Motegi visited the Republic of Tunisia in December, and in meetings with President Saïde, Prime Minister Mechichi, and Secretary of State Ali Nafti, both sides confirmed the close cooperation for the 8th Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD8) to be held in Tunisia in 2022 and reaffirmed the two countries would work to further develop bilateral relations, including the economic relationship and the peace and stability in the region.

In Algeria, the protests against the long-standing administration of President Bouteflika since February 2019 turned into prolonged



Foreign Minister Motegi pays a courtesy call to Tunisian President Saïde (December 9, Tunisia)



Foreign Minister Motegi pays a courtesy call to Tunisian Head of Government Mechichi (December 9, Tunisia)

demonstrations that resulted in the administration resigning in April. The presidential election was held in December 2019, and former Prime Minister Abdelmadjid Tebboune was elected. President Tebboune proceeded with a constitutional amendment to realize a “new Algeria,” and held a referendum on the amendment on November 1, 2020, the day Algeria’s war of independence began. The constitutional amendment was adopted, although the voter turnout was extremely low at 23.7% due to the impact of COVID-19 and low public interest, among others.

In relations with Morocco, Japan has developed friendly relations for many years based on the relationship between the Imperial Family of Japan and the Royal Family of Morocco. Under these circumstances, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Suzuki visited Morocco in January 2020 to attend the Japan-Morocco Joint Committee to discuss the concrete implementation of various types of cooperation including in the economic field. Both



Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs Nakatani visits Morocco as part of the Public and Private Sector Joint Mission for Promoting Trade and Investment in Africa (February, Morocco)

countries also signed the Tax Convention between Japan and Morocco and the Investment Agreement. In February, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs Nakatani Shinichi visited Morocco as the head of the Public and Private Sector Joint Mission for Promoting Trade and Investment in Africa. These official visits steadily developed friendly bilateral relations. Through such official visits and cooperation, it is hoped the economic relationship between the two countries will be strengthened through the greater entry of Japanese companies into Morocco.

Section 8

Africa

1 Overview

Africa, with a population of over 1.3 billion in 54 countries, has attracted the interest of the international community, owing to its high potential and rich natural resources.

At the same time, Africa still faces challenges such as conflicts and political turmoil that threaten peace and stability, terrorism and violent extremism, and the serious poverty and development issues. Overcoming these challenges in Africa is also important for the peace and prosperity of the international community as a whole.

In 2020, infections of the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) spread across Africa as well. The number of COVID-19 cases in Africa has increased at a slow pace since the first case was confirmed in Egypt in February. After peaking in August, the number of newly confirmed cases decreased mainly in Sub-Saharan Africa, but since fall 2020, the number of infections has started to rise again in some countries, and Africa experienced a second wave after the end of the year. With many countries having weak healthcare systems, COVID-19 in Africa is likely to continue to be a serious issue.

Japan has been contributing to the development of Africa for many years through the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD), which boasts a history of more than 25

years, based on the basic principles of African ownership and partnership with the international community. Through this initiative, Japan has been making efforts with a focus on the protection and empowerment of individuals based on the concept of human security.

Under this vision, Japan has supported health and medical systems in Africa in the medium to long term through TICAD. The concrete results of these efforts have been demonstrated during the recent spread of COVID-19. For example, Japan has provided support for the establishment of the Noguchi Memorial Institute for Medical Research in Ghana and assisted in the training of its medical laboratory technologists. The Institute serves as the hub of the country's response to COVID-19 and processes up to about 80% of PCR tests carried out in the country.

As the spread of COVID-19 has had a significant impact on Africa's economy and society, Japan has engaged in a multilayered approach in its efforts including support for achieving Universal Health Coverage (UHC) in Africa, based on the concept of human security with the aim of "leaving no one's health behind." The following are examples of these efforts; First, Japan enhanced Africa's ability to respond to COVID-19 by supporting the improvement of medical equipment and training medical staff. In fact, in response to the spread of COVID-19, Japan provided support

such as capacity building and provision of health and medical equipment to 48 out of 54 African countries (as of December 2020) according to their individual circumstances through bilateral approaches or international organizations. Second, to build a robust and comprehensive health and medical system, Japan is, for example, supporting the Kenya Medical Research Institute, and is developing human resources to disseminate maternal and child health handbooks in Ghana. Third, as a response to socio-economic issues, Japan provided humanitarian assistance to refugees and internally displaced persons due to damage from desert locusts and floods, and the threats of terrorism and war. Furthermore, in the field of peace and stability, Japan contributed to institution building including support through the PKO Training Centers under the New Approach for Peace and Stability in Africa (NAPSA) announced by Japan at TICAD7 in August 2019.

The 8th Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD8) will be held in

Tunisia in 2022. This will be the second time TICAD is held in Africa, since TICADVI in Kenya in 2016. Looking ahead to TICAD8, Japan will actively tackle various African development challenges that have been highlighted due to the spread of COVID-19.

In December 2020, despite challenges the COVID-19 pandemic poses to high level visits, Foreign Minister Motegi made his first visit to Africa after taking office as Minister, travelling to Tunisia, the TICAD8 host country, and three Southeast African countries facing the Indian Ocean—Mozambique, South Africa and Mauritius. In January 2021, he visited Senegal and Kenya, becoming the first Japanese Foreign Minister to visit a total of six African countries in two months.

During these visits, Foreign Minister Motegi met with the leaders and foreign ministers of each country and confirmed to promote African development leading up to TICAD8 and to strengthen business relations, looking ahead to the post COVID era. The Minister also exchanged views and confirmed to cooperate to achieve the vision of a “Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP).” Foreign Minister Motegi’s two visits to Africa put into practice “diplomacy with a sense of caring and robustness” in Africa to maintain and strengthen a free and open international order based on the rule of law, and laid the foundation for Japan to exercise leadership in shaping a post-COVID-19 international order.



Japan-Mauritius Foreign Ministers' Meeting
(December 13, Vacoas-Phoenix, Mauritius)



Courtesy call to President Sall of Senegal
(January 11, 2021, Dakar, Senegal)

2 East Africa

(1) Uganda

Under President Yoweri Museveni’s long-serving administration since 1986, Uganda has enjoyed sustained economic growth owing to its stable domestic politics, and has contributed to regional stability as a major actor in East Africa. Uganda also actively accepts refugees, including South Sudanese refugees staying in the northern part of the country.

Following the damage caused by desert locusts,

Japan provided Emergency Grant Aid of approximately 66 million Japanese yen through the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) in June.

(2) Ethiopia

Ethiopia, which has the second largest population in Africa (110 million people), holds an important position in African politics, serving as the location of the African Union (AU) headquarters. It also recorded a solid economic growth rate until 2019. In March, in response to the damage from desert locusts, about 3.3 billion yen was provided for food assistance through the WFP.

In April, as COVID-19 spread, Japan requested support from the Ethiopian government, and Japanese nationals residing in African countries were able to leave Africa through Ethiopia via flights on Ethiopian Airlines (see the Opening Special Feature on page 2). During a summit telephone call with Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed that month, Prime Minister Abe expressed his gratitude for Ethiopia's support for the repatriation of Japanese nationals.

(3) Kenya

Kenya plays a central role in the regional economy with its port of Mombasa, the largest port in East Africa, serving as a gateway to East and Central Africa. Kenya also contributes to the peace and stability of the region as a stabilizing force in East Africa by its efforts including its engagement in peacebuilding in Somalia, South Sudan, and elsewhere. Under the leadership of President Uhuru Kenyatta, the Kenyan economy has achieved solid growth in recent years but has been hit hard by the spread of COVID-19 and lockdown measures. In March, Japan provided Emergency Grant Aid for food assistance of approximately 396 million Japanese yen through the WFP in response to the damage caused by desert locusts.

At the Japan-Kenya Foreign Ministers' Meeting held in France in October, the Ministers exchanged opinions on cooperation for realizing universal



Japan-Kenya Foreign Ministers' Meeting
(January 13, 2021, Nairobi, Kenya)

health coverage and coordination for TICAD8. In January 2021, Foreign Minister Motegi visited Kenya and paid a courtesy call to President Kenyatta and met with Foreign Minister Raychelle Awuor Omamo and Cabinet Secretary for Sports, Culture and Heritage Dr. Amina Mohamed.

(4) Union of the Comoros

Union of the Comoros is an island nation located in the Indian Ocean and its long-standing political instability and agricultural-based economy affected by climatic conditions have become obstacles to economic growth and social development. In January, Secretary of State in charge of Cooperation at the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Dr. Takiddine Yousouf visited Japan to meet with Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs Nakatani Shinichi.

(5) Djibouti

Djibouti, situated at one of the great trade arteries that pass through the Indian Ocean and connects Europe and Asia, is aiming to be a regional distribution hub. It is a base for international security and is also a key country in achieving a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific." Since 2011, Djibouti has been hosting the facility of Japan Self-Defense Forces to carry out Japan's counter-piracy operations, and the two countries have been developing an excellent relationship.

In August, the two countries exchanged notes concerning grant aid to expand access to basic

education and improve school environment, with a maximum grant limit of 2.092 billion yen.

(6) Sudan

Sudan is the second largest country by area in Sub-Saharan Africa, and is blessed with crude oil, minerals, as well as water resources and fertile arable land from the Nile River. The country has potential for economic development, but its development has been hampered by a long civil war totaling about 40 years since independence. In April 2019, the Bashir administration, which had been in power for 30 years, collapsed. In August, a new provisional government based on power sharing between the armed forces and the people was established. The new provisional government has prioritized a complete end to the civil war, and in October 2020, signed a peace agreement with the Sudan Revolutionary Front. In addition to the agreement to normalize diplomatic relations with Israel, relations with the international community are improving significantly, such as the resumption of support from international financial institutions following its removal by the U.S. from the list of state sponsors of terrorism. The international community has welcomed the changes in Sudan, and the Sudan Partnership Conference was held in Berlin in June, with State Minister for Foreign Affairs Suzuki Keisuke participating from Japan online. At the conference, each country announced its support for Sudan totaling 1.8 billion US dollars.

(7) Seychelles

Although Seychelles has the highest gross national income per capita (GNI) of 16,900 US dollars (2019) in Sub-Saharan Africa, it is a small island country with vulnerabilities in fields such as climate change and disaster prevention.

At the end of October, presidential and national assembly elections were held peacefully, with the opposition candidate Wavel Ramkalawan winning with 54.9% of the vote, with the opposition Seychelles Democratic Alliance party, headed by

Ramkalawan, taking 25 out of 35 seats. It is the first democratic election in the history of Seychelles' internal affairs that has led to a change of government since the 1977 coup d'état.

(8) Somalia

In Somalia, the federal government was officially reestablished in 2012 for the first time in 21 years, but Somalia is still in the process of building a country due to the humanitarian crises, such as droughts and floods, as well as continuing activities by the terrorist organization Al-Shabaab.

In March, Japan provided food assistance of about 341 million Japanese yen through the WFP following damage from desert locusts.

(9) Madagascar

Madagascar is an island country situated at the gateway to eastern and southern Africa, which celebrated its 60th anniversary of independence in 2020. Japan is supporting the project to extend Toamasina Port, the country's largest port, with an ODA yen loan, as one of the key countries to realize a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific."

In July, Japan exchanged notes with Madagascar concerning grant aid through the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations, which contributes to improving children's nutrition and health services. On the economic front, investments by a Japanese company is contributing to the Madagascar's economy with the integrated production of nickel and cobalt ores, which is the largest mining investment in Africa.

(10) South Sudan

Turmoil has continued in South Sudan since the clashes in the capital, Juba, in December 2013. Mediation efforts by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) are ongoing. After the second clashes in July 2016, the Khartoum Declaration of Agreement between parties of the conflict of South Sudan was issued in June 2018, and President Kiir, former first Vice President Machar, and others signed the

Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan in September 2018. The establishment of the Transitional Government of National Unity was realized only in February 2020, after being postponed twice in May and November 2019. Future important challenges in domestic affairs include reform of the security sector (integration of the national army and opposition forces), reconstitution of the Transitional National Legislative Assembly, establishment of a new constitution, and holding presidential elections at the end of provisional period.

(11) Mauritius

Mauritius is an island country at the center of marine transportation on the Indian Ocean, and is one of key countries for realizing a “Free and Open Indo-Pacific.”

From August to September, Japan dispatched Japan Disaster Relief (JDR) Expert Teams in response to an oil leakage off the coast of the country. In December, Foreign Minister Motegi visited Mauritius for the first time as Japan's foreign minister and met with Prime Minister Pravind Jugnauth and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade Nandcoomar Bodha. Foreign Minister Motegi inspected the extent of the damages from the oil spill and the status of recovery (see the Special Feature on page 167).

3 Southern Africa

(1) Angola

In March, President João Lourenço declared a state of emergency at the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic and introduced strict regulations, including the suspension of international flights. Under these circumstances, Japan provided support including distributing sanitary products such as masks and disinfectants to healthcare centers as a part of the technical cooperation “Project for Improving Maternal and Child Health Handbook” that has been ongoing since 2017.

(2) Eswatini

Eswatini remains an absolute monarchy, with King Mswati III having overwhelming power in administration and legislation. In April 2018, it was announced that the country's name would be changed from the “Kingdom of Swaziland” to the “Kingdom of Eswatini,” and the change came into force that same day. Eswatini has become the only country in Africa to have diplomatic relations with Taiwan after Burkina Faso severed diplomatic relations with Taiwan in 2018.

(3) Zambia

With abundant mineral resources, Zambia has been working on economic diversification in recent years to break its economy away from over-dependence on minerals.

In July, Japan exchanged notes with Zambia concerning grant aid with a maximum of 2.654 billion Japanese yen to improve and upgrade health centers into district hospitals in Copperbelt Province.

(4) Namibia

Namibia has abundant marine and mineral resources, and, as a distribution hub on the Atlantic side of the Southern Africa region, it is expected that trade and investment will expand in the fields of resource development and energy.

In September, Japan exchanged notes with Namibia concerning grant aid to provide vocational training centers with training equipment for industrial human resources development.

(5) Botswana

Botswana was the first country in Africa to adopt the Japanese terrestrial digital broadcasting system (ISDB-T system) in 2013 and is moving forward with the change to terrestrial digital broadcasting and the use of data broadcasting. In April, Japan and Botswana exchanged notes concerning grant aid to promote terrestrial digital television broadcasting receivers based on the Japanese system with a grant amount of 150 million Japanese yen.

Response to the Oil Leakage off the Coast of Mauritius

On July 25 (local time), the bulk carrier “WAKASHIO” got stranded off the southern-east coast of Mauritius. About 1,000 tons of fuel oil leaked from the ship from August 6 (local time), causing serious damage over the environment in the affected area, which could have a serious impact on the country’s tourism industry as well.

In response, Japan decided to dispatch Japan Disaster Relief (JDR) Expert Teams (19 members in total) three times to the Republic of Mauritius, holistically considering circumstances, including the request for urgent assistance from the Government of the Republic of Mauritius and the friendly relationship between the two countries. From August 12 to 21, the first team (comprising six members) conducted marine pollution surveys and offered training on oil removal and control to the National Coast Guard of Mauritius. The second team (comprising seven members), active from August 21 to September 11, and the third team (comprising six members), active from September 4 to 18, conducted environmental impact surveys on the coral reef ecosystems, mangroves and birds. The first and second teams also carried and provided equipment.

On September 7, Foreign Minister Motegi held a telephone call with Prime Minister Pravind Jugnauth of Mauritius. Foreign Minister Motegi explained that the Government of Japan took the accident very seriously and expressed his intention to advance an unprecedented scale of cooperation from the mid- and long-term perspectives in a swift manner toward the restoration and revival of Mauritius. This includes the following areas of cooperation: (1) maritime safety; (2) recovering the environment; (3) restoring the livelihoods of the people engaged in fishery; and (4) recovery and development of the Mauritian economy. In response, Prime Minister Jugnauth expressed his appreciation for the immediate dispatches of the JDR Expert Teams as well as the proposal of future cooperation, and expressed his expectation to receive Japan’s continuous support. Toward the realization of the abovementioned cooperation, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) survey missions were dispatched first from October 24 and then from November 22.

In December, Foreign Minister Motegi visited Mauritius. During the courtesy call to Prime Minister Jugnauth,



Foreign Minister Motegi paying a courtesy call to Prime Minister Jugnauth (December 13, Vacoas-Phoenix, Mauritius)



Foreign Minister Motegi inspecting the extent of damages from the oil spill and the status of recovery in Mauritius (December 13, Riviere Des Creoles estuary, Mauritius)



Visit to the JDR team by Prime Minister Jugnauth (August 13, Blue Bay, Mauritius; Photo: JICA)

Foreign Minister Motegi presented the progress on the cooperation committed to at the telephone call in September. Touching on the activities of the JICA survey teams, he conveyed that: (1) a technical cooperation project in the areas of environment and fishery would be initiated as soon as possible based on the result of the survey; (2) a technical cooperation project for preventing maritime accidents would be implemented at the earliest possible date, and preparations were ongoing to enable the early implementation of grant aid to support the monitoring of maritime navigation; and (3) implementation of swift financial support based on the request of the Government of Mauritius and the dispatch of a Public-Private Sector Joint Mission for Promoting Trade and Investment to Mauritius would be considered for recovering and developing the economy of Mauritius. Foreign Minister Motegi stated that he would like to achieve more steadfast bilateral relations than ever before by building on these supports. During the same visit, Foreign Minister Motegi also held a meeting with Mr. Nandcoomar Bodha, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade and inspected the extent of damages from the oil spill and status of recovery while receiving a briefing from Mr. Sudheer Maudhoo, Minister of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping.

Japan will continue to cooperate closely with the relevant countries and organizations as well as the private sector, in order for Mauritius to recover the environment in the affected area, overcome the COVID-19 pandemic, and restore the economy and people’s livelihoods as soon as possible.

(6) Malawi

Malawi has maintained relatively stable domestic affairs since its independence in 1964, but there have been frequent demonstrations since the May 2019 presidential election. In February 2020, the constitutional court ruled to invalidate the outcome of the election, and in a repeat election held in June, the leader of the Malawi Congress Party (MCP), Lazarus Chakwera, defeated the incumbent and became president.

(7) South Africa

South Africa is the only G20 member in Africa. It continues to garner attention from foreign companies including Japanese companies as a major economic power in Africa and as a hub from which to carry out business expansion. South Africa has, for the third time, been serving as a member of the UN Security Council since 2019, and has a strong presence in the international arena.

Following the spread of COVID-19, in addition to implementing domestic measures, President Cyril Ramaphosa has been leading Africa's efforts to fight the pandemic as the AU chair.

In January, the 7th Joint Committee Meeting on Science and Technology Cooperation between South Africa and Japan was held in the capital Pretoria, where the two countries confirmed bilateral cooperation in the field of science and technology. In December, Foreign Minister Motegi visited South Africa and held a foreign ministers' meeting with Minister of International Relations and Cooperation Naledi Pandor as well as a telephone talk with President Ramaphosa.

(8) Mozambique

Mozambique is rich in natural resources especially in the Nacala Corridor region, and Japanese companies have shown great interest in Mozambique, including one that announced their participation in Mozambique's natural gas development projects in 2019. However, since the latter half of 2019, the security situation in Cabo Delgado Province in the north has deteriorated,



Japan-Mozambique Foreign Ministers' Meeting
(December 11, Maputo, Mozambique)

and President Filipe Jacinto Nyusi has been working to strengthen security measures while seeking cooperation with donor countries and neighboring countries. Japan allocated part of its food assistance via the WFP, granted through an exchange of notes in September, to support internally displaced persons in the province. In October, Japan decided to provide Emergency Grant Aid in collaboration with five international organizations, and continues to cooperate toward the realization of regional peace and stability.

In January, Mihara Asahiko, acting President of the Japan-AU Parliamentary Friendship League, attended the presidential inauguration ceremony as a special envoy of the prime minister. In December, Foreign Minister Motegi visited Mozambique and met with President Nyusi and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation Veronica Macamo.

(9) Lesotho

Lesotho is a landlocked country surrounded by South Africa, composed mostly of mountainous highlands, and continues to grow economically through mining and water resources development. Trout aquaculture is carried out in the lake of the Katse Dam constructed by utilizing natural resources, providing a major export product to Japan.

Japan exchanged notes with Lesotho for food assistance through the WFP in September in response to the droughts, heat waves and floods that have significantly reduced crop yields.

4 Central Africa

(1) Cameroon

In Cameroon, various security problems are occurring in the English-speaking regions in the Northwest and Southwest regions. Under the direction of President Paul Biya, the country is tackling the challenge of stabilizing these regions based on the national dialogue in 2019 on the situations in the Northwest and Southwest regions. On December 6, the regional election was held for the first time to promote decentralization, including in the English-speaking regions.

In 2020, Japan and Cameroon celebrated the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations. Japan has friendly relations with Cameroon, and cooperation is progressing in various fields, such as sports exchanges and development cooperation.

(2) Democratic Republic of the Congo

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the 11th outbreak of the Ebola virus disease declared in June in Equatorial Province ended in November. President Félix Antoine Tshisekedi Tshilombo is working to stabilize the eastern region, where the activities of armed groups such as the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF, Ugandan rebels) have created major security challenges, and is also advancing various domestic reforms including anti-corruption measures.

Japan maintains excellent bilateral relations with the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and in 2020, the two countries celebrated the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations. Japan has long supported the DRC's National Institute of Professional Preparation and has contributed to the country's economic development through the development of industrial human resources. In addition, the National Institute of Biomedical Research (Institut National pour la Recherche Biomédicale INRB), which Japan has been supporting for the expansion of testing facilities and the development of infectious disease

specialists, plays a central role in the country's measures against Ebola and COVID-19.

(3) Central African Republic

In Central African Republic, under leadership of President Faustin Archange Touadéra, efforts are underway for peace and stability based on a peace agreement with armed groups. Although opposition parties and some armed groups demanded that the presidential election be postponed and the security situation deteriorated temporarily, the first round of voting in the presidential election was held on December 27, and President Touadéra was re-elected.

Japan has friendly relations with Central African Republic, and in 2020, the two countries celebrated the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations. Japan, in cooperation with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), has contributed to institution building in Central African Republic by providing 248 million Japanese yen in support for the presidential election mentioned above.

(4) Gabon

Gabon is a politically stable country with no experience of civil war or conflict, while it is located in the politically unstable Central Africa region. President Ali Bongo is engaged in diversification of the country's economy, with the aim of transitioning from an oil-dependent economy, including strengthening the timber processing field. With the cabinet reshuffle in July, the Osouka Raponda Cabinet was inaugurated, resulting in the country's first female prime minister.

Japan has friendly relations with Gabon, and in 2020, the two countries celebrated the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations. Japan is cooperating mainly in the fields of infectious disease control and environmental conservation.

5 West Africa

(1) Ghana

The administration of President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo has adopted the vision of “Ghana Beyond Aid,” and has been working to attract investment and diversify industry since he assumed the presidency in 2017. Since the spread of COVID-19, the administration has been focusing on measures to fight COVID-19 and rebuilding the domestic economy. President Akufo-Addo, New Patriotic Party (NPP), was re-elected in the presidential election held on December 7.

Japan has supported the Noguchi Memorial Institute for Medical Research for many years through ODA. The institute, a symbol of friendship between the two countries, was responsible for up to about 80% of the country's PCR tests. It has played a central role as a core facility for measures against COVID-19.

(2) Guinea

In Guinea, which has fertile soil and abundant mineral resources, President Alpha Condé has initiated socio-economic development efforts. On the domestic affairs front, national assembly elections and a referendum on constitutional amendments was held in March. In October, a presidential election was held based on the new constitution, and President Condé was inaugurated in December.

Japan has friendly relations with Guinea, and President Condé has visited Japan three times since he took office (2013, 2017 and 2019). There have also been exchanges at the grassroots level, such as exchanges through traditional drums (*djembe*).

(3) Guinea-Bissau

Guinea-Bissau aims to escape poverty and political instability by taking advantage of its fertile lands, fishery resources and mineral resources. It held presidential elections in November 2019 and January 2020, where candidate Umaro Sissoco

Embaló was elected as the new president.

Japan is providing support to Guinea-Bissau mainly in basic human needs, contributing to the alleviation of poverty. At the time of the presidential election, Japan provided election-related materials and equipment in cooperation with the UNDP.

(4) Côte d'Ivoire

Côte d'Ivoire, a major country in West Africa, held a presidential election in October, re-electing President Alassane Ouattara. President Ouattara is making efforts to strengthen the foundation for the further development of the country with measures such as advancing reconciliation between the ruling and opposition parties.

Japan has friendly relations with Côte d'Ivoire, and in 2020, the two countries celebrated the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations. Both countries signed the Japan-Côte d'Ivoire Investment Agreement in January, which is expected to promote bilateral business relations in the future.

(5) Senegal

In February, the Public and Private Sector Joint Mission for Promoting Trade and Investment in Africa headed by Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs Nakatani was dispatched from Japan to Senegal in which 20 Japanese companies participated. President Macky Sall expressed Senegal's expectations for further investment by Japanese companies. In addition, the first meeting of the Japan-Senegal Economic Committee, established by the Seventh Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD7) in August 2019, was held in conjunction with the dispatch of the Mission.

In 2020, Japan and Senegal celebrated the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations and the 40th anniversary of the dispatch of Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) to Senegal, and commemorative events were held in



Japan-Senegal Foreign Ministers' Meeting
(January 11, 2021, Dakar, Senegal)

both countries. In October, the Foreign Minister and Economic Minister from the Government of Senegal attended a commemorative reception hosted by the Embassy of Japan in Dakar. In November, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Washio Eiichiro attended a commemorative ceremony in Tokyo hosted by the Senegalese Embassy in Japan.

In January 2021, Foreign Minister Motegi visited Senegal to pay a courtesy call to President Sall and also hold two foreign ministerial meetings with Minister for Foreign Affairs Aïssata Tall Sall. Through Foreign Minister Motegi's visit, the two countries agreed to enhance multilayered relations of cooperation based on long-standing friendly relations.

(6) Togo

Under the strong leadership of President Faure Essozimna Gnassingbé, who won his fourth election in the February presidential election, Togo is actively working on democratization, improving people's lives, and stabilizing the West African region. Prime Minister Victoire Tomegah-Dogbé was appointed in September, and a new cabinet was formed in October.

Japan has friendly relations with Togo, and in 2020, the two countries celebrated the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations. President Gnassingbé is known to have great affinity toward Japan, having visited the areas affected by the Great East Japan Earthquake

twice. In September, a mutual cooperation agreement was signed between Hyuga City (Miyazaki Prefecture), the Embassy of the Republic of Togo in Japan, and the Japan-Togo Friendship Association.

(7) Nigeria

President Muhammadu Buhari, re-elected in the 2019 presidential election, is prioritizing efforts on the three pillars of economy, security and anti-corruption. On the security front, in particular, Nigeria is cooperating with neighboring countries to deal with the problem of terrorism in the north-eastern region by Boko Haram and Islamic State (IS) West Africa Province (ISWAP).

In 2020, Japan and Nigeria celebrated the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations. Japan is providing support to the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC), which plays an important role in fighting COVID-19 in Nigeria. Many Japanese companies are also interested in Nigeria's high economic potential. As such, in January 2021, Foreign Minister Motegi held a telephone call with Foreign Minister Geoffrey Onyeama in which they shared the view to promote cooperation, including on the fight against COVID-19, development challenges, and business relations.

(8) Niger

In Niger, the first round of presidential elections was peacefully held in December, and the top two candidates advanced to the final round next year.

Japan has friendly relations with Niger, and in 2020, the two countries celebrated the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations. In September, Japan provided emergency relief goods, such as tents and water purifiers, after the country was hit by large-scale flooding nationwide.

(9) Burkina Faso

The political situation in Burkina Faso has been relatively stable since President Roch Kaboré took

office in 2015. On the other hand, there have been a number of terrorist incidents in recent years, and the country is facing deteriorating public security. President Kaboré was re-elected in the November presidential election, announcing that improving security would be a priority. The election was held peacefully, demonstrating that democracy has progressed in the country.

Japan has friendly relations with Burkina Faso, and in 2020, the two countries celebrated the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations. In March and August, Japan provided Emergency Grant Aid in response to the rise in internally displaced persons in the country.

(10) Mali

In Mali, a coup by a group of Malian army soldiers in August forced President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita to resign, and rebel leader Assimi Goita seized power. After discussions with mediators from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), interim President Bah N'Daw took office in September, and an interim cabinet led by interim Prime Minister Moctar Ouane was inaugurated in October. The interim government is preparing to hold presidential and national assembly elections within 18 months. In Mali, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), the French military forces, and others have been

deployed and are working to maintain peace and combat terrorism.

Japan has friendly relations with Mali, and in 2020, the two countries celebrated the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations. Japan is supporting efforts to improve security in Mali by providing security equipment and supporting the United Nations Peacekeeping Operations (PKO) training center.

(11) Mauritania

Mauritania has a stable government under President Mohamed Ould Cheikh El Ghazouani, who took office in August 2019. The country attaches great importance to efforts for peace and stability in the Sahel region and chaired the G5 Sahel¹ in 2020. On the economic front, Mauritania's economy is based on exporting abundant marine, mineral and energy resources. In recent years, expectations have increased for developing offshore oil and gas resources.

Japan has friendly relations with Mauritania, particularly with respect to marine resources. In 2020, the two countries celebrated the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations. Japan is supporting Mauritania in its efforts toward food security through food assistance, in addition to support for capacity building in fisheries.

¹ Framework for cooperation on security, development and governance by the five Sahel countries (Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger)

Column

60th Year of Japanese Diplomacy since the “Year of Africa”**Shirato Keiichi, Professor, College of International Relations, Ritsumeikan University**

1960 is known as the “Year of Africa,” when 17 countries on the African continent gained independence. For Japan, whose top priorities at the time were the postwar process and the securing of its position as a member of the West, it would not be an exaggeration to say that systematic diplomacy with Africa did not even exist.

This situation began to change around the first half of the 1970s. The signing of the Treaty on Basic Relations between Japan and the Republic of Korea (ROK) in 1965 and the normalization of diplomatic relations between Japan and China in 1972 signaled certain prospects for progress in the postwar process. In addition, due to the first oil crisis that struck in 1973, the Government of Japan began to position Africa as an oil supplier. Furthermore, there were also stronger views that relations with countries of Africa should be strengthened as they could offer their voting support at the United Nations. Against this backdrop, then-Foreign Minister Kimura Toshio became the first Foreign Minister of Japan to make a round of visits to five African countries from October to November 1974. For the first time, Japan turned its gaze on Africa, which had been virtually outside of Japan’s field of vision until then. We can say that Japan’s diplomacy with Africa began to derive some “benefits” from the strengthening of its relations with Africa.

A significant turning point in Japan’s Africa policy came during the end of the Cold War, from the second half of the 1980s to the early 1990s. Amidst the turbulent changes to the global structure, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs increasingly leaned toward the position that instead of the “passive diplomacy” that it had previously practiced as a country defeated in the war, Japan should practice “proactive diplomacy” and be actively involved in the establishment of the world order. This point of view was embodied in the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) process, which began in 1993. The inaugural conference, TICADI, did not focus on the perspective of “how to help Africa,” but instead placed the emphasis on “the sharing of the principles of development by the international community with countries of Africa,” and Japan sought to take the lead in these discussions. For more than a decade after that, Japan’s diplomacy with Africa focused on values and principles, such as the approach to development and human security.

Japan’s diplomacy with Africa, which developed in this way, began to reflect the new circumstances of rapid economic growth among African countries at the start of the 21st century, and shifted toward an emphasis on promoting private investment. As the focus for African development funding changed from aid to investment, the pillars of Japan’s diplomacy with Africa in recent years have moved toward attracting Japanese corporations to the African business world and generating profit for both Japan and the countries of Africa.

The year 2020 marked the 60th year since the “Year of Africa.” As Japan’s diplomacy with Africa developed with a strong commitment to profit, the world was struck by the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted how human society cannot be sustained through the pursuit of profit through economic growth alone, and reaffirmed the importance of addressing issues such as disparity and poverty. As we approach TICAD8, which will be held in Tunisia in 2022, it is hoped that Japan will pursue both profit and values in its diplomacy with Africa.



Chapter 3

Japan's Economic Diplomacy to Promote National and Global Interests

Section 1	Promotion of Rule-Making to Bolster Free and Open Global Economic Systems	176
Section 2	Leading Discussions at International Conferences	191
Section 3	Communicating Japan's Economic Strengths (Including the Promotion of Japanese Agriculture, Forestry, Fishery and Food Exports)	195
Section 4	Promoting Resource Diplomacy along with Foreign Direct Investment in Japan	199

Section 1

Promotion of Rule-Making to Bolster Free and Open Global Economic Systems

1 Overview of Economic Diplomacy

In the international community, as inter-state competition arises in the fields of politics, economy, and the military, the balance of power in the international arena is changing in an increasingly rapid and complex manner, while uncertainty over the existing international order is growing. Particularly along with economic challenges such as the rise of economic protectionism and trade conflicts, the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) has had a profound impact on the global economy, causing stagnant economic activity, a rapid decline in demand, and restrictions on the movement of people. Supply chain problems wherein the world has become reliant on certain countries for the production of certain products have also become clear.

Amid these circumstances, Japan has continued its efforts for rule-making and further trade liberalization through economic partnerships. These efforts led to the signing of the Japan-UK Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) (see the Special Feature on page 180) and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) Agreement in 2020. These, combined with the Japan-U.S. Trade Agreement, Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP11), and EU-Japan Economic Partnership Agreement that are already

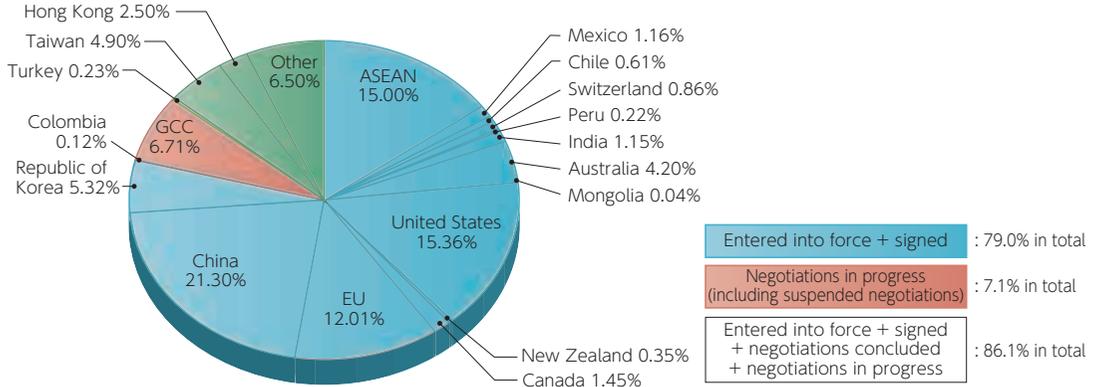
in force, will create a free economic zone covering 80% of the global GDP. With regard to the World Trade Organization (WTO), while the organization continues to be central to the Multilateral Trading System, there is an urgent need for reform in the face of rising emerging countries, an inadequate response to the advance of digitalization, and a contraction of global trade due to COVID-19 (see the Special Feature on page 186). With a view to the 12th Ministerial Conference, which was postponed until 2021, Japan must coordinate with concerned countries and provide leadership to the reform.

Japan has advanced initiatives with the aim of accelerating the promotion of economic diplomacy as one of the priority areas of its diplomacy, centered around the following three areas: (1) rule-making and initiatives through international organizations to bolster free and open global economic systems by promoting economic partnership agreements, while maintaining and strengthening the multilateral trading system; (2) supporting the overseas business expansion of Japanese companies through promotion of public-private partnerships; and (3) promoting resource diplomacy along with inbound tourism toward Japan.

2 Promotion of Economic Partnerships

In recent years, development of economic globalization movement has seen a growing

Percentages of Japan's economic partnership agreement partner countries and regions within Japan's total trade



Source: Trade Statistics of Japan by the Ministry of Finance (released in March 2020) (Percentages of each country's trade value are rounded to the nearest hundredth)

prevalence in protectionism. In such circumstances, Japan has emphasized and steadily promoted Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) and Free Trade Agreements (FTAs), which help capture the vitality of the growing market overseas and strengthen the basis of the Japanese economy through measures such as the reduction or elimination of tariffs on goods as well as barriers on trade in services, and through rule-making for trade and investment. In 2020, the First Protocol to Amend the Agreement on Comprehensive Economic Partnership Among Japan and Member States of the ASEAN entered into force for Japan, Thailand, Singapore, Laos, Myanmar, and Viet Nam on August 1, as well as for Brunei Darussalam on October 1. Japan signed the Japan-UK CEPA on October 23 and the RCEP Agreement on November 15. As a result, the EPA/FTA ratio in Japan's trade (the ratio of trade value with countries that have FTAs already signed or entered into force with Japan, to the total trade value) reached 79.0%. This ratio becomes 86.1% when including the trade value with the countries with which Japan is currently in negotiations (source: Trade Statistics, Ministry of Finance, 2020).

To advance a free and fair economic order, the basis for its peace and prosperity, Japan will continue to proactively continue its endeavors, including the early entry into force of the

RCEP Agreement and full implementation of the Agreement, steady implementation and expansion of the TPP11 Agreement as the chair of the TPP Commission in 2021, and negotiations of other economic partnership agreements.

(1) Economic Partnership Agreements

A Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP11 Agreement)

The TPP11 Agreement is an effort to establish new economic integration rules for the 21st century in a wide range of areas such as tariffs, services, investments, intellectual property and state-owned enterprises in the fast-growing Asia-Pacific region. It is also an opportunity for Japanese companies to better thrive in overseas markets, giving it important economic significance as a major driving force for the country's economic growth. Furthermore, the TPP11 Agreement has great strategic significance in that it facilitates the building of a free and fair economic order together with countries that share fundamental values such as freedom, democracy, fundamental human rights, and the rule of law, contributing to Japan's security and stability in the Asia-Pacific region as well as leading peace and prosperity in the region and the world at large.

The 12 countries of Japan, Australia, Brunei

Darussalam, Canada, Chile, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, the U.S., and Viet Nam signed the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPP12 Agreement) in February 2016. However, due to the U.S.'s announcement of its withdrawal from the TPP12 Agreement in 2017, Japan proactively led discussions among the 11 countries for the early realization of the TPP. At the TPP Ministerial Meeting held in Viet Nam in November 2017, the Ministers agreed (agreement in principle) to move forward with the new TPP11 Agreement among 11 countries by incorporating the articles of the original TPP12 drawn up by the 12 countries into the TPP11, while exceptionally suspending the application of certain articles. The TPP11 Agreement was later signed in Chile in March 2018. The six countries (Mexico, Japan, Singapore, New Zealand, Canada, and Australia), completed necessary domestic procedures and the Agreement entered into force on December 30, 2018. Furthermore, Viet Nam became the seventh Party to conclude the Agreement in January 2019.

In January 2019, after the entry into force of the TPP11 Agreement, Japan became the TPP chair and hosted the First Commission of the TPP at the ministerial-level. The Second Commission was held in October in Auckland, New Zealand. The Third Commission was virtually held in August 2020, with Mexico serving as the chair. At the meeting, Ministers confirmed the importance of promoting free trade through the TPP11 Agreement as part of the discussions centered on achieving economic recovery from the COVID-19 crisis. The Ministers also exchanged views particularly on the usage of the TPP11 Agreement for strengthening supply chains and digitalization. As the chair of the TPP Commission in 2021, Japan will work towards the steady implementation of the TPP11 Agreement in light of the economic conditions caused by COVID-19 and discussions at the Third Commission.

The TPP11 Agreement has significance in providing to the world a shared set of high-standard and balanced rules for the 21st century. A number of economies (countries and regions) have expressed interests in joining the TPP11 Agreement. The UK submitted a formal request to commence negotiations on acceding to the TPP11 Agreement in February 2021. While thoroughly assessing, with strategic perspectives, whether these economies are prepared to satisfy the high standards of the TPP11 Agreement in terms of market access and rules, Japan will continue to work toward the steady implementation and expansion of the TPP11 Agreement.

B Japan-EU Economic Partnership Agreement (Japan-EU EPA)

The Japan-EU EPA, which accounts for roughly 30% of global GDP and 40% of global trade, entered into force in February 2019. It is a model for a 21st century economic order based on free and fair rules. Although the UK withdrew from the EU at the end of January 2020, the combined economies of Japan and the EU amount to 20.7 trillion US dollars in GDP and 12.7 trillion US dollars in trade. It is the largest economic sphere after the RCEP, which was signed in November. Global trade volume declined due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic beginning in 2020. However, certain effects have been seen in the year since the Japan-EU EPA entered into force, including an increase in trade volume of such products as passenger cars and wine. Furthermore, the Japan-EU EPA has brought visible benefits to consumers such as the fairs related to the Japan-EU EPA organized by numerous retail stores and restaurants.

Since the agreement entered into force, Japan and the EU have steadily implemented this agreement by confirming the operational status and holding discussions on topics such as future initiatives for further promoting trade between Japan

and the EU, through joint committees¹ in accordance with the agreement, as well as separate specialized committees² and working groups³ in 12 areas.

Japan and the EU share fundamental values that include freedom, democracy, market economy, human rights and the rule of law, and Japan has built a cooperative relationship with the EU in many areas as a key partner in tackling a range of global problems. Positioning the Japan-EU EPA as a legal foundation for furthering cooperation between Japan and the EU, these two parties are working to strengthen their coordination and address a range of problems by taking a multilayered approach that includes the existing policy dialogue between the relevant authorities in both parties and joint public-private initiatives.

C UK-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA)

The Japan-UK CEPA entered into force on January 1, 2021. Due to the UK's withdrawal from the EU, the Japan-EU EPA would no longer apply to the UK once the transition period ends on December 31, 2020, a date set in the withdrawal agreement between the UK and the EU. In light of this, negotiations began on June 9, 2020 toward building a new trade and investment framework between Japan and the UK that would replace the Japan-EU EPA.

Following an agreement in principle reached on September 11, 2020 and signings by Foreign Minister Motegi and Trade Secretary Elizabeth Truss on October 23, the new agreement was approved at the 203rd extraordinary Diet session



Japan-UK CEPA signing (October 23, Tokyo)

and entered into force on January 1, 2021. While being based on the Japan-EU EPA, the new agreement establishes more progressive, higher-level rules in areas such as electronic commerce and financial services. The agreement is a particularly high-level document that guides discussions over international rule-making in the digital sphere. It establishes rules concerning the latest digital domains that are on the level of or above those in the TPP11 Agreement and the Japan-U.S. Digital Trade Agreement, including the prohibition of restrictions on the cross-border transfer of information, of requests for location of computing facilities, and of requests to disclose algorithms.

This agreement can be counted on to ensure the continuity of Japanese companies' businesses and promote further trade and investment between Japan and the UK in accordance with high standards. Roughly 1,000 Japanese companies are doing business in the UK and have created 180,000 jobs, making the UK their gateway to Europe. The agreement will serve as an important foundation for further strengthening good relations between Japan and the UK.

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- 1** Joint Committee: Held once a year, in principle, and co-chaired by ministerial-level officials (or their representatives) from both parties to ensure the proper and effective implementation of the Japan-EU EPA.
 - 2** Specialized committees: Established under the EPA Joint Committee, with sessions held once a year, in principle, in the following fields: (1) trade in goods, (2) rules of origin and customs, (3) sanitary and phytosanitary measures, (4) technical barrier to trade, (5) trade in services, investment liberalization and electronic commerce, (6) government procurement, (7) intellectual property, (8) trade and sustainable development, (9) cooperation on regulation, and (10) cooperation on agriculture.
 - 3** Working groups: Established under the EPA Joint Committees, with meetings held once a year, in principle, in the following fields: (1) wine and (2) automobiles and parts.

Special
FeatureThe Japan-UK Comprehensive Economic Partnership
Agreement (Japan-UK EPA)

Japan and the UK launched the negotiations of the Economic Partnership Agreement following the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union ("Brexit") at the end of January. This EPA was signed unusually quickly, just four-and-a-half months after negotiations started in June, and it entered into force on January 1, 2021. As the impact of the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) spread across the world, and led to the stagnation of trade and investments, the conclusion of this agreement, which was negotiated primarily through videoconferences, sent a strong message on promotion of free trade to the international community. This Special Feature provides an overview of the Japan-UK EPA and its negotiation process.

Overview: Establishment of advanced rules based on the Japan-EU EPA

The Japan-UK EPA stipulates a new framework for trade and investment with the United Kingdom as a replacement for the Japan-EU EPA after Brexit. It is based on the Japan-EU EPA and comprises a total of 24 chapters. The contents can be broadly categorized into the section that prescribes how tariffs are reduced for trade in goods, and the section that sets out the broad rules concerning trade and investment. With regard to trade in goods, the tariff rate for exports from Japan to the UK is basically maintained at a similarly low rate with the Japan-EU EPA, with the addition of the immediate abolition of tariffs for certain items, such as railway rolling stocks and some automobile parts. As for agricultural, forestry and fishery products, the Agreement stays within the extent of the Japan-EU EPA, with tariffs on the UK kept at the same level as the Japan-EU EPA and no new tariff rate quotas introduced for the UK. The Agreement also stipulates new and more advanced rules than the Japan-EU EPA in some areas, such as electronic commerce and financial services, and is the first Japanese EPA that includes an independent chapter on gender while also prescribing bilateral cooperation to ensure that women benefit fully from trade.

Negotiation process: A trade agreement concluded unusually quickly against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic

Against the backdrop of time restrictions due to the need of establishing a new Japan-UK trade and investment framework by the end of the Brexit transitional period (December 31, 2020) to avoid causing severe impact to Japan-UK trade, as well as the situation of the spread of COVID-19, the negotiations for this EPA, usually held through in-person meetings, were carried out by fully taking advantage of videoconferencing technology. Negotiators from the two governments surmounted the nine-hour time difference (eight hours during British summer time) to engage in videoconferences on an almost daily basis. At the ministerial level, videoconferences were held between Foreign Minister Motegi and Secretary of State for International Trade Elizabeth Truss, on June 9 when the negotiations were launched and on other occasions. However, as in-person consultations were also essential at important phases of the negotiation process, Foreign Minister Motegi visited the UK on August 5, marking his first overseas visit since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. For two whole days, he engaged in direct negotiations with Secretary of State for International Trade Truss, and they eventually reached an agreement in substance. After the two ministers confirmed the agreement in principle through the second videoconference on September 11, Secretary of State for International Trade Truss visited Japan on October 23 and a signing ceremony was held. The series of events, including the signing ceremony, took place with various COVID-19 measures in place. At the joint press conference held after the signing ceremony, the two ministers smiled and bumped elbows instead of exchanging handshakes, and the atmosphere was very convivial. The Japan-UK EPA, which entered into force on January 1, 2021, is expected to serve as an important foundation for further strengthening Japan-UK relations.



Consultation between Foreign Minister Motegi and Secretary of State for International Trade Truss (August, United Kingdom)



The two ministers after the signing of the Japan-UK Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (October, Tokyo)

D Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) Agreement

The RCEP Agreement is an economic partnership agreement with a total of 15 member states, namely the ASEAN member states, Japan, Australia, China, the Republic of Korea (ROK), and New Zealand. RCEP participating countries account for roughly 30% of the world's total GDP, total trade, and population. Furthermore, trade value between Japan and RCEP member states account for just under 50% of Japan's total trade value. The RCEP Agreement aims to improve market access and promote regional trade and investment while boosting supply chain efficiency, by establishing rules in areas such as intellectual property and e-commerce that go beyond the WTO rules. The Agreement is expected to further strengthen Japan's ties with the regions serving as the world's growth center, thus contributing to the economic growth of Japan. It is also expected that the RCEP Agreement will serve to send a message that it will promote free trade amid worldwide concerns over protectionism that have grown particularly strong with the outbreak of COVID-19.

The negotiations of the RCEP Agreement continued for nearly eight years. Following a ceremony to launch RCEP negotiations during the ASEAN-related summit meeting held in Phnom Penh, Cambodia in November 2012, four summit meetings, 19 ministerial meetings, and 31 rounds of negotiations were held. The Agreement was signed on the occasion of the fourth RCEP Summit on November 15, 2020.

Although India had participated from the start of negotiations, at the third Summit in November 2019, India declared that it would not participate in further negotiations and did not sign the RCEP Agreement. However, at the signing, Signatory States issued a "Ministers' Declaration on India's Participation in the RCEP," which clarified that the Agreement would be open for India, and stipulated a facilitation of India's future accession and allowed it to participate in related meetings as an observer. Japan proposed and led the discussion

in issuing this declaration. Considering the significant economic and strategic importance of India's participation in the RCEP Agreement due to its population of more than one billion and its steady economic growth in recent years, Japan will continue to play a leading role for the future participation of India to the RCEP Agreement.

The RCEP Agreement is stipulated to enter into force for these signatory States that have deposited their instrument of ratification, etc., 60 days after the deposit by at least six signatory States that are Member States of ASEAN and at least three signatory States that are not the member states of ASEAN. Along with working to ensure the early entry into force of the RCEP Agreement, after its entry into force, Japan will coordinate closely with countries involved to enforce economic activity that is based on free and fair rules in the region by ensuring the implementation of the Agreement.

E EPAs Currently in Negotiation

(A) Japan-China-ROK FTA

The Japan-China-ROK FTA is a negotiation with Japan's major trading partners: China and the ROK. The negotiations were launched in March 2013 and 16 rounds of negotiations had been held as of December 2020. In accordance with the content of the RCEP Agreement, to which Japan, China, and the ROK participate, the three countries have been engaged in discussions concerning a wide range of areas including trade in goods, investment, trade in services, competition, intellectual property and electronic commerce with the shared objective of pursuing a comprehensive, high quality, and mutually beneficial FTA.

(B) Japan-Turkey EPA

As an important country that serves as a hub among Europe, the Middle East, the Central Asia and Caucasus region, and Africa, Turkey has considerable economic potential and is attracting attention as a production base for exports to surrounding regions. The country has signed FTAs

with over 20 countries and regions, and the need has been recognized for Japan to develop conditions of competition for Japanese companies through the conclusion of an EPA. Furthermore, business communities in both countries have high expectations for an early conclusion of an EPA between the two countries. At the Japan-Turkey Summit Meeting in January 2014, the leaders agreed to launch negotiations, and 17 rounds of negotiations had been held as of the end of 2020.

(C) Japan-Colombia EPA

Japan began EPA negotiations in December 2012 with Colombia, a country with rich natural resources and high economic growth. Since Colombia has concluded FTAs with a number of countries (including the U.S., Canada, the EU and the ROK), it has been increasingly necessary for Japan to establish a competitive environment in the country. The strengthening of bilateral relations through an EPA is also expected to lead to improved cooperation in the international arena and promote cooperation among Japan and the Pacific Alliance (Mexico, Colombia, Peru, and Chile). Negotiations are currently ongoing.

F Existing EPAs

The existing EPAs contain provisions concerning the joint committee, which is a body that discusses the implementation of the agreements, and a process to review the agreements after a certain period of time following their entry into force. In addition, a variety of consultations are being held in order to smoothly implement EPAs after their entry into force.

In accordance with the EPAs, Japan has been accepting candidates for nurses and certified care workers from Indonesia, the Philippines, and Viet Nam. In total, 3,080 (as of FY2020) candidates have been accepted from Indonesia (since 2008), 2,592 (as of FY2019) from the Philippines (since 2009), and 1,340 (as of FY2020) from Viet Nam (since 2014). Acceptance of candidates from the Philippines for FY2020 is currently being

coordinated. The total numbers of nurses and certified care workers who have passed national exams are 459 and 1,322 individuals, respectively, as of FY2019.

(2) Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific (FTAAP) Concept

The Lima Declaration on the FTAAP adopted at the 2016 Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit meeting confirmed mainly the following two points: (1) that the FTAAP would be high quality and comprehensive, and address next-generation trade and investment issues, being built in accordance with the TPP Agreement and the RCEP Agreement; (2) efforts would begin on implementing work plans supporting capacity building aimed at promoting the realization of FTAAP. In a progress report presented to leaders in 2020, the need was expressed for further efforts.

Since 2017, Japan has been continuously providing capacity building support through workshops and policy dialogues concerning the “competition chapters” in FTAs and EPAs. From the viewpoint of achieving a comprehensive and high-quality FTAAP, it is highly significant that the TPP11 Agreement entered into force at the end of December 2018 and that the RCEP Agreement was signed in November 2020.

(3) Investment Treaties, Tax Conventions, and Agreements on Social Security

A Investment Treaties

Investment treaties constitute an important legal basis to promote investments, by stipulating the protection of investors and their investment property, enhancement of transparency in regulations, expansion of investment opportunities, procedures for investment dispute settlement, and other matters. Japan has actively engaged in concluding investment treaties in order to promote the improvement of the investment environment overseas and to attract foreign investment to the Japanese market.

In August, the Japan-Jordan Investment Agreement and Japan-UAE Investment Agreement entered into force. As of the end of December 2020, there are currently 47 investment-related treaties that have entered into force (32 investment treaties and 15 EPAs), and six (three investment treaties and three EPAs) that have been signed but not yet entered into force, bringing the total to 53, covering 78 economies. As of the end of December 2020, including investment-related treaties that are currently in negotiation, treaties cover 94 economies and around 93% of Japan's direct investments overseas⁴ will be covered.

B Tax Conventions

Tax conventions are intended to eliminate international double taxation in cross-border economic activities (e.g. to reduce or exempt withholding taxes imposed on investment income such as dividends), or to prevent tax evasion or avoidance, and provide an important legal basis for promoting sound investment and economic exchange between two countries. To support the sound overseas business expansion of Japanese companies, the Government of Japan is working to expand the necessary tax treaty networks, both in terms of quality and quantity.

Entering into force in 2020 were a tax treaty with Jamaica in September and a new (completely revised) tax treaty with Uzbekistan in October. Meanwhile, Japan signed tax treaties with Morocco in January and Serbia in July. Furthermore, in October a substantial agreement was achieved for a new (completely revised) tax treaty with Georgia. As of the end of December 2020, Japan has signed 78 tax treaties applied to 141 economies.

C Agreements on Social Security

Agreements on social security aim to resolve the issues of the double payment of social security insurance premiums and annuity insurance non-refunds. They are expected to facilitate interpersonal exchange and strengthen further bilateral relations, including economic exchange, by reducing the burden on Japanese companies and citizens working overseas. The total number of countries that have concluded or signed such agreements with Japan now stands at 23 as of the end of December 2020. In 2020, Turkey and Japan held intergovernmental negotiations toward the signing of a new agreement.

3 Initiatives with International Organizations

(1) World Trade Organization (WTO)

A Issues Facing the WTO

The remarkable economic growth that Japan achieved with scarce natural resources after World War II is owed to the free trade system. The WTO has facilitated free trade through various efforts such as rule-making for trade liberalization, dispute settlement between WTO Members, and conducting monitoring to ensure the implementation of the WTO Agreements. However, the WTO today is not adequately addressing certain changes such as the rise of emerging countries and digitalization of the economy, and new problems are arising with the free trade system due to COVID-19.

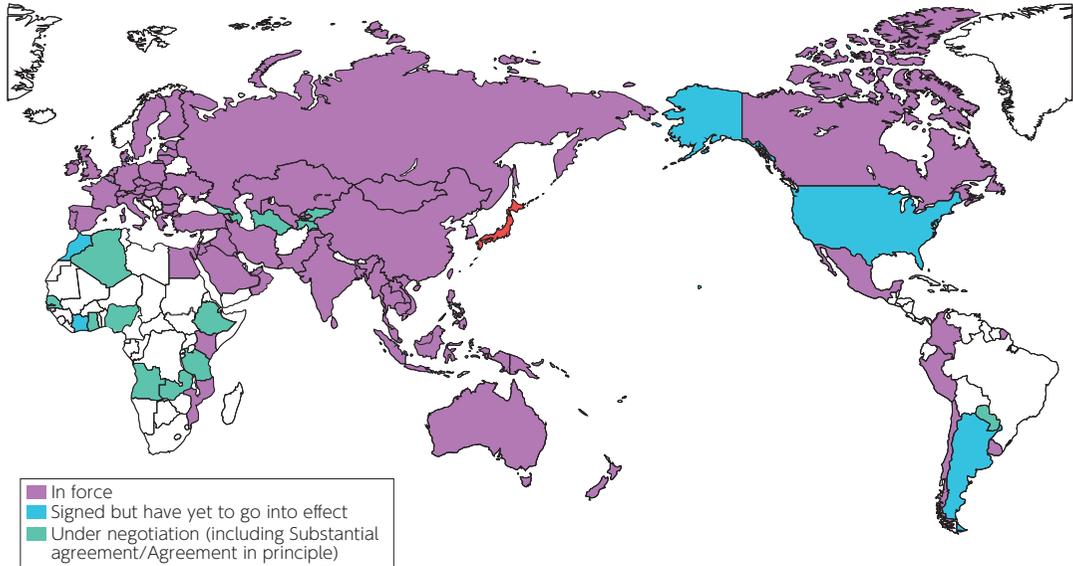
The WTO's dysfunction can be seen clearly in the weakening of its rule-making mechanisms such as the stall of the Doha Round,⁵ and in the stagnation of its dispute settlement system, exemplified by the paralysis of the Appellate Body.

⁴ "Regional balance of Direct Investment (Assets)," Ministry of Finance (All regions) (As of the end of 2019)

⁵ "Rounds" are trade liberalization negotiations in which all WTO Members participate. There were eight rounds of negotiations held during the GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) years, from the first negotiations held in Geneva in 1947 to the last round held in Uruguay in 1994, and with each round held in response to the global economic demands of the time. The Uruguay Round saw decisions made to implement rules for new fields at the time, including trade in services and intellectual property, and strengthen mechanisms that included establishing the international organization that is the WTO. Later, the Doha Round became the first round to be held under the WTO system.

Current investment-related treaties (as of December 2020)

Status of investment-related treaties (*) (*) Investment treaties and EPA/FTA including investment chapters
 - In force: 47 (32 investment agreements, 15 EPAs)
 - Signed but have yet to go into effect: 6 (3 investment treaties, 3 EPAs) } 78 Countries/Regions covered
 - Under negotiation: 20 (17 investment treaties, 3 EPAs) — Combined with treaties under negotiation, 94 Countries/Regions covered



■ In force (excluding expired agreements) (): Year of entry into force
 *: Treaties based on liberalization

Investment treaties

1 Egypt (1978)	17 Iraq (2014)
2 Sri Lanka (1982)	18 Japan-China-ROK (2014)
3 China (1989)	19 Myanmar (2014)*
4 Turkey (1993)	20 Mozambique (2014)*
5 Hong Kong (1997)	21 Colombia (2015)*
6 Pakistan (2002)	22 Kazakhstan (2015)
7 Bangladesh (1999)	23 Ukraine (2015)
8 Russia (2000)	24 Saudi Arabia (2017)
9 ROK (2003)*	25 Uruguay (2017)*
10 Vietnam (2004)*	26 Iran (2017)
11 Cambodia (2008)*	27 Oman (2017)
12 Laos (2008)*	28 Kenya (2017)
13 Pakistan (2009)*	29 Israel (2017)*
14 Peru (2009)*	30 Armenia (2019)*
15 Papua New Guinea (2014)	31 Jordan (2020)
16 Kuwait (2014)*	32 United Arab Emirates (2020)

Note: Japan has a Japan-Taiwan Private Investment arrangement based on liberalization in 2011.

EPAs including investment chapters

1 Singapore (2002)*	9 Switzerland (2009)*
2 Mexico (2005)*	10 India (2011)*
3 Malaysia (2006)*	11 Australia (2015)*
4 Chile (2007)*	12 Mongolia (2016)*
5 Thailand (2007)*	13 Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (2018)
6 Brunei (2008)*	14 EU (2019)*
7 Indonesia (2008)*	15 ASEAN (2020)*
8 Philippines (2008)*	

*Year of entry into force of the amended protocol

■ Under negotiation

Investment treaties

1 Angola	10 Kirghiz
2 Algeria	11 Nigeria
3 Qatar	12 Zambia
4 Ghana	13 Ethiopia
5 Tanzania	14 Tajikistan
6 Bahrain	15 EU
7 Turkmenistan	16 Paraguay
8 Georgia	17 Azerbaijan
9 Senegal	

EPAs/FTAs including investment chapters

1 Canada
2 Japan-China-ROK
3 Turkey

■ Signed but have yet to go into effect

- TPP* agreement (signed in February 2016, approved by the Diet) (EPA)*
- Argentina (signed in December 2018, approved by the Diet)*
- Morocco (signed in January 2020, approved by the Diet)
- Ivory Coast (signed in January 2020, approved by the Diet)*
- United Kingdom (signed in October 2020, approved by the Diet) (EPA)*
- RCEP** (signed in November 2020, unapproved) (EPA)*

*TPP: Trans-Pacific Partnership
 **RCEP: Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership

Furthermore, although the organization is attempting to improve the transparency and predictability of Members' trade policies by monitoring implementation of the obligations under the Agreements such as notifications, such obligations are not being fully implemented.

According to the WTO's statistics, the world merchandise trade volume in 2020 is expected to drop by 9.2% year-on-year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and many countries have introduced export restrictions on food and medical products such as masks. It is difficult to address these export restrictions under the current WTO Agreements, and members are discussing the necessity of creating new rules in order to tackle the current COVID-19 crisis and also to prepare for future pandemics.

B Increasing Momentum for WTO Reform

Confronted by these challenges, the international community has recognized that the WTO needs to promote its reform (see Special Feature on page 186) with the new Director-General Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, and now the momentum for WTO reforms has been increasing.

With regard to the digital economy, the Joint Statement Initiative was released by like-minded members at the 11th WTO Ministerial Conference (MC11) in 2017, and 86 members are currently actively engaged in WTO e-commerce negotiations. Japan is leading the WTO e-commerce negotiations as co-convenor with Australia and Singapore under the "Osaka Track⁶" toward achieving "Data Free Flow with Trust (DFFT).⁷"

Two-thirds of WTO Members have self-declared as "developing countries" and are being exempted from the WTO Agreements obligations (special and differential treatment, also known as S&DT⁸). Developed countries maintain the stance that every country should assume their fair share of responsibility in the rise of emerging countries, and recent years have seen Taiwan, Brazil, Singapore and the ROK renounce S&DT in current and future negotiations. Of the view that S&DT should be allowed to countries that truly need it to the extent that it is really needed, Japan has been engaging in discussions with countries on this issue in a constructive manner.

Regarding the dispute settlement system, in response to the Appellate Body's ceasing to function, some members launched a mechanism known as the Multi-party Interim Appeal Arrangement (MPIA)⁹ as a provisional alternative mechanism. Meanwhile, Japan considers that the Appellate Body has not been fulfilling its original role to settle disputes in a clear and prompt way and that it is important that the DS reform should be made in a way that addresses this problem. Based on this idea, Japan has been taking the initiative on the DS reform.

C Developments in the WTO and Broader International Arena concerning COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic exposed limitations and vulnerabilities of the free trade system in 2020. In light of these challenges, actions to be taken with a sense of urgency were agreed in various fora. Extraordinary G20 Trade and Investment

⁶ Data Free Flow with Trust (DFFT). A concept proposed by Prime Minister Abe during his speech at the Davos conference in January 2019 for promoting international rule-making for a digital economy. DFFT aims to prevent certain countries from monopolizing data and to instead ensure, in principle, the free flow of data both inside and outside of a country, while ensuring privacy, security and the safety of intellectual property and other forms of data.

⁷ Launched during the Leaders' Special Event on the Digital Economy hosted by Prime Minister Abe at the G20 Osaka Summit in 2019, this process promotes international rule-making concerning the digital economy, particularly the data flow and e-commerce.

⁸ Special and Differential Treatment (S&DT): In the wording of the WTO Agreements, this refers to the acknowledgment of "special" or "differentiated" (from developed countries) treatment for developing countries and least developed countries (LDC). Specifically, the WTO Agreements contain S&DT clauses that entitle developing countries to receive exemptions or relaxations of obligations, as well as technical cooperation.

⁹ Multi-party Interim Appeal Arbitration (MPIA). Proposed by the EU as an alternative interim measure until Appellate Body functions are restored, and uses arbitration proceedings similar to those of the Appellate Body. Like-minded countries and regions officially notified to the WTO Secretariat of the establishment of the MPIA in April 2020.

Special
Feature

WTO Reform

"Free trade should not stop..." This was a remark made by Prime Minister Suga at the UN General Assembly in relation to World Trade Organization (WTO) reform, a goal that was also shared by the international community later at the G20 Summit and APEC Ministerial Meeting. This Special Feature introduces a part of the international cooperation on WTO reform that Japan is taking the lead on.

Since its founding in 1995, the WTO has consistently supported free trade around the world. However, it is now becoming increasingly difficult for this 25-year-old international organization to respond to the trends of the times. For example, the rise of emerging economies and advancement of digitalization have transformed the face of international trade and business in recent years, and the rules for governing such activities can no longer keep pace. The functions of WTO's dispute settlement procedures have also been suspended for more than a year. On top of that, the whole world is shrinking and becoming more inward-looking as a result of factors such as retaliative responses to unilateral tariff measures and the increase in export restrictions brought about by the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. 2020, more than ever before, brought home painfully the systemic fatigue of the WTO and the need for bold reforms.

The 164 members of the WTO may be right in the midst of systemic reorganization. Japan has benefited from the postwar GATT* and WTO systems and enjoyed peace and prosperity. With protectionism on the rise in recent times, Japan has worked hard to bring life back to free trade in the world, such as through the signing of the TPP11, the Japan-EU EPA, the Trade Agreement Between Japan and the U.S. and the Agreement between Japan and the U.S. Concerning Digital Trade, the Japan-UK Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement, and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) Agreement. In light of Japan's track record in this area as the standard-bearer for free trade, there have been high expectations for Japan to fulfill its role as a leader in WTO reform.

Japan has joined forces with other countries and is working hard on reforms with a focus on the following four areas, among the many challenges faced by the WTO.

The first is the establishment of new rules based on the principles of "Data Free Flow with Trust (DFFT)," amidst the growing digitalization in the world under the conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic. During the G20 Osaka Summit held in 2019, Japan launched the "Osaka Track," aiming at promoting international rule-making for digital economies. Under the umbrella of this initiative, Japan is serving as the co-convenor, alongside Australia and Singapore, for e-commerce negotiations in the WTO that close to 90 members are participating in. It is an extremely difficult task to coordinate the interests of countries with different circumstances in the promotion and use of digital technology.

The second is the creation of an environment in which each country fulfills its responsibilities to an extent corresponding to its capabilities. In this respect, for example, Japan, the U.S., and other countries have presented "market-oriented conditions" for preventing excessive intervention by non-market economies in corporate activities.

The third is the attaching of conditions to measures that could limit free trade, even though such limitations may be temporarily unavoidable under the circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic. Discussions are under way on the proposal drawn up by more than 10 like-minded countries, with a view to establishing rules for the whole of the WTO.

The final point is reform to the permanent dispute settlement system. Along with Australia and Chile, Japan has proposed remedies for the various issues that have built up on the WTO Appellate Body over many years.

The WTO reform is a pressing issue. To fulfill its responsibilities in the international community, Japan shall support Dr Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, appointed as WTO Director-General in February 2021, and work in cooperation with the other members of the WTO, to continue contributing to maintaining and strengthening the multilateral free trading system.

Read more about the WTO reform and Japan's initiatives in the serial publication by MOFA, "WTO Reform—Why now?" (https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/ecm/it/page25_002061.html)

(Only in the Japanese language)



Foreign Minister Motegi attending the WTO Informal Ministerial Meeting hosted by Australia, and engaging in a discussion on WTO reform and other matters (October 27, Tokyo)



*General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT)

Ministerial Virtual Meetings were held in March and May, and the “G20 Actions to Support World Trade and Investment in Response to COVID-19” was released in pertaining to trade facilitation, ensuring transparency, and more resilient global supply chains. With the regular WTO meetings being postponed, the WTO Secretariat conducted the monitoring of trade related measures taken by members in connection with COVID-19 and the analysis of the impact of the pandemic on trade. And the “Statement on COVID-19 and the multilateral trading system by Ministers responsible for the WTO,” was released, which was jointly proposed by Japan and emphasized the importance of WTO notifications and WTO reforms that include a permanent resolution for the WTO’s dispute settlement system. In June, the “Statement of the Ottawa Group: Focusing Action on COVID-19” was released at the Ministerial meeting of the Ottawa Group, a small group of like-minded nations promoting WTO reforms, of which Japan is also a member. In the statement, the principle that trade related measures in connection with COVID-19 should be “targeted, proportionate, transparent, temporary, and consistent with WTO rules” was reaffirmed and agreements were also reached in such areas as medical supplies and e-commerce. The Ottawa Group Ministerial meeting was also held in November, and Japan actively engaged in and contributed to discussions.



Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs Suzuki Hayato attending the WTO’s virtual Ottawa Group Ministerial Meeting chaired by Canada (November 23, Tokyo)

D Discussions Toward the 12th Ministerial Conference (MC12)

Discussions continue to be held in preparation for MC12, which was postponed from June 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, with the following points given a particular focus.

The WTO Members are taking part in fisheries subsidies negotiations based on the Ministerial Decision adopted at MC11 to achieve one of the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), to “prohibit certain forms of fisheries subsidies which contribute to overcapacity and overfishing, and eliminate subsidies that contribute to illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing.” Japan is actively engaged in these negotiations with the view that subsidies that truly result in overfishing and expanding overfishing capacity be regulated, aiming at the early conclusion of the negotiations.

With regard to rule-making in the digital domain, the global COVID-19 pandemic has given greater importance to negotiations as the role of online trade and the digital economy grows further. Although there has been a temporary suspension of the aforementioned WTO e-commerce negotiations due to the pandemic, discussions have been ongoing thereafter via virtual meetings. As a co-convenor leading the negotiations, Japan released a Co-convenors’ Update in December that calls for speeding the pace of negotiations with the aim of achieving a high-standard in rule-making. In the lead up to MC12, Japan will continue in a leadership capacity toward achieving substantial progress on such issues as the cross-border transfer of data and the protection of personal information.

E Individual Dispute Settlement Cases

The WTO dispute settlement system is a system for resolving disputes among its members under the WTO Agreement according to procedures. This system is positioned as a pillar that imparts stability and predictability to the WTO system. The following is a list of recent cases that have involved Japan (as of December 2020).

- The ROK — Anti-Dumping Duties on Pneumatic Valves from Japan (DS504)¹⁰: A panel was established in June 2016, and the panel ruled that the ROK's measures were in violation of the WTO Agreements in April 2018. In September 2019, the Appellate Body issued the same ruling as the panel, and made the decision to recommend that the ROK take corrective measures. The ROK eliminated the anti-dumping duties in August 2020.

- India — Safeguard Measure on Imports of Iron and Steel Products (DS518): A panel was established in April 2017, and the panel recognized that India's safeguard measure was in violation of the WTO Agreements in November 2018. The case was referred to the Appellate Body in December 2018, but proceedings have halted with the cessation of Appellate Body functions.

- The ROK — Measure Imposing Anti-dumping Duties on Stainless Steel Bars Originating from Japan (DS553): Following the establishment of a panel in October 2018, the ROK's measure was recognized as being in violation of the WTO Agreements and the country was issued the recommendation to take corrective measures in November 2020.

- The ROK — Measures Affecting Trade in Commercial Vessels (DS571/DS594): Japan sent a request for bilateral consultations to the ROK in November 2018, and consultations were held in December 2018. In January 2020, Japan requested another consultation covering new support measures in the ROK, which was held in March.

- India — Measures Concerning Tariff Increases on ICT Products (DS584): In May 2019, Japan requested bilateral consultations concerning whether the tariff increase measures by India for information and communications technology products were consistent with the WTO Agreements. A panel was established in July 2020.

- Japan — Update of licensing policies and procedures on exports of controlled items to the

ROK (DS590): In July 2019, Japan announced on the application of its export control measures on three semiconductor materials (fluorinated polyimides, resists, and hydrogen fluoride) to the ROK and implemented individual export licensing requirements for such materials. In September 2019, claiming that Japan's measures violated the WTO Agreements, the ROK requested bilateral consultations and the two countries conducted two rounds of such consultations. In November, the ROK announced that it would suspend the WTO dispute settlement procedures while the Export Control Policy Dialogues were pursued on a normal course of action between the relevant authorities. The dialogues were conducted on two occasions, and in June 2020 the ROK resumed WTO dispute settlement procedures. A panel was established in July.

(2) Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)

A Features

The OECD is the "world's largest think tank," covering a wide range of economic and social fields such as macro economy, trade and investment, agriculture, industry, the environment, and science and technology. It makes policy recommendations and forms international norms, including through discussions at relevant committees. Japan acceded to the OECD in 1964 as the first country to do so outside of the U.S. and Europe. Since then, Japan has been actively engaged in OECD initiatives through discussions at relevant committees as well as through contributions in terms of financial and human resources.

B 2020 OECD Ministerial Council Meeting

The OECD Ministerial Council Meeting, which was originally scheduled in May, was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Between June and September, three Ministerial Council Meeting

¹⁰ DS numbers have been used since the launch of the WTO's dispute settlement system in 1995 and are assigned to every dispute case by the WTO Secretariat at the time when a request for discussions is received.

Roundtables were held that saw ministers from each country share their experiences on policies aimed at combating and recovering from the pandemic. At the October Ministerial Council Meeting with the theme “The Path to Recovery,” Prime Minister Suga issued a video message where he emphasized the importance of international cooperation and expressed his hope for the OECD to play its role as a vital place for international policy coordination toward maintaining measures to prevent the spread of infection while revitalizing socio-economic activities. He also spoke on efforts being made by Japan concerning digitalization and resuming cross-border travel. In addition, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Washio Eiichiro emphasized the government-wide undertakings on digitalization, the importance of the OECD’s initiatives to support international rule-making based on the idea of “Data Free Flow with Trust (DFFT),” and Japan’s international cooperation efforts, including strengthening medical and health systems over the medium to long term. He also affirmed Japan’s intention to lead OECD’s outreach activities (relationship strengthening and policy dialogue) to the Asian region.



State Minister for Foreign Affairs Washio Eiichiro attending the OECD Ministerial Meeting (virtual meeting) (October 29, Tokyo)

C Commemoration of the 60th Anniversary of the signing of the OECD Convention

At a ceremony commemorating the 60th anniversary of the signing of the OECD Convention in December, Prime Minister Suga made an appearance via a video message where he appreciated

the OECD’s efforts, including its evidence-based analysis and quality standard-setting, and emphasized the importance of the OECD’s role in handling globalization and the COVID-19 crisis. He also spoke on Japan’s works toward promoting digital transformation and realizing a green society, and expressed Japan’s intention to support the endeavors to strengthen relations between the OECD and Asia, including Southeast Asia.

D Initiatives in Various Sectors

For the issue of steel excess capacity, the Global Forum on Steel Excess Capacity (GFSEC) was established following the G20 Hangzhou Summit, China in 2016. At a Ministerial Council Meeting in October 2020, which was attended by 30 major steel manufacturing countries and regions as well as the OECD Secretariat, discussions were conducted concerning multi-lateral cooperation toward mitigating the impact of COVID-19 on steel demand and solving the problem of structural excess production capacity. Japan will continue to demonstrate strong leadership toward and play an active role in solving these problems.

Meanwhile, the OECD is strengthening its cooperation with the G20 in areas that include reviewing international taxation principles in response to the digitalization of the economy, as well as the formulation of principles concerning quality infrastructure investment and corporate governance.

E Strengthening Relations with Asia

In light of the growing importance of Southeast Asia as a center for global economic growth, the OECD places importance on strengthening relations with the region. In 2020, a range of policy dialogues and other events were held online between Southeast Asian nations and OECD member countries. Participants to these events discussed areas where the OECD should give priority in Southeast Asia in response to COVID-19 and affirmed the importance of cooperation. Going forward, it is important to effectively utilize the Southeast Asia Regional Programme (SEARP) in

order to continue to support economic integration and domestic reform in the region with a view to the future accession to the OECD by ASEAN countries.

F Contributions in Terms of Financial and Human Resources

Japan was the second largest financial contributor to the OECD after the U.S. in 2020, covering 9.4% of the OECD's mandatory contributions (Part I Budget). Moreover, Japanese nationals have successively served as the Deputy Secretary General (currently Deputy Secretary General Kono Masamichi), the second-highest position at the OECD Secretariat. Japan was the largest contributor to the OECD Development Centre in 2020, and a Japanese national serves as a Deputy Director of the Centre (Ms. Yuasa Ayumi, assumed this position in September 2020). Thus, Japan supports the OECD through contributions in terms of financial and human resources.

4 Intellectual Property Protection

Strengthening intellectual property protections is extremely important for the promotion of technological innovation and eventually for economic development. Japan has actively participated in multilateral consultations such as APEC, the WTO (TRIPS),¹¹ and the World Intellectual

Property Organization (WIPO), and is working to improve an environment for ensuring that Japanese intellectual property is appropriately protected and utilized overseas. During bilateral talks, Japan also calls on other countries to proactively strengthen intellectual property protections. For EPAs as well, Japan strives to establish regulations on intellectual property rights to ensure the adequate and effective protection of intellectual property. Following the TPP11 Agreement and the Japan-EU EPA, both the Japan-UK CEPA and the RCEP Agreement have incorporated contents on further promotion of the protection and use of intellectual property. Moreover, for the purpose of rapidly and efficiently providing assistance for Japanese companies that are facing problems such as counterfeit and pirated goods, MOFA appoints Intellectual Property Officers at almost all of Japan's diplomatic missions overseas so that they can advise Japanese companies and make inquiries with or requests to their counterpart governments. Japan is also engaged in efforts to improve the capacity of government officials in developing countries to counter the spread of counterfeit and pirated goods, and to strengthen the protection of intellectual property, by dispatching experts through the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and providing other assistance.

¹¹ Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS)

Section 2

Leading Discussions at International Conferences

1 G7 and G20

Japan actively participates in G7 and G20 Summits, which are attended by the world's major nations, and makes efforts to maintain and strengthen the international order.

(1) G7

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the U.S., the G7 Presidency of the year, hosted the G7 Leaders' Video Conference on March 16. It was the first video conference among G7 leaders. At the meeting, the G7 leaders agreed to use all policy tools in order to contain the impact of COVID-19 on the global economy, and to coordinate on efforts such as the rapid development of COVID-19 treatments and vaccines, and released the G7 Leaders' Statement. Prime Minister Abe stated his intention to host the Olympic and Paralympic Games Tokyo 2020 in their complete form as a symbol of overcoming COVID-19, and other leaders expressed their support.

At the G7 Foreign Ministers' Meeting held via video conference on March 25, the Ministers affirmed their coordination in response to COVID-19 and also had lively discussions on regional affairs including North Korea, China and Iran.

At the G7 Leaders' Video Conference on April 16, the G7 leaders agreed on matters such as the importance of developing vaccines and medicines



G7 Leaders' Video Conference (April 16, Tokyo; Photo: Cabinet Public Relations Office)

and of supporting developing countries. Prime Minister Abe spoke particularly on the following points: developing and distributing medicines; supporting countries with vulnerable medical and healthcare systems; international sharing support and information concerning the crisis; strengthening infectious disease prevention systems worldwide, and; building economies resilient to crises.

(2) G20

On March 26, Saudi Arabia, the G20 Presidency of the year, hosted the G20 Leaders' Video Conference. The G20 leaders adopted the Leaders' Statement, which clearly expressed their determination to coordinate on public health and financial measures, and minimize disruptions to trade and the global supply chain. As one of the lead speakers, Prime Minister Abe emphasized the importance of accelerating the development

of medicines and called for the G20 to implement bold and large-scale economic and fiscal policies, which received support from the other leaders. The Leaders' Statement stated that the G20 leaders commended Japan's determination to host the Olympic and Paralympic Games Tokyo 2020 in their complete form as a symbol of human resilience.

At the G20 Foreign Ministers' Extraordinary Virtual Meeting held on September 3, the Ministers shared knowledge and experience in dealing with COVID-19 and discussed possible ways of international cooperation for resuming cross-border travel. During the G20 Riyadh Summit, held via video conference on November 21 and 22, the G20 leaders held discussions on the agendas, "Overcoming the Pandemic and Restoring Growth and Jobs," and "Building an Inclusive, Sustainable, and Resilient future." After the Summit, the G20 Riyadh Leaders' Declaration was released as a summary of the discussions. Prime Minister Suga took the lead in the discussion, remarking that the G20 should deliver a clear message that the G20 members will lead the international community in (1) responding to COVID-19, (2) recovering the global economy, (3) resuming cross-border travel, and (4) shaping the post-COVID-19 international order. On the subject of health, the leaders affirmed the importance of contributing to international frameworks for ensuring equitable access to vaccines, therapeutics and diagnostics, and the importance of Universal Health Coverage (UHC). With regard to trade, the leaders agreed on the unprecedented importance of a multilateral trading system, the political support for WTO reforms, as well as the necessity of strengthening supply chain sustainability and resiliency. The leaders also spoke on digitalization, affirming that digital technology would play a key role in the response to COVID-19, and acknowledged the importance of Data Free Flow with Trust (DFFT). The leaders also agreed to explore concrete ways to facilitate



G20 Riyadh Summit (November 22, Tokyo; Photo: Cabinet Public Relations Office)

the movement of people. With regard to the climate change, conserving the global environment, and sustainable using of resources and energy, the G20 leaders referred to the international efforts including the Paris Agreement. In addition, the leaders affirmed their intention to proceed with the implementation of the "G20 Principles for Quality Infrastructure Investment" and to contribute to achieving the SDGs.

Prime Minister Suga emphasized Japan's determination to host the Olympic and Paralympic Games Tokyo 2020 as a symbol of overcoming COVID-19. As a result, the Leaders' Statement included a sentence to commend Japan's determination to host the Games in 2021 as a symbol of humanity's resilience and global unity in overcoming COVID-19.

2 Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC)

APEC is a framework of economic cooperation in which 21 economies (countries and regions)¹ in the Asia-Pacific region participate. The Asia-Pacific region is the "world's growth center," accounting for about 40% of the world's population, about 50% of the world's trade volume, and about 60% of the world's total GDP. APEC, in order to liberalize and facilitate trade and investment in the region, conducts activities such as deepening

¹ Members of APEC are referred to as 'member economies' or 'members' or 'economies.'

regional economic integration, and enhancing economic and technical cooperation. The Asia-Pacific region, which thrives by liberalizing trade and investment and strengthening connectivity in accordance with international rules, is the core of the “Free and Open Indo-Pacific” that Japan has been promoting. Japan’s active involvement in and promotion of cooperation with APEC are of great significance to the effort to support our own economic growth and the overseas expansion of Japanese companies.

At APEC 2020, chaired by Malaysia, discussions were held at a variety of meetings throughout the year (all meetings beginning in March were held virtually). The discussions revolved around an overarching theme — “Optimizing Human Potential Towards a Resilient Future of Shared Prosperity. Pivot. Prioritise. Progress.” — as well as three priority areas; (1) improving the narrative of trade and investment, (2) inclusive economic participation through digital economies and technologies, and (3) driving innovative sustainability.

The 27th APEC Economic Leaders’ Meeting held on November 20 as APEC’s first ever virtual meeting, highlighted the presence of APEC in the Asia-Pacific region, adopting the Leaders’ Declaration for the first time in three years, as well as the APEC Putrajaya Vision 2040, which charts a future course for APEC replacing the Bogor Goals.²

APEC Putrajaya Vision 2040 seeks to achieve an “open, dynamic, resilient and peaceful Asia-Pacific community by 2040, for the prosperity of all our people and future generations,” through the economic drivers of trade and investment, innovation and digitalization, and strong, balanced, secure, sustainable and inclusive growth.

At the Leaders’ Meeting, Prime Minister Suga gave a keynote address on economic growth in the COVID-19 years and post-COVID-19 era, emphasizing the importance of realizing digitization and a decarbonized society, promoting free trade and strengthening connectivity, and achieving inclusive economic growth. Specifically, Prime Minister Suga highlighted the establishment of the government agency in charge of digital transformation and the acceleration of the virtuous cycle of environment and growth toward achieving carbon neutrality by 2050. He also explained Japan’s intention to promote WTO reform, further advance regional economic integration toward achieving the Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific (FTAAP), strengthen connectivity by leading efforts to make the supply chain more resilient while distributing and deploying quality infrastructure, and ramp up efforts based on the concept of human security. New Zealand will serve as the host of APEC in 2021.

² A set of targeted goals for developed economies and developing economies to achieve free and open trade and investment no later than 2010 and 2020 respectively. Adopted at the 1994 APEC Economic Leaders’ Meeting.

Results of the 27th APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting



Prime Minister Suga speaking at the APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting (November 20, Tokyo; Photo: Cabinet Public Relations Office)

(1) Main points of the leaders' declaration¹

	Main points of the leaders' declaration
COVID-19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Continue working together to use all available policy tools to support an inclusive, effective and sustained response to COVID-19 ● Recognize the importance of the development and contribution of digital technologies towards <u>universal health coverage</u>
APEC Putrajaya Vision 2040	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● See (2) below
Trade and investment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Welcome the significant progress made under the Bogor Goals, and recognize more needs to be done in fostering an enabling environment for trade and investment in the Asia-Pacific region. ● Recognize the importance of a <u>free, open, fair, non-discriminatory, transparent and predictable trade and investment environment</u>
Multilateral trading system and WTO reform	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Take note of the call of the APEC Business Advisory Council (ABAC) for APEC to continue supporting the <u>multilateral trading system</u> ● Continue to support the on-going work at the WTO, including through <u>its necessary reform</u> aimed to improve its functioning
Free Trade Area of the Asia Pacific (FTAAP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Further advance the <u>economic integration in the region</u>, in a manner that is market-driven
Supply chain resilience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Cooperate to facilitate the movement of essential goods and services, as well as the essential movement of people in a safe manner, identifying and resolving unnecessary barriers to trade and strengthening the <u>resilience of our supply chains</u>
Quality infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Underscore the importance of improving regional connectivity through <u>quality infrastructure</u> development and investment
Digital economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Acknowledge the importance of cooperation in facilitating the <u>flow of data</u> and strengthening <u>consumer and business trust in digital transactions</u>
Sustainability and human security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Foster comprehensive quality growth and advancement of work to this effect, including on the <u>human security agenda</u> ● Work to ensure <u>food security</u> ● Enhance <u>energy resilience</u> and energy security

(2) Main points of the APEC Putrajaya Vision 2040²

To achieve “*an open, dynamic, resilient and peaceful Asia-Pacific community by 2040, for the prosperity of all our people and future generations*” by pursuing the following three economic drivers:

Trade and investment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Acknowledge the importance of, and will continue to work together to deliver, a <u>free, open, fair, non-discriminatory, transparent and predictable trade and investment environment</u> ● Reaffirm our support for agreed upon rules of the WTO in delivering a <u>well-functioning multilateral trading system</u> ● Further advance the <u>Bogor Goals</u> and <u>economic integration in the region</u> in a manner that is <u>market-driven</u>, including through the work on the <u>Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific (FTAAP) agenda</u>
Innovation and digitalization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Foster an enabling environment that is market-driven and supported by digital economy and innovation, and pursue structural reforms and sound economic policies ● Strengthen <u>digital infrastructure</u> as well as cooperate on facilitating the <u>flow of data</u> and strengthening <u>consumer and business trust in digital transactions</u>
Strong, balanced, secure, sustainable and inclusive growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Foster quality growth that brings palpable benefits to all, including MSMEs and women to ensure that the Asia Pacific region is resilient to shocks ● Intensify human resource development and comprehensively address <u>all environmental challenges</u>, including climate change

1 For the agreed language, please refer to https://www.apec.org/Meeting-Papers/Leaders-Declarations/2020/2020_aelm

2 For the agreed language, please refer to https://www.apec.org/Meeting-Papers/Leaders-Declarations/2020/2020_aelm/Annex-A

Section 3

Communicating Japan's Economic Strengths (Including the Promotion of Japanese Agriculture, Forestry, Fishery and Food Exports)

1 Promotion of Japanese Companies' Overseas Business Expansion by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Accompanying Diplomatic Missions Overseas

Recent years have seen a rise in the number of branches operated by Japanese companies with branches overseas, reaching over 74,072 as of October 2019. One of the reasons behind this is that many Japanese companies, which underpin Japan's economic development, have embarked more actively than ever before on overseas expansion with the aim of further cultivating foreign markets. There is considerable momentum behind economic growth abroad, mainly in Asia. To capture this for the Japanese economy, it is becoming increasingly important for the Government to support Japanese companies.

In light of the situation, MOFA, in coordination with diplomatic missions overseas, has been engaged in supporting Japanese companies in their efforts to expand their businesses overseas. At the diplomatic missions overseas, all staff, including those responsible for Japanese business support, provide Japanese companies with information while lobbying foreign governments under the leadership of ambassadors and consuls-general. Under the motto of being "open and responsive government offices," these missions aim to pro-

vide specific support that corresponds with the conditions in that respective region. They also offer seminars about local legal systems, various information and legal consultations. In FY2020, these were provided at 17 diplomatic missions in 13 countries, with a focus on Asia.

In addition to consultations about business problems, another important function performed by diplomatic missions overseas for Japanese companies is promotion and publicity of the "Japan Brand" for products, technologies and services, as well as for agricultural, forestry and fishery products, from Japanese companies at receptions to celebrate the Emperor's birthday and various other events and exhibitions. These missions actively offer the embassies and official residences of the ambassadors for use as publicity and advertising spaces for Japanese companies to hold product exhibitions, or for local governments to hold local product exhibitions and food-tasting events. These spaces can be used for conducting seminars on business expansion, or for exchange with local companies and concerned organizations. However, many projects were discontinued or scaled down in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

From the perspective of public-private cooperation and support for companies, it is important not only to support Japanese enterprises seeking to expand their businesses overseas, but also to

support those already operating overseas. Following a June 2016 national referendum in the UK on whether to remain in or leave the EU, the UK left the EU on January 31, 2020 and the transition period ended on December 31. As Japanese businesses and the global economy could be significantly impacted by the actions taken by the UK and the EU, as well as the results of their negotiations, the Government of Japan took necessary measures, including consolidating and analyzing information across sectors of the Government through seminars at the diplomatic missions overseas and the Government Task-force regarding the Withdrawal of the UK from the EU, chaired by the Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary launched in July 2016 (convened 15 times as of January 30, 2020). The Government of Japan will continue to closely observe relevant trends while taking necessary steps, including properly administrating the Japan-UK Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA), which entered into force on January 1, 2021, and providing information to Japanese companies.

2 Promotion of the Japanese Infrastructure System in Overseas Business Expansion

In order to capture overseas infrastructure demand mainly in emerging countries and promote infrastructure exports by Japanese companies, the “Ministerial Meeting on Strategy relating to Infrastructure Export and Economic Cooperation,” comprising relevant cabinet ministers and the Chief Cabinet Secretary serving as chair, was established in 2013. A total of 49 meetings have been held as of December 2020. The Meeting had discussed annual revisions to and follow-ups for the Infrastructure System Export Strategy, which was formulated in 2013. In December 2020, the Meeting formulated the “Infrastructure System Overseas Promotion Strategy 2025” (hereinafter “the New Strategy”), which lays out new five-year goals for 2021 based on the recent changes in the

relevant situations. The New Strategy establishes a policy for taking specific steps toward garnering 34 trillion yen in infrastructure system orders in 2025 by promoting the achievement of three goals, namely (1) achieving economic growth, (2) contributing to achieving the SDGs, and (3) realizing the Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy (FOIP). The current key issues of the New Strategy involve a focused approach to combating COVID-19, contributing to carbon neutrality, tightening export policy on coal-fired power, and promoting the use of digital technologies and data.

Japan has also been conducting trade promotion by the Government and making systemic improvements aimed at the active use of public financing schemes, and has reviewed the process for audits involving JICA overseas investment loans. With regard to diplomatic missions overseas, MOFA has been appointing “Officers in charge of Infrastructure Projects” to gather and consolidate information on infrastructure projects in diplomatic missions overseas in countries of focus (200 personnel at 97 diplomatic missions overseas in 75 countries as of the end of December 2020). This initiative has also shown results.

3 Promotion of the Export of Agricultural, Forestry and Fishery Products and Food (Regulations on Japanese Food Imports after the Great East Japan Earthquake)

Expanding exports of Japan's agricultural, forestry, fishery and food products is a major objective of the Government of Japan. To further promote concerted efforts by the Government in this vein, the “Ministerial Meeting on Expansion of the Export of Agricultural, Forestry, and Fishery Products and Foods as a Response to Restrictions by Importing Countries” was established in April 2019. After conducting interviews with all businesses and other organizations involved, a list of tasks was raised up and a response plan was

formulated in June 2019. Furthermore, the Act on Facilitating the Export of Agricultural, Forestry, and Fishery Products and Food was established in November and entered into force on April 1. This law governs the development of systems for mounting a quick cross-government response to food safety regulations imposed by any countries and regions importing such products. Following this, a new target was established that seeks to achieve 5 trillion yen in exports of agricultural, forestry, fishery and food products by 2030 (the Basic Plan for Food, Agriculture, and Rural Areas; approved by the Cabinet on March 31, 2020). All Government agencies have since been working toward further increasing these exports (see the Column on page 198).

MOFA enthusiastically promotes the attractiveness of Japanese products by collaborating with the relevant ministries and agencies, as well as Japanese companies and local governments, utilizing the networks of organizations such as diplomatic missions overseas as well as social media and other tools. In particular, Japanese business support officers (in charge of the food industry) have been assigned to 58 diplomatic missions overseas in 54 countries and regions to strengthen initiatives to promote the export of agricultural, forestry and fishery products and food. Japan has made energetic efforts toward such promotion at numerous opportunities such as receptions and cultural events to which dignitaries have been invited from countries and regions around the world.

One of the biggest barriers to increase exports is import restrictions on Japanese agricultural, forestry and fishery products and food by countries and regions following the Great East Japan Earthquake and TEPCO's Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station accident. Although ten years have

passed since the Great East Japan Earthquake, the fact is that 16 countries and regions out of 54 (as of December 2020) continue to impose import restrictions on agricultural, forestry, fishery and food products from Japan, and it remains a serious problem. As eliminating these restrictions and addressing Japan's reputational damage are top priorities for the Government of Japan, MOFA has been making efforts in collaboration with relevant ministries and agencies to have these restrictions lifted as quickly as possible.

As a result of these efforts, in 2020, import restrictions were lifted in the Philippines (January), Morocco (September), Egypt (November), the United Arab Emirates (December) and Lebanon (December). So far, 38 countries and regions have removed their import restrictions: Canada, Myanmar, Serbia, Chile, Mexico, Peru, Guinea, New Zealand, Colombia, Malaysia, Ecuador, Viet Nam, Iraq, Australia, Thailand, Bolivia, India, Kuwait, Nepal, Iran, Mauritius, Qatar, Ukraine, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Argentina, Turkey, New Caledonia (territory of France), Brazil, Oman, Bahrain, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Brunei and the five above-mentioned countries. Furthermore, due to the relaxation of restrictions by Singapore, the U.S. and Indonesia, the number of regions with import restrictions and the number of restricted product categories has gradually decreased (as of December 31, 2020).

Working closely with the relevant ministries, agencies, local governments and international organizations, MOFA will continue taking every opportunity and making every effort to provide explanations and appeal to countries and regions that maintain import restrictions, with the goal of having restrictions promptly removed and reputational damage repaired based on scientific evidence.

Column

Overseas Promotion of Ashiro Rindo® Gentians from Hachimantai City

Tsushima Sachiyo Director, Hachimantai Floriculture R&D Center (HFC), Iwate Prefecture

Hachimantai City in Iwate Prefecture is a city with lush greenery. Its rich natural environment surrounded by the Ou Mountains, hot springs, ski resorts, and other attractions draw many tourists. Taking advantage of the cool climate, the Ashiro district in the northwestern part of the city has been producing gentians (*rindo*) since 1972. The Hachimantai City government operates the research and development facility, which has concluded a joint research contract with Ashiro Rindo Development, a general incorporated association comprising floriculturists, to engage in the development of original gentian varieties. The floriculturists contribute 2% of their sales revenue as research cooperation fees, thereby realizing a stable operation of the organization as well as the establishment of a consistent system; from variety development to production guidance built upon the views of the floriculturists. Through these, Hachimantai City has become Japan's top gentian production area accounting for more than 30% of domestic demand.

Hachimantai City is currently working on the export of intellectual property aimed at promoting the industry by facilitating the worldwide use of gentian varieties cultivated and trademarked as "Ashiro Rindo" gentians. The move toward the overseas business expansion of "Ashiro Rindo" gentians began when the production of flowers to decorate venues of the national ski competition held in February 1998 was outsourced to New Zealand, in the southern hemisphere, where the seasons are opposite. Thereafter it was decided that "Ashiro Rindo" gentians produced in New Zealand during the winter season in Japan would be reimported into Japan, thereby realizing year-round sales in the Japanese market. In this context, although there had been no initial plans to export intellectual property from Japan, with New Zealand being a country with a thriving flower export sector, the export of intellectual property for gentians started since New Zealand floriculturists hinted exporting the intellectual property of Japanese flowers. In recent years, a collaborative research with Mizuho Research & Technologies, a private company in Japan, for three years since 2015 on the feasibility of floriculture in Rwanda, Africa verified technologies enabling year-round supply. In 2018, a cultivation license agreement was concluded with a local corporation in Rwanda, and export to Europe commenced. This led to exchanges with Hachimantai City as the host town of the Rwanda team for the Olympic and Paralympic Games Tokyo 2020.

As explained above, Hachimantai's export business is not exporting produce, but exporting intellectual property. The royalties (fees for the use of trademark rights) earned through such exports are utilized to improve varieties and develop new varieties. 2021 marks 50 years of gentian production in Hachimantai City. The City aims to continue to be a production area of gentians for a century, and is confident that it can contribute to the development of the African region through the branding of "Ashiro Rindo" gentians produced globally as a high value-added agricultural product. To that end, it will continue going forward with its undertaking in this sector.



Gentian cultivation in Rwanda (Photo: Hachimantai City)



Japanese and local officials delighted with the first shipment of "Ashiro Rindo" gentians produced in Rwanda (Photo: Hachimantai City)

Section 4

Promoting Resource Diplomacy along with Foreign Direct Investment in Japan

1 Securing a Stable Supply of Energy and Mineral Resources at Reasonable Prices

(1) Current Situation Concerning Energy and Mineral Resources in Japan and Abroad

A Situation in the World

Structural changes in the recent years have been seen in the international energy market with respect to three areas: (1) demand (consumption), (2) supply (production), and (3) resource selection. Regarding demand, global demand for primary energy has shifted toward non-OECD member countries, primarily China and India. With respect to supply, the U.S. became the world's largest producer of both oil and natural gas due to the "Shale Revolution," and lifted its ban on crude oil exports in December 2015. The U.S. is promoting energy export policies such as further exports of U.S. liquefied natural gas (LNG) promotion under the Trump administration. As for resource selection, based on the fact that production and usage on energy account for about two-thirds of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, the transition to cleaner energy resources such as renewable energy is accelerating. In addition, since the Paris Agreement on climate change was adopted in December 2015, companies have made their efforts

to further advance toward low-carbonization.

In oil markets, oil demand and prices have fallen significantly due to reduced movement of people and sluggish economic activity owing to the spread of the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19). For the first time in history, oil prices dipped into the negative following a coordinated production cut breakdown by the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) Plus.¹ OPEC Plus later agreed to begin a coordinated production cut in May and gradually resolved the excess supply problem. Furthermore, the supply-demand balance was improved and rising oil prices began trending up due to a recovery in oil demand in China and India, a continued coordinated production cut, and other factors, contributing to the continuation of a stable condition. However, uncertainty grows as COVID-19 continues to spread, muddying prospects for an energy demand recovery and fueling concerns of oil market instability. It is important that continued attention is paid to the impact of these oil price fluctuations on future energy security.

B Situation in Japan

Since the Great East Japan Earthquake, the percentage of fossil fuels in Japan has reached about 90% of the country's power generation in 2012, up

¹ OPEC Plus consists of OPEC members and the world's major non-OPEC oil-exporting nations

from about 60% before the earthquake, due to the shutdown of nuclear power plants. Japan's primary energy self-sufficiency ratio (including nuclear power), which relies on imports from overseas for almost all of its oil, natural gas, coal and other energy resources dropped sharply from 20% before the earthquake to 6.4% in 2014. It remains at a low level compared to other OECD countries despite a recovery to 11.8% in FY2018. Furthermore, nearly 92% of crude oil imported by Japan comes from the Middle East. With regard to LNG and coal, Japan depends less on the Middle East for oil but almost completely on Asia and Oceania (both 2019). Under the circumstances, efforts to secure a stable supply of energy at reasonable prices are becoming increasingly important.

Against this backdrop, the Cabinet decided on the "5th Strategic Energy Plan" in July 2018. Aiming to realize a stable, low-burden and environmentally compatible energy supply and demand structure under the 3E+S ("Energy Security," "Economic Efficiency," "Environment," and "Safety") principle, this Plan includes efforts aimed at utilizing renewable energy as the major power source and promoting energy system reform. It aims to steadily achieve the energy mix needed to realize a 26% greenhouse gas reduction by FY2030 (compared to FY2013). The Strategic Energy Plan will be reviewed at least once every three years, and discussions aimed at creating the next Strategic Energy Plan began in October 2020.

(2) Diplomatic Efforts to Secure a Stable Supply of Energy and Mineral Resources at Reasonable Prices

Securing a stable supply of energy and mineral resources at reasonable prices are the foundation for a vital Japanese economy and the livelihoods of its people. MOFA has been strengthening diplomatic efforts with a focus on the following activities.

A Gathering and Analysis of Resource-Related Information at Diplomatic Missions overseas

"Special Assistants for Natural Resources" have been appointed to 60 diplomatic missions overseas in a total of 53 countries to work intensively on the acquisition and stable supply of energy and mineral resources with a view to strengthening the function of diplomatic missions overseas, as of the end of 2020. MOFA also calls for "Strategy Meetings on Natural Resources" every year, which bring together officials assigned to diplomatic missions overseas with the objective to ensure stable supply of energy and mineral resources. Although the 2020 meeting was canceled due to the spread of COVID-19, the most recent meeting was held in Tokyo in February 2019 with attendants from the representatives from the relevant ministries and private-sector agencies. Active discussions took place on the international affairs surrounding energy and mineral resources, as well as on the direction of Japan's strategies in light of this situation. In addition, MOFA has been holding Regional Meetings on Energy and Mineral Resources for certain regions since 2017. At the 2019 meeting, held in Egypt, which was focused on the Middle Eastern region, participants discussed the importance of strengthening collaboration among MOFA, diplomatic missions overseas, and government-affiliated organizations, as well as Japan's policy for promoting energy and mineral resources, and renewable energy diplomacy effectively.

B Securing Transportation Route Safety

Piracy threatens the sea lane stretching from the Middle East to Japan, through which approximately 90% of all imports to Japan pass, as well as other internationally important sea lanes in places such as the Gulf of Aden and waters off the coast of Somalia. In response, Japan has supported the coastal countries along these lanes through such measures as enhancing counter-piracy capacities, cooperating on information sharing among countries concerned, and developing navigation

facilities. Japan has also been dispatching Japan Self-Defense Force units and Japanese Coast Guard officers to areas off the coast of Somalia and the Gulf of Aden to engage in escort operations for any of country's commercial ships.

C Making Use of International Fora and Rules

Japan makes active use of international fora and rules to cooperate with the international community toward securing a stable supply of energy. While endeavoring to strengthen its capability to respond to emergencies such as disruptions in oil supply, Japan strives to quickly and accurately grasp information such as trends in the global energy markets and resource-producing countries, as well as revisions to the medium- and long-term outlooks for supply and demand.

In response to the impact on energy demand caused by the economic downturn brought about by the spread of COVID-19, the G20 Extraordinary Energy Ministers Meeting (virtual meeting) was held in April (with Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry Kajiyama Hiroshi in attendance from Japan). G20 ministers affirmed the significant adverse effects of the unstable energy market on the real economy and confirmed the intention to strengthen coordination as G20 in the interest of market stabilization and stronger energy security.

A G20 Energy Ministerial Meeting (virtual meeting) was held in September, chaired by Saudi Arabia, with State Minister for Foreign Affairs Washio Eiichiro in attendance from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. At the meeting, ministers discussed issues such as the Circular Carbon Economy (CCE), energy access, and energy security and market stabilization, and a Ministers' Communiqué was issued as an outcome document. In response to the destabilization of the global energy market caused by the spread of COVID-19, the Ministers' Communiqué affirmed the importance of international cooperation toward strengthening the energy system, and of achieving safe, affordable and sustainable energy access. Ministers

also reaffirmed the importance of transforming the energy mix toward achieving 3E+S ("Energy Security," "Economic Efficiency," "Environment" and "Safety"), which was established at the G20 Osaka Summit 2019.

In November, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Washio attended the Ministerial Forum on Africa co-chaired by the International Energy Agency (IEA) and African Union Commission (AUC). At the meeting, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Washio emphasized the importance of Japan's continued involvement in the improvement of energy access and investment in Africa, while also introducing Japan's efforts to achieve universal access to energy in Africa.

(3) Major Efforts Concerning Energy and Resource Diplomacy in 2020

A Consideration and Launch of New Energy and Resource Foreign Policy

At the 10th Session of the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) Assembly held in Abu Dhabi (United Arab Emirates) in January, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Wakamiya Kenji made a speech on Japan's plans and efforts toward further promotion and expansion of renewable energy use, while also raising the issue of the need to dispose of large quantities of solar panels and other equipment beginning in 2030 as the equipment approaches the end of its service life. State Minister for Foreign Affairs Wakamiya also



State Minister for Foreign Affairs Wakamiya giving a speech at the 10th Session of the IRENA Assembly (January 11, Abu Dhabi, UAE)

stressed, in relation to promoting further penetration of long-term and stable sustainable energy, the importance of thinking about and taking action now toward the issue of future disposals and not simply speeding the pace of new installations, while considering the environment.

B Study Tour of Carbon Recycling Facilities in Chiba and Fukushima Prefectures for the Diplomatic Corps in Tokyo

In March, MOFA conducted a study tour of CCUS²/carbon cycle facilities (CCUS/Carbon Recycling Study Tour) in the cities of Noda and Kashiwa in Chiba Prefecture and Iwaki in Fukushima Prefecture for the Diplomatic Corps in Tokyo, in cooperation with the Agency for Natural Resources and Energy, Tokyo University of Science, and the city of Iwaki, Fukushima.

In accordance with such initiatives as the Fukushima Plan for a New Energy Society, this study tour was held to inform the world of Japan's initiatives toward achieving decarbonization. Five embassy staff from five countries participated in the tour. In addition to attending the CCUS/Carbon Recycling Seminar held at the Noda Campus of the Tokyo University of Science, the participating diplomatic corps deepened their knowledge of the carbon dioxide reduction technologies of the Tokyo University of Science Photocatalysis International Research Center at the university as state-of-the-art technologies for achieving a carbon cycle. The corps also visited Hitachi Zosen Corporation in Kashiwa, Chiba and observed hydrogen production equipment and methanation test equipment, which produces methane from carbon dioxide and hydrogen. In addition, the corps visited Tomato Land Iwaki and Joban Joint Power Co., Ltd.'s Nakoso Power Plant in Iwaki to observe progressive agricultural initiatives being carried out with regard for a variety of environments, as well as the Integrated coal Gasification Combined Cycle (IGCC), which Japan prides itself

on as being the world's most advanced clean coal technology.

C Start of Negotiations Concerning the Modernization of the Energy Charter Treaty

The Energy Charter Treaty (ECT), a multilateral treaty that entered into force in April 1998 (signed in 1995 and entered into force with Japan in 2002), was established as a legal framework for implementing the European Energy Charter, which called for promoting improvements based on market principles in the energy sector in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe following the collapse of the Soviet Union, as well as promoting trade and investment activities in the global energy sector. This treaty was signed by 52 countries and organizations mostly located in Europe and central Asia.

The ECT prescribes the liberalization of the trade and transit of energy source materials and commodities, the protection and liberalization of investments in the energy sector, and other matters. It ensures a stable supply of energy from supply countries to demand countries, contributes to improving energy security for Japan, which largely relies on other countries for energy resources, and provides an important legal foundation for further improving the investment environment for Japanese companies overseas.

For this treaty, which has been in force for over two decades since 1998, 2017 saw the start of discussions concerning modernizing the treaty by making necessary revisions. In December 2019, the decision was made at the 30th Meeting of the Energy Charter Conference to begin negotiations related to modernizing the ECT. Full-scale negotiations, in which Japan also actively engaged, began in 2020, with discussions held on such wide-ranging issues as investment protection, dispute settlement and commodity transit. Japan has also contributed to the development of the ECT as the largest contributor of assessed donations.

² CCUS: Carbon dioxide Capture, Utilization and Storage

This includes serving as chair for the first Meeting of the Energy Charter Conference in East Asia, which was held in 2016, and hosting the 27th Meeting in Tokyo. During the 31st Meeting of the Energy Charter Conference, which was held online in December 2020, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Washio shared a video message in which he emphasized the importance of the ECT in energy security and introduced Japan's initiatives regarding the recent energy situation.

2 Ensuring Food Security

The global population in 2020 is estimated to be about 7.8 billion (prospects released by the UN Population Division), and this is expected to increase mainly in Africa and Asia. Changes in the dietary habits of people in developing countries will require a rapid increase in the production of feed grains. In Japan, while the country's food self-sufficiency rate (calorie basis (published by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries)) has been on a downward trend in the long-term, it has been leveling out in recent years, reaching 38% in FY2019. Japan relies on imports for much of its food, and to ensure a stable food supply for its people, the country needs to achieve the optimal ratio of importing to stockpiling, primarily by increasing domestic agricultural production.

Amid global concern over the tightening of supply and demand situation in the medium- to long-term, Japan must work to increase the food supply globally to continue securing stable food imports. For this purpose, ensuring sustainable approaches are also required for increasing production while reducing environmental impact. Japan must also establish robust food security through efforts that include the creation of a stable agricultural produce market and trading system to protect against food price instability caused by poor harvest conditions, natural disasters, etc.

The spread of COVID-19 has had an impact on global food security. Along with a temporary decrease in exports to Japan of vegetables produced

and processed in China, steps have been taken in countries such as Russia and Viet Nam to restrict the export of wheat, rice and other products. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO), more than 100 million people across particularly vulnerable regions could end up suffering from malnutrition as food access worsens due to economic decline and supply chain disruptions. Although the production of the world's staple grains and other produce is expected to be sufficient to satisfy demand, strengthening the food supply chain has become an urgent issue in light of concerns that COVID-19's effects could be long-term.

(1) Cooperation in International Frameworks Concerning Food Security

Based on the situations involving food export restrictions and supply chain disruptions due to the impact of COVID-19, the importance of maintaining and restoring supply chains and circumventing excessive trade restrictions has been highlighted in international frameworks. In March, the World Health Organization (WHO) and World Trade Organization (WTO) released a joint statement calling for countries to ensure that their trade-related measures would not disrupt the food supply chain.

As efforts under the G20 framework, the G20 Extraordinary Agriculture Ministers Meeting was held virtually in April and the G20 Agriculture and Water Ministers Meeting was conducted virtually in September, both hosted by Saudi Arabia as chair. Participants discussed measures toward food security and other issues caused by COVID-19, and the "G20 Ministerial Statement on COVID-19" and "G20 Agriculture and Water Ministers Communiqué" were adopted at the meetings, respectively.

In APEC, members are engaging in related cooperation through the APEC Policy Partnership on Food Security (PPFS) in collaboration with the private sector. At the APEC Virtual Ministerial Policy Dialogue on Food Security, held in October

2020 and chaired by Malaysia, participants discussed ensuring food security in light of the effects of COVID-19 and adopted the “Virtual Ministerial Policy Dialogue on Food Security Statement.”

(2) Cooperation with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO)

As a responsible member of the international community, Japan supports the activities of the FAO, a specialized agency of the UN in the fields of food and agriculture. Japan, a major donor to the FAO and the third largest contributor of assessed contributions, significantly contributes to strengthening global food security through efforts such as providing development assistance in the areas of food and agriculture, and creating international rules that include food safety standards. Japan also works to strengthen its relationship with the FAO, holding Annual Strategic Consultations and conducting seminars for the general populace aimed at raising awareness for the FAO domestically.

3 Fisheries (Whaling and Tuna, etc.)

As one of the major fishing countries and consumers of fishery products in the world, Japan, through international organizations, actively contributes to the proper conservation, management and sustainable use of marine living resources (see the Column on page 205).

In line with its position that cetaceans are a part of marine living resources that should be utilized in a sustainable manner based on scientific evidence, Japan has sincerely engaged in the dialogues in the International Whaling Commission (IWC) for over 30 years on the basis of scientific data collected. However, as it became evident that it is not possible in the IWC to seek the coexistence of States with different views between “sustainable use” and “conservation,” the original goals of the IWC, Japan withdrew from the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling (ICRW) on June 30, 2019. In July of the same year, Japan re-

sumed commercial whaling targeting large whales in territorial waters and its exclusive economic zone (EEZ). The whaling, which targets minke whales, Bryde's whales and *sei* whales, whose abundance has been confirmed, is conducted in a sustainable manner based on scientific evidence within the catch limits calculated in line with the method adopted by the IWC, which allows for the maintenance of the population level whereby whale resources will not be depleted even after 100 years of continuous whaling.

Japan has been contributing to the science-based sustainable management of whale resources in coordination with relevant international organizations, through participating as an observer in the IWC Scientific Committee in May 2020, conducting a non-lethal study of whaling resources in the Japanese Abundance and Stock-structure Surveys in the Antarctic (JASS-A), the IWC-Pacific Ocean Whale and Ecosystem Research (IWC-POWER), etc., and providing research results and catch information to the IWC and other international organizations.

As there is an increasing call for urgent actions by the international community against illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, Japan is promoting efforts to combat IUU fishing. In the leaders' declaration issued at the G20 Osaka Summit in 2019, where Japan served as chair, Japan took the initiative to state the following point in the declaration: “the importance of addressing IUU fishing for ensuring the sustainable use of marine resources and conserving the marine environment including biodiversity.” Through multilateral discussions and efforts including the adoption of the “Sustainable Fisheries Resolution” at the 75th UN General Assembly, Japan also urges non-signatory countries to accede to the Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (PSMA), which establishes rules for port states to take measures against IUU fishing vessels, including denial of port entry

In the Central Arctic Ocean, while commercial

Considering Japan's Fishery Diplomacy with SAKANA-KUN: Aiming to Realize Sustainable Fishery and Achieve the SDGs

On February 1, 2021, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs appointed SAKANA-KUN as the “Goodwill Ambassador for Sustainable Oceans and Fish.” Going forward, SAKANA-KUN will take on the role of communicating, both in Japan and abroad, Japan's activities toward realizing sustainable and healthy oceans, including fishery resources. This column features a dialogue between Foreign Minister Motegi and SAKANA-KUN.

1. Appointment as the Goodwill Ambassador for Sustainable Oceans and Fish

Foreign Minister Motegi: Congratulations on your appointment as the Goodwill Ambassador for Sustainable Oceans and Fish. I hope that you will widely communicate Japan's contribution to sustainable fishery.

SAKANA-KUN: It is my honor to be appointed as the Goodwill Ambassador for Sustainable Oceans and Fish! I would like to convey, from a major fish-consuming nation of Japan widely to the world, what is important to live in harmony with the fish that we love, while preserving the beautiful seas.

2. Japan's diplomatic role and initiatives as a major fishery nation

SAKANA-KUN: Japan is a major fishery nation that is surrounded by beautiful seas and is endowed with wonderful rivers and lakes, and many species of fish. I believe that fish is an indispensable part of the Japanese diet and food culture.

Minister: Japanese people have enjoyed the blessings of the sea since a long time ago. “Sustainable use of fishery resources,” which means that we can continue fishing in a stable manner going forward, is an important diplomatic issue linked to biodiversity and securing stable food supplies. Japan, as a major consumer country of fishery products, plays a significant role in the international community as a responsible fishery nation.

SAKANA-KUN: Great changes are now taking place in the environment surrounding fish. It is becoming increasingly difficult to catch some species that we have been able to catch so far, and the volume of the catches is declining. One of the hot topics that came up last year was the record low catches of Pacific saury, which is an indispensable part of the Japanese diet.

Minister: We often hear the word “sustainable” in relation to fisheries and the sea. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are now becoming a keyword not only in the international community, but also among private companies in Japan, and Japan is actively promoting the SDGs. The same goes for the field of fisheries.

SAKANA-KUN: Goal 14 of the SDGs aims to realize healthy oceans. As the Goodwill Ambassador, I would like to participate actively in activities toward this goal! I am concerned about the volume of fish we catch, because fish consumption is increasing around the world. What are Japan's initiatives in the international community to contribute to sustainable fishery?

Minister: Since overfishing is a global problem, we are working to realize the sustainable use of fishery resources based on scientific evidence. One of these initiatives is our contribution to the rule making process for sustainable fisheries through Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs). Even for species that the Japanese people are very familiar with, such as tuna species, mackerel species, Pacific saury, and squid, we discuss their catch quota and fishery methods in the RFMOs. Japan is member of 13 RFMOs, and actively engaged in international efforts toward sustainable management of fishery species through these organizations.

SAKANA-KUN: Wow, that many! I have heard that in the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT), one of the RFMOs, Japan played a central role in the efforts made by relevant



Foreign Minister Motegi
(Photo: Watanabe Shigeki)



SAKANA-KUN holding the
letter of appointment



Logo of SDGs Goal 14
(Photo: United Nations Information Center)

countries to restrict the catches of Atlantic bluefin tuna in order to curb their declining population. Thanks to their efforts, the population of Atlantic bluefin tuna has increased. For fish with declining populations due to overfishing, diplomacy can make fishery sustainable and contribute to conserving fish and healthy oceans for future generations.

Minister: Exactly. Similar efforts are being made to restrict the catches of Pacific bluefin tuna to enable resource recovery.

To conserve fishery resources in the future, it is also important to tackle “illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing.” For example, on my visit to Tunisia last December, I conveyed that Japan would provide Tunisia with two vessels for fishery surveillance to combat IUU fishing. The Head of Government and the Secretary of State of Tunisia expressed their great appreciation for Japan’s initiatives.

SAKANA-KUN: That is wonderful. On my previous visit to Senegal, I was really impressed to see the sites where Japan’s support and technologies are contributing to the development of fishery industries overseas. Fish is an important food resource around the world, and that is why it is important to provide support to developing countries.

3. What we can do to conserve the healthy oceans

SAKANA-KUN: SDGs Goal 14 also aims to prevent marine pollution and protect marine ecosystems. In recent years, the marine environment has undergone significant changes, such as the rise in seawater temperature and its acidification. Marine plastic litter is an especially serious problem. I once participated in a study to investigate how much plastic litter is floating in the sea. I was flabbergasted when our net filled up with plastic litter in just about 20 minutes. This is very worrying as marine organisms are sensitive to changes in their environment.

Minister: At the G20 Osaka Summit in June 2019, Japan shared the “Osaka Blue Ocean Vision,” which aims to reduce additional pollution by marine plastic litter to zero by 2050. Under the “MARINE Initiative” established to realize this vision, Japan is providing support for efforts to improve waste management in developing countries through ODA. As a part of this, Japan will provide training for 10,000 officials engaging in waste management by 2025.

SAKANA-KUN: How amazing! One of the ways in which marine plastic litter is generated is when litter on land flows into the sea through rivers and waterways. Therefore it is important for all individuals across the world to put effort into reducing waste in their daily lives, such as by using their own reusable bags and bottles, and by recycling waste. I hope that we can spread this vision from Japan to the world! Could you tell us about the activities for conserving the marine environment that have left on you a strong impression since you assumed office as Minister?

Minister: In December last year, I visited Mauritius, where I inspected the extent of damages from the oil spill caused by the grounding of the bulk carrier “WAKASHIO.” Through tireless efforts by the Government and the people of Mauritius and hard work of relevant parties, water in the surrounding sea had become visibly cleaner than when the accident occurred. This left a strong impression on me. I heard that the oil removal work had mostly been completed, but Japan will continue to work closely with the relevant parties so that Mauritius can regain its beautiful natural environment as well as its prosperous economy and life as soon as possible.

SAKANA-KUN: The world is connected by oceans. I have realized anew how important it is for the world to put concerted effort into conserving fish and healthy oceans, in order to achieve SDGs Goal 14. Individual efforts are also important, including for the marine plastic litter issue. As the Goodwill Ambassador for Sustainable Oceans and Fish, with the aim of achieving SDGs Goal 14, I will communicate the importance of sustainable use of fishery resources!



Foreign Minister Motegi inspecting the coastal area in Mauritius

fishing is unlikely to become viable in the near future, there have been concerns that unregulated fishing will begin as ice coverage in that area has diminished due to global warming. Consequently, ten states and organizations, including Japan and five states bordering the Arctic Ocean, signed the Agreement to Prevent Unregulated High Seas Fisheries in the Central Arctic Ocean in October 2018. As of the end of 2020, nine countries including Japan have signed the agreement.

As one of the largest tuna consumers, Japan has joined Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs) for tuna, and leads discussions on strengthening conservation and management measures (CMM) at annual meetings and other occasions. With regard to the Pacific Bluefin tuna, at the 2020 meeting of the Northern Committee of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC), based on scientific knowledge concerning the adult fish stock recovery for example, Japan, same as in 2019, proposed an increased catch limit once again this year to an extent that a certain measure of achievement concerning its resource recovery target will be maintained. While some cautious comments resulted in the catch limit not being increased, revisions to the CMM were adopted and measures allowing an increase in the carryover limit for the portion of unused catch from 5% to 17% and a transfer of the small fish catch to the large fish catch were extended for one year. The total allowable catch (TAC) for Atlantic tuna has been increased based on the state of resource recovery in recent years, and email discussions, held upon the cancellation of the annual International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) in 2020, led to the decision to maintain the same level of the 2020 TAC for 2021, as well. Japan withdrew from the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) on October 31, 2020 due to Japanese fishing vessels not having operated in the Mediterranean Sea since 2010 and conserva-

tion and management measures concerning tuna in the Mediterranean Sea, in which Japan has an interest, have been adopted in recent years only by ICCAT.

With respect to Pacific saury, the first fishing operations took place in accordance with fishing regulations adopted at the 5th Annual Session of the North Pacific Fisheries Commission (NPFC), held in 2019. In 2020, as the media reported extensively on record poor catches of and high prices for Pacific saury, there was a renewed interest in the importance of using fisheries resources sustainably, changes in the marine environment, and the sustainability of Japan's fishing industry. Measures for more robust resource management will be needed at the future sessions.

As for Japanese eel, same as 2019, at the informal consultation on international cooperation led by Japan in June, Japan, the ROK and Chinese Taipei agreed to cooperate toward establishing limits for glass eel into aquaculture ponds and improving traceability in international trade.

4 Foreign Direct Investment in Japan

Regarding the promotion of foreign direct investment in Japan, the "Council for Promotion of Foreign Direct Investment in Japan," which has been held since 2014, is spearheading initiatives to promote activities for discovering and attracting investments while gathering opinions from foreign company managers. At the same time, Japan continues to respond to the needs of foreign companies by making further progress in implementing additional measures such as regulatory and institutional reforms and support measures that help improve the investment environment in Japan. Based on the "Five Promises for Attracting Foreign Businesses to Japan," decided at the second meeting of the Council for Promotion of Foreign Direct Investment in Japan, held in March 2015, foreign companies have been utilizing the Invest-

ment Advisor Assignment System³ since April 2016 and are meeting with the relevant State Ministers in charge and State Minister for Foreign Affairs. Japan has undertaken a variety of initiatives in order to meet the target of doubling (compared to 2012) foreign companies' direct investment in Japan to 35 trillion yen by 2020 (33.9 trillion yen as of the end of 2019). In accordance with the Basic Policy on Economic and Fiscal Management and Reform (Cabinet Decision on July 17, 2020), the Cabinet decided on a draft policy for formulating a "Medium and Long-term Strategy for Promoting Foreign Direct Investment in Japan 2021" at the 8th meeting of the Council for Promotion of Foreign Direct Investment in Japan, held in July, which aims to formulate a medium- to long-term strategy that includes Key Performance Indicators (KPI). To this end, this strategy will be discussed with an initial focus on ramping up calls for more start-up companies and calls to rural areas.

MOFA, along with implementing various measures adopted by the Council for Promotion of Foreign Direct Investment in Japan, is also utilizing diplomatic resources to engage in initiatives through diplomatic missions overseas and trade promotion by key government officials. The "Contact Points for Direct Investment toward Japan," established at 126 diplomatic missions overseas in April 2016, have been collaborating with the Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) to conduct surveys of requests for improvements to Japanese regulations and systems, call for investments in Japan by making use of networks of contacts at diplomatic missions overseas, and hold events for promoting foreign direct investment in Japan, among other initiatives. Diplomatic missions conducted more than 750 cases in FY2019.

5 The Road to 2025 World Expo Osaka (Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan)

In accordance with "The Act on Special Measures Necessary for Preparing for and Managing of the International Exposition in 2025," the Headquarters for the World Expo was established at the Cabinet Secretariat in September to work with the relevant ministries and agencies, the business community and local governments to prepare for the Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan.

Following the approval of a registration application for the Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan at the General Assembly of the Bureau International des Expositions (BIE) held on December 1, Japan, as the host country, began activities to officially invite other countries and international organizations to participate in the expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan. On December 21, the International Exhibitions Promotion Office formulated Japan's basic policy of the government toward the Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan. Domestic preparations for this expo have also begun that include selecting a producer, deciding on a logo, and formulating a basic policy (see the Column on page 209).

With the theme of "Designing Future Society for Our Lives," Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan aims to utilize this expo as an important opportunity to broadly disseminate information about Japan's appeal and accelerate initiatives toward the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are all to be achieved by 2030. Japan will continue making a concerted national effort aimed at ensuring the expo inspires and surprises people around the world, while also bringing joy to everyone in Japan.

³ A system that seeks to prepare an environment in which foreign companies who have made important investments in Japan can easily consult with the Government of Japan through State Ministers and other officials that oversee the main industries in which these companies engage

Column

Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan: Thoughts and Sentiments included in the Logo Design

The logo for the 2025 World Exposition in Japan (hereinafter referred to as “Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan”) was confirmed on August 25. The Japan Association for the 2025 World Exposition solicited proposals for the public to submit logo designs, and received a total of 5,894 works. The design produced by TEAM INARI (Representative: Mr. Shimada Tamotsu) was selected as the logo. We spoke to the team about the thoughts and sentiments they had included in the logo, and their expectations for the Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan.

— The logo for the Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan created a stir for its unique design, and was even picked up by foreign press. How did you come up with the idea for this logo?

Mr. Shimada: The theme of the Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan is “Designing Future Society for Our Lives,” and we were presented with key ideas such as “every individual reaching their full potential and excelling,” and “connecting individuals to realize co-creation.” Based on these concepts, we started production with the idea of viewing a simple circle as a single life, imbuing it with various character traits, and connecting them again.

— Could you tell us about the thoughts you included in this logo design?

Mr. Shimada: We created this logo on the concept of “the cell,” which supports the vitality of life. The parts of the logo that look like eyeballs are in fact inspired by the cherry blossom petals in the logo of the Japan World Exposition, 1970 Osaka Expo, and the two are matching in both form and number. In other words, it is a metaphor that suggests that the Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan succeeds the 1970 Osaka Expo through the “DNA (genes)” in the cells. We have included in this logo our hopes that the event will pass on the history and culture of Osaka to the future.

— The theme of the Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan places importance on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) established by the United Nations. Does the logo have any connection to the SDGs?

Mr. Shimada: The perspective of “a world in which no one is left behind,” as set out in the SDGs, is one that resonates strongly with us. Hence, this logo was created with a view to sending our message that each individual can make most use of his/her brilliant uniqueness. Even if we are looking in different directions, we can surely still join hands. We can accept and respect each other. These sentiments have definitely been included in the design of this logo.

— It is hoped that the logo will be spread and seen widely by people around the world as we move toward the Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan, which will take place in four years’ time. In what ways do you hope it will succeed?

Mr. Shimada: This logo may be taken differently depending on viewer. It appears to be something that does not stay still and is constantly on the move; in this sense, it may appear to be unstable in some way. Nevertheless, I think of it as something that is “living.” I hope that this “fetal movement” will become a full, dynamic movement someday. I hope that the people in the world support the Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan so that it will be a stage for such movement.

— Having the Expo '70 Commemorative Park and Tower of the Sun makes the 1970 Osaka Expo feel like it is still close to our hearts in Kansai even today. As a citizen from Osaka, what do you expect for this upcoming Expo?

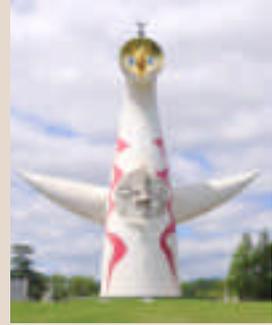


Logo of the Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan



Logo of the 1970 Osaka Expo (Photo: Osaka Prefectural Government)

Mr. Shimada: The members of TEAM INARI are all creators who are based and active in Osaka. Two are from the generation who experienced the 1970 Osaka Expo, and they still clearly remember the global scale of excitement they felt at the time. We are surprised that technologies and ideas such as mobile phones and videophones, electric vehicles, and linear motor cars, which were only a dream at the time, have become reality before we knew it. I believe the Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan will stir that sense of wonder again, in a way that befits our present era. We will be able to share the story of “a future that will surely come true” with the world once again in Japan, and in Osaka too. I am already looking forward to that moment.



Tower of the Sun (Photo: Osaka Prefectural Government)



TEAM INARI at the press conference for the announcement of the Best Logo Design Award (Photo: Japan Association for the 2025 World Exposition)

Chapter 4

Japan Strengthening Its Presence in the International Community

Section 1	Japan Strengthening Its Presence in the International Community	212
Section 2	Efforts for Peace and Stability of Japan and the International Community	215
Section 3	Japan's International Cooperation (Development Cooperation and Response to Global Issues)	280
Section 4	Efforts to Promote Understanding and Trust in Japan	308

Section 1

Japan Strengthening Its Presence in the International Community

In recent years, the balance of power in the international community is shifting dramatically due to the rise of emerging countries among other factors, while inter-state competition, in which states seek to shape an international order to their advantage as well as increase their influence, is emerging more prominently. As uncertainty surrounding the existing order grows, protectionism and inward-looking trends are intensifying. Amid such a situation, the year 2020 saw the global spread of the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19), which reaffirmed the importance of multilateralism in the face of crises that no single state can address on its own. Under these circumstances, Japan must take on a greater responsibility and roles than before, while collaborating with other countries, toward maintaining and advancing a free, fair and transparent rules-based international order. Based on this recognition, Japan, through a variety of initiatives as described below, has been strengthening its presence in the international community by emphasizing the rule of law, and pursuing consistent and stable diplomacy.

1 Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)

The Indo-Pacific is a region that supports half of the world's population, and an area of importance in security and economic terms that holds the key to global peace and prosperity. A "Free and Open Indo-Pacific," which Japan has been promoting, is a vision for ensuring peace and prosperity in the entire region and beyond, through establishing a free and open order based on the rule of law. The vision is now shared by a number of countries. For example, the "Joint Statement of the 23rd ASEAN-Japan Summit on Cooperation on the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP)," which was adopted in November 2020, affirms that the AOIP and Japan's FOIP concept share relevant fundamental principles in promoting peace and cooperation, and declares that ASEAN and Japan will strengthen their strategic partnership through cooperation in the four areas outlined in the AOIP.¹

The relevance and significance of the vision are growing as we advance toward the post-COVID-19 era. Seizing every opportunity of bilateral and multilateral dialogues, including the Japan-Australia-India-U.S. meetings, Japan will advance coordination and cooperation with the U.S., Australia, India and ASEAN as well as countries in Europe, the Middle East and Africa.

¹ The four areas of maritime cooperation, connectivity, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and economic and other possible areas of cooperation

2 New Rule-Making

In light of the need for new rule-making that meets the challenges of a changing world and emerging needs, Japan will lead necessary international efforts to create new rules.

As protectionism and inward-looking trends spread worldwide, Japan has demonstrated its leadership as a flagbearer of free trade. Following the U.S. announcement in January 2017 to withdraw from the Trans-Pacific Partnership, Japan led discussions with 10 other participating countries to realize the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP11, entered into force in December 2018). Japan also concluded the Japan-EU EPA with the EU (entry into force in February 2019), and brought the Japan-U.S. Trade Agreement and the Japan-U.S. Digital Trade Agreement into force in January 2020. In November 2020, following eight years of negotiations that began in 2012, the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) Agreement was signed among 15 countries, including Japan. Furthermore, the Japan-UK Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA), a new framework for trade and investment between Japan and the UK to replace the Japan-EU EPA between Japan and the UK, entered into force in January 2021 following the UK's withdrawal from the EU. With the signing and the conclusion of the TPP11 Agreement, the Japan-EU EPA, the Japan-U.S. Trade Agreement, the Japan-UK CEPA and the RCEP Agreement, a network of free and fair economic zones that cover approximately 80% of the global GDP is now formed, with Japan at its center.

In the digital field, which is becoming increasingly important in the post-COVID-19 era, Japan is playing a leading role in developing global rules on digital trade such as the Japan-U.S. Digital Trade Agreement (entry into force in January 2020). In addition, at the G20 Osaka Summit, held in June 2019 and chaired by Japan, Japan shared

its Data Free Flow with Trust (DFFT) concept and launched the Osaka Track. In particular, on occasions such as the WTO e-commerce negotiations, where Japan serves as a co-convenor, Japan leads international rule-making efforts concerning the digital economy, particularly with respect to e-commerce and the data flow.

Japan has focused on building international rules in new areas including new domains such as cyberspace and outer space as well as maintaining national security in our economy and technology, which has broadened its scope due to technological innovations. This effort is based on the understanding that existing international law applies to these new areas.

3 International Cooperation Based on Multilateralism

While the global spread of COVID-19 is demanding more international cooperation than ever, Japan is pursuing peace and prosperity domestically and internationally through international cooperation via multilateral frameworks such as the United Nations.

To tackle the human security crisis arising from COVID-19, guided by the principle of “leaving no one’s health behind,” Japan is leading international discussions aimed at achieving universal health coverage at opportunities such as the G7, the G20 and the UN General Assembly, and taking initiative as a cosponsor of the ACT Accelerator,² a framework for international cooperation to ensure equitable access to vaccines and treatment, including by developing countries. Furthermore, along with efforts to overcome the infectious diseases crises, Japan is also swiftly implementing bilateral and multilateral cooperation including for reinforcement of healthcare systems with a view to future health crises.

Japan has also made various efforts to strengthen its presence in the international community

² ACT Accelerator: Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator

with regard to global challenges. These efforts include the G20 Principles for Quality Infrastructure Investment (June 2019), which seeks to realize connectivity across the Indian Ocean and the Pacific; leadership for the Osaka Blue Ocean Vision, which aims to reduce additional pollution by marine plastic litter to zero by 2050, and the launch of the MARINE Initiative as a means to realize the vision (June 2019); and the declaration of the goal of realizing carbon-neutrality by reducing its greenhouse gas emissions to net-zero by 2050 (October 2020). Through the proactive and strategic use of ODA, Japan will continue to accelerate efforts to address global challenges such as achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In particular, climate change is currently the most important issue to address. With a view to realizing carbon-neutrality by 2050, Japan is taking steps to address climate change domestically while also working with other countries to lead efforts by the international community, including the 26th session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP26) scheduled for 2021, toward world-wide realization of a decarbonized society, which the Paris Agreement is aiming for.

As the international community confronts an array of crises such as COVID-19, the crucial role of the UN to unite the international community has never been more necessary. Therefore, in order for the UN to carry out its required functions effectively, the international community needs to take serious steps to reform the UN for the post-COVID-19 era. In particular, while making efforts toward beginning concrete negotiations aimed at the reform of the UN Security Council, Japan is seeking to be elected in the UN Security Council non-permanent membership election in 2022 as a means to further contribute to peace and stability in the international community. Japan will also actively address a wide variety of international issues through UN Peacekeeping Operations (PKOs) and opportunities such as the 14th United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (March 2021).

Amid increasing complexity and uncertainty of the international situation, Japan will harness its presence to coordinate international efforts on the global stage and demonstrate its leadership toward resolving diverse problems with a sense of responsibility and purpose.

Section 2

Efforts for Peace and Stability of Japan and the International Community

1 National Security Initiatives

(1) “Proactive Contribution to Peace” Based on the Principle of International Cooperation

The security environment surrounding Japan is becoming more testing and uncertain at a remarkably faster speed. Changes in the balance of power in the international arena are accelerating and becoming more complex, and uncertainty over the existing order is increasing. Against such a backdrop, inter-state competitions are prominently emerging, in which states seek to shape global and regional order to their advantage as well as increase their influence. What is more, in the international community, there is a broadening and diversifying array of security challenges that cannot be dealt with by a single country alone. With respect to space and cyber domains, establishing international rules and norms has also been a security agenda. In the maritime domain, there have been cases where a country unilaterally claims its entitlements or takes actions based on assertions that are incompatible with existing international order. These have generated undue infringement to rights accorded under international law, including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). Given that national security has been expanding its scope to economic and technological fields in recent years,

the enhancement of efforts regarding the security policy in these fields is necessary. The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles, as well as escalating international terrorism, remain grave challenges for the international community. Against such a background, qualitatively and quantitatively superior military powers are concentrating in the areas surrounding Japan, where clear trends are observed in further military buildup and an increase in military activities.

Facing such a security environment and other factors, it has become indispensable for Japan to make more proactive efforts in line with the principle of international cooperation. Japan cannot secure its own peace and security by itself, and the international community expects Japan to play a more proactive role for peace and stability in the world, in a way commensurate with its national capabilities. Japan will continue to adhere to the course that it has taken to date as a peace-loving nation, and as a major player in world politics and the economy, contribute even more proactively to securing the peace, stability and prosperity of the international community, and achieve its own security as well as peace and stability in the region, as a “Proactive Contributor to Peace” based on the principle of international cooperation.

(2) Enforcement of the “Legislation for Peace and Security,” and Initiatives based on the Legislation

In order to adapt to the changes in the security environment surrounding Japan and to secure the lives and peaceful livelihood of its people, it is important to advance vibrant diplomacy to create a stable and predictable international environment. In addition, it is important to enable seamless responses to any situation, and to contribute even more proactively to the peace and stability of the international community under the policy of “Proactive Contribution to Peace” based on the principle of international cooperation. To achieve these objectives, the “Legislation for Peace and Security” took effect in March 2016.

This legislation aims to solidify Japan’s orientation as a peace-loving nation, including adherence to its exclusively defense-oriented policy. Moreover, the legislation strengthens the Japan-U.S. Alliance and enhances the deterrence capability of Japan, thus enabling Japan to prevent conflicts preemptively, and to further contribute to the international community.

Japan has taken advantage of a variety of opportunities to thoroughly explain the “Legislation for Peace and Security” to foreign countries. Not only the U.S., but also a number of countries and organizations including Australia, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Member States, European countries, Latin America and the Caribbean countries, and the UN have expressed their understanding and support for this legislation. This clearly demonstrates that the “Legislation for Peace and Security” is legislation that contributes to the peace and security of the world.

(3) Territorial Integrity

Maintaining territorial integrity is a fundamental responsibility of the Government. Japan’s policy to resolutely protect its land, sea and airspace remains unchanged. Japan will continue to maintain its stance of responding firmly but in a calm

manner. Based on this, the relevant government agencies are working in close cooperation to advance measures to ensure a seamless and adequate response to any form of unlawful acts. At the same time, the Government of Japan engages in proactive efforts to promote awareness of Japan’s position on terrestrial integrity among the international community, making use of the contacts and knowledge of our diplomatic missions overseas.

2 Japan-U.S. Security Arrangements

(1) Overview of Japan-U.S. Security Relationship

Under the security environment surrounding Japan, which is becoming increasingly severe and uncertain at a remarkably rapid pace, it is indispensable to strengthen the Japan-U.S. Security Arrangements and to enhance the deterrence of the Japan-U.S. Alliance not only for the peace and security of Japan, but also for the peace and stability of the Indo-Pacific region. The year 2020 was a milestone year that marked the 60th anniversary of the signing and entering into force of the current Japan-U.S. Security Treaty (see the Special Feature page on 217), and the Japan-U.S. Alliance has become more solid than ever. Japan and the U.S. are further enhancing their deterrence and response capabilities under the Guidelines and the Legislation for Peace and Security. Through such efforts, Japan and the U.S. have been expanding and strengthening cooperation in a wide range of areas, including ballistic missiles defense, cyberspace, space and maritime security. Japan and the U.S. have been working closely on the realignment of U.S. Forces in Japan, including the relocation of Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) Futenma and of approximately 9,000 U.S. Marine Corps in Okinawa to Guam and other locations in order to mitigate the impact on local communities, including Okinawa, while maintaining the deterrence capabilities of the U.S. Forces in Japan.

Special
FeatureSixtieth Anniversary of the Signing and Entering into Force of
the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty

On January 19, 1960, then-Prime Minister Kishi Nobusuke signed the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security Between Japan and the United States of America (Japan-U.S. Security Treaty) at the U.S. White House. The Treaty was signed by U.S. Secretary of State Christian A. Herter for the U.S., and by Prime Minister Kishi himself for Japan. In his memoir, Prime Minister Kishi explained that the revision of the security treaty was the policy of the greatest importance for his Cabinet, and because he took full responsibility for the result, he thought it was only natural that he would be the one to sign it.

The Japan-U.S. Alliance, based on the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty, which was signed with such strong will, remains to be the foundation of Japan's diplomacy and security, despite the great changes of the security environment surrounding Japan. The year 2020 marks the 60th anniversary of the signing and entering into force of this Treaty.

On January 17, Foreign Minister Motegi, Defense Minister Kono Taro, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, and U.S. Secretary of Defense Mark Esper issued a joint statement on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the signing of the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty. In the Joint Statement, the four ministers paid tribute to their "predecessors for their wisdom, courage, and vision" and expressed their gratitude "to the men and women of the United States Armed Forces and Japan Self-Defense Forces for their dedicated service in protecting [our] common values and interests." In addition, they reiterated their "unshakeable commitment to strengthen the Alliance and to uphold [our] common values and principles towards the future" while "honoring the achievements of the past 60 years."

On January 19, exactly 60 years since the signing of the Treaty, a reception to Commemorate the Sixtieth Anniversary of the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty was held, co-hosted by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Minister of Defense. Among the guests from the U.S. were Ms. Mary Jean Eisenhower, granddaughter of President Dwight Eisenhower, who was President at the time of the signing and entering into force of the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty.

President Trump sent a congratulatory message for the reception praising that "the rock-solid Alliance between the two great nations has been essential to peace, security, and prosperity for the United States, Japan, the Indo-Pacific region, and the entire world over the past six decades."

In his speech, Prime Minister Abe looked back on how his grandfather, Prime Minister Kishi, and President Eisenhower deepened their friendship through golf, took up the challenge of the security treaty revision, and eventually brought it to fruition. He addressed, "Let us keep and enhance the U.S.-Japan Alliance, while making it even more steadfast, shall we not, to make it a pillar safeguarding freedom, liberty, democracy, human rights and the rule of law, one that sustains the whole world, sixty years, one hundred years down the road" and stated "Our alliance being one of hope, it is for us to let the rays of hope keep shining even more."

Today, 60 years since the signing and entering into force of the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty, the Japan-U.S. Alliance is stronger, broader, and more vital than ever before. This is the result of the steady and tireless efforts of both Japan and the U.S. over the past 60 years. Going forward, we will further strengthen the Alliance and contribute to the peace, stability and prosperity not only of Japan and the U.S., but also of the Indo-Pacific and the international community.



Prime Minister Kishi and President Eisenhower at the signing ceremony of the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty (January 19, 1960, Washington D.C., U.S.; Photo: Jiji)



Logo commemorating the 60th anniversary of the signing and entering into force of the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty (Image: U.S. Embassy in Japan)



Prime Minister Abe with Ms. Mary Jean Eisenhower, granddaughter of President Dwight Eisenhower (front row, fourth from the left), at the Reception to Commemorate the Sixtieth Anniversary of the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty (January 19, Tokyo)

(2) Japan-U.S. Security and Defense Cooperation in Various Fields

A Efforts Under the Guidelines for Japan-U.S. Defense Cooperation

The Guidelines for Japan-U.S. Defense Cooperation, which were announced at the April 2015 meeting of the Japan-U.S. Security Consultative Committee (“2+2”), reviewed and updated the general framework and policy direction of Japan-U.S. defense cooperation. Through the Alliance Coordination Mechanism (ACM) established under these Guidelines, Japan and the U.S. have shared information closely, established a common understanding of the situation, and provided “seamless” responses from peacetime to contingencies. In the “2+2” meeting held in April 2019, four cabinet-level officials from Japan and the U.S. concurred that the Japan-U.S. Alliance serves as the cornerstone of peace, security and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific region and that Japan and the U.S. will work together to realize a “Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP),” and to strengthen cooperation in cross-domain operations such as improving capabilities in non-conventional domains that include space, cyberspace and the electromagnetic spectrum. They also affirmed that cyberattacks could, in certain circumstances constitute armed attacks, for the purposes of Article 5 of the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty. In March 2021, just two months after the inauguration of the Biden administration, Antony Blinken, Secretary of State, and Lloyd Austin, Secretary of Defense, visited Japan in the first overseas trip made by cabinet members under the Biden administration, and held a “2+2” meeting with Foreign Minister Motegi and Defense Minister Kishi Nobuo. The four ministers reaffirmed that the Japan-U.S. Alliance remains the cornerstone of peace, security and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific region, and renewed the unwavering commitment of both countries to the Japan-U.S. Alliance. They also concurred to further deepen the coordination to strengthen the deterrence and response capabilities of the Japan-U.S. Alliance.



The first Japan-U.S. “2+2” meeting convened under the Biden administration (March 16, 2021, Tokyo)

Furthermore, the U.S. underscored its unwavering commitment to the defense of Japan through the full range of its capabilities, including nuclear. The four ministers affirmed that Article V of the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty applies to the Senkaku Islands and affirmed that both nations oppose any unilateral action that seeks to undermine Japan’s administration of these islands. The four ministers instructed their respective offices to advance concrete works to strengthen the Alliance. They concurred to hold another “2+2” meeting later this year to confirm their outcomes.

In the second half of 2020, in-person visits by senior defense officials of the U.S. continued to take place in spite of the severe environment under the circumstances of the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. In August, General John Raymond, Chief of Space Operations of the U.S. Space Force paid a courtesy call to the Prime Minister as the first foreign high ranking official to do so since the outbreak of COVID-19. In October, Kenneth Braithwaite, Secretary of the Navy, Ryan McCarthy, Secretary of the Army, and Admiral Philip Davidson, Commander, U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, visited Japan successively. These were followed by a visit by General David Berger, Commandant of the U.S. Marine Corps, in November. In addition, Japan-U.S. bilateral security discussions were held by way of a video teleconference in October, during which both sides confirmed continued close coordination to maintain a free and open Indo-Pacific,

enhance response and deterrence capability, and strengthen the Japan-US Alliance, which is stronger than ever. Through these multilayered efforts, Japan will continue to promote security and defense cooperation with the U.S., further enhancing the deterrence and response capabilities of the Alliance.

B Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD)

Japan has been making steady efforts to develop and engage in the production of the BMD system while continuing cooperation with the U.S., including on the steady implementation of joint development and joint production of the Standard Missile 3 (SM-3 Block IIA) since 2006, and Japan is fully prepared to protect the lives and property of its citizens from the threat of ballistic missiles to Japan under any circumstances. With regard to the ground-deployed Aegis system (Aegis Ashore) that the Cabinet decided to introduce in 2017, the Ministry of Defense announced the suspension of its deployment process in June 2020. As a result of reviews conducted within the Government, the Cabinet reached a decision in December to build two new vessels equipped with the Aegis system in place of the Aegis Ashore system.

C Cyberspace

Based on the necessity for cross-government efforts by both Japan and the U.S., participants from both sides held a follow-up discussion on matters including the outcome of the seventh Japan-U.S. Cyber Dialogue held in October 2019. They also engaged in wide-ranging discussions on Japan-U.S. cooperation in cyberspace, including awareness about the situations, cyber countermeasures in both countries, cooperation in the international arena, and support for capacity building.

D Space

Japan and the U.S. have held discussions on a wide range of cooperation on space through events such as the Seventh Meeting of the Japan-U.S. Comprehensive Dialogue on Space, held in

August. Japan and the U.S. are continuing to cooperate on space security, including through mutual exchanges of information in the field of Space Situational Awareness (SSA) and others, as well as concrete examinations of cooperation over hosted payloads (mission instruments loaded onto other entities' satellites). In December, the Governments of Japan and the U.S. exchanged Notes concerning cooperation on hosted payloads, including the loading of U.S. Space Situational Awareness (SSA) sensors onto Japanese Quasi-Zenith Satellite "Michibiki," (QZS)-6 and QZS-7, scheduled to commence operations in FY2023.

E Multilateral Cooperation

Japan and the U.S. place importance on security and defense cooperation with allies and partners in the Indo-Pacific region. At the Second Japan-Australia-India-U.S. Foreign Ministers' Meeting in October, in order to promote a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific," which is becoming increasingly important in view of the post-COVID-19 world in a concrete way, the four ministers shared the importance of further developing practical cooperation in various areas such as quality infrastructure, maritime security, counter-terrorism, cyber security, humanitarian assistance/disaster relief, education and human resource development, and broadening cooperation with more countries for the realization of a FOIP.

F Information Security

Information security plays a crucial role in advancing cooperation within the context of the alliance. Based on this perspective, both countries continue to hold discussions designed to enhance their cooperation regarding information security.

G Maritime Security

In forums such as the East Asia Summit (EAS) and the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), Japan and the U.S. stress the importance of peacefully resolving maritime issues in accordance with international law as reflected in the United Nations

Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). The Guidelines announced in April 2015 also provide that Japan and the U.S. will cooperate closely with each other on measures to maintain maritime order in accordance with international law, including the freedom of navigation. Even under the conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, Japan and the U.S. continued to conduct joint exercises in the surrounding waters in the region including the South China Sea. Furthermore, cooperation with regional partners including Australia and India was strengthened through exercises such as MALABAR (Japan-U.S.-Australia-India joint exercise) and Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC).

(3) Realignment of U.S. Forces in Japan

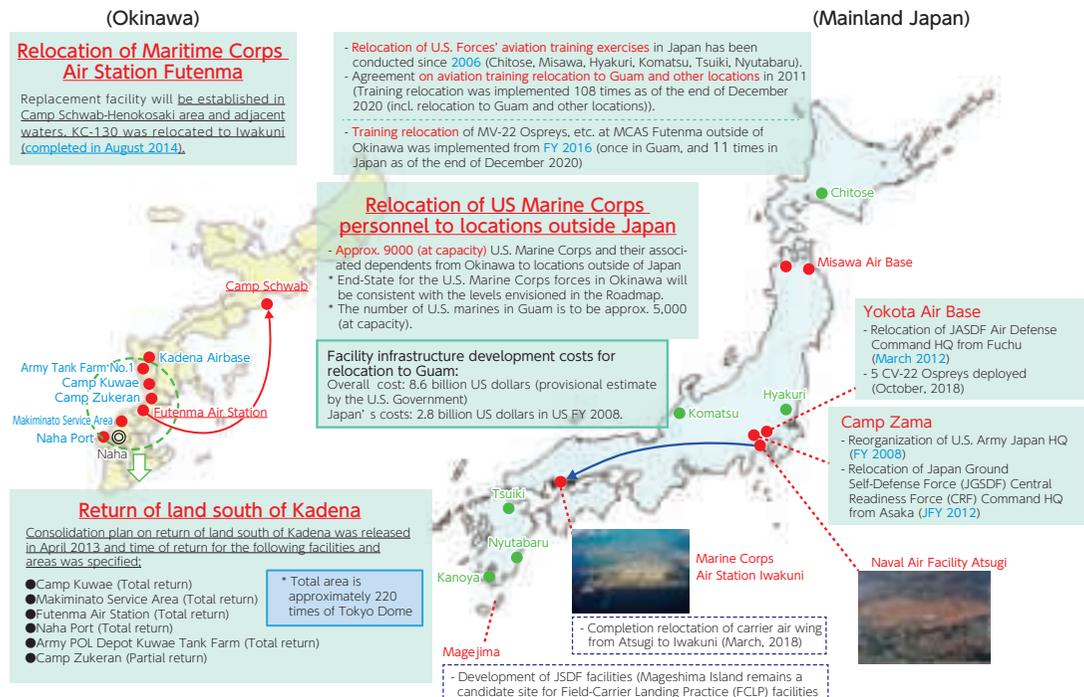
The Government of Japan will continue to make every effort to mitigate the impact on local communities, including Okinawa, by soundly promoting the realignment of U.S. Forces in Japan, including the prompt relocation to Henoko and the

return of MCAS Futenma, while still maintaining the deterrence capabilities of said forces.

In the joint statement issued by Japan and the U.S. in February 2017, the two governments affirmed, for the first time in a document at the summit level, that constructing the Futenma Replacement Facility (FRF) at the Camp Schwab-Henokosaki area and adjacent waters is the only solution to avoid the continued use of MCAS Futenma. Furthermore, in the “2+2” joint statement in April 2019, the two governments reaffirmed their understanding that the plan to construct the FRF at the Camp Schwab-Henokosaki area and adjacent waters is the only solution that avoids the continued use of MCAS Futenma, and underscored their strong determination to achieve its completion as soon as possible.

Japan and the U.S. will also continue to work closely on the steady implementation of the relocation of approximately 9,000 U.S. Marine Corps from Okinawa to outside the country such as Guam, which will begin in the first half of the

Realignment of U.S. Forces in Japan - An Overview



*In the “2+2” joint statement released in April, 2012, Japan and the U.S. decided to delink both the relocation of U.S. Marine Corps personnel from Okinawa to Guam and land returns south of Kadena from progress on the relocations of MCAS Futenma

2020s, and on the return of land south of Kadena based on the April 2013 “Consolidation Plan for Facilities and Areas in Okinawa.”

In addition to the return of a major portion of the Northern Training Area (NTA, approximately 4,000 hectares) in December 2017, various return projects were advanced based on this Consolidation Plan. In March 2020, a portion of the warehouse area of the Facilities and Engineering Compound in Camp Zukeran (approximately 11 hectares) were returned, thereby realizing the return of all areas indicated as “Immediate Return” under the Consolidation Plan.

(4) Host Nation Support (HNS)

The security environment surrounding Japan is becoming increasingly severe and uncertain at a remarkably rapid pace. From the standpoint that it is important to ensure smooth and effective operation of U.S. Forces, Japan (USFJ) bears the rent for USFJ facilities and areas and the Facility Improvement Program (FIP) funding stipulated within the scope of the Japan-U.S. Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA). In addition to this, under the Special Measures Agreement (SMA), Japan also bears labor costs, utility costs and training relocation costs for USFJ.

In February 2021, the Government of Japan and the Government of the U.S. mutually decided to amend the current Special Measures Agreement, extending its validity through March 31, 2022. They also concurred on continuing negotiations toward an agreement on a new SMA to be effective from April 1, 2022.

(5) Various Issues Related to the Presence of U.S. Forces in Japan

To ensure the smooth and effective operation of the Japan-U.S. security arrangements and the stable presence of USFJ as the linchpin of these arrangements, it is important to mitigate the impact of U.S. Forces’ activities on residents living in the vicinity and to gain their understanding and support regarding the presence of U.S. Forces. In

particular, the importance of mitigating the impact on Okinawa, where U.S. Forces’ facilities and areas are concentrated, has been confirmed between Japan and the U.S. on numerous occasions, including the Japan-U.S. Summit Meeting in April 2018 and the “2+2” meeting in April 2019. The Government of Japan will continue to work to address the realignment of U.S. Forces in Japan. At the same time, the Government of Japan has been making utmost efforts to make improvements in specific issues in light of the requests from local communities. Among these issues are preventing incidents and accidents involving U.S. Forces, abating the noise by U.S. Forces’ aircraft, and dealing with environmental issues at U.S. Forces’ facilities and areas, including the sound implementation of the Agreement on Cooperation in the Field of Environmental Stewardship of 2015 and the Agreement on Cooperation with regard to Implementation Practices relating to the Civilian Component of the United States Armed Forces in Japan of 2017. For example, when the large-scale leak of firefighting foam that contains Perfluorooctane Sulfonate (PFOS) occurred at MCAS Futenma in April 2020, Japanese officials accessed the site five times based on the Supplementary Agreement on Environmental Stewardship, conducted water and soil sampling and released the results. In addition, there have been many COVID-19 cases among USFJ personnel since March. In response to this, the Government of Japan and USFJ issued a joint press release in July on USFJ’s efforts to combat COVID-19, and are cooperating closely to prevent further spread of COVID-19 in Japan.

Since 2018, the TOFU: Think of Okinawa’s Future in the U.S. program has been launched to provide an opportunity for high school and university students from Okinawa to witness for themselves what Japan’s alliance partner, the U.S., is truly like, and the role that Japan plays in the international community, as well as to promote mutual understanding by having them interact with local important officials and young people in English.

Column

Project to Promote Exchanges and Enhance Mutual Understanding between Japan and the United States

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in cooperation with the United States Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA), has launched an exchange program since FY2020 between local middle and high school students and the children of personnel from the U.S. Forces, in regions where U.S. facilities and areas in Japan are located. This program aims to deepen mutual understanding among Japanese and U.S. middle and high school students through cultural and educational exchanges, as well as to nurture talents who can take an active role in the international community. The first program was held on December 5 and 6, at Misawa City of Aomori Prefecture. This column features the voices of Japanese students who participated in the program.

Kawamura Yukino, Daini Junior High School, Misawa City

At the beginning, simply introducing myself in English made me nervous. However, through interactions between Japanese and U.S. junior high school students, such as playing games and drawing pictures, I felt very happy as we were able to become closer to each other. I learned that despite the differences in language and culture, a strong desire to communicate can lead to mutual understanding between various people. From now on, I will value my own abilities as well as the abilities of others and engage in exchanges between Japan and the U.S. Misawa City has mountains, rivers, seas and lakes, making it a place with abundant resources. During the session where we considered ways to enhance the popularity of Misawa, we compiled and presented the ideas raised by all the participants. Through participation in this project, I feel that I have acquired some skills to listen to the opinions of others and broaden my own ideas. I am truly happy to have taken part in the program.

Ikeda Reika, Horiguchi Junior High School, Misawa City

At the start of the program, although I was able to understand what the U.S. participants were saying, I was unable to respond well to them, and I was vexed by the difficulty of communicating with them. However, we were able to exchange opinions with one another through trial and error, such as by drawing pictures, and using gestures. By the end, we had an enjoyable time. During the joint group session between Japanese and U.S. participants, I was amazed by the proactive attitude and leadership of the girls who took action immediately when they had an idea. At the same time, despite the differences in language and culture, I truly felt that working together toward the same goal helped to foster our friendship and deepen our ties naturally. I hope that there will be more such programs in the future that give us the opportunities to communicate directly with people from other countries.



Students engaging in discussions



Students dancing together

Due to the COVID-19 situation, this program was postponed in FY2019. On the other hand, the Project to Promote Exchanges and Enhance Mutual Understanding Between Japan and the United States was launched from December 2020 in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) to facilitate cultural and educational exchanges between Japanese and American middle and high school students (see the Column on page 222).

(6) United Nations Command (UNC) and U.S. Forces in Japan

Coincident with the start of the Korean War in June 1950, the United Nations Command (UNC) was established in July of the same year based on UN Security Council resolution 83 in June and resolution 84 in July. Following the cease-fire agreement concluded in July 1953, UNC Headquarters was relocated to Seoul, South Korea in July 1957, and UNC (Rear) was established in Japan. Established at Yokota Air Base, UNC (Rear) currently has a stationed commander and four other staff and military attachés from nine countries who are stationed at embassies in Tokyo as liaison officers for UNC. Based on Article 5 of the Agreement Regarding the Status of the United Nations Forces in Japan, UNC may use the U.S. Forces' facilities and areas in Japan to the minimum extent required to provide support for military logistics for UNC. At present, UNC is authorized to use the following seven facilities: Camp Zama, U.S. Fleet Activities, Yokosuka, U.S. Fleet Activities, Sasebo, Yokota Air Base, Kadena Air Base, Marine Corps Air Station Futenma and White Beach Area.

In July 2019, a joint board was held between the Government of Japan and UNC that marked the first time in over 60 years that any substantial discussions had been held between the two sides over matters not concerning the usage of facilities and areas. The meetings saw discussions held over the situation on the Korean Peninsula, with the two sides reaching an agreement on notification

procedures in case of unusual occurrences related to the United Nations Command Forces in Japan. The Government of Japan will continue to work closely with the UNC.

3 Global Security

(1) Regional Security

The security environment surrounding the Asia-Pacific region is becoming increasingly severe for various reasons such as the shift in the global power balance. Meanwhile, it would be difficult to say that the framework of regional security cooperation is sufficiently institutionalized because of the diversity of political, economic and social systems in the region. Therefore, Japan has been making efforts to realize a desirable regional security environment for Japan, by strengthening the Japan-U.S. Alliance, and combining bilateral and multilateral security cooperation at multifaceted and multilayered levels.

Japan works to further strengthen the deterrence and response capabilities of the Japan-U.S. Alliance as well as to enhance security cooperation with various other countries in addition to the U.S.

In relation to ASEAN Member States, Japan is advancing initiatives that contribute to the stability and prosperity of the region as a whole, basing Japan-ASEAN cooperation on the fundamental principles of the rule of law, openness, freedom, transparency and inclusivity as advocated in the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP) which was announced by ASEAN in June 2019. For instance, Japan offers continuous assistance for improving maritime security including through providing the Philippines, Malaysia, Viet Nam, Indonesia and other countries with patrol boats. Japan is also making progress in defense equipment and technology cooperation, including the conclusion of a contract on the transfer of surveillance radar systems to the Philippines in August as the first overseas transfer of complete equipment from Japan, and the reaching of a substantial agreement for the Agreement concerning

the Defense Equipment and Technology Transfer with Viet Nam in October.

In relation to India, the two leaders concurred on continuing to advance the “Japan-India Special Strategic and Global Partnership” in the summit telephone call held in September, and the Agreement between the Government of Japan and the Government of the Republic of India Concerning Reciprocal Provision of Supplies and Services between the Self-Defense Forces of Japan and the Indian Armed Forces (so-called “Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement,” or ACSA) was signed in the same month. The Agreement will promote closer cooperation between the Self-Defense Forces of Japan and the Indian Armed Forces, and enable them to actively contribute to international peace and security. In October, despite the circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic, Japan and India took the opportunity of the Second Japan-Australia-India-U.S. Foreign Ministers’ Meeting held in Tokyo to convene the Japan-India Foreign Ministers’ Strategic Dialogue, during which the Ministers affirmed their intention to continue boosting cooperation for the promotion of the “Free and Open Indo-Pacific” vision.

In relation to Australia, at the Japan-Australia Summit Meeting held during Prime Minister Scott Morrison’s visit to Japan in November, the leaders affirmed that Japan and Australia, as Special Strategic Partners, will continue to work together toward the realization of a “Free and Open Indo-Pacific.” They also welcomed the agreement in principle reached between the two countries on the reciprocal access agreement between Japan and Australia (“Japan-Australia RAA”) aimed at elevating bilateral security and defense cooperation to a new level, and for which negotiations have been ongoing. In sectors such as information and communications and critical minerals, the two leaders concurred on continuing to strengthen economic security cooperation.

In relation to the UK, Japan’s “global strategic partner,” and France, Japan’s “exceptional

partner,” at the Japan-UK Foreign Ministers’ Strategic Dialogue in February, the Japan-UK summit telephone call in September, the Japan-France Foreign Ministers’ Meeting as well as the Japan-France summit telephone call in October, inter alia, Japan and both countries affirmed the strengthening of cooperation going forward in areas such as maritime security, toward the realization of a free and open Indo-Pacific. In relation to France, the First Japan-France Working Group on the Indo-Pacific was held online in October, during which both sides confirmed that they would deepen concrete cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region. At the video teleconference meeting held by the Foreign Ministers of Japan and Germany in October, in light of the release of the “Policy Guidelines for the Indo-Pacific” by the Government of Germany, the two Ministers shared the view on strengthening Japan-Germany cooperation toward realizing a “Free and Open Indo-Pacific.” In addition, in the Japan-Netherlands summit telephone call held in December, in light of the fact that the Netherlands had released its own Indo-Pacific Guidelines, the two leaders shared the view of working together to realize a “Free and Open Indo-Pacific.” Japan also concurred on cooperating toward the realization of a “Free and Open Indo-Pacific” with Italy (March, Foreign Ministers’ telephone call), Spain (June, summit telephone call) and Finland (November, Foreign Ministers’ telephone call). In January 2021, Foreign Minister Motegi attended the EU Foreign Affairs Council held in a virtual format, during which he explained Japan’s stance and initiatives related to a “Free and Open Indo-Pacific.” In response to his statement, many of the EU Member States expressed understanding and support for the importance of ensuring rules-based international order in the Indo-Pacific.

In relation to the Republic of Korea, based on the recognition of the importance of Japan-ROK as well as Japan-U.S.-ROK cooperation toward the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, the two countries held a Japan-ROK Summit

Telephone Talk (September), Japan-ROK Foreign Ministers' Meetings (January, February, June (telephone call)) and Japan-U.S.-ROK Foreign Ministers' Meetings (January, February). The two sides confirmed that Japan and the ROK, as well as Japan, the U.S. and the ROK, would work closely together.

There are various issues of concern between Japan and China, such as the rapid strengthening of China's military power lacking transparency, its increasing activities in the waters and air spaces surrounding Japan, including the areas around the Senkaku Islands that are an inherent part of Japan's territory, and its enactment of the Coast Guard Law which includes provisions that are problematic from the viewpoint of their consistency with international law. Japan will continue to make use of opportunities at high-level dialogues, including summit meetings and foreign ministers' meetings, to firmly assert its position and resolve the issues of concern one by one, as well as to take a calm and resolute approach while strongly requesting for China's concrete action. As China's military trends are matters of grave interest to Japan, Japan is working on communicating its policies through security dialogues such as the Japan-China Security Dialogue, as well as efforts to build multilayered channels for exchanges. At the same time, Japan is communicating its concerns and urging China to improve transparency in relation to its defense policies and military power. The Maritime and Aerial Communication Mechanism between the defense authorities of Japan and China that commenced operation in June 2018 has great significance in the sense of promoting mutual understanding and confidence and avoiding unexpected collision.

Regarding Japan-Russia relations, in the area of security, the Japan-Russia Security Consultations took place in January, during which both parties held candid discussions on their security policies and various issues related to international and regional security. During the same month, Japan conducted the second joint counter-piracy

exercise with Russian Navy vessels in the Gulf of Aden.

Peace and stability in the Middle East region is vital to the peace and prosperity of the international community including Japan. The Middle East is one of the world's key energy suppliers and approximately 90% of Japan's crude oil imports rely on the region. It is, therefore, extremely important to ensure the safety of navigation of Japan-related vessels in this region. As Japan's independent efforts toward ensuring peace and stability in the Middle East region and the safety of Japan-related vessels, the Government of Japan has made a Cabinet decision in December 2019 on (1) making further diplomatic efforts toward easing tensions and stabilizing the situation in the Middle East, (2) taking thorough measures for ensuring safety of navigation including robust information sharing with relevant stakeholders, and (3) utilizing vessels and aircraft of the SDF for strengthening its information gathering posture. Information gathering activities using SDF vessels and aircraft in the waters of the Middle East began from January 2020.

Japan held the third Politico-Military (PM) Dialogue with Laos in March, as well as the 18th PM Dialogue with the UK in September, the 2nd PM Dialogue with Jordan in October and the 4th PM Dialogue with Bahrain in October.

In addition to the abovementioned efforts to strengthen bilateral cooperation, Japan is also advancing on the establishment of networks for regional peace and prosperity by promoting various forms of cooperation, including cooperation with the U.S. and Australia, with the U.S. and India, and with the U.S., Australia and India (Second Foreign Ministers' Meeting held in Tokyo in October, and telephone call held in February 2021).

In addition, Japan has actively participated in and contributed to multilateral frameworks in the region, including the East Asia Summit (EAS), the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting-Plus (ADMM-Plus), in order to strengthen security cooperation in the

region. The ARF is an important security dialogue framework in which various entities participate including North Korea and the EU, and it aims to improve the security environment of the Indo-Pacific region through dialogues and cooperation on political and security issues. It is also an important forum that focuses on confidence building through various initiatives. At the 27th ARF Ministerial Meeting held in September, participating ministers candidly exchanged views mainly on regional and international affairs, including the issues concerning North Korea and the East and South China Seas, as well as the response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Japan is also making a proactive contribution through, for example, serving as the co-chair of the Inter-Sessional Meetings (ISM) on Maritime Security twice to date.

Furthermore, in addition to government-to-government dialogues (track 1), Japan actively utilizes frameworks where participants from both public and private sectors exchange opinions and explain their security policies (track 1.5). Japan participates in various conferences, including the IISS Asia Security Summit (Shangri-La Dialogue) (Singapore), and Foreign Minister Motegi attended the Munich Security Conference (Germany) in February 2020 as part of Japan's efforts to promote other countries' understanding of Japan's security policies, and to facilitate cooperation and confidence-building in the region.

(2) Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding

A On-the-Ground Initiatives

(A) UN Peacekeeping Operations (UN PKOs)

As of December 31, 2020, 13 UN PKO missions are on active duty, primarily in the Middle East and Africa, to handle a wide range of duties that include monitoring ceasefires, promoting the political process, and protecting civilians. More than 90,000 military, police, and civilian personnel have been deployed to these missions. In response to the increasing complexity and scale of the mandates and the associated shortages of personnel, equipment, and financial resources,

discussions on more effective and efficient implementation of UN PKOs are underway in various forums, primarily within the UN.

Based on the Act on Cooperation with UN Peacekeeping Operations and Other Operations (PKO Act), since 1992 Japan has dispatched more than 12,500 personnel to a total of 28 missions, including UN PKOs. More recently, since 2011 Japanese staff officers have been dispatched to the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), while engineering units used to be deployed there from 2012. The engineering units in the South Sudanese capital of Juba and the surrounding areas have undertaken such activities as developing infrastructure that includes roads, supporting displaced persons through the provision of water supplies, as well as site preparation, and concluded their activities in May 2017. As of December 31, 2020, four SDF officers are on active duty at the UNMISS Headquarters, who continue to work toward peace and stability in South Sudan. Additionally, since April 2019, Japan has been conducting activities contributing to peace and stability in the Middle East by dispatching two SDF officers to the Force Headquarters for the Multinational Force and Observers (MFO), which is stationed in Egypt's Sinai Peninsula. Under the banner of "Proactive Contribution to Peace," by building on the past experiences of peacekeeping operations and making use of its own strengths, Japan will continue to contribute proactively in the field of international peace cooperation in the future by means such as enhancing capacity building support and dispatching units and individuals.

(B) ODA and Other Cooperation to Facilitate Peacebuilding

Post-conflict support that effectively combines humanitarian assistance and development cooperation (humanitarian-development nexus) is important for preventing the recurrence of humanitarian crises. At the same time, in order to prevent the outbreak and recurrence of conflicts that give rise to humanitarian crises, it is important to provide

support for nation-building and social stabilization from a medium- to long-term perspective even during peacetime, as well as to provide support for autonomous and self-sustaining development. Japan has been providing support for peacebuilding based on this “humanitarian-development-peace nexus” approach, and positions peacebuilding as one of the priority issues in its Development Cooperation Charter. The following are some of the main initiatives implemented recently.

a. Middle East

Japan has provided comprehensive support for peace and stability in the Middle East. This includes providing food and refugee assistance, as well as support for the development of human resources who can play an active role in nation-building. From 2019 to 2020, Japan received 34 people from Afghanistan, including government officials, expected to contribute to such fields as agricultural, rural, and infrastructure development. This has made up a total of 610 international students and other personnel that Japan has received from Afghanistan to date. Japan’s efforts in human resource development have steadily borne fruit, as seen in past examples such as an international student who became a vice minister of the government upon returning to the student’s home country. Japan also received 16 students from Syria in 2020 to offer education to young people who were deprived of opportunities to attend school due to the Syrian crisis. As for Palestine, in addition to an increase in the refugee population, it is also facing serious deterioration of the living environment, including the deteriorated camp infrastructure as well as unemployment and poverty. In light of this, Japan worked on improving the living environment of refugees through the implementation of the Camp Improvement Project (CIP) at refugee camps in Palestine, and contributed to the stabilization and

improvement of the people’s welfare based on human security.

b. Africa

At the Seventh Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD7) in 2019, Japan announced the New Approach for Peace and Stability in Africa (NAPSA). Through support for institution building, resilience of local community, prevention of youth radicalization and others, Japan contributes to peace and stability in Africa under the banner of NAPSA while respecting Africa’s ownership in conflict resolution and addressing the root causes that hamper peace and stability.

For example, Japan has conducted criminal justice training since 2014 for Francophone African countries, and has supported stabilization of the Sahel region by strengthening the capabilities of investigative and judicial bodies. Japan also actively provides support for elections. During the presidential election in Côte d’Ivoire in October 2020, Japan provided support by supplying equipment and in other ways, in cooperation with the UN Development Programme (UNDP). Japan also supported the Central African Republic’s efforts to achieve peace and stability by supplying equipment for the management of elections through UNDP, during the country’s presidential elections held in December. Japan is also providing security equipment to strengthen countries’ ability to maintain security against frequent terrorist attacks and transnational crimes.

In South Sudan, along with dispatching headquarters staff to UNMISS, in response to the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS)¹ signed in 2018, Japan has been supporting the implementation of the agreement and ceasefire monitoring through the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), a regional organization

¹ An agreement concluded by bringing together stakeholders in South Sudan in response to the sluggish implementation of the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan issued in 2015 by IGAD. It provides matters such as a schedule for fulfilling the ceasefire.

in East Africa. Furthermore, Japan, in collaboration with the UNDP, has disbursed a total of 57 million US dollars between 2008 and 2020 to Peacekeeping Training Centers operated by 13 African countries, contributing to strengthening Africa's capacity for peacekeeping activities.

B Initiatives within the UN (Peacebuilding)

Based on the understanding that many regional conflicts and civil wars are rekindled even after the conflict has ended, and that it is extremely important to provide appropriate support in the post-conflict period, the UN Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) was established in 2005 with the aim of offering consistent advice on assistance, from conflict resolution to recovery, reintegration and reconstruction. The PBC conducts discussions to identify priority issues and formulate peacebuilding strategies in the agenda countries.² Japan has served as a member of the Organizational Committee since the PBC's establishment and contributed to its activities.

Based on the "Review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture" including the PBC of April 2016, the UN Secretary-General issued a report on peacebuilding and sustaining peace (A/72/707-S/2018/43) in February 2018. The report makes a variety of proposals for, inter alia: enhancing financing for peacebuilding; increasing operational and policy coherence of the PBC; and strengthening UN leadership, accountability and capacity. The third "Review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture" was conducted in 2020, and the UN General Assembly resolution (A/RES/75/201) and Security Council resolution 2558 were adopted in December. While welcoming progress on the implementation of the relevant resolutions of the past, the review affirmed that efforts will be made to continue with the implementation of these resolutions, the importance of the role of the PBC, and the convening of a meeting to discuss sustained financing.

Japan has contributed proactively to the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) since its establishment in 2006. Announcing its aim to allocate 10 million US dollars in September 2016, Japan has contributed a total of 55.5 million US dollars (3 million US dollars in 2020) and ranks seventh among the major donor countries as of December 2020. In the address delivered by Prime Minister Suga at the General Debate of the United Nations General Assembly in 2020, he announced that Japan will continue to contribute to sustaining peace, including through the PBC, and engaging in strengthening institutions and building capacities.

C Human Resource Development

(A) The Program for Global Human Resource Development for Peacebuilding and Development

While civilian experts with a high level of skill and expertise have a substantial role to play in the field of post-conflict peacebuilding, the number of those who are capable of fulfilling the role is insufficient, and therefore, the development of relevant human resources remains a major challenge. Japan has been implementing programs for human resource development in order to cultivate civilian experts who can play a leading role in the field of peacebuilding and development. As of the end of the FY2020, more than 800 people have been trained. The trainees who completed the programs have gone on to play an active role in the field of peacebuilding and development in Asia, Africa, and other parts of the world, and have received high acclaim from both the UN and other countries.

In the FY2020 program, a training course for entry level human resources and a training course for mid-career practitioners with experience in the fields of peacebuilding and development were conducted.

² Four countries of Guinea-Bissau, Central African Republic, Liberia and Burundi

(B) Training for United Nations Peacekeepers of Various Countries

Japan has been supporting peacekeepers from various countries participating in UN PKOs to enhance their capabilities. Since 2015, in conjunction with cooperative efforts among the UN, supporting member states, and personnel-dispatching countries, Japan has provided support for the Triangular Partnership Project (TPP), a framework for innovative cooperation aimed at addressing the urgent need to improve the capabilities of PKO personnel. For example, Japan has sent 172 SDF personnel and other individuals to Kenya and Uganda as instructors and conducted training on the operation of heavy engineering equipment for 277 people from eight African countries that expressed intentions to dispatch engineering units to UN PKOs. Since 2018, this project has been extended to Asia and the surrounding regions. Japan has dispatched 68 SDF and other personnel to Viet Nam and conducted training on the operation of heavy engineering equipment for 56 people from nine countries of Asia and the surrounding regions. Additionally, in October 2019 a Buddy First Aid program was begun in the medical field, a considerably problematic area for UN PKOs. Separate from this project, Japan also dispatches instructors and other personnel to Peacekeeping Training Centers in Asian and African nations while also providing them with financial assistance.

(3) Initiatives to Combat Security Threats

A Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism Measures

In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic has had profound effects not only on domestic politics, economy and society, but also the international political and economic order, and further, penetrated into people's behavior, mindsets and values. It also brought about major changes to the environment surrounding terrorism. Terrorists continue to carry out their terrorist activities in Asia and other parts of the world while adapting to the new

social circumstances that have resulted from the COVID-19 pandemic, such as the weakening of governance as well as social divisions brought about by poverty and racial and ethnic issues becoming apparent. Furthermore, the increased dependence on information and communications technology by people around the world has motivated terrorists or terrorist organizations to spread extremism through the Internet and social media, as well as to conduct illegal behavior connected to terrorism in cyberspace, such as acquisition of funding for terrorism. There is a pressing need to respond comprehensively to these developments.

Based on the "G7 Action Plan on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism" compiled at the G7 Ise-Shima Summit in 2016, Japan has implemented the following actions: (1) concrete measures to enhance counterterrorism capacity, which includes promoting the utilization of Interpol databases and measures against the funding of terrorism, (2) promotion of tolerance in communities through dialogues and other means, in order to prevent violent extremism, which is a root cause of terrorism, and (3) capacity building assistance to developing countries. In particular, it has been pointed out that the spread of various misinformation brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic may further motivate young people who depend on the Internet and social media to commit acts of violence. In light of this, it is more important than ever before to respond to violent extremism, and initiatives through public-private cooperation are also being implemented globally.

Cutting off the funding of terrorism is of great importance to preventing and eradicating it. Based on this recognition, in accordance with UN Security Council resolution 1373, Japan has implemented measures against terrorists or terrorist organizations including the assets freeze in cooperation with the U.S. and the other members of G7. In March, Japan designated three entities to add in the sanction list set out in this resolution.

In 2019, the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) lost their dominant territories in Iraq and

Syria. In view of this, with respect to the issue of returning and relocating foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs), there are two very important issues: (1) taking measures for properly prosecuting, de-radicalizing, rehabilitating and socially integrating former terrorists and their families, and (2) strengthening people's awareness and resilience of communities at the grassroots level to prevent people from being drawn to violent extremism, especially young people. In addition, Japan is implementing projects through providing financial contribution to international organizations to address imminent issues, such as strengthening maritime security, preventing violent extremism and treating prisoners properly in prisons.

Japan provided contributions in the amount of 2.9 billion Japanese yen (supplementary budget for FY2019) to the projects implemented by international organizations and funds, including the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), and the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT), by using their respective strengths and expertise effectively.

As an initiative that Japan has carried out continuously for the past 16 years, Japan also runs an exchange program inviting Islamic school teachers and providing opportunities to experience interfaith dialogue, school visits and cultural events in Japan. Japan will continue to implement such initiatives in the future, in order to help promote moderation and the creation of more tolerant societies that are receptive to different values.

Through bilateral and trilateral counterterrorism consultations, Japan also exchanges information on the world terrorism situations and affirms the strengthening of cooperation in the field of countering terrorism with other countries.

The Government of Japan has promoted counterterrorism measures in collaboration with relevant countries and organizations. Based on the

view that information gathering is critical for combating terrorism, the Government established the Counter Terrorism Unit - Japan (CTU-J) in December 2015 and has been making concerted efforts to gather information with the Prime Minister's Office serving as the control tower. Regarding the incident in which a Japanese national being detained in Syria was safely released in October 2018, this outcome is owed to CTU-J playing a key role in requesting the cooperation of the countries concerned and handling the situation by leveraging Japan's information network. Following the series of terrorist bombings that occurred in Sri Lanka in April 2019, the Director General in charge of the region and others from CTU-J were immediately dispatched to the area to gather information. To fulfill the critical responsibility of securing the safety of Japanese nationals overseas, Japan will continue to further enhance its information gathering through the CTU-J and take all possible measures to counterterrorism to ensure the safety of Japanese nationals overseas.

B Criminal Justice Initiatives

The UN Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice ("Congress") and the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice are in charge of shaping policy on crime prevention and criminal justice in the international community. The 14th Congress was convened in March 2021 in Kyoto ("Kyoto Congress"). (The Kyoto Congress was scheduled to be held in April 2020 but was postponed due to the situation over the spread of COVID-19. In August 2020, the UN General Assembly decided that the 14th Congress will be held in March 2021.) Japan, as the chair of the Congress, led discussions on the draft political declaration to be adopted and advanced preparations for hosting the Congress in coordination with UNODC, and relevant international organizations and countries. In accordance with the overall theme, "Advancing crime prevention, criminal justice and the rule of law: towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda," the Kyoto Congress

Column

Learning for Empathy - Creating a Peaceful and Sustainable Society Underpinned by Empathy

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We work for UNESCO, and its Constitution adopted in 1945 states that “since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed.” Furthermore, as advocated by the Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4), there is now a strong need to foster leaders who can take proactive action to resolve the issues that are common to all humankind. To that end, the UNESCO Office in Bangkok, Thailand, with the support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, has put in place a project “Together for Peace (T4P),” to promote peace in the Asia-Pacific region through education and culture.

In recent years, UNESCO has been participating in the initiatives to counter and prevent violent extremism under the leadership of the UN Secretary-General and engaging in education activities that focus on the power of education to break the chain of violence. These efforts were initiated based on the assumption that in addition to some human nature which justifies various forms of exclusion for various reasons, leading to structural poverty, inequality and discrimination, willingness and efforts are missing to achieve mutual understanding and cooperation with ‘others’. The “Learning for Empathy” project aims to transform this mindset of our society toward a culture of empathy. This project was launched in 2019 with funding contributed by Japan. Here, empathy refers to the ability to understand the feelings of others and the issues around us in a multifaceted manner, from the perspective of the other party or a third party, and to take action motivated by the desire to help others and resolve the issues. We believe that it is possible to counter structural discrimination and inequality, and to contribute to building a more just and peaceful society, through fostering more and more future leaders who have a strong sense of empathy and the ability to appreciate diversity. Active support for school education that promotes tolerance and cross-cultural understanding is expected to help prevent hatred, violent extremism and conflict. To that end, it is necessary to support teachers, who are role models. The project currently involves school principals and teachers from madrasas (religious schools) and local public junior high schools that have not had opportunities to actively engage in international exchange so far, in the four countries of Bangladesh, Indonesia, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. Despite facing their own challenges, they are striving every day to improve the quality of learning in their respective schools.

Specifically, teachers from the beneficiary countries (countries receiving support) are invited to Japan where they visit UNESCO Associated Schools* and community learning centers. Based on their interactions with Japanese teachers, parents and students, and the sharing of initiatives by each country, the participants draw up their own action

plans for mainstreaming learning for empathy in their schools. Upon returning to their home countries, they engage in various activities based on their action plans, including sharing the results of initiatives implemented at their schools widely among the teachers of other schools and other countries. A male student from Pakistan who had participated in the activity shared what he had learned—“The other day, I was hit by a bicycle on the road and I was about to lose my temper. However, I was glad that we were able to talk calmly and solve the problem. Perhaps I may be able to change myself and my surroundings gradually, through such small efforts.” It was also learned that the teachers of each country hope for their students to be exposed to diverse experiences beyond the usual sphere of their lives. This initiative may only be a drop in the sea, but we hope to contribute, even a little, to laying the groundwork for encouraging young people to tackle global issues with a sense of solidarity.



Students learning from a teacher who had participated in the program in Japan (June 2020, Indonesia; Photo: UNESCO)



Visiting a UNESCO associated school (a public junior high school in Tokyo) (July 2019; Photo: UNESCO)

*UNESCO Associated Schools: educational institutions at all levels, including primary and secondary schools, which promote UNESCO values and ideals into schools as members of the UNESCO Associated Schools Network (ASPnet).

adopted a political declaration setting measures on crime prevention and criminal justice, as well as approaches for international cooperation.

Furthermore, Japan provides support to improve the prosecution capabilities of law-enforcement authorities and to enhance capacities related to measures against cybercrime in Southeast Asia by providing financial contributions to UNODC and through financial contributions from the Japan-ASEAN Integration Fund (JAIF).

In July 2017, Japan concluded the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC), which establishes a global legal framework for promoting cooperation to prevent and combat transnational organized crime including terrorism more effectively. In accordance with the UNTOC, Japan advances international cooperation that includes international assistance in investigation.

C Anti-corruption Measures

As a State Party to the UN Convention against Corruption (UNCAC), which sets out provisions for international cooperation and measures to address corruption such as bribery and embezzlement of property by public officials, Japan has actively participated in discussions for the effective implementation of the UNCAC and strengthening international cooperation on preventing and combating corruption. In 2020, the General Assembly adopted a resolution in which it decided to convene the “Special session of the General Assembly against corruption” aimed at strengthening UNCAC initiatives, and Japan is working with other countries to advance preparations for the convention of this special session in 2021. In addition to the international cooperation based on the Convention, Japan has been conducting training for anti-corruption authorities in developing countries with the aim of strengthening their capabilities of investigation and prosecution through financial contributions to UNODC.

Within the context of the G20, the inaugural G20 Anti-corruption Ministers Meeting (in



State Minister for Foreign Affairs Uto participating in the G20 Anticorruption Ministers Meeting (held online) (October 22, Tokyo)

October) was convened online under the Saudi Presidency. State Minister for Foreign Affairs Uto Takashi represented Japan at this meeting, and delivered a speech on behalf of Japan as the former Presidency. In his speech, he announced that Japan will continue to promote the effective implementation of existing international conventions such as the UNCAC and the OECD Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials in International Business Transactions, as well as to enhance international cooperation toward preventing and combatting corruption. The outcome documents adopted at this meeting including the G20 Anti-Corruption Ministerial Communiqué were annexed to the Leaders’ Declaration of the G20 Riyadh Summit.

Japan is an active participant in the OECD Working Group on Bribery, which verifies the implementation of the Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials in International Business Transactions by each state party to prevent and combat the bribery of foreign public officials. Japan has also supported the ADB/OECD Anti-Corruption Initiative jointly promoted by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the OECD as part of its contributions toward enhancing anti-corruption measures in the region.

D Measures to Combat Money Laundering and the Financing of Terrorism

Regarding anti-money laundering and counter-terrorist financing — (AML/CFT) measures, the

Financial Action Task Force (FATF) is an international framework that establishes the international standards that countries should implement and conducts peer reviews to assess levels of implementation. As a founding member, Japan has actively participated in these discussions. In recent years, the FATF has been engaged in initiatives to prevent financing for the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and has issued the FATF statement that calls for the eradication of illegal financial activities by North Korea. In the Fourth Round of Mutual Evaluations of Japan, conducted by the FATF in 2019, Japan, under cooperation between the Government and the private sector, provided explanations on its AML/CFT measures to the FATF's assessors.

In addition, Japan takes measures to combat the financing of terrorism as a state party to the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism, and also implements measures to freeze the assets of terrorists and terrorist organizations in accordance with the UN Security Council resolution 1373, and designated by the UN Security Council Taliban Sanctions Committee or the ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee. On March 31, Japan implemented asset freezing measures on three organizations based on the UN Security Council resolution 1373, and four individuals and five organizations designated by the ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee.

Furthermore, in order to support international initiatives to stamp out money laundering and block terrorism financing flows, Japan works with the UNODC to provide assistance for capacity building that includes the development of legal systems in South Asia, including Bangladesh, Maldives and Pakistan.

E Measures to Combat Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants

Japan has strengthened its domestic mechanisms to combat trafficking in persons which involves increasingly sophisticated and latent methods,

while proactively providing assistance to developing countries in accordance with "Japan's 2014 Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Persons." For example, in 2020, Japan continued to conduct training programs through JICA to deepen mutual understanding on human trafficking countermeasures (especially prevention, protection and support to restore the autonomy of victims) of stakeholders in Asian countries, including Japan, and to promote more effective regional cooperation. With respect to cooperation with international organizations, in 2020, through funding to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), Japan continued to provide assistance for the safe repatriation of foreign victims of trafficking in persons protected in Japan and to carry out social rehabilitation support programs to prevent the repetition of trafficking after they return to their countries. Japan also funded training programs for law-enforcement authorities in Southeast Asian countries through projects organized by UNODC, UN Women and other organizations.

Japan also implemented support projects mainly toward ASEAN and African countries, with a view to preventing the smuggling of migrants.

As a state party to the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, and the Protocol Against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, Japan has also further deepened its cooperation with other countries with a view to combating trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants.

F Measures to Combat Illicit Drug Trafficking

Japan works in cooperation with UNODC to investigate and analyze synthetic drugs such as amphetamine-type stimulants and new psychoactive substances in the Asia-Pacific region, provide support for improving the container control capacity of law enforcement agencies at air and sea ports, and put in place measures against illicit drug trafficking, which is spreading across borders. In relation to Afghanistan, the world's largest region

for the illegal cultivation of opium poppy, Japan has contributed 5.3 million US dollars to UNODC in order to strengthen border controls, promote alternative development to drug crop cultivation, and enhance capacity building of narcotics agents in cooperation with neighboring countries.

(4) The Oceans and Seas

Japan is surrounded by the sea on all sides, and is blessed with a vast exclusive economic zone (EEZ) and long coastlines. It is a maritime nation that has achieved economic growth through maritime trade and development of marine resources, and has pursued “Free, Open and Stable Seas.” “Free, Open and Stable Seas,” which are upheld by maritime order governed by law and rules including freedom of navigation and overflight, rather than force, are essential for the peace and prosperity not only of Japan but also of the international community as a whole. To maintain and develop “Free, Open and Stable Seas,” Japan promotes initiatives to ensure safe maritime transport and cooperate on maritime security. Such initiatives are also important toward securing Japan’s maritime interests, which form the basis for Japan’s economic survival.

Japan is advancing efforts toward the realization of a “Free and Open Indo-Pacific” that aims to bring stability and prosperity to the Indo-Pacific region, in particular, by strengthening maritime order in the region where important sea lanes are located.

A Order at Sea

(A) Basic Stance

There is an increasing number of cases where the interests of countries clash with each other from the perspective of securing maritime interests and national security. In particular, in the seas of Asia, there has been an increasing number

of cases of tension arising from friction between countries, and the international community is closely monitoring these cases with much interest. Against this background, at the 13th Asia Security Summit (Shangri-La Dialogue) held in Singapore in May 2014, Japan shared the view that it was necessary to fully uphold the “Three Principles of the Rule of Law at Sea” (see 6(2) on page 268).

Japan also utilizes frameworks such as the G7 and ASEAN-related meetings including the East Asia Summit (EAS) and the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF)³ to actively send a message regarding the importance of “Free, Open and Stable Seas,” and Japan’s stance on maritime security as well as the importance of international cooperation in this area. For example, at the EAS held in November, Prime Minister Suga expressed his full support for the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP), that sets forth the rule of law, openness, freedom, transparency and inclusivity as ASEAN’s principles of action. He also expressed that the AOIP shares many fundamental commonalities with the “Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)” promoted by Japan and called on each country for their support. In addition, at the Japan-ASEAN Summit Meeting held in the same month, they adopted the Joint Statement of the 23rd ASEAN-Japan Summit on Cooperation on ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific and affirmed that the AOIP and FOIP share fundamental principles, and Japan confirmed that it will advance cooperation in accordance with the four priority areas⁴ set out in the AOIP, including maritime cooperation.

Among the frameworks related to ASEAN, the Expanded ASEAN Maritime Forum (EAMF) and the ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on Maritime Security are frameworks that are focused on the maritime sector. At the Eighth EAMF hosted by Viet Nam in December, the delegates from Japan

³ Regional cooperative frameworks with the participation of the 10 ASEAN countries as well as various countries, regions and organizations. In addition to the East Asia Summit (EAS) and ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), other examples include the ASEAN+3 (Japan, China, ROK) and Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM).

⁴ The four areas of maritime cooperation, connectivity, SDGs and economy.

spoke about the importance of a maritime order based on the rule of law and Japan's initiatives toward the realization of a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific", among other matters. An expert from Japan also made a presentation on the importance of the rule of law at sea based on the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). Japan also organizes workshops as an official event of the ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on Maritime Security (see [C](#) (B)).

(B) United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)

Also known as the "Constitution for the Oceans," UNCLOS is the very basis of maritime order governed by the rule of law. Japan regards maritime order with the Convention at the core as the cornerstone that safeguards Japan's maritime rights and interests while facilitating its maritime activities across the international community. As such, Japan actively contributes to discussions among concerned international organizations at conferences that include the Meetings of States Parties to the Convention, as well as to the sharing of

ideas for achieving stability in the maritime legal order, in order to ensure that the convention will be even more widely applied and implemented appropriately (see [6\(2\)](#) on page 268).

(C) Challenge to Japan's Maritime Sovereignty (Situation Surrounding the East China Sea) (see Chapter 1, 1-1(2) and Chapter 2, Section 2, 3 (1) [B\(D\)](#))

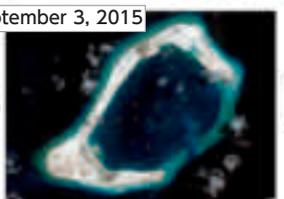
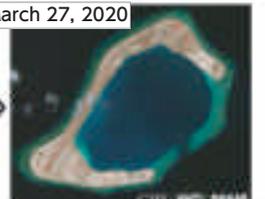
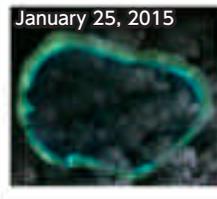
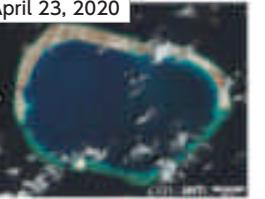
In the East China Sea, China Coast Guard vessels have continued to intrude into Japan's territorial sea around the Senkaku Islands in 2020. The duration of intrusion into the territorial waters and the number of days of navigation in the contiguous zone by China Coast Guard vessels reached a record high, and there were repeated incidents of China Coast Guard vessels approaching Japanese fishing vessels. Chinese military vessels and aircraft are also becoming increasingly active and expanding their operations. In addition, China has been continuing unilateral resource development in areas where the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and the continental shelf are pending delimitation. In recent years, Japan

Uotsuri Island of the Senkaku Islands



Photo: Office of Policy Planning and Coordination on Territory and Sovereignty, Cabinet Secretariat

Large-scale, rapid outpost building in the South China Sea by China

	Before reclamation	2015 (After reclamation)	2020
Fiery Cross Reef	August 14, 2014 	September 3, 2015 	March 27, 2020 
Subi Reef	January 8, 2014 	September 3, 2015 	March 27, 2020 
Mischief Reef	January 25, 2015 	September 8, 2015 	April 23, 2020 

Source: CSIS Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative/Digital Globe

has found numerous research projects being conducted by China in the waters surrounding Japan, such as the East China Sea, without Japan’s consent. Given China’s continued unilateral attempts to change the status quo in the East China Sea, Japan will carefully monitor the trends and movements around its air and sea spaces, continue to respond in a firm but calm manner while making claims that should be made, and at the same time, promote cooperation with the relevant countries including the U.S. in order to achieve peace and stability in the East China Sea.

(D) Challenge to the Maritime Order (Problems Surrounding the South China Sea) (see Chapter 1, 1-1(2) and Chapter 2, Section 2, 7 (2))

In the South China Sea, China has announced the establishment of new administrative districts called the “Nansha District” and the “Xisha District”. China has also been further conducting unilateral attempts to change the status quo and

that run counter to the rule of law and openness, as well as attempting to create a fait accompli. These include the further militarization of reclaimed features. The international community, including Japan, has expressed serious concerns over these actions. China has also continued to take actions that heighten tensions in the region, including repeated military exercises and missile launches. Japan has consistently supported the full enforcement of the rule of law in the South China Sea, while focusing on ensuring freedom of navigation and overflight and ensuring the safety of sea lanes. Japan has also emphasized the importance of all parties involved with the South China Sea to work toward the peaceful settlement of disputes in accordance with international law, in particular the UNCLOS.

The issue with regard to the South China Sea is directly related to the peace and stability of the region and constitutes a legitimate concern of the international community. The issue is also an important matter of concern for Japan, which

depends on marine transport for much of its resources and energy and which is a stakeholder that utilizes the South China Sea. Cooperation within the international community is of great importance in maintaining and developing “Free, Open and Stable Seas.” For this reason, Japan supports the U.S. Freedom of Navigation Operations.⁵

B Ensuring Safe Maritime Transport

Japan actively contributes to ensuring freedom of navigation and overflight and safe maritime transport through anti-piracy measures in Asia and Africa as well as close partnership and cooperation with other countries.

(A) Anti-piracy Measures in Asia

According to the International Maritime Bureau (IMB) of the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC), the number of piracy cases in the seas of Southeast Asia was 53 in 2019 and 62 in 2020. In recent years, there have been some kidnap incidents against seafarers in the Sulu Sea and Celebes Sea, posing a threat to vessels navigating in these waters.

To encourage regional cooperation in coping with incidents such as acts of piracy in Asia, Japan took the initiative in formulating the Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia (ReCAAP), which entered into force in 2006. Each of the contracting parties provides information and cooperates on incidents such as acts of piracy in the Straits of Malacca and Singapore and other regions, via the Information Sharing Centre (ReCAAP-ISC) established in Singapore under the Agreement. Japan supports the activities of ReCAAP-ISC through personnel (dispatching the Executive Director and an Assistant Director) and financial contributions. Moreover, Japan is carrying out programs to enhance maritime law enforcement and surveillance capabilities of coastal

states in Asia, which have been highly acclaimed in the international community.

(B) Anti-piracy Measures Off the Coast of Somalia and in the Gulf of Aden

According to the IMB, the number of piracy and armed robbery cases (hereinafter referred to as “piracy cases”) off the coast of Somalia and in the Gulf of Aden was 237 at its peak in 2011 but has since declined to a low level (three in 2018, zero in 2019, and zero in 2020). Despite efforts such as maritime operations of the navies and self-defense measures by merchant ships, the root causes of piracy off the coast of Somalia remain unresolved. Pirates off the coast of Somalia still have the intention and capability to carry out acts of piracy, which requires a careful watch on the situation.

Since 2009, Japan has been conducting anti-piracy operations, without any interruption, by deploying Maritime Self-Defense Force destroyers (with coast guard officers on board) and P-3C maritime patrol aircraft off the coast of Somalia and to the Gulf of Aden. To solve the root causes of piracy off the coast of Somalia and in the Gulf of Aden, Japan has been making multi-layered efforts that include support for enhancing the maritime law enforcement capacity of Somalia and its neighboring countries and ensuring the stability of Somalia.

Japan has supported the establishment of Information Sharing Centres in Yemen, Kenya and Tanzania, as well as the construction of the Djibouti Regional Training Centre (DRTC), by contributing 15.53 million US dollars to a fund established by the International Maritime Organization (IMO). Moreover, Japan has contributed 4.5 million US dollars to a trust fund to support Somalia and its neighboring countries. In addition, Japan provided two patrol vessels to the Djibouti Coast Guard in 2015 and has been

⁵ The U.S. Government explains its “freedom of navigation” operations as efforts to challenge excessive claims that can infringe freedom of navigation and overflight, and the right of lawful uses of the sea. One example of this is the navigation of the U.S. Navy’s Montgomery littoral combat ship through the waters around the Spratly Islands on January 25, 2020.

supporting the enhancement of its capacity to secure maritime safety and security through JICA's technical cooperation. With a view to promoting the stability of Somalia, Japan has provided a total of 500 million US dollars since 2007 aimed at supporting improvement in basic services and public security through support for the police, as well as revitalization of the domestic economy through vocational training and job creation, among other measures.

(C) Anti-piracy Measures in the Gulf of Guinea

According to the IMB, the number of piracy and armed robbery cases (hereinafter referred to as "piracy cases") in the Gulf of Guinea has remained at a high level in recent years, with 64 cases in 2019 and 84 cases in 2020. Many of these occurred in the territorial waters of coastal states, which face the challenge of the need of strengthening their maritime law enforcement capabilities. Japan has provided coastal states with capacity building assistance through training conducted by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). Japan has also been involved in discussions in the international community through participation in the "G7++ Group of Friends of the Gulf of Guinea"⁶, a cooperative and coordination mechanism to address illegal maritime activities in the Gulf of Guinea.

Cooperation on Maritime Security

(A) Capacity Building Assistance

Japan provides seamless assistance to various countries for capacity building in the area of maritime security, through cooperation between MOFA, the Ministry of Defense and Self-Defense Forces, the Japan Coast Guard and other agencies. The Basic Plan on Ocean Policy approved by the Cabinet in 2018 also affirmed that Japan, in collaboration with allied nations, friendly nations

and international organizations, will promote initiatives to strengthen maritime disciplines including equipment and technology cooperation and capacity building assistance to the coastal states along the Sea Lanes of Communications.

MOFA provides capacity building assistance to law enforcement agencies and other organizations in developing countries, through the provision of equipment such as patrol vessels and human resource development implemented through bilateral ODA. As an example of collaboration with international organizations, Japan contributed about 3 million US dollars toward the Maritime Law Enforcement Capacity Building Project implemented by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) under its Global Maritime Crime Programme (GMCP), with the aim of addressing the diverse illegal maritime activities that have been increasing further in recent years. Through this Project training and workshops for practitioners involved in measures to address illegal maritime activities were conducted.

The Ministry of Defense and Self-Defense Forces have provided capacity building in the area of maritime security to Myanmar, Thailand, Malaysia, Viet Nam, Indonesia, the Philippines and Sri Lanka to date. Through these support initiatives, it is strengthening cooperative relations with partners that share strategic interests with Japan.

To provide capacity building assistance to coast guard authorities of coastal states of the Indo-Pacific, the Japan Coast Guard dispatches highly skilled Japan Coast Guard officials with expert knowledge as well as the Japan Coast Guard Mobile Cooperation Team (MCT), a special team that provides capacity building support, to the coast guard authorities of each country. In addition, the Japan Coast Guard also invites the coast guard officials from each country to Japan where it conducts training for them. It also administers

⁶ G7++ Group of Friends of Gulf of Guinea: In addition to the G7, other participants include non-G7 countries and international organizations

the Maritime Safety and Security Policy Program, a Master's level education program on maritime policy that accepts coast guard officials from Asian countries. Through this program, the Japan Coast Guard contributes to the development of human resources with advanced practical and applied knowledge, knowledge on international law and international relations as well as research into the relevant case studies, the ability to conduct analysis and make proposals, and international communication skills.

When providing such capacity building assistance, Japan cooperates closely with the above mentioned international organizations as well as like-minded countries including the U.S., Australia, India, the UK and France.

(B) Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA)

Consolidating and sharing a wide range of maritime information and understanding maritime domain effectively and efficiently are vital toward the realization of "Free, Open and Stable Seas." Japan places great importance on international cooperation in such maritime domain awareness (MDA) initiatives.

In recent years, progress has been made in the Indo-Pacific region to establish information sharing centers for the consolidation, analysis and sharing of maritime information, such as phenomena related to the safety of navigation and ship information. Japan has dispatched personnel (Executive Director and Assistant Director) to the ReCAAP-ISC based in Singapore, as well as liaison officers to the Information Fusion Centre (IFC) established by the Republic of Singapore Navy and the Information Fusion Centre - Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR) established by the Indian Navy. Furthermore, the authorities of Japan and India exchange information based on the Implementing Arrangement for Deeper Cooperation Between the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force and the Indian Navy, signed on the occasion of the Japan-India Summit Meeting held in October 2018.

Japan also organizes the "ARF Workshop on

International Cooperation on Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA)" as an official event of the ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on Maritime Security. In the Second Workshop, co-hosted with Viet Nam in February 2020, active discussions were held on matters such as the utilization of MDA to address maritime challenges such as piracy, terrorism and illegal fishing, cooperative systems between the relevant domestic agencies, and international cooperation initiatives.

(5) Cyber

During the COVID-19 pandemic, remote working and education rapidly became popular, while cyberspace has become an indispensable activity base for economies and societies. On the other hand, the scale and impact of cyberattacks have been growing year after year, making cybersecurity a pressing issue.

Against this backdrop, Japan is promoting cyber diplomacy based on the three pillars of "Promotion of the rule of law in cyberspace," "Development of confidence-building measures," and "Cooperation on capacity building."

"Promotion of the rule of law in cyberspace" maintains that existing international law is applicable to cyber activities. From this viewpoint, Japan participates actively in the United Nations Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) and the UN Open-ended Working Group (OEWG), and contributes to discussions on how international law should be applied and the norms that countries should comply with. For example, at the OEWG in June, six countries including Japan expressed grave concern on cyberattacks against healthcare services and facilities, and proposed to consider the medical services and medical facilities as critical infrastructure, like the electricity and water sectors, which should be provided with appropriate protection. At the OEWG Multi-stakeholder Meeting held in December, Japan co-chaired the session on international law. Many participants, in particular representatives from academia, government and private corporations, were invited to

engage in discussions at this session, which contributed to enhancing understanding on the application of international law in cyberspace.

Japan is also actively involved in the implementation of norms in cyberspace. For example, in September, it was included as one of the proposing countries for the formulation of the Program of Action, which covers contents such as the convention of regular meetings focused on the implementation of norms for state behavior.

In addition, Japan collaborates with other like-minded countries in taking initiatives to deter malicious cyber activities. In December 2018, Japan issued a statement resolutely condemning the long-running, widespread attacks perpetrated against private organizations, academic institutions and other organizations by the China-based hacking group APT10. Japan participated in a ministerial-level meeting on cybersecurity hosted by the U.S. in September 2019, and also partook in a joint statement on cooperation toward encouraging the acceptance of responsibility by states acting against frameworks on responsible state behavior in cyberspace. Concerning countermeasures against cybercrime, as the first country from Asia to become a party to the Convention on Cybercrime (Budapest Convention), which is the only multilateral treaty on the use of cyberspace, Japan participates actively in the Plenaries of the Cybercrime Convention Committee and the preparation of a draft Additional Protocol to the Budapest Convention that seeks to improve the effectiveness of investigative cooperation, and also puts efforts into adding more nations to the treaty, especially nations in Asia.

Regarding “Development of confidence-building measures,” gaining a better understanding of one another’s views and enhancing mutual confidence are critical to prevent unforeseen situations stemming from cyber activities. With this purpose in mind, Japan holds consultations and dialogues with 14 countries and regions, and in

2020, has continued with initiatives to develop confidence-building measures mainly through online exchanges of opinions with members from cyber-related sectors of various countries. Within the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) framework, Japan also leads discussions at inter-sessional meetings on cybersecurity as co-chair.

Regarding “Cooperation on capacity building,” due to the nature of cyberspace, the lack of incident handling capacity of some countries and regions may pose a risk to the entire world. Therefore, capacity building in developing countries is important for ensuring Japan’s security, as well. Japan has been providing support, including the capacity building of the Computer Security Incident Response Team (CSIRT)⁷ and the relevant administrative and investigative agencies, mainly in ASEAN countries. For example, in October, the 13th ASEAN-Japan Cybersecurity Policy Meeting was held in Tokyo as an online meeting. At the meeting, Japan and ASEAN member states confirmed the progress of various collaborative activities, and agreed to a new collaborative activity for promoting joint industry-government-academia collaboration to enhance cyber security throughout the ASEAN region.

Japan will continue to provide strategic and effective assistance through the efforts of the entire Government.

(6) Outer Space

In recent years, outer space has become congested due to the diversified use of outer space and increasing number of countries using space. In addition, the increase of space debris due to factors such as Anti-Satellite (ASAT) tests and satellite collisions poses a growing risk to the sustainable and stable use of outer space.

In order to cope with this situation, Japan has been engaging in initiatives such as strengthening Space Situational Awareness (SSA) and mission assurance for space systems, while working on

⁷ A general term which refers to a group that deals with computer security incidents

international rule-making and international space cooperation, which includes cooperation with other countries, notably its ally, the U.S.

A Realizing the Rule of Law in Outer Space

Based on environmental changes concerning outer space, the international community has been discussing international rule-making concerning outer space activities in a variety of ways. Japan has also been actively involved in these discussions with the aim of establishing and strengthening the rule of law in outer space.

The Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) is a permanent committee established under the UN General Assembly, and engages in discussions on matters such as legal issues related to civil space activities. Concerning the Guidelines for the Long-Term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities (LTS Guidelines) adopted during COPUOS held in June 2019, Japan will actively contribute to the discussions in the working group including the implementation of the LTS Guidelines. Japan is also making contributions in the aspect of human resources, such as a Japanese space law expert serving as Chair of the COPUOS Legal Subcommittee in 2020 and 2021. In February, Japan signed a Joint Statement on Space Debris with the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA), which serves as the secretariat of COPUOS.

In the First Committee of the UN General Assembly convened in November, Japan, the UK and other member states jointly proposed a draft resolution seeking international discussions on responsible behaviors in outer space and it was adopted with the support of 150 countries. Thereafter, the draft resolution was adopted at the UN General Assembly convened in December, with the support of 164 countries.

With regard to the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space (PAROS), a Group of Governmental Experts was established by a resolution submitted to the UN General Assembly in 2017. Meetings of the Group were held in January 2018 and March

2019 and attended by experts from 25 countries, including Japan.

B International Dialogues and Consultations on Outer Space

Japan promotes dialogues and consultations on outer space primarily with major space-faring nations and nations in the Asia-Pacific region.

With the U.S., the Seventh Meeting of the Japan-U.S. Comprehensive Dialogue on Space was held in Tokyo in August, during which both sides exchanged information on their space policies. They also comprehensively exchanged views on a wide range of topics including the civil space and security, and issued a joint statement as the outcome of the Dialogue. This Dialogue also presented an opportunity for the two sides to reaffirm their high-level commitment toward bilateral space cooperation. This was notably demonstrated by the courtesy call to Prime Minister Abe paid by General John W “Jay” Raymond, Chief of Space Operations of the U.S. Space Force, a special participant of the Dialogue, as the first such meeting between Prime Minister Abe and a foreign high-ranking official since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, in December, the Governments of Japan and the U.S. exchanged Notes concerning cooperation over hosted payloads (mission instruments loaded onto other entities’ satellite), including the loading of U.S. Space Situational Awareness (SSA) sensors onto the Japanese Quasi-Zenith Satellite “Michibiki” (QZS)-6 and QZS-7, scheduled to commence operations in FY2023.

In November, Japan held a preparatory meeting with France online ahead of the Third Japan-France Comprehensive Dialogue on Space.

With respect to multinational meetings, the Asia-Pacific Regional Space Agency Forum (APRSAP) Online 2020 was held in November, co-organized by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology and the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) along with space organizations from Singapore, Viet Nam

and Indonesia, to discuss measures for expanding space business, sustainable space activities for the future, and contribution to social issues.

C Space Science and Exploration

The progress of space exploration and application for peaceful purposes is a common benefit for all humankind, and is also significant in terms of diplomacy. In December, Japan's asteroid explorer "Hayabusa2" successfully completed a mission to bring back samples from the asteroid "Ryugu" to Earth. This achievement of bringing back samples from an asteroid is a successor of "Hayabusa," which returned to Earth in 2010, and attracted the attention of the international community. Space technology brings dreams and hope to many people, and at the same time, is the symbol of the scientific and technological capabilities of a country. Hence, Japan's achievements in space science and exploration contribute to enhancing its international presence.

In October 2019, Japan decided to participate in international space exploration under the proposal of the U.S. (Artemis program). In July, the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology of Japan and the Administrator for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) signed a Joint Exploration Declaration of Intent for Lunar Cooperation (JEDI), and announced the details of cooperation between Japan and the U.S. In October, eight countries including Japan and the U.S. signed the Artemis Accords, which set out a political commitment to establish principles for creating a safe and transparent environment in promoting outer space activities, including the Artemis program. In December, Japan and the U.S. concluded a Memorandum of Understanding concerning Cooperation on the Civil Lunar Gateway, a human outpost in the lunar vicinity that will be developed as a part of the Artemis program.

The International Space Station (ISS) is an epic project in which 15 countries participate and has become a symbol of international

cooperation regarding outer space. The ISS/ Japanese Experiment Module "Kibo" is capable of deploying cube satellites, and is also used to deploy satellites on behalf of many emerging and developing countries with the aim of providing support for capacity building in the space field. In April, Guatemala's first satellite was deployed through the KiboCUBE program, a cooperative framework between JAXA and UNOOSA that provides developing countries with the opportunity to deploy CubeSats from Kibo. Another example is the Kibo Robot Programming Challenge (Kibo-RPC), a new educational program for students from the Asia-Pacific region who represent the next generation, which was held from June to October.

D Overseas Development of Japanese Space Industry

Leveraging the growth of the expanding overseas commercial markets of space, largely in emerging nations, is important for the Japanese space industry. The public and private sectors of Japan are working in cooperation with the relevant ministries and agencies to promote the entry of Japan's space industry into overseas markets by such means as high-level campaigns and mobilizing diplomatic missions.

In July, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) launched its first Mars explorer, "HOPE," using the Japanese H-IIA rocket. After a Japanese corporation concluded the contract in 2016 for the launch of this spacecraft, the Cabinet Office,



© Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA)

Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, and Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry of Japan signed a Memorandum of Cooperation with the UAE Space Agency. Based on this Memorandum of Cooperation, the public and private sectors worked together on capacity-building programs such as inviting young UAE engineers to Japan to participate in educational programs on space exploration and space engineering, and providing opportunities for utilization of the ISS/Japanese Experiment Module “Kibo.” As the young UAE engineers who benefited from these programs have played active roles in government agencies and the space industry in UAE thereafter, such initiatives also contribute to strengthening space cooperation in the medium- to long-term.

E International Cooperation Through the Utilization of Space Technology

Outer space is a unique space that enables the constant observation of the Earth’s atmosphere, land and seas. In recent years, there have been growing expectations toward the role of space technology in resolving global issues such as climate change, forest conservation, water resources management, disaster prevention and food security. Japan promotes international cooperation through utilization of space technology, which is one of Japan’s strengths in the international arena, and contributes to the achievement of the SDGs.

For example, the world’s first greenhouse gases observing satellite “IBUKI” has been capturing information on the concentration of greenhouse gases on Earth for more than 10 years. The 2019 Refinement to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Guidelines for National Greenhouse Gas Inventories defined, for the first time, the utilization of satellite data to improve the precision of emissions from each country and included examples from the utilization of IBUKI. In addition, the JICA-JAXA Forest Early Warning System in the Tropics (JJ-FAST), developed for the conservation of forests that serve as

an important “carbon sink” for the absorption of greenhouse gases, uses data from the Advanced Land Observing Satellite-2 “DAICHI-2” to provide free information on forest changes in 77 countries around the world. This system is used for purposes such as detecting illegal logging. In the oil spill accident that occurred off the coasts of Mauritius in August, information analyzed by the Japan Coast Guard based on images obtained from DAICHI-2 and other observation sources, were provided to the Government of Mauritius through the Japan Disaster Relief (JDR) teams that were dispatched to the site of the accident.

Japan also provides, at no charge, the Global Satellite Mapping of Precipitation (GSMaP) system, which utilizes multiple satellites to observe the global rainfall situation. This system is applied to wide range of uses, including rainfall situation monitoring, disaster management and agriculture, in 136 countries and regions around the world. Furthermore, Japan took the lead in launching “Sentinel Asia,” an initiative to provide free observational satellite information during disasters to contribute to disaster management in the Asia-Pacific region. To date, this project has responded to more than 300 emergency requests from 28 countries.

(7) Economic Security

In recent years, innovative civilian technologies that could potentially be diverted to military uses have emerged, and some countries have utilized economic dependency to secure their own strategic interests. Against the backdrop of such trends, there is a growing need to reconsider, from the perspective of national security, events that have till now been treated as a part of laissez-faire economic activities and left to workings of market principles and economic policies (see the Special Feature on page 244). Such efforts have been gaining traction not only in Japan, but also in other major countries in recent years.

For example, the National Security Strategy of the U.S., formulated in 2017, cited President

Establishment of the Economic Security Policy Division

The international community has achieved development through the deepening of economic ties in the world as a result of increased activity in the cross-border movement of capital and labor, as well as the growth in overseas investments and goods and services transactions through trade. However, in recent years, innovative civil technologies that could be diverted to military uses have emerged, and some countries have utilized economic dependency to secure their own strategic interests. Against the backdrop of such trends, we are entering an era in which individual incidents that have already existed such as the obtaining of trade secrets through corporate acquisitions, market control by state-owned corporations supported by subsidies that lack transparency, and the theft of intellectual property through malicious cyber activities could further change the international balance of power and have an impact on the international order.

In other words, countries' national capabilities relative to one another are changing in the international community, and the interdependent economic relations between countries are becoming increasingly complex. Under these circumstances, there is a growing need to reconsider, from the perspective of national security, events that have until now been treated as a part of laissez-faire economic activities and left to the workings of market principles and economic policies. In such an era, it is vital for Japan to position the Japan-U.S. Alliance as the cornerstone of diplomacy and security, and work proactively to build a free and open international order based on the rule of law to strengthen its efforts in the new policy area of economic security.

There are many and varied challenges in advancing with these efforts. For example, efforts to prevent the leakage of technologies not only encompass conventional export controls on the transfer of goods and technologies that are important to national security, but also call for measures that are able to respond to the diversification of leakage channels, such as the acquisition of sensitive technologies through corporate acquisitions, the movement of researchers and other personnel enabled by globalized research and corporate activities, and cyberattacks enabled by increasingly sophisticated information and communications technology (ICT).

Furthermore, with regard to market control through specific products and services including basic infrastructure, as well as society's dependence on that, there is a need to establish rules aimed at correcting unfair market practices that enable market control, and at avoiding or reducing social dependence. Such measures include ensuring and strengthening the observance of rules on subsidies, as well as establishing principles for supporting safe ICT supply-chains and promoting their implementation into the domestic regulations of each country.

Of course, the effectiveness of each type of measures is secured through their implementation not by Japan alone, but in cooperation with the international community. However, when promoting international cooperation in a situation of varying industrial structures and economic scales between each country, there is a need to carefully assess the security interests and economic interests while comprehensively weighing their impact on diplomatic relations.

In light of the needs of the times as described above, and in the face of a rapidly changing global environment, MOFA established the Economic Security Policy Division in August through an expansive reorganization of the previous Emerging Security Challenges Division. The aim is to tackle broad initiatives in a comprehensive manner, including making new rules that meet the needs of the times as well as utilizing the existing legal system. MOFA will cooperate with relevant ministries and agencies based on consistent awareness and recognition of the issues by going beyond the boundaries between national security and economic policy.

Trump's words, "Economic security is national security," and championed the values established by the U.S., while establishing "Lead in Research, Technology, Invention, and Innovation" and "Promote and Protect the U.S. National Security Innovation Base" as key issues to be addressed. To that end, the U.S. is advancing various initiatives. Furthermore, the National Strategy for Critical and Emerging Technologies, formulated in October 2020, sought to promote the development of a science and technology workforce and investment in research and development in the context of national security, through cooperation with like-minded allies and partners. At the same time, with a view to protecting its technology advantage, it also incorporated efforts to ensure that competitors do not use illicit means to acquire United States intellectual property, as well as appropriate export controls and the implementation of investment screening policies.

The European Union (EU) and European countries such as the UK, France and Germany have also demonstrated, through their security policies, a recognition of the need to overcome vulnerabilities in critical infrastructure and support technological innovation, in order to secure their own safety and prosperity. In October, the European Council reached an agreement on a revised regulation setting out the EU regime for the control of exports of dual-use items, and on the policy to tighten measures on the transfers of intangible technology via researchers and other channels. With regard to investment screening, an EU-wide investment screening mechanism commenced operation from November, while information sharing among member states was strengthened with respect to investments from outside of the region and related to sensitive technology and critical infrastructure. In addition, in the "Horizon 2020" framework that offers funding for research and innovation, the EU allocated a total of approximately 80 billion Euros (10 trillion Japanese yen) from 2014 to 2020 toward support for areas that member states find difficult to finance on their

own, such as the development of research infrastructure, high-risk collaborative research, and addressing social issues through innovation.

With regard to Australia, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade has been working on its International Cyber and Critical Technology Engagement Strategy since April, and the decision was made in October to establish the Critical Technologies Policy Coordination Office in the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. Amendments to the Foreign Acquisitions and Takeovers Act were passed by the Parliament of Australia in December and enforced the following month. The amended law tightened screening measures for investments in land and businesses related to sensitive national security, and made it mandatory to seek prior approval from the government to establish businesses or invest in businesses that provide goods and services in areas such as national defense and intelligence, regardless of the value of the investment.

China has established the goal of completing its socialist modernization project to make China a "great country" by 2049, and set out a clear timeline under the "Made in China 2025" strategy. Based on this timeline, it is advancing efforts to strengthen the real economy and to acquire and develop advanced technology to support this economy. In the article titled "Major Issues Concerning China's Strategies for Mid-to-Long-Term Economic and Social Development," published in the CPC Central Committee journal *Qiushi* in October 2020, President Xi Jinping set out the new strategy, among others, of further expanding the middle-income group that currently stands at around 400 million people, while establishing an autonomous domestic circulation and drawing global resources toward China, as well as making global industrial supply chains more dependent on China, and keeping to the principle of putting China first in the real economy in sectors such as food and manufacturing. Against the backdrop of this strategy, at the 5th Plenary Session of the 19th CPC Central Committee convened in

October, the emphasis was placed on the need to enhance economic self-sufficiency including making the transition to an economic structure led by domestic demand, the development of a supply chain that is not impacted by external pressures, self-reliance and self-strengthening in science and technology, and the strengthening of efforts to ensure the national economic security. Furthermore, China has also made rapid advancements in the establishment of its domestic legal system in recent years, such as laws related to cybersecurity and data security as well as encryption (enforced in January), and export control law (enforced in December).

In light of these trends in other countries, Japan will continue to strengthen initiatives in the new policy area of economic security from the perspective of working proactively toward the development of a free and open international order based on the rule of law, while positioning the Japan-U.S. Alliance as the cornerstone of its diplomacy and security, with a view to ensuring the survival and prosperity of Japan.

4 Disarmament and Non-proliferation and the Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy

(1) Nuclear Disarmament

As the only country to have ever suffered atomic bombings during wartime, Japan has the responsibility to lead the international efforts to realize a world without nuclear weapons.

The global security environment has been severe in recent years. As seen in the situation surrounding the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons that entered into force in January 2021, there exists an apparent divergence of views on how best to advance nuclear disarmament, a divergence that exists not only between nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear-weapon states but also among non-nuclear-weapon states that are exposed to the threat of nuclear weapons and those that are not. Considering these

circumstances, it is necessary to persistently advance realistic measures while bridge-building between states with divergent views, in order to promote nuclear disarmament.

Japan continues to pursue bridge building between states with divergent views with the aim of realizing a world without nuclear weapons. It has done this through such actions and frameworks as holding meetings of the Group of Eminent Persons for Substantive Advancement of Nuclear Disarmament, submitting the Resolution on Nuclear Disarmament to the UN General Assembly, and the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (NPDI) and bilateral consultations. Moreover, Japan intends to promote the entering into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and encourage states to commence negotiations on a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT), build up realistic efforts that nuclear-weapon states can also participate in, such as discussions and exercises toward the realization of effective nuclear disarmament verification, and continue maintaining and strengthening the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) regime.

Japan shares the goal of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which entered into force on January 22, 2021, to bring about the total elimination of nuclear weapons. On the other hand, while it is vital to advance nuclear disarmament with the involvement of nuclear-weapon states in order to realize a world without nuclear weapons, this Treaty does not currently have the support of nuclear-weapon states. Moreover, it also does not have the support of many non-nuclear-weapon states that are exposed to the threat of nuclear weapons.

As Japan has responsibility to protect the lives and properties of its citizens, in the face of the deterioration of the security environment surrounding Japan, the Government of Japan considers it necessary to address the real security threat in an appropriate manner, including through maintaining and strengthening deterrence, while

realistically pursuing a path for advancing nuclear disarmament. In light of Japan's position as such, it has no intention of signing this Treaty.

A Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)

Japan places great importance on maintaining and strengthening the NPT regime, which is the cornerstone of the international nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime. NPT Review Conferences have been held once every five years with the aim of achieving the goals of the NPT and ensuring compliance with its provisions, and discussions that reflect the international situation of the time have been held since the NPT entered into force in 1970. However, at the 9th Review Conference held in 2015, discussions failed to arrive at a consensus regarding the establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction and other issues, and the Conference ended without a consensus document.

2020 is a milestone year, marking 50 years since the NPT entered into force and 75 years since the use of nuclear weapons in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. A Statement by the Foreign Minister was released on March 5 to coincide with the entering into force of the NPT. In the statement, Foreign Minister Motegi expressed appreciation for the NPT's invaluable contribution to the consolidation and maintenance of international peace and security as the cornerstone of the international nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime, and spoke about the need to uphold and strengthen the NPT regime. Although the 10th NPT Review Conference scheduled for 2020 was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic (as of January 2021, it is expected to be convened in August 2021), Japan will continue to propose and implement realistic and practical efforts toward achieving a meaningful outcome at the upcoming NPT Review Conference.

B Group of Eminent Persons for Substantive Advancement of Nuclear Disarmament

The "Group of Eminent Persons for Substantive Advancement of Nuclear Disarmament" (EPG; consisting of 17 experts from countries of different positions, including Japan) was launched by Japan in 2017 with the goals of rebuilding trust among countries with divergent views on how to proceed with nuclear disarmament and of obtaining recommendations that will contribute to the substantive advancement of nuclear disarmament. The Group held a total of five meetings leading up to July 2019, and the concrete outcomes were submitted to the second and third sessions of the Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference. In October 2019, the Chair's Report, summarizing discussions at all five meetings of the Group held to date, was published. Thereafter, Japan established "The Track 1.5 Meeting for Substantive Advancement of Nuclear Disarmament" with the participation of experts and government officials from both nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear-weapon states, for the purpose of following up with, and further developing, the discussions of the EPG. The inaugural Track 1.5 Meeting was convened in March 2020, when discussions were held on transparency, nuclear risk reduction, and nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation education as the concrete nuclear disarmament measures that the international community should address immediately.

C The Non-proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (NPDI)

The NPDI, a group of 12 non-nuclear-weapon states from various regions established under the leadership of Japan and Australia in 2010 has served as a bridge between nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear-weapon states. It leads efforts in the field of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation through its realistic and practical proposals with the involvement of the foreign ministers of its member states. The NPDI has actively contributed

to the NPT review process through realistic and practical proposals, including the submission of 19 working papers to the 9th NPT Review process and 15 to the 10th NPT Review process.

At the 10th NPDI Ministerial Meeting, co-organized by Japan and Australia and held during the G20 Aichi-Nagoya Foreign Ministers' Meeting in November 2019, an NPDI Joint Ministerial Statement was issued concerning the importance of maintaining and strengthening the NPT regime. In April 2020, the NPDI issued a joint message at the senior officials' level, stating that the NPDI will continue to make efforts to serve as a bridge-builder, and that it remains committed to using the time before the 10th NPT to deepen its positive engagement with nuclear-weapon states and non-nuclear-weapon states.

D Initiatives Through the United Nations (Resolution on Nuclear Disarmament)

Since 1994, Japan has submitted draft resolutions on the elimination of nuclear weapons to the UN General Assembly. They incorporate issues of the time related to nuclear disarmament, as well as concrete and practical measures toward the total elimination of nuclear weapons. As a means to facilitate the building of a common ground between nuclear-weapon states and non-nuclear-weapon states, the 2020 resolution focused on joint courses of action to be taken immediately by the international community toward nuclear disarmament as well as the importance of future-oriented dialogues. The resolution was adopted with the broad support of 139 countries at the First Committee of the UN General Assembly in November and of 150 countries at the Plenary Meeting of the UN General Assembly in December. The states supporting the resolution have divergent views, and include nuclear-weapon states such as the U.S. and UK as well as many non-nuclear-weapon states. While other

resolutions that comprehensively addressed nuclear disarmament were submitted to the General Assembly in addition to Japan's draft resolution on the total elimination of nuclear weapons, Japan has enjoyed support among a larger number of states. For more than 20 years, Japan's resolutions have continued to enjoy the broad support of states with divergent views in the international community.

E Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT)

Japan attaches great importance to promoting the entry into force of the CTBT as a realistic measure of nuclear disarmament where both nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear-weapon states can participate. Japan also has continued diplomatic efforts to encourage countries that have not signed or ratified the CTBT, including those countries whose ratifications are required for its entry-into-force. In 2020, despite original plans to hold the Ministerial Meeting of the Friends of the CTBT during the UN General Assembly High-Level Week in September, in light of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the foreign ministers of the respective Friends of the CTBT countries presented video messages in place of the meeting. In his video message, Foreign Minister Motegi stated that this year marks the 75th anniversary of the first ever use of nuclear weapons, and that the tragedies of Hiroshima and Nagasaki must never be repeated. He also underscored the need to promote the entry into force of the CTBT and strengthen its monitoring capabilities to deter nuclear tests.

F Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty⁸ (FMCT: Cut-off Treaty)

A Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT) has great significance for both disarmament and non-proliferation as it would prevent the

⁸ A treaty concept that aims to prevent the increase in the number of nuclear weapons by prohibiting the production of fissile materials (such as enriched uranium and plutonium) that are used as materials to produce nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices.

emergence of new states possessing nuclear-weapons by banning the production of fissile materials such as highly-enriched uranium and plutonium for weapons purposes. At the same time, it limits the production of nuclear weapons by nuclear-weapon states. For many years, however, no agreement has been reached on commencing negotiations for the treaty in the Conference on Disarmament (CD). Consequently, it was decided at the 71st UN General Assembly in December 2016 to establish the FMCT High-Level Experts Preparatory Group, and Japan has been actively participating in the Group's discussions. Through discussions at the 1st meeting (August 2017) and 2nd meeting (June 2018), a report was adopted that includes possible options for the outline of a future treaty and content to consider in negotiations. The report was submitted to the 73rd UN General Assembly in 2018. Japan will continue actively contributing to FMCT discussions.

G Disarmament and Non-proliferation Education

As the only country to have ever suffered atomic bombings, Japan places great importance on education in disarmament and non-proliferation. Specifically, Japan has been actively engaged in efforts to convey the realities of the devastation caused by the use of nuclear weapons to people both within Japan and overseas, through activities such as translating the testimonies of atomic bomb survivors into other languages, invitations for young diplomats from other countries to go to Hiroshima and Nagasaki through the UN Programme of Fellowships on Disarmament⁹ (suspended in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic), providing assistance for holding atomic bomb exhibitions overseas¹⁰, and designating atomic bomb survivors who have given testimonies of their atomic bomb experiences as “Special Communicators for a World without Nuclear Weapons.”

Additionally, as the atomic bomb survivors age, it is becoming increasingly important to pass on the realities of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings across generations and borders. To this end, from 2013 to 2020, Japan conferred the designation of “Youth Communicators for a World without Nuclear Weapons” for more than 400 youths in Japan and overseas.

H Initiatives Toward Future Arms Control

In the area of nuclear disarmament, in addition to initiatives through multilateral frameworks such as the NPT, the U.S. and Russia have also concluded and maintained a bilateral arms control treaty. On February 3, 2021, the two countries agreed on an extension to the Treaty between the United States of America and the Russian Federation on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms (New START Treaty). Japan welcomed this extension from the viewpoint that the New START Treaty demonstrates important progress in nuclear disarmament between the U.S. and Russia.

On the other hand, in view of the recent situation surrounding nuclear weapons, it is important to establish a new arms control mechanism that encompasses a wider range of countries beyond the U.S. and Russia, while also including a broader range of weapon systems. For example, Japan has been communicating with China on this issue at various levels. At the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) Ministerial Meeting held in September, Foreign Minister Motegi, joining hands with other countries, expressed his desire to encourage China to continue its efforts to fulfil its responsibility as a nuclear weapon state and an important player in the international community, and engage in the bilateral dialogue between the U.S and China on arms control.

Furthermore, the Draft Resolution on Nuclear

⁹ Implemented since 1983 by the UN to nurture nuclear disarmament experts. Program participants are invited to Hiroshima and Nagasaki and taught the realities of atomic bombing through such means as museum tours and talks by victims about their experiences in the atomic bombings.

¹⁰ Opened as a permanent exhibition about the atomic bomb in New York, U.S.; Geneva, Switzerland; and Vienna, Austria, in cooperation with Hiroshima City and Nagasaki City.

Disarmament submitted by Japan and adopted in the Plenary Meeting of the UN General Assembly in 2020 also stresses the importance of transparency among nuclear-weapon states, and reaffirms the special responsibility of nuclear-weapon states to initiate arms control dialogues on effective measures to prevent nuclear arms racing.

(2) Non-proliferation and Nuclear Security

A Japan's Efforts of Non-Proliferation

To ensure Japan's security and to maintain peace and security of the international community, Japan has been making efforts concerning non-proliferation policy. The goal of such a policy is to prevent the proliferation of weapons that could threaten Japan or the international community (weapons of mass destruction such as nuclear weapons and biological/chemical weapons, as well as missiles with the ability to deliver those weapons and conventional weapons) and of related materials and technologies used to develop such weapons. In today's international community, economic growth in emerging countries has enabled a growing capacity to produce and supply weapons in those countries as well as materials that could be diverted to the development of such weapons. Meanwhile, methods for procuring these materials are becoming more sophisticated, due in part to increasing complexity in means of distribution. Furthermore, the emergence of new technologies is spurring a growing potential for private sector technologies to be diverted to uses for military purposes, and increasing the proliferation risk of weapons that could pose a threat and of related materials and technologies. Under these circumstances, Japan has been implementing its non-proliferation policies, focusing on maintaining and strengthening international

non-proliferation regimes and rules, taking appropriate non-proliferation measures domestically, and promoting close coordination with and capacity building support for other nations.

Japan's three main measures of preventing proliferation are (1) IAEA safeguards, (2) export control, and (3) the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI)

Safeguards refer to verification activities conducted in accordance with safeguards agreements between states and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), and aim to ensure that nuclear energy will not be diverted from peaceful uses to nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. As a designated member of the IAEA Board of Governors¹¹, Japan has made various efforts, including supporting the IAEA. For example, based on the view that the IAEA safeguards are at the core of the international nuclear non-proliferation regime, Japan enhances the understanding and implementation capabilities of safeguards of other countries. Japan also encourages other countries to conclude the Additional Protocol (AP)¹² to the IAEA safeguards agreements. Furthermore, Japan actively contributes to regional and international efforts to strengthen safeguards through efforts such as attending the 11th Annual Meeting of the Asia-Pacific Safeguards Network (APSN) held in December (as an online event), which aims to strengthen safeguards in the Asia-Pacific region, and acting as facilitator in the session on safeguards implementation during the COVID-19 outbreak and human resource development.

IAEA Director General Rafael Mariano Grossi, who assumed office in December 2019, visited Japan in February as a guest of the Minister of Foreign Affairs. During his visit, he paid a courtesy call to Prime Minister Abe and held a meeting

11 13 countries are designated by the IAEA Board of Governors. The designated member states include Japan and other G7 countries with advanced nuclear energy capabilities.

12 An Additional Protocol is concluded in addition to a Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement that is applied on all nuclear materials pertaining to the peaceful nuclear activities in that country, and that non-nuclear-weapon NPT States Parties must conclude with the IAEA pursuant to Article 3 Paragraph 1 of the NPT. The conclusion of the Additional Protocol expands the scope of nuclear activity information that should be declared to the IAEA, and gives the IAEA strengthened measures to verify the absence of undeclared nuclear materials and activities. As of November 2020, 136 countries have concluded the Additional Protocol.

with Foreign Minister Motegi. Japan and the IAEA shared the view that both sides would work together to build a further cooperative relationship. Japan will continue providing utmost support to Director General Grossi, who has extensive knowledge and experience, and will continue to work with other member countries to strengthen the role of the IAEA.

Export control is a useful measure in the so-called supply-side regulation toward countries of proliferation concern, terrorist organizations, and other entities attempting to acquire or distribute weapons or related materials or technologies. There are currently four export control frameworks (international export control regimes) in the international community. Japan has participated in all of them since their inception, engaging in international coordination and practicing strict export control. Each of the four regimes, namely the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) for nuclear weapons, the Australia Group (AG) for chemical and biological weapons, the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) for missiles,¹³ and the Wassenaar Arrangement (WA) for conventional weapons, establishes a list of dual-use items and technologies which contribute to weapons development. To ensure the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and conventional weapons, participating countries to the regimes implement export control measures on the listed items and technologies in accordance with their domestic laws. The export control regimes also

exchange information concerning trends in countries of proliferation concern and are engaged in outreach activities to non-participating countries to the regimes in order to strengthen their export control. Japan actively engages in such international rule-making and application of rules, and makes various contributions. Additionally, in terms of international contributions in nuclear non-proliferation, the Permanent Mission of Japan to the International Organizations in Vienna serves as the Point of Contact of the NSG.

Furthermore, Japan seeks to complement the activities of the international export control regimes by actively participating in the activities of the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI).¹⁴ Through efforts such as hosting the maritime interdiction exercise “Pacific Shield 18”¹⁵ in July 2018, Japan is working to enhance coordination among countries and concerned institutions.

Japan also holds Asia Senior-level Talks on Non-Proliferation (ASTOP)¹⁶ and Asian Export Control¹⁷ every year in order to promote a better understanding of the non-proliferation regimes and strengthen regional efforts, mainly in Asian countries. At the 16th ASTOP, held in December (as an online event), the EU participated for the first time, and discussions were conducted concerning North Korea’s nuclear and missile programs and the strengthening of export control. 33 countries and regions participated in the 27th Asian Export Control Seminar, held in February. At the seminar, participants held discussions

13 Apart from export control regimes, the Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation (HCCOC), which includes the principle of exercising restraint in their development and deployment, addresses the issue of ballistic missiles. As of December 2020, 143 countries subscribe to the HCCOC.

14 107 countries participate in and support the PSI as of December 2020. In the past, in addition to hosting PSI maritime interdiction exercises in 2004, 2007, and 2018, and air interdiction exercises in 2012, Japan also hosted an Operational Experts Group (OEG) meeting in 2010 in Tokyo. Japan has also actively participated in training and related conferences hosted by other countries. This includes a rotation exercise in the Asia-Pacific region and the High-Level Political Meeting in the U.S. in January 2016. Most recently, Japan took part in a High-Level Political Meeting to commemorate the 15th anniversary of the PSI, held in France in May 2018.

15 Japan, Australia, New Zealand, the ROK, Singapore, and the U.S. contributed assets and personnel to the exercise, which was held in Yokosuka City, off the Boso Peninsula and the Izu Peninsula, and 19 countries from Indo-Pacific region and other countries sent observers.

16 A multilateral Director-General-level meeting hosted by Japan to discuss various issues related to the strengthening of the nonproliferation regime in Asia among the ten ASEAN Member States, China, India, the ROK, as well as the U.S., Australia, New Zealand, Canada, France, and the EU, which have common interests in Asian regional security.

17 A seminar hosted by Japan to exchange views and information toward strengthening export controls in Asia, with the participation of export control officials from Asian countries and regions. It has been organized annually in Tokyo since 1993.

concerning measures to strengthen the effectiveness of export control with a view to capacity building for export control personnel in Asian countries and regions.

Furthermore, with regards to the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1540,¹⁸ which was adopted in 2004 with the aim of preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery (missiles) to non-state actors, Japan contributes to maintaining and strengthening international non-proliferation frameworks through Japan's contributions to support the implementation of the resolution by Asian nations.

B Regional Non-proliferation Issues

North Korea has not carried out the dismantlement of all weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles of all ranges in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner in accordance with a series of relevant UN Security Council resolutions.

North Korea frequently and repeatedly conducted launches of short-range ballistic missiles from May to November 2019, and launched short-range ballistic missiles four times in March 2020. The IAEA Director General's report in September pointed out that some nuclear facilities continued to operate while others remained shut down. It also noted that North Korea's nuclear activities remain a cause for serious concern, and that these activities are clear violations of UN Security Council resolutions and it is deeply regrettable. At the same IAEA General Conference, a resolution

based on the report was adopted by consensus, and IAEA member countries expressed their solidarity on achieving the denuclearization of North Korea.

It is crucial that the international community makes concerted efforts to fully implement the UN Security Council resolutions for dismantlement of all weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles of all ranges, in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner by North Korea. To that end, Japan will continue to coordinate closely with related countries, including the U.S. and the ROK, as well as international organizations such as the IAEA. In addition, from the viewpoint of the full implementation of the UN Security Council resolutions, Japan will work on capacity building for export control particularly in Asia.

With respect to Iran, the IAEA has continuously monitored and verified Iran's implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA)¹⁹ since January 2016. In May 2018, the U.S. announced its withdrawal from the JCPOA, and sanctions against Iran were reapplied in August and November. On the other hand, Iran announced a phased suspension of its commitments under the JCPOA in May 2019. Thereafter, it has taken a succession of steps that include exceeding the limit on the stockpile of low-enriched uranium and level of uranium enrichment, conducting activities related to its centrifuge research and development beyond the limits of the JCPOA and restarting uranium enrichment activities at the Fordow Fuel Enrichment Plant. In January 2020,

18 Adopted in April 2004, UN Security Council Resolution 1540 obliges all countries to: (1) refrain from providing support to terrorists and other non-state actors attempting to develop weapons of mass destruction; (2) adopt and enforce laws prohibiting the development of weapons of mass destruction by terrorists and other non-state actors; and (3) implement domestic controls (protective measures, border control, export controls, etc.) to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The resolution also establishes, under the UN Security Council, the 1540 Committee, which comprises Security Council members and has a mandate to review and report to the Security Council the level of resolution 1540 implementation by member states.

19 Sets forth detailed procedures for imposing constraints on Iran's nuclear activities while ensuring that they serve peaceful purposes, and for lifting the imposed sanctions.

<Main measures undertaken by Iran>

● Constraints on enriched uranium-related activities

- Limit on the number of centrifuges in operation to 5,060 unit
- Upper limit on enriched uranium at 3.67%, and limit on the amount of stored enriched uranium at 300 kg, etc.

● Constraints on the Arak heavy-water nuclear reactor, and reprocessing

- Redesign / remodeling of the Arak heavy-water nuclear reactor so that it is not able to produce weapon-grade plutonium and to transfer spent fuel out of the country
- No reprocessing including for research purposes, no construction of reprocessing facilities, etc.

Iran announced that it would not be bound by the limit on the enrichment of uranium set forth in the JCPOA. Iran also announced that it had begun producing 20% enriched uranium as well as research and development activities on uranium metal in January 2021. In addition, it suspended implementation of the transparency measures under the JCPOA in February.

Japan, deeply concerned about Iran's continued reduction of its commitments under the JCPOA, strongly urges Iran to comply with the JCPOA, and to immediately return to its commitments, while also strongly urging Iran to refrain from further measures that may undermine the JCPOA. Japan is also calling upon Iran to fully cooperate with the IAEA based on the JCPOA and in accordance with all its nuclear obligations.

Since January 2020, IAEA had demanded access (site visit) to two locations in Iran but Iran had denied it. Concerning this problem, the IAEA Board of Governors adopted its resolution in June 2020, calling on Iran to fully cooperate with IAEA including by providing prompt access to the locations specified by IAEA. At the end of August, Director General Grossi visited Iran, and a joint statement was issued by IAEA and Iran. Accesses to the locations were conducted after that.

C Nuclear Security

With regards to nuclear security that aims to prevent acts of terrorism such as those involving the use of nuclear and other radioactive materials, the IAEA, the UN and like-minded countries have strengthened international cooperation on nuclear security through various efforts. These include the Nuclear Security Summit, which was hosted by then U.S. President Obama and held four times between 2010 and 2016, and the International conference on Nuclear Security. Japan continues to actively participate in and contribute to

these efforts. In February 2020, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Wakamiya Kenji represented the Government of Japan at the International Conference on Nuclear Security organized by the IAEA, where he delivered a speech.

Based on "the Practical Arrangements between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan and the International Atomic Energy Agency on Cooperation in the Area of Support to the Implementation of Nuclear Security Measures on the Occasion of the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games," signed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the IAEA in February 2018, relevant Japanese ministries and organizations conducted a table-top exercise on nuclear security measures for major public events with the participation of experts from the IAEA and the U.S. in October, 2019.

(3) Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy

A Multilateral Efforts

Along with nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, the peaceful uses of nuclear energy are considered to be one of the three pillars of the NPT. According to the treaty, it is the "inalienable right" for any country that meets its obligations to non-proliferation to develop research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. Reflecting the increase in international energy demand, many countries use or are planning to use nuclear power.²⁰

On the other hand, these nuclear materials, equipment, and technologies used for nuclear power generation can be diverted to uses for military purposes, and a nuclear accident in one country may have significant impacts on neighboring countries. For these reasons, with regard to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, it is vital to ensure the "3S"²¹: that is, (1) Safeguards, (2) Nuclear Safety (e.g. measures to ensure safety

²⁰ According to the IAEA, as of January 2021, 443 nuclear reactors are in operation worldwide and 52 reactors are under construction (see the IAEA website).

²¹ "3S" is used to refer to the IAEA's efforts toward nuclear safety, nuclear security, and nuclear safeguards, which are typical measures for non-proliferation.

to prevent nuclear accidents), and (3) Nuclear Security. As the country that experienced the TEPCO's Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station accident, it is Japan's responsibility to share its experiences and lessons learned from the accident with other countries and to contribute to strengthening global nuclear safety. In this regard, Japan and the IAEA have been working in cooperation. The IAEA Response and Assistance Network (RANET) Capacity Building Centre (CBC) in Fukushima Prefecture was designated in 2013 and 26 workshops were held until December 2020 for Japanese and foreign officials to strengthen their capabilities in the field of emergency preparedness and response.

The difficult work of decommissioning, contaminated water management, decontamination and environmental remediation has been progressing steadily at the TEPCO's Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station by leveraging the collective technologies and knowledge of the world. Japan has been cooperating closely with the IAEA since the accident. In November 2020, Japan received a mission comprising experts on environmental radioactivity from an independent domestic research institute designated by the IAEA, conducted marine monitoring and review, and underwent an IAEA review on marine radiation monitoring efforts in Japan. In addition, the UN Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation (UNSCEAR) published a report in 2014 on the levels and the impact of radiation from the TEPCO's Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station accident. Since 2018, UNSCEAR had been updating the report in order to carry out assessment based on the latest information, and there are plans to publish the report in 2021.

It is necessary to disseminate accurate

information in a timely and appropriate manner in order to make progress in the decommissioning works and to promote recovery, with the support and correct understanding of the international community. From this perspective, Japan periodically releases comprehensive reports through the IAEA that cover matters such as progress in decommissioning and contaminated water management at the TEPCO's Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station, results of the monitoring of air dose rate and seawater radioactivity concentration, and food safety. In addition, Japan submits reports on the current situation to all the Diplomatic Missions in Tokyo and to the IAEA every month in principle. Furthermore, Japan has organized more than 100 briefing sessions to all the Diplomatic Missions in Tokyo since the accident (held in February, April and October in 2020), and provided information through overseas diplomatic establishments. With respect to the status of contaminated water management at the TEPCO's Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station, Japan prepared an information sheet in English in order to clearly explain the difference between contaminated water and ALPS-treated water,²² which are often confused, to the international community, and distributed the information sheet at international conferences including the IAEA General Conference held in Vienna in September 2019.²³ Japan continues to provide information to the international community in a courteous and transparent manner, based on scientific evidence, and to make explanations securely so as to prevent causing further reputational damage.

Nuclear energy is applied not only to the field of power generation, but also to areas including human health, food and agriculture, environment, and industrial uses. Promoting the peaceful uses

²² ALPS-treated water is water purified using multiple purification systems, including advanced liquid processing systems (ALPS).

²³ The most recent English language materials that are distributed at IAEA General Conferences and other assemblies and that concern the differences between polluted water and ALPS-treated water are available on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' website (<https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/files/000564692.pdf>).



of nuclear energy in such non-power applications and contributing to development issues are becoming increasingly important as developing countries make up the majority of NPT member states. The IAEA also contributes to technical cooperation for developing countries and to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Against this background, Japan has been providing active support to the IAEA's activities, through such means as the Peaceful Uses Initiative (PUI) and IAEA technical cooperation that includes cooperation based on the Regional Cooperative Agreement for Research, Development, and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology (RCA). At the NPT Review Conference held in April 2015, Japan announced that it would be contributing a total of 25 million US dollars over five years to the PUI, a commitment that was achieved in April 2020.

B Bilateral Nuclear Cooperation Agreement

Bilateral nuclear cooperation agreements are concluded to establish a legal framework for securing a legal assurance from the recipient country on nuclear non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear-related material and equipment that are transferred between the two countries, so as to realize cooperation in the peaceful use of nuclear energy between the two countries. Under such bilateral agreements, it is possible to promote cooperation in areas such as the strengthening of nuclear safety.

When considering whether or not to establish a nuclear cooperation agreement framework with a foreign country, Japan considers the overall situation in each individual case, taking into account such factors as perspectives on non-proliferation, nuclear energy policy in that country, the country's trust in and expectations for Japan, and the bilateral relationship between the two

countries. As of the end of 2020, Japan has concluded nuclear cooperation agreements with Canada, Australia, China, the U.S., France, the UK, the European Atomic Energy Community (EURATOM), Kazakhstan, the ROK, Viet Nam, Jordan, Russia, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates and India in the order of effective date.

(4) Biological and Chemical Weapons

A Biological Weapons

The Biological Weapons Convention (BWC)²⁴ is the only multilateral legal framework imposing a comprehensive ban on the development, production and possession of biological weapons. However, the question of how to reinforce the convention is a challenge as there are neither provisions governing the means of verifying compliance with the BWC nor an implementing organization for the convention.

Since 2006, decisions have been made to establish the Implementation Support Unit (fulfilling the functions of a Secretariat) and to hold inter-sessional meetings twice a year in between the Review Conferences held every five years. During this time, progress has been made with respect to initiatives aimed at strengthening the regime of the BWC.

Agreement has been reached with regard to discussing the five topics, namely international cooperation, reviews of developments in the field of science and technology, national implementation, assistance for preparedness and response, and institutional strengthening of the convention. The discussions are to be conducted at the inter-sessional meetings up until the upcoming 9th Review Conference.

B Chemical Weapons

The Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC)²⁵ imposes a comprehensive ban on the development, production, stockpiling, and use of chemical

²⁴ Entered into force in March 1975. Total number of state parties is 183 (as of December 2020).

²⁵ Entered into force in April 1997. Total number of state parties is 193 (as of December 2020).

weapons, and stipulates that all existing chemical weapons must be destroyed. Compliance is ensured through a verification system consisting of declarations and inspections, making this convention a groundbreaking international agreement on the disarmament and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The implementing body of the CWC is the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), which is based in the Hague, the Netherlands. Along with the UN, the OPCW has played a key role in the destruction of Syria's chemical weapons. Its extensive efforts toward the realization of a world without chemical weapons were highly acclaimed, and the organization was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2013.

Japan, which has a highly developed chemicals industry and numerous chemicals factories, also accepts many OPCW inspections. Japan also actively cooperates with the OPCW in many other concrete ways, including measures to increase the number of member states and strengthening national implementation measures by States Parties with the aim of increasing the effectiveness of the convention. Moreover, under the CWC, Japan aims to complete, as soon as possible, the destruction of chemical weapons of the former Japanese Army abandoned in Chinese territory by working in cooperation with China.

(5) Conventional Weapons

Conventional weapons generally refer to arms other than weapons of mass destruction and include a wide variety of weapons ranging from large weapons such as landmines, tanks, and artillery to small arms such as handguns. The problem of conventional weapons, which are used in actual wars and cause injury and death to civilians, is a serious one for both national security and humanitarian concerns. The disarmament agenda presented in 2018 by UN Secretary-General

Guterres categorizes disarmament of conventional weapons as one of the three pillars, "Disarmament that Saves Lives." Japan is making active efforts involving cooperation and support based on international standards and principles concerning conventional weapons.

A Small Arms

Described as "the real weapons of mass destruction" due to the many human lives they take, small arms continue to proliferate due to the ease with which they can be obtained and used. They contribute to conflict prolongation and escalation, hindering the restoration of public security and post-conflict reconstruction and development. Since 1995, Japan has been working with other countries to submit a resolution on the illicit trade of small arms to the UN General Assembly, and the resolution has been adopted every year. In areas around the world, Japan has also provided support for projects to address the issue of small arms, including training and the collection and destruction of weapons. In 2019, Japan contributed two million US dollars to a mechanism for preventing small arms established under UN Secretary-General Guterres' disarmament agenda.

B The Arms Trade Treaty (ATT)²⁶

The Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), which seeks to establish common standards to regulate international trade in and prevent the illicit trade of conventional arms, entered into force in December 2014. As one of the original co-authors of the UN General Assembly resolution that initiated a consideration of the treaty, Japan has taken the lead in discussions and negotiations in the UN and contributed significantly to the establishment of the treaty. Even after the treaty entered into force, Japan has actively participated in discussions at Conferences of States Parties and other opportunities. Japan has continued to contribute

²⁶ As of December 2020, there are 110 states and regions that are parties to the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). Japan signed the Treaty on the day that it was released for signing and became a State Party in May 2014.

in ways such as hosting the 4th Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty in Tokyo as the first chair country elected from the Asia-Pacific region in August 2018. Japan also places importance on the universal application of the ATT. To that end, it has been encouraging countries, in particular Asian countries, to participate in the ATT. In 2020, Namibia, China, São Tomé and Príncipe, Afghanistan and Niue became new parties to the ATT, bringing the total number of state parties to 110 at the end of 2020.

C Convention on Prohibition or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects (Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, CCW)²⁷

The Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) prohibits or restricts the use of conventional weapons that are deemed to be excessively injurious or to have indiscriminate effects. It comprises a framework convention that sets forth procedural and other matters, as well as five annexed protocols that regulate individual conventional arms. The framework convention entered into force in 1983. Japan has ratified the framework convention and annexed Protocols I to IV, including the amended Protocol II. Prompted by concerns in the international community about the rapidly advancing military applications of science and technology, meetings of the Group of Governmental Experts on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS) have been held under the CCW framework since 2017. Meetings of the Group were held in March and August 2019, and the High Contracting Parties reached consensus on 11 guiding principles on LAWS. It was decided

that discussions on matters including the guiding principles will be used as a basis for the clarification, consideration and development of normative and operational framework for the future. The 11 guiding principles were reached consensus at the Meeting of the High Contracting Parties to the CCW held in November 2019. In 2020, a meeting of the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) was convened in September. Japan continued to participate actively in this and contributed to discussions.

D Anti-personnel Mines

2019 marks the 20th anniversary of the entering into force of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction (Ottawa Treaty)²⁸. To date, Japan has continued to promote comprehensive measures with a focus on the effective prohibition of anti-personnel mines and strengthening of support for mine-affected countries. Along with calling on countries in the Asia-Pacific region to ratify or accede to the Convention, Japan has also been steadily engaged in international cooperation through landmine clearance, victim assistance and other activities in the international community, from the viewpoint of the “Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus.”

At the Eighteenth Meeting of the States Parties of the Ottawa Treaty held in Geneva in November 2020, Japan looked back on its initiatives and achievements in supporting mine action, and also expressed its continued resolve toward playing an active role in achieving a mine-free world.

E Cluster Munitions²⁹

The international community takes very

²⁷ As of December 2020, 125 countries and regions are parties to the CCW.

²⁸ The Convention, which entered into force in March 1999, bans the use and production of anti-personnel mines while mandating the destruction of stockpiled mines and the clearance of buried mines. As of December 2020, there are 164 states and regions that are parties to the Convention, including Japan.

²⁹ Generally speaking, it refers to bombs or shells in the form of large containers that open midair and release submunitions that spread over a wide area. They are said to be highly likely to not explode on impact, leading to the problem of civilians being accidentally killed or injured.

seriously the humanitarian consequences brought about by cluster munitions. Japan is therefore taking steps to address this issue via victim assistance and unexploded ordinance clearance³⁰, while also continuing its efforts to increase the number of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM)³¹. Japan is participating in discussions concerning these issues toward the upcoming Second Review Conference of the Convention on Cluster Munitions to be held in 2021.

5 Japan's Efforts at the United Nations

(1) Japan-UN Relationship

The UN, which celebrated its 75th anniversary in 2020, is an international organization that nearly all the countries in the world are currently members of (193 countries as of December 2020). It addresses various challenges in diverse areas such as conflict resolution and peacebuilding, counterterrorism, disarmament and non-proliferation, poverty and development, human rights, refugee issues, environment and climate change issues, disaster risk reduction and infectious diseases.

The UN has two facets, functioning as the world's largest forum for Member States to gather and engage in negotiations (universality), as well as consolidating information and knowledge from expert organizations and making recommendations for the optimal solution (expertise). Since joining the UN in 1956, Japan has leveraged on both universality and expertise to realize policy aims through multilateral cooperation in a wide range of areas, including the three pillars of the UN—peace and security, development and human rights. An important example of this is the key role that Japan has fulfilled in the maintenance of international peace and security, such as

having served as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council 11 times, more frequently than any other UN Member State. In order to support such activities, the Government of Japan contributes financially to the UN while also actively engaging in the organizational aspects (management) of the UN. Japan also supports Japanese staff who play active roles in the UN, and puts effort into helping them gain appointment to important posts (see Chapter 5, Section 1, 2(1)).

Today, 75 years since the founding of the UN, we face the pressing challenge of making the UN efficient, effective and appropriate for the 21st century. Japan continues to proactively engage in UN reform, including UN Security Council reform.

(2) Major Events in 2020

Due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the high-level meeting of the 75th UN General Assembly was convened in September through the screening of pre-recorded speeches by each member state in the Assembly Hall. It was the first time that the meeting was held in such a format, and it was attended by Prime Minister Suga and Foreign Minister Motegi from Japan.

In his address at the UN General Assembly, Prime Minister Suga called on the international community to unite in solidarity so as to turn the unprecedented COVID-19 crisis into an opportunity to reinforce cooperation based on multilateralism. He stated that the spread of the coronavirus is a human security crisis, and that Japan will lead international efforts toward the attainment of universal health coverage (UHC). He also spoke about the need to “build back better” from the COVID-19 pandemic, and to create a flexible yet resilient society where the SDGs have been achieved. To that end, he emphasized the importance of the following three points that Japan will work on proactively: the UN and multilateralism;

³⁰ See the White Paper on Development Cooperation for specific efforts on international cooperation regarding cluster munitions and anti-personnel mines.

³¹ Entered into force in August 2010, it prohibits the use, possession, or production of cluster munitions, while mandating the clearance of cluster munitions in contaminated areas and the destruction of stockpiled cluster munitions. As of December 2020, there are 110 states and regions that are parties to the Convention, including Japan.

international peace and security; and the rule of law. He also said that Japan will spare no effort to bring about the early resolution of the abductions issue by North Korea, and toward the realization of a world without nuclear weapons. Finally, he expressed Japan's determination to host the Olympic and Paralympic Games Tokyo 2020 in the summer of 2021, as a symbol of overcoming COVID-19.

Prime Minister Suga also took the opportunity of the high-level meeting to hold a telephone call with UN Secretary-General António Guterres. In the talk, they exchanged views on ways to address COVID-19, and Secretary-General Guterres reiterated his appreciation to the contributions made by Japan. At the same time, they agreed that they would continue to cooperate in a wide range of areas, including peacebuilding, development and climate change. As for North Korea, Prime Minister Suga asked for continuous understanding and cooperation toward the early resolution of the abductions issue, for which Secretary-General Guterres expressed his full support. Secretary-General Guterres also emphasized the importance of promoting denuclearization.

In his statement delivered at the high-level meeting to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the UN, Foreign Minister Motegi emphasized the importance of multilateralism in the UN and the need to undertake efforts with a view to the post-COVID-19 world. He also conveyed Japan's position on UN reform, including UN Security Council reform. At the same meeting, the Declaration on the Commemoration of the Seventy-Fifth Anniversary of the United Nations, marking the milestone anniversary of the UN, was adopted.

Foreign Minister Motegi also worked on strengthening the mutual relationship of trust with the foreign ministers of other countries, and to communicate Japan's policies and stance to the international community, such as by attending the Meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the G4 Countries on UN Security Council Reform, the 13th Global Governance Group (3G) Ministerial



United Nations Headquarters
(Photo: UN Photo/Andrea Brizzi)



Address by Prime Minister Suga at the Seventy-Fifth Session of the UN General Assembly (pre-recorded video)
(September 26, Photo: Cabinet Public Relations Office)

Meeting, and the high-level meeting on financing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the era of COVID-19 and beyond (all of which were convened online), as well as releasing a video message along with the foreign ministers of the respective countries for the Friends of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT).

In November, Foreign Minister Motegi held a telephone call with Mr. Volkan Bozkir, President of the 75th session of the UN General Assembly. During the talk, they confirmed that they will cooperate to further vitalize discussions on human security, as well as work together to promote the reform of the UN including the reform of the Security Council. Foreign Minister Motegi also sought understanding and cooperation toward the early resolution of the abductions issue and gained the support of Mr. Bozkir.

(3) United Nations Security Council and its Reform

A United Nations Security Council

The UN Security Council holds the primary responsibility within the UN for maintaining international peace and security. It is composed of five permanent members and ten non-permanent members that are elected by UN Member States (for two-year terms). Its activities, including Peacekeeping Operations (PKOs) based on UN Security Council resolutions, are diversifying, and the Council's role has been expanding year by year, encompassing the efforts to address new threats such as the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and terrorism.

Japan has served as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council 11 times, more frequently than any other UN Member State, and has contributed proactively to discussions on topics such as country-specific situations and peacebuilding. During its term on the Council from January 2016 to the end of December 2017, Japan made every effort to resolve North Korea's nuclear and missile issues, including contributions to drafting the six UN Security Council resolutions adopted in response to North Korea's repeated ballistic missile launches and three nuclear tests conducted in January and September 2016 and September 2017. At the UN Security Council Briefing on Non-proliferation/Democratic People's Republic of Korea in December 2019, Japan was fully engaged in discussions related to maintaining international peace and security by stating that North Korea's ballistic missile launches were in violation of relevant UN Security Council resolutions and posed a serious challenge not only for Japan but also for the international community as a whole, as well as calling for the importance of the full implementation of relevant UN Security Council resolutions. Japan will contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security by seeking to become a non-permanent member of the Council as frequently as possible, until such time as reform, including the admission of Japan as a

permanent member of the Council, is achieved. From this point of view, Japan is running for the Security Council non-permanent membership at the elections to be held in 2022.

B Reform of the UN Security Council

75 years have passed since the UN was established, and the structure of the international community has changed significantly while the UN's functions have grown increasingly diverse. Despite this, the composition of the UN Security Council has basically remained unchanged to this day. There is broad recognition, among the international community, of the necessity for promptly reforming the UN Security Council in a way that improves its legitimacy, effectiveness, representativeness and transparency. In particular, in the Declaration on the Commemoration of the Seventy-Fifth Anniversary of the United Nations, all the leaders of the world committed to "instill new life in the discussions on the reform of Security Council."

Japan has contributed proactively to the international community in areas such as disarmament and non-proliferation, peacekeeping and peacebuilding, and human security, among others. To play an even more proactive role toward the realization of world peace and security through the UN, Japan has been making efforts to convince other countries to pursue the early realization of UN Security Council reform, with the expansion of both permanent and non-permanent seats and Japan's admission as a permanent member.

C Recent Activities Regarding UN Security Council Reform

Since 2009, in the UN General Assembly, Member States have been engaging in the Intergovernmental Negotiations on UN Security Council reform. In January, Japan invited the Co-chairs (UN Permanent Representatives of the United Arab Emirates and Poland) of the 74th session of the General Assembly Intergovernmental Negotiations to Japan, and affirmed its cooperation



Meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the G4 Countries (Japan, India, Germany, Brazil) on UN Security Council Reform (September 23, held via videoconference)

toward the realization of Security Council reform. Thereafter, Intergovernmental Negotiations were held once in February and March respectively under the same Co-chairs, but could not be held after that due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. At the end of August, the decision to transfer the work of the 74th session to the 75th session was adopted by consensus at the UN General Assembly.

Mr. Bozkir, President of the 75th Session of the UN General Assembly, reappointed the UN Permanent Representative from Poland to continue serving as a Co-Chair of the Intergovernmental Negotiations as a carry-over from the 74th session, while also appointing the UN Permanent Representative from Qatar to serve as a new Co-Chair of the Intergovernmental Negotiations.

Japan also places great importance on its initiatives as a member of the G4 (Japan, India, Germany and Brazil), a group that cooperates on promoting UN Security Council reform. Foreign Minister Motegi attended the Meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the G4 countries that was held online in September. At the meeting, the G4 Foreign Ministers confirmed their intention to call for a prompt starting of the Intergovernmental Negotiations in the current session of the General Assembly, and to continue aiming for improvement in the Intergovernmental Negotiations process as well as launching substantial negotiations based on a text. In addition, the Foreign Ministers stressed that the increased representation of countries with the capacity and willingness to contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security,

and of Africa, is indispensable to enhance the capacity of the Security Council to deal with contemporary global challenges. The Ministers shared the view that they would further step up their close collaboration with other like-minded countries to achieve an early reform of the Council. Japan will continue to engage proactively in the process for realizing UN Security Council reform, in close cooperation with reform-oriented countries.

(4) Organizational Aspects of the United Nations (Management)

A Management

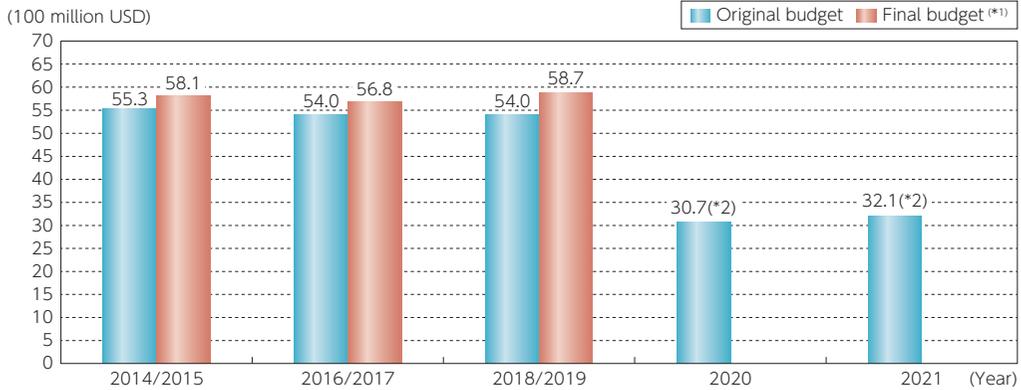
UN Secretary-General Guterres positions the management reform of the UN as a priority issue, alongside efforts for peace and development, and has been working toward enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of the functions of the UN Secretariat. A new organizational structure was launched in January 2019, and an annual regular budget system was introduced on a trial basis from 2020 (see B below), as a part of the ongoing efforts to promote the effectiveness of the UN's financial, budgetary and human resource management. Japan is supporting the objectives of the reform through deliberations pertaining to the management of the UN at its General Assembly as well as dialogues with the UN Secretariat, with the hope that these efforts will produce concrete results and that the UN will fulfill its mission more effectively and efficiently.

B Budget

The UN budget is mainly composed of the regular budget for general activities (a biennial budget for the period from January to December of the next year; an annual budget from January to December of the same year has been implemented on a trial basis from 2020 to 2022), and the peacekeeping budget related to peacekeeping operations (an annual budget for the period from July to the following June).

With regard to the regular budget, a budget for 2021 amounting to approximately 3.2 billion US

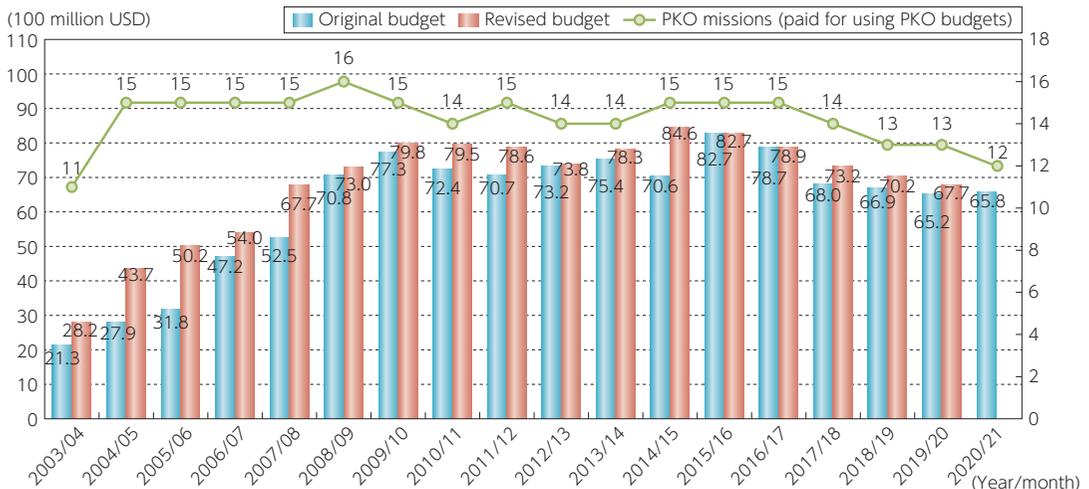
Changes in the United Nations regular budget



(*1) The final budget includes an added budget necessitated by additional demand, inflation adjustments, etc. that occurred during the two-year budget
 (*2) 2020 and 2021 are single year budgets

Source: UN documents

PKO budgets and missions paid for with PKO budgets (2003-2021)



*Includes UNSOS (United Nations Support Office in Somalia)

Source: UN documents

UN regular budget scale of assessments of top contributors (%)

Ranking*	Country	2016 - 2018	2019 - 2021	Change
1	U.S.	22.000	22.000	±0.000
2	China	7.921	12.005	+4.084
3	Japan	9.680	8.564	-1.116
4	Germany	6.389	6.090	-0.299
5	UK	4.463	4.567	0.104
6	France	4.859	4.427	-0.432
7	Italy	3.748	3.307	-0.441
8	Brazil	3.823	2.948	-0.875
9	Canada	2.921	2.734	-0.187
10	Russia	3.088	2.405	-0.683

*Ranking from 2019 to 2021

UN PKO budget scale of assessments of top contributors (%)

Ranking*	Country	2018	2019	2020 - 21
1	U.S.	28.4344	27.8912	27.8908
2	China	10.2377	15.2197	15.2195
3	Japan	9.6800	8.5640	
4	Germany	6.3890	6.0900	
5	UK	5.7683	5.7900	5.7899
6	France	6.2801	5.6125	5.6124
7	Italy	3.7480	3.3070	
8	Russia	3.9912	3.0490	3.0490
9	Canada	2.9210	2.7340	
10	South Korea	2.0390	2.2670	

*Ranking from 2019 to 2021

Source: UN documents

dollars was approved in December 2020 at the UN General Assembly. The budget for peacekeeping operations for the period of 2020-2021 amounting to approximately 6.58 billion US dollars in total was approved in June 2020 (a decrease of approximately 2.6% from the final budget of the previous period).

The budget to support the UN activities is composed of assessed contributions paid by Member States and voluntary contributions provided in accordance with Member States' policy needs. Assessed contributions are revised as necessary based on the financial capacity of Member States. Based on Japan's current scale of assessment of 8.564% (2019-2021), which ranks third after the U.S. and China, Japan contributed approximately 238.57 million US dollars to the UN regular budget for 2020, and approximately 560.78 million US dollars to the peacekeeping budget for 2020. As a major financial contributor, Japan has been encouraging the UN to make more efficient and effective use of its financial resources.

Key bodies that address administrative and budgetary matters of the UN are the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) and the Committee on Contributions. These are standing subsidiary committees of the General Assembly and are comprised of members serving in their personal capacities. The ACABQ reviews the overall administrative and budgetary issues of the UN and makes recommendations to the General

Assembly, while the Committee on Contributions submits a proposal on the scale of assessments of the regular budget for a decision to be made by all Member States at the General Assembly. Hence, both committees play an important role. Members from Japan have served continuously on both of these committees.

6 The Rule of Law in the International Community

Establishing the rule of law in the international community is of great significance in stabilizing relations between countries and realizing the peaceful settlement of disputes. Japan promotes bilateral and multilateral rule-making and the proper implementation of these rules in various fields that include security, economic and social affairs and criminal justice. Furthermore, in order to promote the peaceful settlement of disputes and the preservation of international legal order, Japan actively cooperates with international judicial organizations such as the International Court of Justice (ICJ), the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS) and the International Criminal Court (ICC) to strengthen their functions via both human and financial resource contributions. In addition, Japan has been working to enhance the rule of law in the international community, including Asian countries, through provision of legal technical assistance, participation in international conferences, exchanges of views

with various countries, and hosting events on international law.

(1) Japan's Diplomacy to Strengthen the Rule of Law

Strengthening the rule of law is one of the pillars of Japan's foreign policy. Japan opposes unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force or coercion, and strives to maintain its territorial integrity, secure its maritime and economic interests, and protect its citizens. Examples of Japan's efforts in this regard include the consistent affirmation of, and initiatives to promote, the preservation and enhancement of a free and open international order based on the rule of law at various fora, including international conferences such as the UN General Assembly and meetings with relevant states. With a view to promoting the rule of law in the international community, Japan has been contributing to the peaceful settlement of inter-state disputes based on international law, the formation and development of a new international legal order, and the development of legal systems and human resources in various countries.

A Peaceful Settlement of Disputes

In order to encourage peaceful settlement of disputes via international judicial institutions while striving to comply faithfully with international law, Japan accepts³² the compulsory jurisdiction of the ICJ, the principal judicial organ of the UN, and constructively contributes to establishing the rule of law in the international community via cooperation in providing human and financial resources to numerous international courts. For example, Japan is the largest financial contributor to the ICC and the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA). In terms of human resources, there have been a number of Japanese judges serving on international judicial bodies, including Judge Yanai Shunji to ITLOS (incumbent since 2005, President

of ITLOS from October 2011 to September 2014) and Judge Akane Tomoko to the ICC (incumbent since March 2018). With regard to the ICJ, ICJ Judge Iwasawa Yuji (incumbent since 2018, ICJ's fourth-ever Japanese judge) was re-elected at the ICJ judges elections in November 2020. Through these contributions, Japan strives to enhance the effectiveness and universality of international courts and tribunals. In 2020, the Support Program for Internships at International Courts and other International Organizations was launched with the aim of developing human resources who can play an active role in international courts in the future. Through this project, active support is provided to Japanese interns at international judicial organizations (see the Column on page 265).

To further strengthen the capability of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in dealing with international litigations, efforts are ongoing to enhance expertise on international judicial proceedings as well as to build up strengthened networks with lawyers in and outside Japan, especially by the International Judicial Proceedings Division (established in 2015) and the Economic Dispute Settlement Division (established in 2020). To win in an international litigation, it is vital to have full knowledge of the context of the trial and its specific legal proceedings. The procedural laws that are applicable to trials in courts such as the ICJ, ITLOS, and the PCA are not necessarily stipulated clearly in writing, and there are also norms that have been accumulated through judicial precedents. In addition, procedural laws are also developing alongside the growing complexity of the facts that are disputed in international trials. The International Judicial Proceedings Division captures information on the trends and developments in law firms and among lawyers who are active in major international trials, and also works together with these lawyers to create an organization that can perform well in international trials. When it

³² A declaration that States Parties to the Statute of the ICJ recognize the jurisdiction of the ICJ as compulsory *ipso facto* and without special agreement, in relation to any other state accepting the same obligation, in accordance with Article 36, paragraph 2 of its Statute. Only 74 countries, including Japan, have made such declaration to date.

Participation in the Support Program for Internships at International Courts and other International Organizations

Hiraishi Mari

1. About the Hague Conference on Private International Law (HCCH)

For about two months from September 2020, I participated in an internship at the Permanent Bureau of the Hague Conference on Private International Law (HCCH) in The Hague (the Netherlands), with support from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Support Program for Internships at International Courts and other International Organizations.

The HCCH began with its first session held in 1893. Thereafter, it became a permanent organization in 1955 with the aim of coordinating among the civil laws and civil procedure laws of different countries, so as to facilitate the smooth resolution of conflicts and problems related to international relations between individuals. It is a small organization with about 30 staff members, but it has to date drawn up about 40 conventions related to private international law and international civil procedure laws. Japan has ratified seven of these, including the Hague Convention (the Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction), which it ratified in 2014.

2. Tasks at HCCH

The internship at HCCH did not simply involve an experience of the workplace; instead, I was entrusted with various tasks to contribute immediately to the team. Specifically, I carried out research on the digitization of the international transmission of legal documents, as well as comparative research on the electronic signature laws of each country. With the increasing use of IT in judiciary in recent years, the aim of this work was to make it easier to utilize conventions on mutual legal assistance that were drawn up before the widespread use of the Internet. In addition to this, I was also given the opportunity to attend expert meetings on the topic of surrogate births, and meetings on the utilization of electronic signatures. It was stimulating and exciting to gain exposure to the forefront of the legal field.

Furthermore, as the majority of the staff were bilingual, there was no better environment to improve the English and French that I have been learning for many years, and to maintain my motivation for my linguistic studies. I believe my linguistic skills improved significantly in this environment. At the beginning, it took me a long time just to write one business e-mail, but I gradually became accustomed to it and was eventually entrusted to write letters to other international organizations.

3. Life in The Hague

The Hague is a city with rich international character. It is safe and very comfortable to live in. My heart skipped with delight on my daily commute on the bicycle, as I passed by rows of adorable brick houses along the canal, the beautiful Peace Palace, and the horse-mounted police patrolling around the city at a leisurely pace. After work and on the weekends, I spent time becoming acquainted with other interns and members of the staff. It was a very enriching and fulfilling time for me.

4. Participating in the Support Program

This Support Program allowed me to focus on the internship without having to face any financial difficulties, and made it possible for me to gain many invaluable experiences that cannot be covered in this



Building where the HCCH office is located
(The Hague, the Netherlands)



Streets of The Hague: The Peace Palace that
houses the International Court of Justice

column. I had hoped to take advantage of the linguistic skills and knowledge of Japanese law that I have cultivated so far to play an active role as an international lawyer in the future, but had been completely at a loss as to how I could harness my own strengths. Through this internship, I was able to experience for myself the potential and appeal of working as a member of an international organization, or as a lawyer involved in international trials in The Hague. I had the precious opportunity to consider my future career plans carefully. After my legal apprenticeship in Japan, I plan to work in a law firm as a corporate lawyer in the future. I shall never forget this experience and the enjoyment of working in an international organization, and aim to become a lawyer who can contribute to international trials that concern state parties.

comes to addressing disputes of economic nature, the increasing importance of dispute settlements based on international agreements (the WTO agreements, Economic Partnership Agreements and investment agreements) has resulted in growing demand for strengthening MOFA's capability to achieve more strategic and effective resolution of the disputes. To this end, with the view to consolidating the legal experts versed in economic dispute settlement, the International Trade and Investment Economic Dispute Settlement Division under the Economic Affairs Bureau was newly rebuilt into the Economic Dispute Settlement Division and incorporated into the International Legal Affairs Bureau in August 2020. The division engages in litigation work (preparation of written submissions, handling of evidence, preparation and participation in oral proceedings, etc.), analysis of case law and academic theories, and also engages in dispute prevention. All those works are carried out in close collaboration with the relevant ministries and agencies, as well as with private law firms and academic experts and practitioners specializing in international economic law both in Japan and abroad (see the Special Feature on page 267).

B International Rule-making

International rule-making to respond to issues the global community faces is one of the important efforts toward strengthening the rule of law. Along with actively promoting the conclusion of bilateral and multilateral treaties aimed at building a legal foundation for achieving goals it shares with other countries, Japan is demonstrating initiative

starting at the planning phase in creating rules for developing international laws that reflect its ideals and positions in cross-sectoral efforts in the framework of the UN and other fora. Specifically, Japan has been actively involved in the rule-making processes within various international frameworks that include codification work in the field of public international law at the International Law Commission (ILC) and the sixth Committee of the UN General Assembly, as well as the preparation of conventions and model laws in the field of private international law at fora such as the Hague Conference on Private International Law (HCCH), the UN Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL), and the International Institute for the Unification of Private Law (UNIDROIT). In the ILC, Dr. Murase Shinya, Professor Emeritus of Sophia University, serves as a Special Rapporteur on the topic of "Protection of the Atmosphere," contributing to the development of international law through the deliberations in the ILC, especially those on the draft guidelines of the said topic. Japan also sends Government representatives to various meetings of the HCCH, UNCITRAL and UNIDROIT, taking an active lead in the discussions. In addition, Dr. Kanda Hideki, Professor of Gakushuin University, contributes to the development of the work plan at UNIDROIT. Japan has also been showing its presence as a member nation of UNCITRAL since the founding of the commission, such as through its recommendations on enlargement of the membership of UNCITRAL and new projects.

Establishment of the “Economic Dispute Settlement Division”

In recent years, Japan has been involved in a number of complicated disputes with major countries/ neighboring countries based on economic agreements. In light of this situation, the “Economic Dispute Settlement Division” was established in August 2020 under the auspices of the International Legal Affairs Bureau as a major effort to further strengthen MOFA’s capability to engage in international adjudication and quasi-judicial proceedings, with the aim of achieving more strategic and effective resolution of economic disputes.

The mission of the Division is to carry out well-organized and high-quality litigation work in relation to economic disputes, based on international agreements such as the World Trade Organization (WTO) agreements, Economic Partnership Agreements (EPA), and investment agreements, and at the same time, to take measures necessary to prevent disputes from arising, thereby seeking to secure Japan’s national interests in international economic disputes.

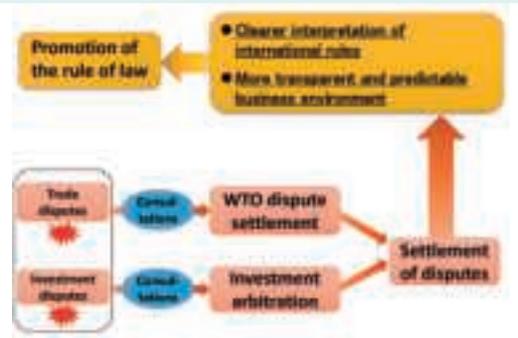
One of the notable latest trends in international economic disputes is that the WTO’s dispute settlement mechanism is being actively utilized, with 598 cases (an average of about 24 cases a year) filed in the 25-year period since the WTO’s establishment in 1995. However, the dysfunction of the WTO Appellate Body since the end of 2019 has become a serious issue that places the system itself at risk. Furthermore, there is a growing number of complex economic disputes that are closely linked to security concerns, such as the increase of tariffs against imports from China by the U.S. based on Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974, and the measures taken by Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries against Qatar. In light of the various trends related to economic policies having security implications in each country, the number of economic disputes is expected to increase worldwide, with a further increase in cases that are difficult to resolve.

As for investment agreements, more than 1,000 cases worldwide have been referred to international arbitration to date, by invoking the investor-state dispute settlement (ISDS) provisions. Of these, States lost in 30% of the cases. In this regard, the smallest amount of awards that a State was ordered to pay in 2019 was 7.9 million US dollars, and the largest amount was 8.4 billion US dollars*. As ISDS procedures are provided for in almost all of the investment agreements concluded by Japan, there needs to be a robust preparedness to respond to a potential claim.

Against this backdrop, to further promote the rule of law, which is one of the cornerstones of Japan’s diplomatic policies, it is important to resolve economic problems between States using legal and technical means, preventing them from becoming diplomatic issues. It is fair to say that the economic dispute settlement system plays a major role to that end. It also contributes to the creation of a business environment that enables Japanese companies and corporations to conduct global economic activities in a much more transparent and predictable manner.

To enable a robust engagement in economic disputes with unified teamwork, the Economic Dispute Settlement Division promotes close cooperation with the relevant ministries and agencies, private law firms both in Japan and abroad, as well as academic experts and practitioners specializing in international law including international economic law.

With this new Division at the core of its efforts, MOFA will further strengthen its capability to proactively engage in international economic dispute settlement.



Securing Japan’s national interests through well-organized litigation work

*UNCTAD: Investment Policy Hub, Investment Dispute Settlement Navigator (<https://investmentpolicy.unctad.org/investment-dispute-settlement>)



Development of Domestic Legislation and Other Matters

Japan not only takes steps to appropriately improve its own national laws so as to comply with international law, but also actively supports the development of legal systems, especially in Asian countries, while cooperating internationally on efforts related to further developing the rule of law. For example, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Japanese Society of International Law, supported by the Nippon Foundation, co-organize the Asia Cup. The Asia Cup is an international law moot court competition for students in Asia including Japan, which aims to raise awareness about the importance of the peaceful settlement of disputes, nurture future generations in the field of international law, and strengthen exchange and communication among them. The 21st Asia Cup was held in 2019, but not in 2020 due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. There are plans to continue holding it from 2021. Japan is also engaging in cooperation concerning human resources and finances with the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization (AALCO), the only inter-governmental organization in the Asia/Africa region that is engaged in international law.

(2) Initiatives in the Maritime Sector

For Japan, as a maritime nation, maintaining and strengthening maritime order based on the rule of law is an issue of the utmost importance. In his keynote address at the 13th Asia Security Summit (Shangri-La Dialogue) in May 2014, Prime Minister Abe proposed the “Three Principles of the Rule of Law at Sea”: (1) making and clarifying claims based on international law; (2) not using force or coercion in trying to drive their claims; and (3) seeking to settle disputes by peaceful means. Ever since then, Japan has consistently advocated these principles. For example, at the 15th East Asia Summit (EAS), held in November 2020, Prime Minister Suga emphasized that a free and open maritime order based on the rule of law forms the cornerstone of peace and prosperity in

the Indo-Pacific region.

The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) serves as a foundation for the rule of law at sea. This convention has been ratified by 167 countries, including Japan (including some regions not officially recognized as nations by Japan), and the EU. The convention comprehensively provides for principles governing the sea, including the freedom of navigation and overflight of the high seas. It also stipulates rights and obligations under international law on the development and regulation of marine resources, among other things. The provisions of this convention that concern areas such as territorial waters and exclusive economic zones are widely accepted as established customary international law. In addition, the recognition that activities conducted on the seas ought to be carried out according to the provisions of this convention is widely shared among the international community. As problems concerning the oceans and seas grow more complex and diverse, it will be important to preserve and strengthen the maritime order based on this convention, which serves as a comprehensive and universal legal framework.

Under UNCLOS, the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS) was established in 1996 in Hamburg, Germany for the peaceful settlement of maritime disputes and the preservation and advancement of law and order at sea. ITLOS deals with a wide range of cases, including the delimitation of maritime boundaries in recent years in particular, and the importance of the tribunal has been growing. Japan attaches importance to the role played by ITLOS and has successively dispatched two Japanese judges to the tribunal since its establishment.

The Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (CLCS) established pursuant to UNCLOS also plays an important role in the operation of the system for defining the outer limits of the continental shelf. Since the establishment of CLCS, Japan has continued to cooperate with the Commission in terms of both human and financial

resources through means such as continuously producing members (Japan's current member of the Commission is Professor Yamazaki Toshitsugu from the University of Tokyo). In the International Seabed Authority (ISA), which was established pursuant to UNCLOS for the primary purpose of managing deep sea-bed mineral resources, regulations on exploitation of deep sea-bed mineral resources were considered at the meeting of the Council held in February 2020 and work on the formulation of the relevant standards and guidelines was carried out. Japan actively takes part in negotiations in order to reflect its standpoint on these rules. It has also traditionally provided support for capacity building to developing countries with deep sea-bed related technologies, and has been taking the lead in the creation of rules governing the deep sea-bed.

The decision was made to convene an intergovernmental conference (IGC) to formulate a new international agreement under UNCLOS on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ), which was adopted by resolution 72/249 of the UN General Assembly in December 2017. Three meetings of the IGC were held by August 2019. Although the fourth meeting had been scheduled for March 2020, it was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Government of Japan actively takes part in discussions in order to ensure that Japan's perspective is reflected in the new international agreement by putting its emphasis on striking a balance between the dual aspects of conservation and sustainable use of the BBNJ.

(3) Initiatives in the Political and Security Fields

In order to strengthen its legal basis for diplomatic activities, Japan is actively engaged in concluding international agreements in the political and security fields. In the field of security, Japan advanced efforts to conclude Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreements (ACSA), which set out the settlement procedures and other matters

on the mutual provision of supplies and services between the JSDF and foreign armed forces, Agreements concerning the Transfer of Defence Equipment and Technology, which set out provisions on the handling of defence equipment and technologies to be transferred, and Agreements on the Security of Information, which serve as the basis for the sharing of classified information on security with the relevant countries. Japan signed an ACSA with India in September, and reached an agreement in principle with Viet Nam in October on an Agreement concerning the Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology. Japan is also continuing negotiations including toward the conclusion of a peace treaty with Russia, which is a key issue. In the area of nuclear energy, in light of the UK's withdrawal from the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom), Japan signed the Protocol Amending the Japan-UK Nuclear Cooperation Agreement in December.

(4) Initiatives in the Fields of the Economy and Society

The conclusion and implementation of international agreements that bring legal discipline to cooperative relationships with other countries in the economic sphere is becoming increasingly important for promoting the liberalization of trade and investment, as well as people-to-people exchanges, and for strengthening the foundations for the overseas activities of Japanese citizens and companies. The agreements that Japan negotiated and signed or concluded in 2020 include tax conventions, investment treaties, and social security agreements with various countries and regions. Furthermore, Japan also engaged actively in negotiations on Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) and other agreements, with the aim of expanding free and fair economic spheres and strengthening wide-ranging economic relationships.

The Japan-U.S. Trade Agreement and the Japan-U.S. Digital Trade Agreement were signed in October 2019 and entered into force in January

2020. The Japan-UK Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (Japan-UK EPA) was signed in October 2020 and entered into force in January 2021. The Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) Agreement was signed in November 2020.

Furthermore, with a view to protecting and enhancing the livelihoods and activities of Japanese citizens and companies, Japan is working on the proper implementation of existing international agreements as well as utilizing the dispute settlement system of the World Trade Organization (WTO).

In social areas such as human rights, the environment, fisheries, maritime affairs, aviation, labor and social security, which are closely linked to the daily lives of the people, Japan actively participates in negotiations of international agreements to ensure that Japan's positions are reflected and also concludes such agreements. For example, in the aviation sector, Japan signed the Japan-EU Bilateral Aviation Safety Agreement in June. In the field of maritime affairs, Japan concluded the International Convention on Civil Liability for Bunker Oil Pollution Damage (Bunker Convention) and the Nairobi International Convention on the Removal of Wrecks (Nairobi Convention) in July.

(5) Initiatives in the Field of Criminal Justice

The ICC is the first-ever permanent international criminal court for prosecution and punishment, in accordance with international law, individuals who have committed the most serious crimes of concern to the international community. Since becoming a State Party to the ICC Rome Statute in October 2007, Japan has consistently supported the ICC's activities and cooperated with the Court in various ways. Fiscally, Japan is the largest contributor to the ICC, accounting for approximately

15.7% of the entire assessed contributions to the Court as of 2020. With regard to human resources, Japan has consistently produced judges since its accession to the ICC. The current judge, Ms. Akane Tomoko, former Ambassador for International Judicial Cooperation at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Public Prosecutor at the Supreme Public Prosecutors Office of Japan, began serving her nine-year term in March 2018. In addition, Japan has cooperated with activities of the ICC from various positions. Mr. Noguchi Motoo, former Ambassador for International Judicial Cooperation and Public Prosecutor of Supreme Public Prosecutors Office of Japan, served as an independent expert of the panel of experts to assist the Committee on the Election of the Prosecutor, while Mr. Kozaki Hitoshi served on the Committee on Budget and Finance. As the ICC evolves into a full-fledged international criminal justice institution, it is imperative to secure cooperation with the ICC, establish the principle of complementarity, and to ensure efficiency and effectiveness in its judicial procedures. Japan actively engages in addressing these challenges, such as through its participation in the working groups of the Assembly of States Parties.

Along with these efforts, in the face of an increase of cross-border crimes in recent years, Japan is further working on ensuring judicial cooperation, such as the mutual submission of necessary evidence. Specifically, as efforts to improve legal frameworks for promoting international cooperation in the field of criminal justice, Japan has been working on negotiations toward concluding international agreements such as the Treaty on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters (MLAT)³³, the Treaty on Extradition³⁴, and the Treaty on the Transfer of Sentenced Persons³⁵. In August, the Treaty between Japan and the

³³ A legal framework that allows for efficient and prompt cooperation with legal authorities of other countries in criminal investigations and procedures.

³⁴ A legal framework having comprehensive and detailed provisions regarding the extradition of criminals to enable more effective cooperation for repressing crime.

³⁵ A legal framework aiming to facilitate the social rehabilitation of sentenced persons by giving them the opportunity to serve their sentences in their own countries.

Socialist Republic of Viet Nam on the Transfer of the Sentenced Persons entered into force.

7 Human Rights

The protection and promotion of human rights provide the foundation for peace and stability in the international community. Japan recognizes that the protection of human rights, which is a universal value, is the basic responsibility of all countries, regardless of differences in the method of attaining this goal and their cultures. While speaking out firmly against any serious violation of human rights, Japan considers, under the basic principle of “dialogues” and “cooperation,” that it is important to promote voluntary efforts through bilateral dialogues and cooperation between countries that are working toward democratization and the protection of human rights. In addition, in the area of human rights, with the standpoint of bridge-building in Asia and protection of the socially vulnerable people, Japan puts effort into improving the global human rights situation through bilateral dialogues, proactive participation in multilateral forums such as the UN, and constructive dialogues with the UN human rights mechanisms.

(1) Initiatives within the UN

A UN Human Rights Council

The UN Human Rights Council was established in 2006 as a restructured version of the UN Commission on Human Rights in order to strengthen the UN’s ability to address human rights issues as part of a movement toward mainstreaming human rights in the UN. The Human Rights Council holds sessions throughout the year in Geneva (three regular sessions per year, lasting about ten weeks in total) to discuss issues and make recommendations concerning the protection and promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Japan served as a member of the Council from June 2006 to June 2011 (the first and the second terms), January 2013 to December 2015 (the third term), and January 2017 to December 2019 (fourth term). Most recently, Japan was elected in the election held in October 2019, and currently serves as a member of the Council from January 2020 to December 2022 (fifth term).

At the high-level segment (meeting of the main representatives of each country) of the 43rd Session in February and March, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan Omi Asako delivered a statement. In her statement, in relation to COVID-19, she called for efforts to prevent the suspension of use of facilities and the calumny against certain persons only for being of East Asian origin. She also expressed Japan’s continued dedication to contribute to the protection and promotion of human rights in Asia and the world, and stressed the importance of the early resolution of the abductions issue. Furthermore, she introduced Japan’s latest initiatives to protect and promote the rights of socially vulnerable people in Japan and abroad, including protecting and promoting the rights of the child, leading international discussions on the elimination of discrimination against persons affected by leprosy and their family members, restoring and promoting the culture of the indigenous Ainu people, and expanding the reception of refugees through Japan’s resettlement program. The resolution on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK), submitted by the EU and co-sponsored by Japan, was adopted without a vote at the same session (adopted for 13 consecutive years)³⁶. This resolution refers to the urgency and importance of the abductions issue and of the immediate return of all abductees, the long years of suffering experienced by abductees and their families, the immediate return of all abductees of Japan as well as the provision of accurate

³⁶ Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the session was suspended after the final meeting held on March 13. It was resumed on June 15, and the resolution on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) was adopted on June 22.

information to the families of victims on the fates and whereabouts of their missing relatives.

At the 44th session held in July, Japan, as the main sponsor, submitted a draft resolution on the elimination of discrimination against persons affected by leprosy and their family members, which was adopted without a vote. The resolution includes the UN Human Rights Council's decision to extend the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the elimination of discrimination against persons affected by leprosy and their family members for a period of three years, with a view to protecting the human rights of those suffering from leprosy-related discrimination around the world. The resolution also encourages the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Special Rapporteur to continue consultations with various stakeholders in relation to discrimination against persons affected by leprosy and their family members.

B The Third Committee of the UN General Assembly

The Third Committee of the UN General Assembly is, along with the Human Rights Council, the UN's main forum focused on human rights. Generally, in October and November, the Committee discusses a wide range of issues, including those concerning social development, women, children, racial discrimination, refugees, crime prevention and criminal justice, as well as the human rights situations in North Korea, Syria and Iran, among others. Resolutions adopted by the Third Committee are then adopted by a plenary session of the general assembly, contributing to the development of international norms.

At the 75th session of the General Assembly, the resolution on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), submitted by the EU and co-sponsored by Japan, was adopted without a vote at a session of the Third Committee in November and a plenary session of the UN General Assembly in December. The resolution refers to the urgency

and importance of the abductions issue and of the immediate return of all abductees, the long years of suffering experienced by abductees and their families, the immediate return of all abductees of Japan as well as the provision of accurate and detailed information to the families of the victims on the fates and whereabouts of their missing relatives.

In addition, Japan participated actively in discussions in the international community toward protecting and promoting human rights, including discussions on the human rights situations in some countries such as Syria and Iran, as well as discussions on various human rights issues that include social development and the rights of the child.

C Ending Violence Against Children

Since 2018, Japan has participated in the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children (GPeVAC). Japan has been actively involved in Partnership activities as a "pathfinding country," engaging in ending violence against children. As part of this effort, Japan cooperates with civil society and private companies to formulate a country-specific action plan aimed at ending violence against children. In July, the Government of Japan and ChildFund Japan, a non-profit organization, co-organized a side event on the theme of COVID-19 and ending violence against children on the occasion of the UN High-level Political Forum (HLPF). Japan will continue promoting efforts to end violence against children at home and abroad, in collaboration with the international community.

D National Action Plan (NAP) on Business and Human Rights

Japan is actively engaged in efforts toward the implementation of the "Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs)" that was endorsed by the UN Human Rights Council. As a part of these efforts, Japan launched the National Action Plan (NAP) on Business and Human Rights

in October to promote respect for human rights in the context of business activities. Since then, the government has been widely promoting the NAP at international fora such as the UN Forum on Business and Human Rights held in Geneva, as well as meetings organized by business associations and stakeholders. Going forward, Japan will steadily implement the NAP in cooperation with the relevant ministries and agencies (see the Special Feature below).

(2) Initiatives Concerning International Human Rights Law and International Humanitarian Law

A International Human Rights Law

In November, at the elections of members of the

Committee on the Rights of the Child held at the 18th Meeting of States parties to the Convention on the Rights of the Child at the UN Headquarters in New York. Ms. Otani Mikiko (lawyer), Japan's candidate, was re-elected to the Committee (see the Column on page 275). Furthermore, with respect to the human rights treaties that Japan has concluded, Japan has faithfully responded to periodic reviews of government reports on the implementation status of the treaties in Japan, pursuant to the rules set forth in those treaties. In March, the Seventh Report of Japan on the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights was submitted to the Human Rights Committee.

Special Feature

Toward Business Enterprises that “Leave No One Behind”; Launch of Japan’s National Action Plan (NAP) on Business and Human Rights

With the progress of globalization of business activities, international interest in the need for business enterprises to respect human rights is growing. Within the United Nations, the “Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights: Implementing the United Nations ‘Protect, Respect and Remedy’ Framework” (hereinafter referred to as Guiding Principles) received unanimous endorsement at the 17th session of the Human Rights Council held in 2011. The Guiding Principles set out the principles for the state duty to protect human rights, the corporate responsibility to respect human rights, and access to remedy for business-related human rights abuse, and are used as the guidelines for the respect of human rights in business activities.

The UN Forum on Business and Human Rights has been convened since 2012 with the aim of promoting the Guiding Principles. When the UN set out the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that aim to realize a world of “Leave No One Behind” in 2015, it also affirmed the importance of compliance with the Guiding Principles, while demand from investors, civil society and consumers for business enterprises to respect human rights has been increasing.

With such growing interest in “business and human rights” in Japan and abroad, the Government of Japan decided to formulate a National Action Plan (NAP) on Business and Human Rights in 2016 as one of its initiatives toward the steady implementation of the Guiding Principles. The formulation of the NAP is also positioned as one of the main initiatives toward the achievement of the SDGs, and this intention was clearly stated in the SDGs Implementation Guiding Principles Revised Edition, approved by the SDGs Promotion Headquarters led by the Prime Minister in December 2019. Hence, business enterprises are also called upon to respect human rights in their actions for SDGs initiatives.



United Nations Forum on Business and Human Rights (Geneva, Switzerland; Photo: UN Secretariat of the Forum on Business and Human Rights) (Convened as an online event in 2020)

The initial stage in the formulation of the NAP took place in 2018 with the participation of all relevant government ministries and agencies to assess the current landscape of Japanese legislation and policies related to business activities. This was followed by ten consultation meetings with leading organizations in the business sector, the labor sector, bar associations, civil society and other sectors of society to ascertain the situation on the respect of human rights in business activities. The results of the discussions were then compiled in a report.

Toward the formulation of the NAP, an Inter-Ministerial Committee was established to promote coordination among the relevant ministries and agencies in 2019. An Advisory Committee and a Working Group were also established to include a wide range of views. A series of discussions were held to learn the views of the business sector, the labor sector, bar associations, academia, civil society and consumer organizations, as well as overseas experts. Through the discussions, priority areas were identified in July 2019 to be incorporated in the NAP. In February, the draft of the NAP was drawn up, and public comments were invited for one month from February 17. Taking these various viewpoints into consideration, in October, the Inter-Ministerial Committee launched the NAP on Business and Human Rights, with the aim of promoting respect for human rights in the context of business activities.

The NAP lists a series of measures related to business and human rights to be implemented by the Government. It also sets out expectations for business enterprises to promote introducing human rights due diligence (to identify, prevent, mitigate, and account for how business enterprises address their impacts on human rights) in the context of their business activities.



Cover of the National Action Plan (NAP) on Business and Human Rights (2020-2025)

Through the implementation and promotion of the NAP, and by encouraging responsible business conduct, the Government of Japan will ensure the coherence of policy measures taken by the relevant ministries and agencies with regard to business and human rights. The Government also wishes to contribute to promoting and protecting both the human rights for society as a whole, including international society. Furthermore, the Government hopes that the NAP will serve to enhance company values and Japanese enterprises' competitiveness and will contribute to the achievement of the SDGs.

Column

Re-election as Member of the Committee on the Rights of the Child

Otani Mikiko, Lawyer

I was re-elected at the elections of members of the Committee on the Rights of the Child held in New York in November, for which I ran for the second term. Due to the impact of COVID-19, this election was held about five months after the original date.

The Committee on the Rights of the Child is a human rights treaty body* comprised of 18 experts, and its mission includes the promotion of the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The number of state parties to the Convention is 196, more than the number of member states of the UN and the largest number among all treaties of the UN. I have been serving as the first Japanese member of the Committee since 2017. Even before that, I have been learning about the Convention on the Rights of the Child and have been interested in the monitoring systems put in place by human rights treaty bodies in accordance with the provisions of the respective human rights treaties. As a member of an NGO, I have been involved in the review of government reports by human rights treaty bodies for more than 20 years. This work made me realize that, in order for human rights treaty bodies to promote the realization of human rights and the implementation of treaties by states parties, the working methods of each treaty body are an extremely important matter. Based on this understanding, during my first term in the Committee on the Rights of the Child, I worked passionately on the reform of human rights treaty bodies in addition to my primary duties as a member of the said Committee.

The review of human rights treaty bodies has been carried out based on the UN Resolution on strengthening and enhancing the effective functioning of the human rights treaty body system, adopted by the General Assembly in 2014. However, it is a subject that does not attract the interest of many Committee members, because discussions on the working methods of human rights treaty bodies are not related to substantive human rights issues and tend to be undistinguished and technical. In this regard, I have been actively involved in the work aimed at reviewing human rights treaty bodies based on the above-mentioned mindset. In human rights treaty bodies, which are collective bodies of individual experts, it is not an easy matter to hold exhaustive discussions on substantive human rights issues and summarize the opinions raised. The review of working methods is far more difficult than that. Within this process, when coordinating varying opinions and proposing new ideas and concrete solutions to overcome issues, I get an actual sense that I am applying my practical instincts as a lawyer, as well as the experiences in organizational management and budgetary/organizational reforms that I had gained as an executive officer of an NGO. In addition, throughout my experience as an intern at the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, and my experience participating as a member of the Japanese delegation and a representative of women in the private sector at the Third Committee of the UN General Assembly, I have continued to hold an interest in, and to learn about, the organizations, budgets and procedures of the UN. This background has served me well in the discussions on the review of human rights treaty bodies.

The committee members of each human rights treaty body do not represent their own governments, but instead, serve as independent and neutral experts. On the other hand, as a Japanese member of the Committee, I feel that doing good work that will be remembered by many people and contributing to the human rights activities of the UN, with the aim of improving the human rights of children and improving the systems of human rights treaty bodies, is a diplomatic activity on the private individual level that contributes to enhancing Japan's reputation in the international community in a broader sense. For the four-year period of my second term, I aim to engage in activities with this fervor and enthusiasm, and with a sense of gratitude for the valuable opportunity that I have been offered.

*Committees (known as treaty bodies) that carry out monitoring activities on the implementation of human rights treaties by state parties, and which are established based on the main human rights treaties adopted by the UN (such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child, Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women).



B International Humanitarian Law

Japan has actively been engaged in efforts for strengthening the national implementation of international humanitarian law (IHL). In February, a meeting of the National IHL Committee was co-organized with the Japanese Red Cross Society, during which discussions were held on matters such as the activities and roles of the International Humanitarian Fact-Finding Commission (IHFFC). In October, Japan participated in a regional meeting of the national IHL committees of Asia-Pacific countries, where views were exchanged on the dissemination and implementation of IHL at the national level. Furthermore, as it does every year, Japan dispatched instructors to play the part of the judge to the IHL Moot Court Competition, organized by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), as part of awareness-raising efforts for IHL.

(3) Initiatives Undertaken via Bilateral Dialogue

In addition to initiatives within the UN and other multilateral frameworks, Japan recognizes the importance of bilateral dialogues in order to protect and promote human rights. The Seventh Japan-Myanmar Human Rights Dialogue was held in Nay Pyi Taw in February, and the 24th Japan-EU Human Rights Dialogue was held via video-conference in May. While sharing information on their respective initiatives in the field of human rights, the parties to these dialogues exchanged opinions concerning cooperation in multilateral fora such as the UN.

(4) Contribution to Refugee Issues

From the perspective of international contribution and humanitarian aid, Japan started accepting refugees from Myanmar who were temporarily residing in Thailand, under a resettlement program that ran from FY2010 to FY2014 (the transfer of refugees from an asylum country to a third country that agrees to accept them for long-term settlement).

In addition to accepting refugees from Myanmar who had been residing temporarily in Malaysia since FY2015, the Government of Japan allowed accepting eligible family members of those who already resettled in Japan on the condition that mutual aid be provided with those remaining in Thailand. From FY2010 to FY2019, a total of 194 people from 50 families have come to Japan under this program.

While local governments in the Tokyo metropolitan region have traditionally played a central role in operations concerning the resettlement destinations for refugees upon their arrival in Japan, proactive efforts are being made to resettle refugees in municipalities outside of the Tokyo metropolitan area, aimed at promoting a better nationwide understanding of the refugee issue. Since 2008, the refugees who have completed a six-month training program upon arrival in Japan started resettlement in various parts of Japan, and are living independently in their respective areas.

The international situation surrounding refugees is undergoing dramatic change. In light of this movement among the international community and to better balance the burden for the refugee problem among the international community, Japan made the decision in June 2019 to accept more refugees resettling from third countries under part of a new framework. Specifically, beginning in FY2020, Japan will now accept up to 60 refugees temporarily residing in Asia once or twice a year without restriction on their birthplace or region of residence, and any of the family members of the refugees who have already been accepted in Japan under a resettlement program. In light of the COVID-19 pandemic situation in Japan and abroad, the appropriate time for accepting refugees is under consideration as of December.

While the acceptance of resettled refugees has been done primarily by Western countries, Japan is the first country in Asia to accept resettled refugees.

8 Women

The “Power of Women” has the greatest potential that has not yet been fully mobilized both in Japan and abroad. By promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women, and thereby enabling women to give full play to their capabilities, is vital toward revitalizing the economy and society as a whole, as well as realizing “building back better” under the conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic. In light of the vulnerable position that women are placed in situations of conflict, it is also important for Japan to prevent the use of sexual violence as a weapon in conflicts, and to contribute actively to international efforts to protect the human rights of women and promote the provision of relief and assistance to women. Going forward, Japan will continue to contribute to the realization of gender equality and the promotion of women’s empowerment while hosting international conferences on women and vigorously promoting assistance to developing countries through cooperation with other countries and international organizations.

(1) G20 Riyadh Summit

At the session on “Building an Inclusive, Sustainable, and Resilient Future” at the G20 Riyadh Summit held in November, Prime Minister Suga expressed that Japan welcomes the commencement of concrete actions of “EMPOWER,” the Private Sector Alliance for the Empowerment and Progression of Women’s Economic Representation in leadership positions. The launch of this initiative was welcomed by leaders at the G20 Osaka Summit held under Japan’s presidency.

(2) International Cooperation for the Empowerment of Women in Developing Countries

In May 2016, Prime Minister Abe announced the “Development Strategy for Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment,” formulated as one of the new thematic policies under the

Development Cooperation Charter, and declared that measures would be implemented to train about 5,000 female government administrative officials and to improve the learning environment for about 50,000 girls over the three years from 2016 to 2018. This was steadily implemented. At the 3rd WAW! held in December 2016, Prime Minister Abe promised to provide support amounting to more than 3 billion US dollars for women in developing countries until 2018, with a focus on the following: (1) promoting women’s and girls’ rights; (2) creating an enabling environment for women and girls to reach their full potential; and (3) advancing women’s leadership in politics, economy and other public fields. These measures were also steadily implemented. At the 5th WAW!, held in March 2019, Prime Minister Abe affirmed his pledge to provide high-quality education and career development opportunities to at least 4 million women and girls over the three years between 2018 and 2020 as a means to expand educational opportunities for women in developing countries.

(3) Initiatives in the UN

A United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)

The 64th session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW64) was held in March on a much smaller scale for a significantly reduced duration, due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Opening statements were presented by the CSW64 chair, the Executive Director of UN Women and others, and political declarations, various resolutions and the agenda for the 65th session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women were adopted. However, there were no opportunities for member states to present their remarks, including statements.

B UN Women

Japan has been strengthening cooperation with UN Women along with increasing its contribution



Meeting between UN Women Executive Director Mlambo-Ngcuka and Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs Omi (January 7, New York)

of approximately 2 million US dollars in 2013 to approximately 22 million US dollars in 2020. In particular, in the Middle East, such as Egypt, Iraq and Jordan, as well as conflict-stricken countries in Africa that include Nigeria, Niger and South Sudan, Japan provides economic empowerment support through the creation of employment and vocational training, raising awareness toward women's rights and the eradication of violence against women, and psychological and social support, as civil war and other factors in these regions have placed women and girls, who became refugees or internally displaced persons (IDPs), in vulnerable economic and social situations. Moreover, to prevent violent extremism, Japan supports efforts to build resilient communities through women's empowerment, as well as efforts to encourage women's participation in both peacebuilding and in the peace and reconciliation process in Lebanon and Sri Lanka. On January 7, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs Omi visited New York, where she engaged in discussions with UN Women Executive Director Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka on cooperation between UN Women and the Government of Japan toward women's empowerment.

C Dealing with Sexual Violence

Sexual violence is used as a tactic of war which cannot be overlooked. It is vital to put an end to impunity and to support victims of violence.

Japan has been actively engaging in efforts to ensure that the 21st century is a world where women do not suffer violation of human rights. Japan places importance on cooperating with international organizations that include the UN Action and Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict (SRSG-SVC), as well as participating in international discussions.

In 2020, Japan provided financial support of approximately 1.09 million US dollars to the Office of the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, contributing to strengthening the police and judicial capabilities, as well as the development of support systems for victims of sexual violence in conflicts, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Somalia, Central Africa, Mali, Nigeria and South Sudan. In 2020, Japan contributed 2 million Euros to the Global Survivors Fund (GSF), founded by 2018 Nobel Peace Prize laureates Dr. Denis Mukwege and Ms. Nadia Murad for survivors of sexual violence in conflicts. Japan also participates actively in GSF as a member of the Board. Furthermore, Japan continues to make voluntary contributions to the Trust Fund for Victims of the International Criminal Court (ICC), earmarking approximately 650,000 Euros out of a cumulative contribution of about 850,000 Euros for victims of sexual violence. Efforts are also being made to protect victims of such violence.

D Women, Peace and Security (WPS)

Japan formulated a national action plan (NAP) in 2015 to implement UN Security Council resolution 1325 and other related resolutions on women, peace and security (WPS). In March 2019, Japan launched the revised second version of NAP. In accordance with the NAP, Japan has contributed to advancing the WPS agenda in the Middle East, Africa and Asia through various financial contributions to international organizations, mainly UN Women and the UN Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual

Violence in Conflict. Japan also compiles a report for the monitoring and evaluation of implementation of NAP, which is published on the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The G7 Women, Peace and Security Partnerships Initiative was established at the 2018 G7 Foreign Ministers Meeting in Toronto. With Sri Lanka as its partner country, Japan has supported the implementation of the WPS agenda including formulating a NAP on the WPS of Sri Lanka since 2019, as well as the economic empowerment project for female headed households, including conflict-affected widows. In December 2020, a dialogue was held between the evaluation committee for the NAP and civic society. During the same month, State

Minister for Foreign Affairs Uto delivered a video message at an International Conference on WPS hosted by Viet Nam, where he noted Japan's initiatives at home and abroad for the implementation of the NAP on WPS.

E Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

Since 1987, Japan has continued to provide members for the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), which comprises 23 independent experts. Professor Akizuki Hiroko of Asia University was elected to a member of the CEDAW at its member election held in 2018.

Section 3

Japan's International Cooperation (Development Cooperation and Response to Global Issues)

1 Development Cooperation

(1) Development Cooperation Charter and Japan's ODA Performance

More than 65 years have passed since Japan started its Official Development Assistance (ODA)¹ in 1954. Japan's development cooperation policy including ODA has greatly contributed to securing peace, stability and prosperity of the international community and consequently the national interests of Japan for many years.

In recent years, the situation surrounding development is transforming, as indicated by the growing diversity and complexity of the issues facing development countries and the growing roles of non-ODA funds and support. In response to the transformation, in February 2015, the Development Cooperation Charter was decided by the Cabinet to replace its previous ODA Charter. Under the Development Cooperation Charter, taking into account its philosophy toward

development cooperation cultivated over many years and from the perspective of further evolving this philosophy, Japan has established the basic policies of (1) contributing to peace and prosperity through cooperation for non-military purposes; (2) promoting human security; and (3) cooperation aimed at self-reliant development through assistance for self-help efforts as well as dialogue and collaboration based on Japan's experience and expertise. Japan promotes development cooperation under these basic policies, with (1) "quality growth" and poverty eradication through such growth; (2) sharing universal values and realizing a peaceful and secure society; and (3) building a sustainable and resilient international community through efforts to address global challenges.

Under this Development Cooperation Charter, in 2019, Japan provided approximately 15.59 billion US dollars (+10.1% year on year) in ODA², based on the grant equivalent system (GE system)³

1 Official Development Assistance (ODA): For details on Japan's international cooperation, refer to "White Paper on Development Cooperation: Japan's International Cooperation."
https://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/oda/page_000017.html



2 The main modalities of ODA from Japan are: grant aid, namely, bilateral fund donations; loan aid, namely, loan for development in developing regions; technical cooperation; and donations or contributions to international organizations. Of these, loan aid accounts for the largest share. Loan aid is typically repaid with interest.

3 The Grant Equivalent system (GE system) calculates ODA loans based on the amount that is equivalent to the grant. The grant equivalent is calculated by applying the terms of the loan, such as amount disbursed, interest rate and maturity, to a formula. The softer the terms of the loan are, the larger the amount will be. Compared to the net flow system (the full amount of loan disbursement is included, but the amount repaid is calculated as a negative figure) that has conventionally been used as the standard method of the OECD/DAC, the GE system reflects Japan's loan aid more accurately.

introduced by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC) since 2018 data as the standard method for calculating ODA. Japan ranks fourth among the member states of the DAC, following the U.S., Germany and the UK. The ODA/GNI ratio based on the GE system was 0.30%, placing Japan in 13th place among member states of the DAC. In terms of gross disbursements⁴, Japan's ODA rose by 9.7% year on year to approximately 18.92 billion US dollars, once again ranking fourth after the U.S., Germany and the UK.

(2) Development Cooperation in 2020

In 2020, Japan engaged mainly in the following (A to D below) in order to promote strategic and effective development cooperation, with the Development Cooperation Charter positioned at the core of these actions.

A Countermeasures against COVID-19

First, combating the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) marked a major challenge for the international community in 2020. The pandemic crossed national borders and became a global crisis. Countermeasures require the cooperation of the international community and not just the initiatives of individual countries and regions. With this belief in mind, Japan has provided health and medical equipment, and also technical cooperation for reinforcing capacities in the health and medical fields at an unprecedented speed in order to build a resilient medical and health system from a medium- to long-term standpoint in developing countries with vulnerable medical systems, through bilateral cooperation and international organizations. Furthermore, Japan has been providing the COVID-19 Crisis Response Emergency Support Loan up to 500 billion Japanese yen over two years to contribute to maintaining and

revitalizing economic activities in developing countries. Japan's assistance has been lauded by other countries and key figures from other countries have directly stated their appreciation for this assistance to Prime Minister Suga and Foreign Minister Motegi during their visits.

Japan will continue to provide assistance toward vaccines, treatments and diagnostics for overcoming the current COVID-19 pandemic. Japan will also offer assistance for health security in a broad range of fields including water and sanitation and for improving health and medical systems in developing countries in preparation for future health crises.

B Achievement of a Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)

Second, Japan is promoting concrete initiatives utilizing ODA strategically in order to achieve a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific" (FOIP) in the Indo-Pacific region which is a focal point of the world's vitality.

Over the years, Japan has developed "quality infrastructure" for building regional connectivity, assisted in legal system development, offered training on public debt and risk management for ensuring debt sustainability, and capacity building for debt management and macroeconomic policy, and for maritime law enforcement agencies for securing safety at sea (provision of patrol vessels and coastal monitoring radars as well as human resources development, etc.). Japan will continue to offer these in the future.

The development of "quality infrastructure" is an important foundation for achieving FOIP and is particularly necessary in the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. From this standpoint, it is important to continue to disseminate and implement the G20 Principles for Quality Infrastructure Investment, endorsed at the G20 Osaka Summit of 2019 as an international standard, including such

⁴ The total amount Japan contributed as ODA during the year in question (without deductions of amounts repaid by the beneficiary country to Japan during the year in question for loans borrowed in the past)

principles as openness, transparency, economic efficiency in view of life-cycle costs, and debt sustainability. In November 2020, Japan co-hosted the Symposium on Quality Infrastructure Investment together with the OECD, where it stated that it will actively play a role in helping the international community to build back better from the COVID-19 pandemic, while touching upon the utility of the OECD Compendium of Policy Good Practices for Quality Infrastructure Investment compiled by the OECD in the same month.

▣ Addressing Global Challenges

Third, Japan is working to address global challenges such as achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including combating COVID-19, based on the concept of human security.

Japan will continue to actively promote development cooperation in fields such as health, food, nutrition, women (gender), education, disaster risk reduction, water and hygiene, climate change and global environmental issues. In doing so, Japan will promote visible development cooperation while utilizing collaboration with NGOs working on international cooperation. In addition, Japan will continue to promote humanitarian assistance including support for refugees, peace building and nation building assistance based on the concept of “humanitarian-development-peace (HDP) nexus” to reinforce responses to fundamental causes of conflict, in addition to humanitarian assistance and development.

▣ Diplomatic Efforts in Support of Japan's Economy

Fourth, Japan seeks to revitalize its own economy through the development of developing countries and Japan is promoting initiatives for achieving the growth of both. The “Infrastructure System Overseas Promotion Strategy 2025” approved in December 2020 and “Follow-up on the Growth Strategy” approved in July 2020 call for utilizing

ODA strategically to further encourage the overseas expansion of Japanese companies.

Specifically, in order to have Japan's leading technologies utilized for development in developing countries, Japan will promote the acquisition of business rights and operation rights of Japanese corporations through means such as the provision of grant aid for public projects implemented through public-private partnership and offer technical cooperation that contributes to quality infrastructure investment, such as trade facilitation and securing debt sustainability. Additionally, to encourage the overseas expansion of private companies including SMEs and local governments, Japan will increase the visibility of products and equipment that can help resolve issues in developing countries as well as continuously generate demand for these, and promote overseas expansion assistance for micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises in the construction industry, including in local regions. Through human resource development, Japan will also contribute to advancing the improvement of the business environment, thereby promoting investment and overseas expansion by corporations.

(3) Safety Measures for Personnel Engaged in International Cooperation Projects

Amidst this approach to development cooperation, personnel engaged in international cooperation projects were heavily impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. From mid-March, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) temporarily repatriated staff excluding managerial staff such as chief representatives and senior representatives of its overseas offices and many company officials also returned to Japan temporarily. Japan's diplomatic missions and JICA's overseas offices actively helped these Japanese nationals leave their respective countries. JICA has been resending its staff to countries that meet certain conditions since mid-July.

Japan will continue to strengthen safety measures for international cooperation projects

further while fully implementing safety measures for personnel engaged in international cooperation projects in terms of preventing the spread of COVID-19 infections and engaging in initiatives based on the final report of the Council on Safety Measures for International Cooperation Projects (August 2016) which focused on counter-terrorism measures.

(4) Initiatives in Major Regions

A East and Southeast Asia

The East and Southeast Asia regions are important to the achievement of FOIP, and the peace, stability, and prosperity in the region are important to Japan, which has a close relationship with the region. Through development cooperation, Japan has helped these regions to resolve various development issues including poverty reduction, by promoting economic growth and human security and contributed to the development of these regions.

Approximately 61.1% of the total bilateral ODA of Japan went to the Asia region in 2019. A large portion of it comprised of support for Member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Japan not only provides support toward efforts aimed at overcoming issues faced by ASEAN and further promoting integration, but also places a strong emphasis on support for the building of quality infrastructure and training of industrial human resources to strengthen regional connectivity and develop industrial foundation.

Japan's support for the East and Southeast Asian regions was concentrated on measures against COVID-19 because of the large number of Japanese companies doing business there and the large resident population of Japanese nationals. Specifically, Japan provided a total of approximately 23 billion Japanese yen in health- and medical-related equipment to ten countries and is supporting assistance for improving health and medical systems in these countries through technical cooperation. Additionally, Japan provided fiscal support yen loans totaling approximately 295

billion Japanese yen to five countries to offset the economic impacts of the pandemic. At the Japan-ASEAN Summit Meeting held in November, a declaration was made that Japan will fully support the establishment of the ASEAN Centre for Public Health Emergencies and Emerging Diseases as part of its support to ASEAN during the pandemic.

Japan is also advancing cooperation to support initiatives aimed at strengthening the centrality and unity of ASEAN. At the Japan-ASEAN Summit Meeting held in November, the Japan-ASEAN Connectivity Initiative was launched focusing on quality infrastructure projects totaling two trillion Japanese yen that are already underway. It was announced that through this infrastructure development, the initiative will enhance connectivity in land, sea and air corridors and develop 1,000 human resources over a three-year period. Based on the Japan-ASEAN Technical Cooperation Agreement signed in 2019, Japan provided training on logistics, port administration and measures to combat marine plastics.

Furthermore, Japan is actively providing support for capacity building for maritime law enforcement to ASEAN countries positioned along Japan's sea lanes such as the Philippines and Viet Nam, with the aim of building the free and open international order. Such efforts include providing equipment such as patrol vessels and coastal monitoring radars, as well as human resource development through the dispatch of experts. In addition, Japan is providing consistent support to eradicate domestic and regional disparity, and support for the creation of a sustainable society in areas such as disaster risk reduction, environment and climate change, and energy. At the Japan-ASEAN Summit Meeting held in November, the Joint Statement of the 23rd ASEAN-Japan Summit on Cooperation on the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP) was announced. Based on the fact that it was confirmed that the principles of the AOIP and FOIP match one another, Japan plans to continue strengthening Japan-ASEAN cooperation going forward in terms of maritime



The first train arriving in the Ho Chi Minh City Urban Railway Construction Project (Line 1) (October, Viet Nam)



Ceremony to mark the partial completion, Patimban Port Development Project (December, Indonesia)



Elementary school building construction support provided through Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects (Myanmar)

cooperation, connectivity, the SDGs and economy, which are priority fields of the AOIP.

In the Mekong region, steady progress has been made with cooperation under the “Tokyo Strategy 2018,” a set of guidelines for Japan-Mekong cooperation. At the Mekong-Japan Foreign Ministers’ Meeting held in July, Foreign Minister Motegi announced the “KUSANONE Mekong SDGs Initiative” and stated that Japan will support socioeconomic development and achievement of

the SDGs through grassroots efforts in the Mekong region. Under this initiative, Japan provided grant aid for grassroots human security projects in the amount of one billion Japanese yen to five countries in the Mekong region in FY2020. At the Japan-Mekong Summit Meeting held in November, as one of the “five forms of cooperation,” the “Mekong SDGs Investment Partnership” was announced in order to support the implementation of development projects by private companies amid the shortfall of development funds following the economic blow suffered by Mekong region countries at the hands of COVID-19. Under this partnership, Japan will promote the formation of overseas investment projects in the Mekong region. Japan has also been working on projects such as the development of Sihanoukville port in Cambodia and functional improvements at Wattay International Airport in Laos and will continue to contribute to enhancing connectivity in the Mekong region under “Tokyo Strategy 2018.”

B Southwest Asia

Southwest Asia holds strategic importance as a marine transportation hub that connects East Asia with the Middle East, and is also a region with immense economic potential, such as India, where economic growth and massive infrastructure demand are anticipated in the future. On the other hand, the region still faces many unresolved challenges such as undeveloped infrastructure, poverty and natural disasters. Japan provides a range of assistance through ODA to assist the region in overcoming these challenges, bearing in mind the improvement of the investment environment for Japanese companies, and ensuring human security. The worldwide COVID-19 pandemic has also had a substantial impact on Southwest Asia due to its social and economic vulnerabilities along with an underdeveloped medical system. As a measure against COVID-19 in Southwest Asian countries, Japan has provided health- and medical-related equipment to seven countries, totaling five billion Japanese yen, and assisted in the enhancement of



Signing Ceremony of the Exchange of Notes for Grant Aid aimed at supporting measures against COVID-19 (June 7, Malé, Maldives; Photo: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Maldives)

health and medical systems through JICA's technical cooperation as well as through international organizations. In addition, Japan has provided a total of 120 billion Japanese yen in fiscal assistance yen loans to three countries, taking into account the economic impacts from the pandemic.

India, which has the largest population in Southwest Asia, has been one of the largest recipients of Japanese yen loans. As part of its support for the development of economic and social infrastructure including electricity and transportation infrastructure that contribute to enhancing connectivity and strengthening industrial competitiveness, Japan has assisted with the construction of subways in a number of cities and road construction in India's northeast. In addition, Japan has supported India's sustainable and inclusive growth through such projects as those in the forestry sector including afforestation activities as well as those in the health sector that help improve health and medical services for women and children.

With regard to Bangladesh, Japan, under the Bay of Bengal Industrial Growth Belt (BIG-B) initiative, has provided support which contributes to strengthening domestic and regional connectivity, developing infrastructure, and improving the investment environment. A large-scale influx of displaced persons from northern Rakhine State, Myanmar, and prolonged evacuation have resulted in the deterioration of humanitarian situations in camps for displaced persons and has also had

a severe impact on the living environment of the surrounding host communities. In response to this situation, Japan provided support through international organizations and NGOs in the areas of water and hygiene, health and medical care, food security, livelihood assistance, education and environmental conservation.

In Sri Lanka, Japan provided equipment for countermeasures against illegal drugs and food aid for improving children's nutrition in partnership with the World Food Programme (WFP).

C Pacific Island Countries

In addition to being Japan's neighbors connected by the Pacific, the Pacific Island countries also share deep historical ties with Japan. Moreover, as these countries possess a vast exclusive economic zone (EEZ, or waters over which a country's economic rights extends), they are a key region for Japan's maritime transportation, and provide vital fishing grounds for Japan's distant-water bonito and tuna fisheries. As such, the stability and prosperity of the Pacific Island countries are of great importance to Japan.

The Pacific Island countries share common issues that are unique to small island states, such as smaller economies that are dependent upon primary industries, territories that are scattered over a wide ocean area, difficulty in breaking into the international market, and vulnerability to damages from natural disasters. In light of these circumstances, Japan, as a good partner of the Pacific Island countries, is providing support to boost their autonomous and sustainable development.

At the 8th Pacific Islands Leaders Meeting (PALM8) held in Iwaki City, Fukushima Prefecture, in May 2018, with the pillars of (i) free, open and sustainable oceans; (ii) strengthening the foundations for resilient and sustainable development; and (iii) revitalization of people-to-people exchanges, and based on the achievement so far, Japan announced its commitment to continuing robust development assistance as before in keeping with the achievement so far. Japan also



Before reconstruction



After reconstruction

Before and after the Project for Reconstruction of the Nippon Causeway (Kiribati; Photo: Dai Nippon Construction Co., Ltd.)

announced to further strengthen human resource development and exchanges (5,000 people over a three-year period), which are the foundation for growth and prosperity. Steady progress is being made with cooperation based on this policy. Japan is implementing concrete initiatives such as bilateral cooperation on basic infrastructure such as ports and airports as well as technical cooperation targeting multiple countries in areas such as illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing (IUU), disaster risk reduction, waste management that contributes to measures against marine plastic waste, and climate change issues.

However, the COVID-19 pandemic limited the movements of people and goods, causing a major economic blow to the Pacific Island countries. Japan has provided a total of four billion Japanese yen in health- and medical-related equipment and support for improving health and medical systems through technical cooperation in order to assist the Pacific Island countries in combating COVID-19. Japan also approved fiscal assistance yen loans amounting to a total of 42.5 billion Japanese yen for Papua New Guinea, Fiji and the Solomon Islands in order to support the economic recovery.

In October, the PALM Ministerial Interim Meeting for PALM9 was held. The Pacific Island countries stated their strong praise and deep appreciation to Japan for steadily implementing its commitment to support in all the fields designated as pillars of cooperation at PALM8.

D Latin America and the Caribbean

Latin America and the Caribbean is a region with which Japan has enjoyed friendly relations for a long time. The region also has deep historical ties with Japan, as demonstrated by the fact that more than 2 million Japanese descendants, known as “Nikkei,” reside in the region. The region is a major supplier of resources and food, as well as a potential emerging market with gross regional production exceeding 5.5 trillion US dollars. On the other hand, as many countries in the region are facing challenges such as rectification of income inequality within country, response to natural disasters, and achievement of the SDGs in each country, Japan is engaged in various cooperative efforts while also taking into account the circumstances of each country in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Japan is providing health- and medical-related equipment to 18 countries in Latin America, totaling 7.9 billion Japanese yen, to help combat the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, Japan is also providing assistance to 17 countries through JICA’s technical cooperation for the improvement of health and medical systems in those countries as well as providing assistance to this region through international organizations.

Additionally, in response to the hurricane-related damages in November, Japan provided emergency aid supplies (tents, sleeping pads and blankets) to Colombia, Nicaragua, Honduras and Guatemala. Japan also provided support based



"Hand-washing COVID-19 (novel coronavirus disease) countermeasure training" in Totonicapán Department (September 22, Guatemala; Photo: JICA)

on the needs of each country; for example, Japan offered food aid to Haiti, which faces serious famine, and provided algae removal equipment to Small Island Developing States (SIDS) (Antigua and Barbuda as well as Grenada) experiencing substantial impacts to marine fisheries and tourism industries due to the accumulation and decay of sargassum seaweed along their shorelines.

In recent years, there have been concerns over the increase in the number of migrants from Central American countries to the United States, which results in deterioration of public security. As such, alleviating poverty, one of the causes of migration, has become an urgent issue that has to be addressed. Japan provided assistance through the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and WFP, to Guatemala and Honduras to curtail immigration and emigration caused by economic distress and to reintegrate migrants in communities to which they return. Recently, deterioration in social and economic conditions in Venezuela has also resulted in a large number of displaced persons. In response to this, in Peru, Japan is working with the IOM to provide food support and vocational training to displaced persons, and capacity building to Peru, which has accepted displaced persons. In Venezuela, Japan

partnered with the United Nations Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) to provide assistance to increase access to regular vaccinations of children and expectant mothers.

E Central Asia and Caucasus

Central Asia and Caucasus are surrounded by Russia, China, South Asia, the Middle East and Europe. The stability and development of this region are also important for the development and stability of the whole of Eurasia, including Japan. Japan supports the "open, stable, and self-sustained" development of Central Asia and the Caucasus region. Japan supports nation building that allows fundamental values such as human rights, democracy, market economy and the rule of law to take root for long-term stability and sustainable development in this region, while also taking into account broad-based views covering neighboring regions including Afghanistan and Iran.

Japan is providing health- and medical-related equipment to six countries, totaling 2.5 billion Japanese yen, as a measure against COVID-19 in Central Asia and Caucasus. In addition, Japan is providing support to three countries for improving health and medical systems through JICA's technical cooperation as well as providing assistance



X-ray diagnostic system provided to the Tashkent Region Cancer Clinic (September 10, Uzbekistan; Photo: JICA)

to this region through international organizations. During the Foreign Ministers' Special Video Conference of the "Central Asia plus Japan" Dialogue in August, Foreign Minister Motegi stated that as measures against COVID-19 in this region, Japan is actively providing health and medical equipment, technical support through international organizations, provision of Avigan tablets, and exchange of opinions among medical professionals among others, so as to support the initiatives of respective countries.

F The Middle East and North Africa

Securing peace and stability in the Middle East and North Africa regions, which are the geopolitical keys, is crucial not only for the energy security of Japan but also for the stability of the world. From this point of view, Japan provided comprehensive support until 2018 at a sum of about 6 billion US dollars to stabilize the Middle East, including human resource development for about 20,000 people, as it announced at the G7 Ise-Shima Summit (2016), with a view to achieving peace and stability in the region. Thereafter, Japan is still continuing to provide support to the Middle East and North Africa.

In 2020, Japan provided COVID-19-related support to the Middle East and North Africa regions using ODA. Specifically, Japan earmarked a total of around 13.4 billion Japanese yen for support through international organizations, provided health- and medical-related equipment as bilateral assistance, and offered a loan to improve the health and medical system to Morocco.

With regard to Syria, where civil war has been prolonged, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs Nakatani Shinichi participated in Supporting the future of Syria and the region, Brussels IV Conference, co-organized by the EU and UN in June 2020. Under its policy of providing humanitarian assistance to all Syrians facing difficulties, Japan has provided more than 2.9 billion US dollars to Syria and surrounding countries since 2012, and Parliamentary Vice-Minister

for Foreign Affairs Nakatani stated that Japan will continue to fulfill the role in improving the humanitarian situation in Syria going forward. Furthermore, in order to foster human resources who could contribute to Syria's future reconstruction, 95 Syrian students have been accepted in Japan since 2017.

In regard to Palestine, based on the Corridor for Peace and Prosperity initiative with the aim of promoting economic and social development for Palestine promoted through cooperation between Japan, Israel, Palestine and Jordan, Japan assists the development of Jericho Agro-Industrial Park (JAIP). Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs Suzuki Keisuke attended the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee (AHLIC) Ministerial Meeting held in June, where he stated that Japan will continue to create an environment for peace in the Middle East by promoting its own unique initiatives.

In Yemen, where a severe humanitarian crisis is still ongoing, Japan has provided more than 300 million US dollars in support since 2015. At the High-Level Pledging Event for the Humanitarian Crisis in Yemen held in June, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs Suzuki stated that Japan will continue its support. Additionally, in 2020, Japan continued to offer humanitarian assistance and provided cooperation in the field of mental healthcare through partnerships with international organizations.

In Afghanistan, where the reconstruction progresses, peace negotiations were initiated in September. Japan has provided assistance to encourage the independent economic growth and poverty reduction in the country. At the 2020 Geneva Conference on Afghanistan held in November, Foreign Minister Motegi welcomed the start of peace negotiations and pledged to maintain annual support of 180 million US dollars, the same level as the previous four years, for the next four years on the condition that Afghanistan make progress in reforms. He also stated that Japan prepares to examine additional assistance if progress



Exterior view of E-JUST with establishment of new faculties under Japan's support in progress (November, Egypt; Photo: JICA)

is seen in the peace process.

Human resource development is vital to realize stability in the Middle East in the medium- to long-term. As one example, through the technical cooperation project “Egypt-Japan University of Science and Technology (E-JUST) Project Phase 3,” Japan is providing support for the development of industrial human resources as well as science and technology human resources in Egypt, the Middle East and the Africa region. The scholarship program for accepting international students from Africa has been expanded since 2020.

G Africa

Africa has been gradually recovering from the economic depression caused by the rapid drop in natural resource prices around 2014, and continues to attract the attention and anticipation from the international community for its potential, backed by its abundant natural resources and a rapidly growing population. On the other hand, the COVID-19 pandemic has shed light on Africa's fragilities in various areas including healthcare and medical sectors. In these circumstances, Japan has provided healthcare and medical equipment to 48 out of 54 African countries through bilateral arrangements as well as collaborations with international organizations, and has made a total donation of 14.8 billion Japanese yen in healthcare and medical equipment to 38 of those countries. Japan also provided assistance through technical cooperation for strengthening

the healthcare and medical system in Africa. In addition, through the longstanding process of Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD), Japan has actively implemented programs to support the healthcare and medical system in Africa in a medium- to long-term perspective. These efforts have proven their true value as COVID-19 spread in Africa. The Noguchi Memorial Institute for Medical Research in Ghana for which Japan has supported the establishment and cooperated in training laboratory technicians, was responsible for up to 80% of the PCR tests in the country. Likewise, other healthcare and medical research institutes that have received assistance from Japan, such as the Kenya Medical Research Institute (KEMRI), are performing as a center for countermeasures against COVID-19 throughout Africa. Japan's support on healthcare and medical sectors has also borne fruit in areas other than COVID-19 measures. For example, as Nigeria was declared wild poliovirus-free in August, Japan had, to this end, conducted a wide range of assistance from vaccine procurement to human resources development in improving response to eradicating polio, for which the Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari also extended his appreciation.

COVID-19 also has a widespread impact on the African society and economy. Japan is implementing measures under each of the three pillars of TICAD7 held in August 2019: economy, society, and peace and stability, making contribution to

respond to the various social and economic issues in Africa.

In the pillar of Economy, Japan has promoted industrial human resource development through the African Business Education Initiative for Youth (ABE initiative) 3.0 and other means, in order to contribute to the promotion of African businesses. The ABE Initiative provides opportunities for youths in Africa to study at graduate schools in Japan and to do internships in Japanese companies. Since TICAD V (2013), under the initiative, Japan has accepted approximately 1,400 trainees through JICA. Furthermore, with a view to strengthening connectivity, Japan will also promote investment in quality infrastructure with a focus on the three priority regions (East Africa Northern Corridor, Nacala Corridor and West Africa Growth Ring). In July, Exchange of Notes on the Project for Improvement of the Tema Motorway Roundabout (Phase 2) (detailed design) was conducted in Ghana.

Under the pillar of Society, Japan is further promoting initiatives toward expanding Universal Health Coverage (UHC). In August, the Exchange of Notes on Health Sector Policy Loan for Attainment of the Universal Health Coverage (Phase 2) was conducted in Kenya. In addition, Japan is providing assistance for developing science and mathematics education and improving the learning environment, in order to help provide high-quality education.

Under the pillar of Peace and Stability, Japan is providing support to Africa-led efforts aimed at establishing peace and stability via support for provision of security equipment and human resource development, under the New Approach for Peace and Stability in Africa (NAPSA) (see Chapter 2, Section 8 on page 162).

(5) Approaches to Appropriate and Effective Implementation of ODA

A Approaches to Appropriate Implementation of ODA

In the implementation of ODA, efforts are made

to enhance transparency and quality by listening to the views of external experts at each phase and formulating projects based on these opinions. In the phase of preliminary studies in the implementation of ODA, MOFA holds the Development Project Accountability Committee in public, exchanges views with independent committee members that have knowledge of the relevant field, and affirms the validity of the project. Furthermore, JICA publishes ex-post evaluation results for all projects valued at 200 million Japanese yen or more (2,618 projects published as of the end of January 2021) on the “ODA Mieru-ka Site” after the implementation of the projects in view of enhancing the transparency of the projects. Ex-post evaluations for projects valued at 1 billion Japanese yen or more are conducted by third parties. MOFA conducts third party evaluations at the policy level (such as country assistance evaluations, thematic evaluations and aid modality evaluations) and ex-post evaluations on grant aid projects implemented by MOFA to improve ODA management and ensure accountability. Efforts are made to utilize the lessons drawn from the evaluation results for the policy formulation and project implementation of future ODA. MOFA also publishes the evaluation results on its website.

B Approaches to Effective Implementation of ODA

ODA is implemented through three frameworks corresponding to the needs of the partner country and the scale of the project: grant aid, loan aid and technical cooperation. In order to utilize the limited budget efficiently and achieve a high level of development effectiveness, MOFA formulates a development cooperation policy for each country that defines the priority areas and policies of ODA, taking into account comprehensively the development plans and development challenges of respective partner countries. Moreover, the Rolling Plan is formulated as an appendix to the Country Development Cooperation Policy, with a summary for quick reference on how each individual

Column

Responding to the Largest Postwar Humanitarian Crisis

Currently, the number of refugees and internally displaced persons has risen to the highest level since World War II, to approximately 79.5 million, and the humanitarian crisis that is arising as a result of conflicts and natural disasters is becoming increasingly complex and prolonged. Moreover, the spread of the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) has further exacerbated the difficulty of providing humanitarian aid. Under such circumstances, Japan, in cooperation with international organizations, is providing efficient and sustainable assistance to meet the growing needs for humanitarian aid.

To ensure that “no one is left behind”: Providing aid to refugees in Syria during the COVID-19 pandemic

Ito Ayaki, Representative, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Representation in Lebanon (former Representative, UNHCR Representation in Syria)

The Syrian crisis, which has created the largest number of refugees since World War II, has marked its 10th year. At present, 5.6 million refugees outside of Syria and 6.6 million internally displaced persons within the country are still waiting for the day they can return to their hometowns. In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has dealt an additional blow to this difficult situation, 500 UNHCR staff continue to provide assistance to internally displaced persons and repatriated refugees within Syria every day.

In the neighboring country of Lebanon, which has taken in over 1 million Syrian refugees, repeated lockdowns and economic collapse have led many Syrian refugees to lose their jobs, making it virtually impossible for them to sustain their lives. There has also been intense pressure and criticism against the refugees. Some of these refugees who could not find a way out of the situation attempted to enter Syria from Lebanon in June and July, disregarding the closure of the border between the two countries. The Syrian authorities had concerns over allowing them to enter the country due to the pandemic. As a result, several thousand people were stranded in the “no man’s land” of the border checkpoints between the two countries.

To break the deadlock in this situation, UNHCR obtained permissions from both the governments of Lebanon and Syria to enter the “no man’s land,” assess the situation of Syrians and find a solution while working in cooperation with the Syrian government. As the PCR testing system within Syria has not yet been adequately established, it was decided that a new quarantine facility would be set up as the only emergency measure. This would enable many refugees to be isolated for 14 days. UNHCR, in cooperation with the Syrian Ministry of Health, the Syrian Arab Red Crescent, and NGOs, established a system for accepting 3,000 new people in addition to the existing emergency isolation facilities. As a result, the Syrian government also allowed refugees to enter the country. UNHCR continues to offer comprehensive support to refugees who have returned to their hometowns after the isolation period, and to their host communities.



Newly established quarantine facility (Syria; Photo: UNHCR)



The author (on the right of Mr. Grandi) introducing the quarantine facility to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Mr. Filippo Grandi (center front) (Syria; Photo: UNHCR)



Staff of UNHCR and partner organizations preparing to receive Syrian repatriates at the quarantine facility (Syria; Photo: UNHCR)

Humanitarian aid to internally displaced persons in Myanmar during the COVID-19 pandemic

Ono Kyoko, Head of Rakhine Office, United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)

In Rakhine State, located in the western part of Myanmar, there are approximately 230,000 internally displaced persons needing humanitarian aid in areas such as food, health care, water, and education from UN organizations and NGOs. The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), taking on a representative role of more than 40 humanitarian aid organizations such as UNHCR and UNICEF, is responsible for the overall coordination of humanitarian assistance and aid strategies, as well as collaboration and negotiations with the Rakhine State government to ensure that aid is delivered effectively.

Out of the 230,000 internally displaced persons in Rakhine State, about 130,000 are so-called "Rohingya"* people who are Muslims, while the remaining 100,000 are ethnic Rakhine people who are mostly Buddhists. In 2012, the Muslims and ethnic Rakhine people who had been living in harmony until then clashed for religious and political reasons, and the displaced Muslims have been forced to live in camps since then. Many of these people have had their citizenship stripped from them with the amendment of the Citizenship Law in 1982, and the situation has worsened further in the past eight years as they became internally displaced persons. They rely on humanitarian assistance for their survival. On the other hand, many of the ethnic Rakhine people, too, have been living in camps in order to escape from the conflicts that had erupted at the end of 2018, between the armed group known as the Arakan Army whom many Rakhine people support, and the military of the Myanmar government.

Under these circumstances, the situation with the COVID-19 pandemic became increasingly severe in Rakhine State in August. There are concerns of COVID-19 spreading in camps where it is impossible for people to maintain any social distance. To minimize the movement of people, many organizations refrained from entering the camps to provide direct assistance, and relied on remote management of assistance rendered through staff living in the camps. However, as there are limitations to remote assistance activities, very little support has been provided in areas such as education and the reinforcement of infrastructure, where specialized skills are required. Despite the circumstances, we strive to continue providing effective humanitarian aid as we tackle various new challenges every day. Closely working with the international community, the UN is also continuing to engage with the Myanmar government to find a political solution as soon as possible that would allow the internally displaced persons to return to their areas of origin and realize their hopes of living independently.



The author (right) and colleagues heading to a camp for internally displaced persons in Pauktaw by an OCHA boat (Photo: OCHA)



Scene at a camp for internally displaced persons in Sin Tet Maw (Photo: OCHA)



Scene at a camp for internally displaced persons in Kyauk Ta Lone (Photo: OCHA)

*The UN uses the term "Rohingya" in recognition of the right of people to self-identity.

ODA project is associated with a specific priority area. Through these efforts, the policy of development cooperation in each country is clearly identified, enabling more strategic projects to be formed across the confines of each framework.

C Efforts with regard to International Discussions on ODA

Japan also contributes actively to international discussions on ODA. The OECD/DAC is advancing efforts to modernize ODA, including changing the ODA calculation rules for debt relief and promoting the mobilization of private-sector funds. Japan also strives to ensure that ODA is aligned with the actual situation, and that efforts by donors are reflected accurately.

From 2019 to 2020, DAC Development Cooperation Peer Review for Japan, which is to review policy and implementation of Japan's development cooperation by other DAC members, was conducted for the first time in six years. Through the process, discussions were held on more effective development cooperation. While Japan was highly assessed for its promotion of quality growth and human security in accordance with the Development Cooperation Charter, efforts in addressing global issues, and human resource development cooperation through capacity building, recommendations were made to increase its ODA budget to reach the target of 0.7% of GNI.

D Efforts toward Promoting Understanding of ODA

It is vital to have the understanding and support of the people when implementing development cooperation. To that end, efforts are made to promote understanding among the citizens through the effective dissemination of information. In addition to promotions through events with participants, MOFA is also putting effort into introducing Japan's development cooperation activities around the world in an easy-to-understand manner through the production of the short animation series "Go! ODA-Man" based on the

popular anime "Eagle Talon," and the simulation game "You can be an ODA-Man too!" This short animation series is available to the public through MOFA's YouTube account, and is also broadcast on trains such as Tokyo Metro with the aim of reaching a wide audience. MOFA also dispatches officials to educational institutions and other organizations, and actively conducts "ODA Delivery Lectures" as a part of its efforts to promote understanding of development cooperation, including virtual lectures online in FY2020.

In addition, MOFA makes active efforts in overseas publicity, including plans for tours to its development cooperation project sites for the local media so that they will also cover Japan's cooperation, and issues PR pamphlets and materials in English and local languages.

2 Response to Global Issues

(1) 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

The "2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (the 2030 Agenda)" is a set of international development goals to be achieved by 2030, which was adopted at the UN Summit in September 2015 as a successor to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) formulated in 2001. The 2030 Agenda sets out international development goals for realizing a society that is sustainable, diverse and inclusive, and where "no one is left behind," by 2030.

The 2030 Agenda lists the "Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)" consisting of 17 goals and 169 targets that are interrelated and closely linked to each other, and which serve as development goals for the whole of the international community including developed countries.

After the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, Japan first built a foundation for the implementation of the SDGs by establishing the SDGs Promotion Headquarters headed by the Prime Minister and composed of all cabinet ministers as members, and formulating the SDGs Implementation

Guiding Principles that set out Japan's medium- to long-term strategy toward the achievement of the SDGs and eight priority areas that Japan will place particular focus on. Furthermore, Japan puts great importance on public-private partnership for the implementation of the SDGs, and established the SDGs Promotion Round Table Meeting, bringing together stakeholders from a wide range of fields including the private sector, civil society, experts, and international organizations. It also engages in the exchange of views on initiatives by local governments and businesses toward the promotion of the SDGs, measures for the empowerment of women and the next generation, and strengthening cooperation with the international community among others.

At the ninth meeting of the SDGs Promotion Headquarters held in December 2020, key initiatives of relevant ministries and agencies toward the achievement of the SDGs were decided as the "SDGs Action Plan 2021." This Action Plan sets out four pillars to generate behavioral change in society as a whole in order to realize an era of with- and post-COVID19 with a virtuous cycle of economy and environment, which is agile and resilient, where the SDGs have been achieved: (i) countering infectious disease and preparing for next crises; (ii) business for building back better and growth strategies through innovation; (iii) SDGs-driven regional revitalization, and creating of a virtuous cycle of economy and environment; and (iv) accelerating actions through empowerment and strengthening bonds among people. In line with these, Japan will further promote efforts toward the achievement of the SDGs in both the aspects of domestic implementation and international cooperation.

On the same day as the ninth meeting of the SDGs Promotion Headquarters, a conferment ceremony for the fourth Japan SDGs Award was held to commend companies and organizations that have put in place excellent initiatives toward

the realization of the SDGs. This year, Minnadenryoku, Inc. (Setagaya Ward, Tokyo Prefecture) received the SDGs Promotion Headquarters Chief's (Prime Minister's) Award for its efforts to promote intercommunity cooperation through renewable energy under the concept of "Face-to-face electricity TM."

In terms of international activities, at the United Nations High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) in July, Foreign Minister Motegi emphasized the importance of international collaboration in addressing the spread of COVID-19. He commented on Japan's efforts in providing support in response to COVID-19 in many developing countries via bilateral arrangements or international organizations based on the philosophy of the SDGs, "leaving no one behind", as well as the concept of human security, which focuses on each individual in a vulnerable situation. Additionally, he highlighted Japan's proactive efforts aimed at achieving universal health coverage (UHC) through enhancing the health-care system. With year 2020 being the start of the Decade of Action to achieve the SDGs, he stressed that Japan will cooperate with the international community and continue to accelerate efforts aimed at realizing the SDGs building upon their philosophy. As we advance, Japan will continue to make the best use of various opportunities to promote its stance as a strong supporter of the SDGs to the world.

On the other hand, to achieve the SDGs by 2030, it has been estimated that there is an annual funding shortfall of approximately 2.5 trillion US dollars (approximately 280 trillion Japanese yen)⁵. In July, the advisory panel to consider new funding mechanisms for SDGs that was set up to discuss topics of this financing gap submitted the summary of its final discussion to Foreign Minister Motegi. With reference to this summary, Japan will continue to consider response measures to issues related to financing.

⁵ Source: The World Investment Report 2014, UNCTAD

A Human Security

Human security is a concept that pursues the right of individuals to live happily and in dignity, free from fear and want, through their protection and empowerment. Japan positions human security as a guiding principle that lies at the roots of Japan's development cooperation in the Development Cooperation Charter approved in 2015. Japan has led discussions on human security in the UN, and supported the dissemination and implementation of the concept of human security by UN organizations through the contribution of a cumulative total of about 47.8 billion Japanese yen by the end of 2019 to the UN Trust Fund for Human Security, established in 1999 by Japan's initiative. Furthermore, in the area of bilateral cooperation, Japan has also put effort into the dissemination and implementation of this concept through support for Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects. The SDGs, which advocate a people-centered approach and the vision of leaving no one behind, also position human security at its core.

The spread of COVID-19 is a human security crisis, posing a threat to the lives, livelihoods and dignity of people around the world. Actions based on the human security concept are crucial in order to overcome this crisis. At the General Debate of the 75th session of the UN General Assembly held in September, Prime Minister Suga addressed that Japan will accelerate efforts to achieve the SDGs and to tackle global issues, by looking to the human security concept of the new era in responding to various challenges, and proposed to tap into the wisdom from around the world to deepen discussions.

B Approaches in the Area of Disaster Risk Reduction

200 million people around the world are affected by disasters every year (90% of the victims are citizens of developing countries) and the annual average loss incurred by natural hazards extends to approximately 140 billion US dollars according

to estimates by the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR). Disaster risk reduction is essential for realizing poverty eradication and sustainable development.

Japan makes the most of its expertise in disaster risk reduction, built up through numerous experiences with disasters, to actively promote international cooperation. At the Third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction held in Sendai in March 2015, Japan took the lead in the adoption of the "Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030," a guideline for efforts by the international community. Japan also announced the "Sendai Cooperation Initiative for Disaster Risk Reduction" as its independent contribution, which includes provision of 4 billion US dollars toward cooperation and training of 40,000 people in the four years from 2015 to 2018. With the achievement of these goals, the Sendai Cooperation Initiative for Disaster Risk Reduction Phase 2 was announced in June 2019, under which Japan plans to provide support to at least 5 million people from 2019 to 2022, in areas such as flood measures.

Coinciding with World Tsunami Awareness Day (November 5), proposed by Japan and enacted unanimously at the 70th UN General Assembly held in December 2015, Japan has hosted the High School Students Summit on "World Tsunami Awareness Day" for four times since 2016. High school students from countries around the world are invited to this event, and through practical learning about Japan's history of tsunami, recovery from earthquake disasters, and preparations for a possible Nankai Trough earthquake, the participants make proposals for future challenges and implementation in their home countries. In 2020, in light of the spread of COVID-19, Japan, in cooperation with the UNDRR and other organizations, supported the virtual holding of the Third World Tsunami Museum Conference, as well as the tsunami related training program for female administrative officers and formulating tsunami evacuation plans for schools in the Asia-Pacific

region. Japan will continue to share the experiences and lessons drawn from past disasters with the world, and to promote the “mainstreaming of disaster risk reduction” that incorporates the perspectives of disaster risk reduction in the policies of every country.

C Approaches in the Area of Education

In the area of education, Japan is engaged in various forms of educational support around the world under the “Learning Strategy for Peace and Growth,” announced by Japan in line with the timing for the adoption of the 2030 Agenda. At the World Assembly for Women (WAW!) held in March 2019, Japan announced that it will continue its efforts to provide opportunities for quality education and training to at least 4 million women in developing countries by 2020. Furthermore, at the meeting of the SDGs Promotion Headquarters held in June of the same year, Japan announced its commitment to the “Education x Innovation” initiative, which aims to provide education for innovation, and education through innovation to at least 9 million children and youths. At the G20 Osaka Summit chaired by Japan, an agreement was reached on the “G20 Initiative on Human Capital Investment for Sustainable Development,” which places the focus on education, and the commitment to invest in human capital and promote access to inclusive, equitable and quality education for all people was affirmed in the Initiative.

Since the beginning of 2020, schools were shut down due to the spread of COVID-19, resulting in rapid increase of children in various parts of the world whose education opportunities were taken away. In light of this situation, Japan has been providing support to enable continued learning for children through coordination with international organizations, etc., including distance learning and support for reopening schools.

D Approaches in Agricultural Areas

In coordination with the relevant countries, such as G7 or G20 member states and international

organizations, Japan has delivered assistance for agriculture and rural development in developing countries. The G20 Niigata Agriculture Ministers’ Meeting was held in May 2019, during which the participants affirmed the importance of sharing knowledge among countries on various issues related to agriculture and food, such as new technology and the creation of human resources, food value chains, and the SDGs. The “G20 Niigata Agriculture Ministers’ Declaration 2019” was also adopted.

Since 2020, through the support via international organizations and others, Japan has been addressing issues of deterioration of the food system due to the stagnation of distribution of agricultural products as a result of travel restrictions due to the spread of COVID-19.

E Approaches in the Area of Water and Sanitation

Japan has continuously been the largest donor country in the area of water and sanitation since the 1990s and has implemented high quality assistance utilizing Japan’s experiences, expertise, and technologies. Japan proactively participates in discussions in the international community, and tackles global issues in the area building upon its contributions to date. Particularly, since the outbreak of COVID-19 at the beginning of 2020, Japan has been providing support through coordination with international organizations and agencies on the promotion of hand washing among other measures from the standpoint of infection control. The 4th Asia-Pacific Water Summit, which had been originally scheduled to be held in Kumamoto in October 2020, was postponed due to the COVID-19 outbreak. It has been determined that the Summit will be held in April 2022 on the theme of “Water for Sustainable Development -Best Practices and the Next Generation-.”

(2) Global Health

Overcoming health challenges that threaten lives and hinder all kinds of social, cultural and

economic activities is a common global challenge directly linked to human security. Japan advocates human security which is the basis of the Development Cooperation Charter, while promoting various activities in support of that principle. Japan puts emphasis on cooperation to tackle those issues. As Japan commemorates the 60th anniversary of the National Health Insurance system in 2021, it has become a society of the most healthy and active ageing and is further expected to play a proactive role in the area of health. Considering that investing in the healthcare sector leads to the enhanced energy level of every person, which contributes to the country's economic development and stabilized society, Japan has taken the lead in efforts of the international community to achieve Universal Health Coverage (UHC)⁶ on the basis of the "Basic Design for Peace and Health," a theme-based policy for the Development Cooperation Charter formulated in 2015.

To date, Japan has proactively advocated for the importance of achieving UHC and sustainable health financing at international meetings and conventions, including G7 and G20 summits, and the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD). In 2019, Japan has taken the lead in international discussions on global health, including holding of the UN General Assembly High-level Meeting on UHC, and playing a leading role towards the agreement of political declaration. Additionally, Japan has achieved remarkable results in overcoming health issues such as infectious diseases, maternal and child health, and nutrition improvements through cooperation with a number of countries and various international organizations, including the World Health Organization (WHO), the World Bank, the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (the Global Fund), Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the Global Health Innovative Technology Fund (GHIT).

At Prime Minister Suga's first UN General Assembly since his inauguration in September 2020, he addressed the General Debate by starting out with Japan's global health policy which included response to COVID-19. During his speech, he pointed out the importance to achieve UHC in aiming to leave no one's health behind in implementing measures in response to the spread of COVID-19, which presents threats to human security. He announced that Japan will take an active leading role in international efforts with a focus on 1) full support to ensure fair and equitable access to therapeutic drugs, vaccines and diagnosis in both developed and developing countries; 2) support health system strengthening of each country through hospital construction, equipment preparation, human resource development, etc.; and 3) implementation of measures for ensuring health security, including environmental improvement, such as water, sanitation and nutrition. Moreover, in order to further promote UHC in the international community, Foreign Minister Motegi has hosted the Ministerial Meeting of the Group of Friends of Universal Health Coverage in October, and Prime Minister Suga has attended the Special Session of the UN General Assembly in Response to the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Pandemic in December and stated the importance of achieving UHC.

Japan positions nutrition, one of the cross-sectoral initiatives, as an issue that is related to human security and indispensable for the achievement of the SDGs, and is making efforts to enhance measures directed at improving nutrition ahead of the hosting of the Tokyo Nutrition for Growth Summit 2021, which was postponed due to the spread of COVID-19.

⁶ Universal Health Coverage (UHC) refers to everyone getting quality health services at an affordable cost and being protected from financial risks.

(3) Labor and Employment

It is important to raise income levels through employment, in order to raise the living standards of those living in poverty. Against the background of an expanding supply-chain worldwide, it is necessary to put effort into developing the labor environment, and to realize “decent work” (work that is of an acceptable quality for motivated human beings) around the world. The realization of “decent work” has been positioned as a primary objective of the activities of the International Labor Organization (ILO), which marks its centenary year in 2019.

In view of this, Japan is also engaged in sustainable development cooperation in the field of labor. In 2020, Japan offered technical cooperation to developing countries in the Asia Pacific region, including Southeast Asia and South Asia and the African region (Mozambique), including support for the urgent creation of employment in the aftermath of a natural disaster and amidst COVID-19, the development of labor laws, and improvement of enforcement systems for labor, health and safety, by making voluntary contributions to the ILO and providing support to networks of international labor organizations.

In December, the third Japan-ILO Annual Strategic Consultation Meeting was held online, where Japan and the ILO affirmed the following points: enhanced cooperation for a better future of work where no one is left behind, including response to current issues related to COVID-19; Japan’s financial and human resources contribution to date and further strengthening of partnership in the cooperative assistance for sustainable development in the labor sector; and further reinforcement of Japanese staff within the ILO.

(4) Environmental Issues and Climate Change

A Global Environmental Issues

Awareness is building worldwide on the importance of addressing global environmental issues, as exemplified by the 2030 Agenda, which

embeds environmental goals. Japan is actively involved in conserving the natural environment and realizing sustainable development through negotiations and engagements in various multilateral environmental conventions and relevant international organizations. As the largest donor to the World Bank Group’s Global Environment Facility, a financing mechanism for the major environmental conventions, Japan also contributes to projects that address global environmental issues such as biodiversity and chemical pollution, etc.

(A) Conservation of the Marine Environment

Addressing the problem of marine plastic litter is growing in importance in recent years, given its potential adverse impact on marine ecology, tourism, fisheries, and human health. The problem is caused by factors such as the illegal dumping of waste and incomplete waste disposal. In order to achieve “the Osaka Blue Ocean Vision” that was launched at the G20 Osaka Summit in 2019, which aims to reduce additional pollution by marine plastic litter to zero by 2050, Japan is working with international organizations, including the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), in areas such as compiling scientific knowledge and providing assistance on building models necessary for measures against marine plastic litter contamination, in providing environmentally appropriate plastic waste management and disposal support in the Asian region.

On December 2, the High-Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy, which is comprised of leaders of maritime nations and established to discuss matters such as conservation of marine environments, fisheries and utilization of marine resources, released a joint document titled “Transformations for a Sustainable Ocean Economy” by joint names of 14 heads of states and government, including Prime Minister Suga. This document, states that member countries commit to “sustainably manage 100% of the ocean area under national jurisdiction, guided by Sustainable Ocean Plans, by 2025,” as well

as “we urge all coastal and ocean states to join us in this commitment so that by 2030, all ocean areas under national jurisdiction are sustainably managed.” In order to promote the leaders’ joint document, MOFA and the Ocean Policy Research Institute jointly held a webinar (an online seminar) on December 3. Prime Minister Suga sent a message for this webinar and emphasized the importance of utilizing the maritime power, such as offshore wind power generation, as a countermeasure to climate change. He also highlighted Japan’s projects for addressing the marine plastic litter problem.

(B) Conservation of Biodiversity

The second meeting of the Open-ended Working Group (OEWG2) under the Convention on Biological Diversity, was held in February in Rome, Italy where discussions took place on elements of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, which were to replace the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. Furthermore, in an effort to emphasize the urgency to take actions related to biodiversity at the highest level, and to promote decision making and implementation of the framework, the UN Summit on Biodiversity was held in September in New York as a hybrid meeting which also enabled online participation.

In recent years, the illegal wildlife trade has exacerbated, drawing international attention as one of the key sources of funding for international terrorist organizations. As a follow-up to its provision of elephant anti-poaching operation facilities in Uganda and Mozambique in 2019, Japan decided to provide the same monitoring facility in Zambia in 2020, underscoring Japan’s drive to address this issue seriously.

Japan also contributed to international discussions on promoting conservation and sustainable uses of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture, with a view to enhancing sustainable agriculture and food security. At the 1st and 2nd meetings of the Standing Committee on the Funding Strategy and Resource Mobilization

of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture held in July and November, Japan, as a regional representative, provided advice on funding strategy and resource mobilization dealing with support and monitoring to monetary and non-monetary benefit sharing and access to genetic resources under the Treaty.

At the 56th Session of the Council of the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) held online in November a new framework to enable efficient implementation of projects to promote sustainable forest management and trading of legally harvested timber were discussed.

(C) International Management of Chemicals and Hazardous Waste

The 12th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer and the 32nd Meeting of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer were held online in November. At the meetings, matters such as the operation of the amended protocol with the addition of hydrofluorocarbon (HFC) as a controlled substance were discussed.

Under the Basel Convention, which regulates the movement of hazardous waste across national borders, Japan is leading the compilation of referencing guideline for parties to the Treaty on the regulation of mercury waste, burning of hazardous waste on land, energy recovery and waste plastic.

Under the Minamata Convention on Mercury entered into force in 2017, Japan is actively contributing to discussions as an expert in the expert meeting on reviewing Annex A Mercury-added Products and Annex B Manufacturing processes in which mercury or mercury compounds are used, as well as in the expert meeting on mercury emissions and releases and their thresholds, as a preparation for the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties for the Convention.

As for the Stockholm Convention on Persistent

Organic Pollutants, parties to the Convention are to formulate and update its national implementation plan in order to fulfill their obligation of the Convention. In December, Japan reflected its measures on chemical substances, which have newly become subject to the regulation in the eighth and ninth meetings of the Conference of the Parties to the Stockholm Convention, into its national implementation plan and submitted it to the Secretariat of the Stockholm Convention.

B Climate Change

(A) Initiatives to Achieve Net Zero GHG Emissions by 2050

In October, Prime Minister Suga declared that Japan will aim to realize carbon neutral with net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. He also expressed that Japan would lead the world's green industry and create a positive cycle of economy and environment. The international community, including UN Secretary-General António Guterres, has expressed their welcome to this declaration of Japan (see the Special Feature on page 301).

(B) The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, and the Paris Agreement

Global efforts are essential in reducing greenhouse gas emissions that cause climate change; however, the Kyoto Protocol adopted at the third session of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP3) in 1997 required only developed countries to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The Paris Agreement was adopted at COP21 held in Paris in December 2015. The Paris Agreement is a fair and effective framework that provides that parties communicate their nationally determined contributions to greenhouse gas emission reductions and undertake efforts toward the achievement of such goals regardless of whether they are developed or developing countries. The Agreement entered into force in November 2016,

and has been ratified by more than 180 countries including Japan (as of December 2020). While the U.S. announced its withdrawal from the Paris Agreement as of November 2020, in January 2021, it declared its re-adoption of the Paris Agreement, and officially adopted it again in February.

Upon the adoption of the Paris Agreement, negotiations commenced on the implementation guidelines of the Agreement toward its full implementation after 2020, and these were adopted at COP24 held in Katowice, Poland in December 2018. While the adoption of implementation guidelines of the market mechanisms was anticipated at COP26, which was scheduled to be held in November 2020, as the parties could not reach a complete agreement in negotiations at COP24 and COP25, due to the impact of the spread of COVID-19, the conference was postponed until November 2021.

Under these circumstances, there was a growing international momentum that sees measures against climate change as important even amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, and various UN meetings were held online, including the June Momentum for Climate Change (June) and Climate Change Dialogues (November). In addition, in commemoration of the fifth anniversary of the adoption of the Paris Agreement, the Climate Ambition Summit 2020 was held online on December 12 under the joint host of the UK, France and the UN, aiming to call on the international community to take further actions on climate change. Prime Minister Suga attended the event and articulated Japan's efforts and international contribution.

Japan has also contributed to maintaining the international momentum on climate change through co-hosting events such as the Online Platform in September with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), a ministerial meeting on recovery from COVID-19, climate change and environmental measures.

Toward the Realization of Net Zero Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions by 2050

Japan took a bold step forward in its climate change measures in 2020.

The Paris Agreement, which is a new international framework for addressing climate change, was finally implemented in earnest in 2020. Although international talks on climate change have also been impacted by the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, such as the one-year postponement of the 26th session of the Conference of the Parties of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) (COP26), initially scheduled to be held in November, the international momentum toward addressing climate change seems to be accelerating further, from the perspective of realizing sustainable recovery in the post-COVID-19 world.

Against this backdrop, Prime Minister Suga declared in his policy speech to the Diet on October 26 that, with a view to focusing on the realization of a green society, Japan aims to achieve carbon neutrality, by reducing GHG emissions to net zero by 2050. He also announced a drastic change in the long-standing policy on coal-fired power generation. These declarations promote a shift to a mindset that proactive measures against climate change, which cannot be delayed any further, bring about revolutionary changes in industrial structure and economic society while also contributing to significant economic growth, and indicate a strong resolve to take the lead in driving the world's green industry by creating a virtuous cycle of economy and environment.

The key to the realization of this goal lies in innovations such as hydrogen, next-generation power storage technologies, and carbon recycling. Hence, the "Green Growth Strategy to Support Japan's 2050 Carbon Neutral Goal" was compiled in December. This action plan takes the perspective of industrial policy, and alongside the realization of carbon neutrality by 2050, establishes ambitious goals for 14 sectors with high growth potential and sets out clearly the current situation and future initiatives, while incorporating all policies including budget, taxes, regulatory reform and standardization, and international cooperation.

In March, Japan submitted its Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) to the United Nations under the Paris Agreement, and announced that the review of its reduction target for 2030 will be carried out consistently with the revision of energy mix*, aiming at aspiring figures to reflect further ambitious efforts. In September, Japan commenced a review on the Plan for Global Warming Countermeasures, in order to submit additional information prior to COP26. In October, discussions were commenced with a view to reviewing the Strategic Energy Plan including energy mix.

Prime Minister Suga's declaration in his policy speech to the Diet in October was welcomed by the leaders and ministers of many countries. Prime Minister Suga also conveyed Japan's initiatives at the Climate Ambition Summit 2020 held on December 12 to commemorate the fifth anniversary of the adoption of the Paris Agreement, and took the opportunity of various international conferences such as ASEAN, G20 and APEC to explain Japan's efforts. Toward the realization of the goal of a decarbonized society set out in the Paris Agreement, Japan will communicate its initiatives to the world, as well as deepen collaboration and cooperation with other countries as it continues to lead efforts by the international community.

*An ideal vision as well as outlook for energy demand and supply structure in the future that should be realized when measures are implemented based on the basic direction of the energy policies.

(C) Efforts in Supporting Developing Countries

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. From such perspectives, the Green Climate Fund (GCF) also plays an important role as a multilateral fund that provides support for developing countries to address climate change. In addition to its initial contribution of 1.5 billion US dollars (2015 to 2018), as Japan expressed at the High-Level Pledging Conference for the GCF's First Replenishment held in October 2019 that it would contribute up to 1.5 billion US dollars, the first payment was made in 2020. Moreover, Japan has actively participated in its management as well as policy-making as a member of the GCF Board. By December 2020, the GCF Board has approved 159 projects, which are projected to avoid CO₂ emissions by 1.2 billion tons and increase resilience of 410 million people.

(D) Joint Crediting Mechanism (JCM)

The JCM is a mechanism for contributing to measures to address climate change on a global scale through diffusion of advanced low carbon technologies, as well as the implementation of mitigation actions in developing countries and evaluating contributions from Japan to GHG emission reductions or removals in a quantitative manner, which are used to achieve Japan's emission reduction target. As of November 2020, Japan has established the JCM with 17 partner countries, and implemented more than 180 projects related to the reduction or removal of greenhouse gases. In 2020, the initiative has steadily produced results, such as through the issuance of credits from projects in Indonesia, Cambodia, Saudi Arabia and Thailand.

(E) Japan's efforts in Climate Change and Fragility Risk

In response to suggestions at the Roundtable Seminar on "Climate Change and Fragility Implications on International Security" held by MOFA in January 2017 and other fora, that Japan will focus on the Asia Pacific and conduct studies and engage in discussions on climate change and fragility, Japan convened the International Conference on Climate Change and Fragility in the Asia-Pacific Region once again in January 2021 following from the conferences in 2018 and 2019, as one of its initiatives on climate change and fragility risk. The 2021 conference was organized under the title of Youth Competition on Climate Change Policy on the theme of Policies for your town to realize a decarbonized society involving senior high school and university students. Participants competed in the event through presentations and sharing their paper on specific policy for realizing a decarbonized society.

(F) Climate Change Measures by Non-State Actors

Measures by non-state actors such as private corporations, local governments, and NGOs are also important in tackling climate change. In Japan as well, non-state actors have made further progress in their efforts, as demonstrated by keen activities of the network of non-state actors, including Zero Carbon Cities in Japan, comprising local municipalities that have declared the goal to reach net zero carbon emissions by 2050, Japan Climate Initiative (JCI), which aims to take proactive action in the area of climate change, the Japan Climate Leaders' Partnership (JCLP), a corporate group with the same goal, and "RE Action - Declaring 100% Renewable," a corporate group whose members have established the goal of procuring 100% renewable energy for the electricity required in the operation of their businesses, as well as the increase in the number of Japanese corporations participating in the international

initiative “RE100” and the Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures (TCFD)⁷. Japan intends to promote diplomacy in the area of climate change while collaborating with such non-state actor driven initiatives.

(5) Arctic and Antarctic

A Arctic

(A) Current State of the Arctic

There is a risk that rapid changes in the Arctic environment caused by global warming will have a drastic and irreversible impact on the ecology and the lives of those living there, including Indigenous peoples. At the same time, as the decreasing amount of sea ice is expected to expand the navigable area, there have been growing economic opportunities such as the use of the Northern Sea Route and the development of resources. Alongside this, Russia, as the largest arctic country, has announced the Basic Principles of Russian Federation State Policy in the Arctic to 2035 in March and the Strategy for Developing the Russian Arctic Zone and Ensuring National Security until 2035 in October 2020. It is also promoting military facility maintenance, resource exploitation and freight shipping on the Northern Sea Route. Meanwhile, China has also published a white paper on its Arctic policy in 2018 and is observed to be proactively advancing into the Arctic with its participation in resource development, commercial use of shipping routes and governance development, as it has positioned itself as an important stakeholder in Arctic affairs. In 2020, China started in-depth scientific research activities in the Arctic, including the launch of the

Arctic missions of polar-observing satellite BNU-1, and the Arctic expeditions of Xuelong 2, the first Chinese-made ice breaking research vessel. Against this backdrop, the U.S. is also enhancing its engagement in light of changes in the situation of the Arctic, including announcing an over 12 million US dollars economic aid policy for Greenland (Denmark) in April, and reopening the U.S. consulate in Nuuk in June after about 70 years.

(B) Japan's Arctic Policy and International Activities

As for Japan, it is proactively promoting activities in the Arctic with an emphasis on the three areas of research and development, international cooperation and sustainable use, with the Headquarters for Ocean Policy approving “Japan's Arctic Policy” in October 2015 as its basic policy on the Arctic. In addition, the Third Basic Plan on Ocean Policy, adopted by the Cabinet in May 2018, added a separate section on Arctic policy for the first time and positioned it as one of the main policy items in Japan's ocean policy.

In terms of international efforts, since 2013, Japan has appointed an ambassador in charge of Arctic Affairs. The ambassador attends international conferences on the Arctic including the Senior Arctic Official's (SAO) meeting of the Arctic Council (AC)⁸, in which Japan participates as an observer, and presents Japan's efforts and views on issues surrounding the Arctic. For example, the Ambassador in charge of Arctic Affairs delivered a speech, at the seventh Arctic Circle Assembly⁹ in October 2019 as well as at the ACSAO meeting in November 2020 (both held in Iceland),

⁷ The TCFD was established by the Financial Stability Board (FSB) as a task force on the disclosure of financial information related to climate change, led by the private sector. In its final report, it presented a framework on voluntary information disclosure by corporations pertaining to climate-related risks and opportunities.

⁸ A high-level intergovernmental consultation body established in 1996 with the aim of promoting cooperation, coordination, and exchanges between the eight Arctic countries (Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden, and the U.S.), while gaining the involvement of indigenous communities on common issues related to the Arctic region (in particular, sustainable development, environmental protection, etc.). (It is clearly affirmed that it does not address military and security issues.) Japan acquired an observer status in 2013.

⁹ An international conference established by Mr. Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson, former President of Iceland and others in 2013 and attended by about 2,000 participants including government representatives, researchers, and business people. Japan has been participating in it since the first assembly with the attendance of the Ambassador in charge of Arctic Affairs and other delegates. They deliver speeches at the plenary session, while Japanese researchers present the outcomes of their scientific research at breakout sessions.

which focused on Japan's efforts in the Arctic, including Japan co-hosting the third Arctic Science Ministerial (ASM3) with Iceland, the current Chair of the AC, for the first time in Asia. However, the ASM3 initially scheduled to be held in Tokyo in November 2020 was postponed until May 2021 in light of the spread of COVID-19.

In addition, Japan promotes international cooperation on the Arctic with the relevant countries including the Arctic countries. Through the Arctic Challenge for Sustainability (ArCS) project launched in FY2015 and its successor, the Arctic Challenge for Sustainability II (ArCSII) from FY2020, Japan promotes international cooperation for research and human resource development at research and observation stations in the U.S., Canada, Russia, Norway, and Greenland (Denmark) among other locations. Japan has also sent its researchers to the AC working groups specialized in specific themes, where they present outcomes of their research on the Arctic and contribute to discussions. During a thematic session on Regional Coordination of Marine Issues and Global Commitments at SAO Marine Mechanism, a webinar series held online from September to October 2020, hosted by Iceland, the chair of AC, an ArCSII expert reported on Japan's Arctic policy and international cooperation and cooperation with the local communities for on-site surveys.

B Antarctic

(A) Japan and the Antarctic

Japan has been conducting Antarctic observation surveys utilizing its advanced technology at Syowa Station established in 1957, thereby contributing to global environment conservation and international development of science and technology. Moreover, as one of the original signatories of the Antarctic Treaty, Japan strives to maintain and strengthen the Antarctic Treaty System, which is essential to the peaceful use of the Antarctic, while contributing to the promotion of environmental preservation and international cooperation in the Antarctic.

(B) The Antarctic Treaty

The Antarctic Treaty adopted in 1959 sets forth the following basic principles: (1) the use of the Antarctica for peaceful purposes, (2) freedom of scientific investigations and international cooperation, and (3) a freeze on territorial rights and claims. Among the signatories of the Treaty, 29 countries that carry out substantial activities in the Antarctic have consultations concerning issues in the Antarctic to take actions to promote the goals of the treaty as "Consultative Parties."

(C) The Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting (ATCM) and the Protection of Antarctic Environment

At the 42nd Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting (ATCM 42) held in Prague, Czech Republic, in July 2019, discussions were held on recent issues, including the microplastics pollution in the Antarctic Ocean, and the impact of the increase in the number of tourists on the Antarctic environment, taking into account the yearly increase in the number of travelers to the Antarctic region for tourism and other purposes. The 43rd Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting (ATCM 43) that was scheduled to be held in May 2020 was cancelled due to the global spread of COVID-19, and is now scheduled to be held in Paris in June 2021.

(D) Japan's Antarctic Observation

As for Japan's Antarctic observation activities, based on the ninth six-year plan of the Japanese Antarctic Research program (2016 to 2021), Japan is undertaking efforts to elucidate the role and impact of the Antarctic region on the global system, and in particular, to elucidate the actual conditions of global warming and its mechanisms. To that end, in addition to long-term continuous observation, it is also implementing various research and observation activities, including observations using a large aperture atmospheric radar, which is the only one of its kind in the Antarctic.

3 Science and Technology Diplomacy

Science and technology constitute the foundational elements for peace and prosperity that support socioeconomic development, and play a vital role in ensuring safety and security. By harnessing its own advanced science and technology, Japan promotes Science and Technology Diplomacy, thereby contributing to the development of science and technology at home and abroad, the promotion of relations with other countries, the peace and stability of the international community, and the resolution of global challenges. As part of this effort, Japan places emphasis on initiatives implemented through the activities of the Science and Technology Advisor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs.

In September 2015, MOFA established the post of Science and Technology Advisor to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and appointed Prof. Kishi Teruo, Professor Emeritus of the University of Tokyo, as the first Science and Technology Advisor. Following the end of his term in March 2020, Prof. Kishi was replaced by Prof. Matsumoto Yoichiro, President of Tokyo University of Science as the new advisor on April 1. Moreover, since April of the previous year, Prof. Kano Mitsunobu has assumed the post of the Science and Technology Co-Advisor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs to support the work of the Science and Technology Advisor. Prof. Matsumoto supports the activities of the Foreign Minister from the perspective of science and technology, and provides advice on the utilization of science and technology in the planning and coordination of various foreign policies to the Minister and relevant divisions.

In September, the Advisory Board for Promoting Science and Technology Diplomacy, chaired by Prof. Matsumoto, co-chaired by Prof. Kano and involving 20 experts was established to apply specialized knowledge in all areas of science and technology in the planning and drafting of diplomatic policies. In the future, the Advisory Board

will also conduct discussions on major issues relevant to science and technology and diplomacy, including their relations to security and response to global issues.

Prof. Matsumoto and Prof. Kano endeavor to exchange views with other countries' government science and technology advisors, such as the U.S., UK, and New Zealand in developing and strengthening a network. Meetings of the Foreign Ministries Science and Technology Advisors Network (FMSTAN) were held in July, October and December, in which in-depth discussion was conducted, including response to COVID-19. At the Japan-Sweden SICORP Symposium in November, researchers and government officials discussed the cooperation and strengthening of the relationship between the two countries in order to address issues of an ageing society. In the same month, at the online event hosted by the Japan International Science and Technology Exchange Center (JISTEC) and others, Prof. Matsumoto, together with Dr. Mung Chiang, Science & Technology Adviser to the U.S. Secretary of State, conducted an overview and discussion on science and technology policies and priority issues in Japan and the U.S., the importance of science and technology diplomacy, and Japan-U.S. science and technology cooperation. Furthermore, Prof. Matsumoto regularly hosts science and technology diplomacy seminars aimed at raising the level of knowledge within MOFA.

Japan has concluded 32 science and technology cooperation agreements, and these are now



Appointment Ceremony of the New Science and Technology Advisor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs (April, Tokyo)

in force with 46 countries and the EU.¹⁰ Based on these agreements, it organizes regular joint committee meetings with these countries to engage in intergovernmental dialogue. In 2020, joint committee meetings were held with South Africa, Serbia, the U.S., India and Finland, respectively. Attended by delegates from the relevant ministries and agencies, consultations were held on the current status of cooperation in diverse sectors, and on the future direction of cooperation.

With regard to multilateral cooperation, as a member of the Board of the International Science

and Technology Center (ISTC), which was established to support research for peaceful purposes conducted by researchers on weapons of mass destruction from the former Soviet Union, and now involved in a wide range of research and development such as chemistry, biology, radioactive materials and nuclear power, Japan works to provide support mainly to countries of Central Asia. Japan also participates in ITER projects to demonstrate the scientific and technological feasibility of nuclear fusion energy.

¹⁰ The Japan-USSR Science and Technology Cooperation Agreement was succeeded by Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Uzbekistan, Armenia, Georgia, Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan on different dates. The Japan-Czechoslovakia Science and Technology Cooperation Arrangement was succeeded by individual agreements with the Czech Republic and Slovakia in 1993. The Japan-Yugoslavia Science and Technology Cooperation Agreement was succeeded by individual agreements with Croatia, Slovenia, Macedonia (country name at the time), Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro on different dates.

Column

Vision and Challenges for Japan's Science and Technology Diplomacy

Prof. Matsumoto Yoichiro, Science and Technology Advisor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs

I have been working in the field of research in universities for many years where I have been involved in science, technology and innovation from the standpoint of considering the relationship between society and research. Japan is applying its superior science and technology capabilities to diplomacy and enhancing its diplomatic skills, and by doing so, contributes to the development of science and technology in Japan and the world, to the furthering of relations with other countries, to the peace and stability of the international community, and to the resolution of global issues. In order to support these activities, I assumed office in April as the Science and Technology Advisor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs.

We are currently faced with the pressing question of how to apply science and technology to resolve various issues. These include the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which has been greatly impacted by the spread of the novel coronavirus infectious disease (COVID-19), and how to advance diplomacy including from the perspective of security, through strengthening Japan's science and technology foundation.

With a view to resolving this wide range of issues, and with the aim of applying scientific knowledge and the appropriate recommendations and advice to the formulation of diplomatic policies, Japan has established the Advisory Board for the Promoting Science and Technology Diplomacy comprising 20 expert members in addition to Prof. Kano Mitsunobu, Science and Technology Co-Advisor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, and myself, and created a system that is capable of consolidating the knowhow of all the board members. The importance of policy-making based on scientific advice and data science is gaining more and more attention worldwide, and discussions have been held using the international networks with the science and technology advisors and scientists of each country. Particularly with regard to COVID-19 countermeasures, in-depth discussions have been held on how to advance diplomacy based on scientific advice through sharing experiences such as the successes and failures of each country.

Japan's science and technology capabilities are an important tool for its diplomacy. However, there have been concerns in recent years that Japan's research capabilities, as well as science and technology capabilities, are on the decline. To overcome this situation, there is a need to create a mobile environment that facilitates free movement between the respective sectors of industry, academia and government. Within this environment, it is then necessary to enhance research as well as science and technology capabilities, while promoting international cooperation. Furthermore, there is also a need to promote science and technology diplomacy more strategically and effectively by consolidating the scientific expertise held by each government ministry and agency, as well as the fruit of their international cooperation efforts, under the Government of Japan as a whole.

The rise of emerging technologies has made it even more important to ensure the soundness and fairness of research (research integrity), and I believe that the first step toward this is to educate academics about research integrity. In addition, ensuring transparency in research and development is necessary for the proper development of science and technology, and it is important for scientists and research institutions to provide mutual guarantees in this respect when engaging in collaborative research. It is becoming increasingly important to advance collaborative research, and science and technology cooperation with countries that share these values.



The 1st Meeting of the Advisory Board for Promoting Science and Technology Diplomacy (The author is seated second from the right of the table) (September, Tokyo)



Prof. Matsumoto at the panel discussion at the Japan- Sweden SICORP Symposium (November, Tokyo)

Section 4

Efforts to Promote Understanding and Trust in Japan

1 Strategic Communications

(1) Initiatives in Strategic Communications

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) is implementing strategic communications based on the three-pillar approach of (1) making further efforts to disseminate Japan's policies, initiatives and views, (2) sharing Japan's rich and varied attractiveness, and (3) expanding the circle of people with a great affinity toward or knowledge of Japan, while enhancing the capabilities of its overseas missions, which are on the frontlines of public diplomacy. Regarding pillar (1), MOFA focuses mainly on promoting public understanding of Japan's contributions to peace, stability and prosperity in the international community, and the maintenance and strengthening of the international order based on the rule of law, as well as on enhancing public awareness of issues concerning the recognition of history and territory/sovereignty. In particular, MOFA is actively communicating Japan's positions and viewpoints through opportunities such as daily press conferences, interviews, contributions of articles, and speeches at official visits to foreign countries and international conferences by the Prime Minister, the Foreign Minister, and other government officials. Japan's diplomatic missions overseas are also actively communicating to the governments of assigned countries, their citizens and the media on Japan's



"Contribution to International Peace (Mindanao, Philippines)," promotional video on Japanese policy (released on November 11, 2020, on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' YouTube channel and broadcast by CNN International)

positions and viewpoints on a range of subjects including the recognition of history and territory/sovereignty. When foreign media outlets publish reports that include factual errors, MOFA promptly sends rebuttal pieces or provides explanations under the name of ambassadors, consuls-generals or the Press Secretary of MOFA to ensure that media reports are made based on objective facts. In addition, MOFA actively communicates with the public via social media and websites, while creating publicity materials such as videos on Japan's foreign policy and utilizing them in a variety of forms. Furthermore, in order to make Japan's basic positions and viewpoints on policy issues understood, it is also important to enhance coordination with experts and think tanks. From this perspective, MOFA invites influential experts and media personnel to Japan from abroad, and provides them with opportunities to exchange views with various people including Japanese government officials, as well as to visit various places around Japan for study tours and to conduct interviews.

MOFA dispatches Japanese experts abroad, while extending its support for Japan-related seminars conducted by overseas research institutions.

In 2020, amidst the continued spread of the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) without any prospect of the pandemic coming to an end, MOFA actively communicated the situation in Japan as well as its initiatives, so as to ensure that the international community gains an accurate understanding. It has also put effort into online initiatives with a view to overcoming restrictions under the COVID-19 situation. For collaborative projects with overseas research institutions and invitation/dispatch projects in particular, it has actively implemented feasible initiatives that do not involve physical interpersonal exchanges, such as online seminars (webinars) and exchange programs.

By taking advantage of various opportunities and utilizing various tools, Japan is also engaged in efforts to strategically communicate information about matters on the recognition of history, including the issue of the so-called “comfort women” and various issues on Japan’s territory and sovereignty. In addition, for baseless criticism of the Rising Sun Flag, accurate information about the flag is provided in a variety of forms, including making multi-language explanatory materials available on MOFA’s website to gain understanding from the international community.¹

Concerning pillar (2), “sharing Japan’s rich and varied attractiveness,” a variety of efforts involving public relations and cultural projects are being made mainly through diplomatic missions to promote understanding and support for Japan, which will also lead to promote inbound tourism in the post-COVID-19 world. Cultural projects have been conducted by diplomatic missions around the world and the Japan Foundation (JF), and the 14th Japan International MANGA Award was organized in cooperation with MOFA. Also,

the attractiveness of all regions of Japan was communicated through various means including social media. While many projects have been postponed alongside the suspension of mass gatherings and the cross-border movement of people around the world in order to prevent the spread of COVID-19, special programs have been conducted through online media with the aim of maintaining and further developing Japan’s ties with the world through culture.

Concerning pillar (3), “expanding the circle of people with a great affinity toward or knowledge of Japan,” MOFA has been making various efforts to promote people-to-people and intellectual exchanges, and Japanese language education. The efforts include youth exchange programs, utilizing online communication tools etc., with the Asia-Pacific, North America, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean under Japan’s Friendship Ties Programs. MOFA also provides support for Japanese studies at universities and research institutions in major countries around the world. To ensure the success of the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games (the TOKYO 2020 Games) that have been postponed to 2021, the “Sport for Tomorrow (SFT)” program has been launched to contribute to the international community through sports. Moreover, Japan has worked on initiatives in cooperation with people in the country and abroad to preserve tangible and intangible cultural heritage throughout the world and to promote the inscription of Japan’s cultural heritage on the World Heritage List and the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

MOFA will continue to make strategic and effective use of initiatives in accordance with the above-mentioned three pillars, in order to enhance Japan’s communication and contribute to the realization of its foreign policy and national interests, through opportunities such as the TOKYO 2020 Games.

¹ Explanatory materials concerning the Rising Sun Flag are available on the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs here:
https://www.mofa.go.jp/a_o/rp/page22e_000892.html



(2) JAPAN HOUSE

MOFA has established JAPAN HOUSE overseas communication hubs in three cities, namely São Paulo (Brazil), London (UK) and Los Angeles (U.S.). The purpose is to attract a wide range of people, including those who were not necessarily interested in Japan previously, and to enlarge the base of the people who are interested and well-versed in Japan by communicating Japan's rich and varied attractiveness as well as its policies, initiatives and views.

JAPAN HOUSE promotes effective communication by (1) communicating through "All-Japan" efforts by the central and local governments, private sectors and other actors, (2) promoting outreach that reflects the needs of local communities, and (3) providing a "one-stop-service" where various information related to Japan can be obtained from one location.

Exhibitions at each JAPAN HOUSE aim to communicate the very best of Japan. In addition to locally designed exhibitions which are independently organized by each hub, JAPAN HOUSE conducts touring exhibitions that are selected by experts from public proposals in Japan, and exhibited at all three hubs. In this way, JAPAN HOUSE works to provide highly-qualified exhibitions by leveraging the knowhow of experts both in those hub cities and in Japan. In addition to exhibitions, Japan's diverse attractions, including traditional culture and arts, advanced technology, nature, architecture, food and design, as well as its policies, initiatives and views, are also widely disseminated through other formats such as lectures, seminars, workshops, webinars, merchandise, food and beverages, books, websites and cafés. In 2020, the JAPAN HOUSE hubs were temporarily closed from March under COVID-19 measures. However, even while they were physically closed, they strengthened online communication and continued to implement projects.

(3) Reports by Foreign Media on Japan and Communications through Foreign Media

Regarding the reports on Japan by foreign media in 2020, their focus was centered on topics such as the conclusion of economic agreements including the Japan-UK Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (Japan-UK EPA) and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) Agreement, the first Japan-Australia-India-U.S. Foreign Ministers' Meeting held in Japan, Japan-U.S. relations, Japan-China relations, response to North Korea, domestic politics and economy including the inauguration of the new Cabinet, as well as Japan's COVID-19 response and border control measures.

MOFA actively provides foreign media with timely information and offers assistance with press coverage in order to gain understanding and support from the international community on Japan's policies, initiatives and views. Communication through foreign media includes interviews with the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister, regular press conferences by the Foreign Minister (also livestreamed online in Japanese and English), and the provision of information to correspondents in Japan via briefings, press releases, press tours and other means. MOFA makes efforts to achieve strategic and effective communications by providing information in a timely manner based on the diplomatic schedule.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, there were fewer opportunities for the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister to make overseas visits. Nevertheless, ahead of his visits to Viet Nam and Indonesia in October, Prime Minister Suga argued for the restart of travel in a way that strikes a balance with COVID-19 measures and for cooperation toward the stability and prosperity of the Indo-Pacific region, among other matters, in his contribution to Viet Nam's "Thanh Niên" newspaper and interview with Indonesia's "KOMPAS" newspaper. Ahead of the G20 Riyadh Summit hosted by the Government of Saudi Arabia in November, Foreign Minister Motegi agreed to an

interview with the Pan-Arab newspaper “al-Sharq al-Awsat,” in which he called upon G20 to take the lead in establishing the international order in the post-COVID-19 world.

In 2020, Prime Minister Suga contributed articles and held interviews twice, while Foreign Minister Motegi contributed articles and held interviews for a total of six times. Additionally, Prime Minister Suga held one press conference for domestic and foreign press during his overseas visit.

MOFA also provided information to foreign media through the Press Secretary and other means, and held press briefings for local media during Prime Minister Suga’s visits to Viet Nam and Indonesia in October. With regard to COVID-19 response, a total of 22 press conferences and briefings for foreign media were conducted in order to provide accurate information on Japan’s situation and measures within and outside Japan in a timely and appropriate manner.

In regard to invitations for foreign media to visit Japan, MOFA invited foreign journalists to Japan individually and in groups to enhance their understanding on East Asia’s security environment and to publicize the TOKYO 2020 Games, and others. As for invitations to foreign television crews, a television crew from Poland was invited to Japan to produce a special program commemorating the 100th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Japan and Poland. By creating an opportunity to cover the story of how Polish orphans were rescued a century ago in Tsuruga City of Fukui Prefecture as well as in Tokyo, and through other efforts, MOFA conveyed the message of friendly relations between Japan and Poland, a strategic partner of Japan that holds great importance in the context of V4² + Japan cooperation as well. As a follow-up to the G20 Foreign Ministers’ Meeting, a television crew from Senegal was invited to Japan to cover and publicize the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) process and Japan’s

initiatives toward the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Even under the COVID-19 pandemic, opportunities were created for foreign media to carry out online press coverage on bilateral relations and other themes.

(4) Information Provision through the Internet

MOFA has been actively engaged in providing information through the Internet, such as the MOFA websites and social media, in order to gain better understanding and draw further support of people inside and outside Japan on Japan’s foreign policy. As face-to-face diplomatic activities were significantly constrained in 2020, efforts were made to provide information in new ways through the Internet, such as online live streaming of the regular press conferences by the Foreign Minister.

Considering MOFA’s English website to be an important tool for public diplomacy, MOFA has been enhancing its efforts to provide information in English on Japan’s foreign policy concerning such subjects as territory and sovereignty, recognition of history, and security, as well as Japan’s position on international affairs and Japan’s various appeals together with attractive features of Japan’s diversity. MOFA has also been working to provide information in local languages through the websites of Japanese embassies, permanent missions and consulates-general overseas.

2 Cultural, Sports, and Tourism Diplomacy

(1) Overview

For a very large number of foreign nationals who develop an interest in Japan, Japanese culture is a motive for their interests. MOFA and the JF carry out various projects ranging from introducing Japanese culture and sports to promoting inbound tourism, aimed at creating positive images of Japan

² Visegrád Four (V4) (Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Poland)

abroad, boosting the overall Japanese brand, and encouraging a deeper understanding of Japan, as well as fostering the circle of people with a great affinity toward or knowledge of Japan and increasing the number of foreign visitors to Japan. For example, “Cultural Projects of Diplomatic Missions Overseas” introduce the wide-ranging attractions of Japan, from traditional culture such as tea ceremony, flower arrangement and martial arts, to aspects of modern culture such as anime, manga and fashion and Japanese food culture. As it was difficult to implement programs with guests and participants in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the diplomatic missions overseas organized and conducted many programs through online media.

Under the “Japan Brand Program,” MOFA has dispatched experts of various fields overseas to establish a national brand and give Japan a stronger presence in the world. MOFA also holds seminars, workshops and demonstrations to share Japan’s outstanding cultural assets, which represent a culmination of Japan’s experience and wisdom. In light of the continued difficulty in sending experts overseas due to the spread of COVID-19, MOFA will continue to share Japan’s diverse attractions and strengths by incorporating projects using online platforms.

It is also important that Japan takes the opportunity of the TOKYO 2020 Games to further enhance Japan’s presence in the field of sports. As part of the “Sport for Tomorrow (SFT)” program, MOFA is engaged in various initiatives such as sports exchanges and sports promotion support projects overseas, dispatching sports instructors through the JICA volunteer program, and the provision of sporting equipment and improvement of sporting facilities through Cultural Grant Assistance. In addition, MOFA provides information about these initiatives in Japan and abroad through MOFA’s “MofaJapan x SPORTS” Twitter account. Furthermore, MOFA supports the Host Town Initiative that promotes mutual exchange with the countries and regions participating in the TOKYO 2020 Games.

MOFA conducts a range of activities through Japan’s diplomatic missions overseas to promote a deeper understanding of Japan by fostering the circle of the next generation of people with a great affinity toward or knowledge of Japan and encouraging Japanese studies. These include providing information on studying in Japan; building alumni networks comprising foreign nationals who have studied in Japan; cooperating with the JET Program, which invites young foreign nationals to come work for local governments in Japan; holding exchange programs for youth and adults from Asia and the U.S.; and providing support for Japanese studies.

Promoting the Japanese language overseas fosters individuals who engage in exchange with Japan, deepens understanding of Japan, and creates foundations for friendship between Japan and other countries. Japanese language education is becoming increasingly important, as evidenced by the promulgation and entering into force of the Act on Promotion of Japanese Language Education in June 2019, and the formulation of the Basic Policy for the Comprehensive and Effective Implementation of Measures to Promote Japanese Language Education (Cabinet Decision) in June 2020. Through the JF, MOFA dispatches Japanese-language education specialists overseas, conducts training programs for overseas Japanese-language instructors, and develops Japanese-language education materials. To address the labor force shortage in Japan, Japan began accepting foreign workers under the “Specified Skilled Worker” residence status since April 2019. In this connection, MOFA has also been working to meet a new type of need by providing Japanese language education to foreigners interested in coming to Japan for work.

In cooperation with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Japan has been actively engaged in preserving the world’s tangible and intangible cultural heritage. Moreover, Japan is actively taking part in the international framework

for safeguarding heritage through conventions such as the World Heritage Convention and the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (see (7) on page 320).

By putting creative efforts into promoting such cultural and sports diplomacy during the COVID-19 pandemic, such as through online channels, and by appealing Japan's charms to the world, MOFA helps bring more foreign visitors to Japan.

(2) Cultural Programs

For Japan's diplomatic policies to be smoothly implemented in the international community, it is important to promote a better understanding of Japan among the individual foreign nationals who form the foundation of public opinion and policy making, and to make Japan's image even more positive. Based on this perception, MOFA engages in communicating information about the

diverse attractions of Japan through diplomatic missions overseas and the JF. In 2020, the online event "Japan Matsuri Presents" was held as a part of the Japan-UK Season of Culture, with the aim of creating opportunities for people to experience Japanese culture safely even during the COVID-19 pandemic. This event attracted about 30,000 viewers, and communicated the diverse attractions of Japan ranging from traditional culture such as Japanese drumming and martial arts, introduction to Japanese cuisine and Japanese liquor, to popular culture such as dance performance by the Tomioka Dance Club high school students, which is even well known locally.

Diplomatic missions overseas carry out a range of cultural projects as part of efforts to promote a deeper understanding of Japan and expand the circle of people with a knowledge of Japan in the areas under their jurisdiction. For example, they plan and implement events such as workshops on



Lecture and demonstration on Japanese cuisine (January 27, Miami, U.S.)



Lecture and demonstration on the Japanese art of flower arrangement (*ikebana*) (January 6, Hong Kong, China)



Lecture and demonstration on Japanese cuisine (February 17, La Paz, Bolivia)



Kyogen performance to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Japan and the Czech Republic (September 23, Prague, Czech Republic)

tea ceremony, flower arrangement and origami, as well as Japanese film screenings, Japanese music performances, martial arts demonstrations, traditional craft exhibitions and Japanese speech contests. In recent years, they have also actively introduced Japanese lifestyle and culture including pop culture such as anime and manga, as well as Japan's food culture.

Furthermore, in years that mark diplomatic milestones, MOFA collaborates with governmental and private organizations to intensively carry out large-scale and comprehensive commemorative projects that include mutual visits of dignitaries, various conferences, and public relations and cultural projects with the aim of effectively promoting a deeper understanding of Japan. In 2020, large-scale cultural events were conducted to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Japan and the Czech Republic and the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Japan and Fiji.

In collaboration with MOFA and diplomatic missions overseas, the JF promotes and provides support for Japanese-language education and Japanese studies, as well as runs arts and cultural exchange projects to promote Japanese culture and arts in a variety of forms throughout the world. In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, emergency support was provided for arts and cultural exchange projects including online projects, and

cultural introduction and dialogues were conducted online by the JF headquarters and overseas offices. From November, the JF held the Japanese Film Festival Plus: Online Festival for the first time in ten countries around the world.

Furthermore, the Japan Foundation Asia Center has been steadily implementing the “WA Project: Toward Interactive Asia through Fusion and Harmony” announced by Prime Minister Abe in December 2013. The project steadily implements a wide range of cultural exchange projects with a focus on providing support for Japanese-language education along with interactive arts and cultural exchange projects. The “NIHONGO (Japanese language) Partners” program is one of the main projects to support Japanese-language education in Asia, and a part of pre-dispatch training was provided this year through Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University (Beppu City, Oita) with the goal of regional revitalization. By the end of FY2019, 2,375 Japanese citizens were dispatched mainly to secondary educational institutions in Ten Southeast Asian countries, China and Taiwan, where in addition to providing Japanese-language support they also engaged in exchange projects that entailed introducing Japanese culture. (Dispatch was suspended in FY2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.) These efforts were warmly commended by many people affiliated with the schools in these countries and region, who appreciated the NIHONGO Partners helping motivate students to learn.



NIHONGO Partners playing an active role at the dispatch destination (February, Indonesia; Photo: Japan Foundation)



Film directors Hirokazu Koreeda, Bora Kim (the Republic of Korea), and actress Hashimoto Ai, taking the stage at the “Asia Lounge” Conversation Series of the Tokyo International Film Festival (November, Tokyo ©2020 TIFF; Photo: Japan Foundation)

In the two-way arts and cultural exchange program, in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, assistance was provided for joint projects between Japan and other Asian countries that do not involve cross-border movement of people and the online seminar series “Asia Center TERAKOYA” was held, presenting discussions on the potential of international exchanges. The “Asia Lounge” Conversation Series was also held in collaboration with the Tokyo International Film Festival. In this series, dialogues between people in the film industry of Japan and Asia were held in an online format.

The Japan International MANGA Award was launched by MOFA in 2007 with the aim of rewarding manga creators who have contributed to the spread of manga culture overseas and the promotion of international cultural exchanges through manga. The 14th Japan International MANGA Award, held in 2020, received the record-high 383 entries from 61 countries and regions. The Gold Award was given to a work from Taiwan. This year, there were award entries from Mauritania and Montenegro for the first time.

(3) People-to-People Exchange and Exchanges in the Area of Education and Sports

To build personal relationships and promote a better understanding of Japan, MOFA carries out a number of projects that invite foreign nationals who have a significant influence on shaping public opinion and the policymaking process and who are expected to play a leading role in various fields. In the area of education and sports, MOFA conducts various activities to promote people-to-people exchanges. These projects not only promote mutual understanding and friendships but also enhance Japan’s presence in the international community, which considerably benefits Japan’s national diplomatic interests.

A Student Exchange Programs

MOFA actively introduces the attractiveness

and opportunities of studying in Japan to foreign students through Japanese diplomatic missions overseas, and implements application and screening procedures to grant the Japanese Government (MEXT) Scholarship to promising students abroad. It also makes efforts to network with former foreign students who have returned to their home countries through Japan Alumni Associations and to foster the circle of people with a great affinity toward or knowledge of Japan. In 2020, some of these activities were held through online methods, depending on the situation in the respective countries.

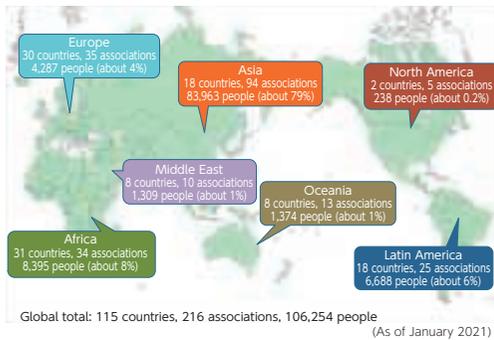


Briefing session on studying in Japan, undertaken by the diplomatic mission overseas (February, France)

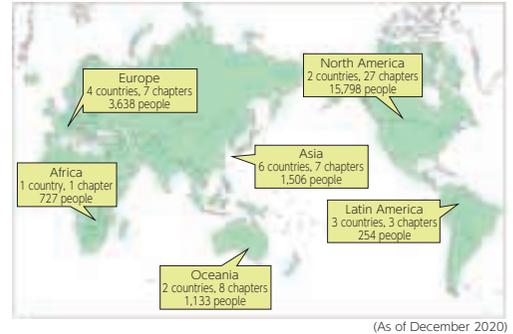


Pre-departure orientation for JET Programme participants, held at the Embassy of Japan in New Zealand (November, New Zealand)

Alumni associations and members by region



JET Alumni Association Chapters and members



B JET Programme (The Japan Exchange and Teaching Programme)

The JET Programme was launched in 1987 to improve foreign language education in Japan and promote international exchange with Japanese citizens in local areas. To date, 70,000 people have taken part in the program and were dispatched all over Japan. This program is administered by local authorities and other organizations in cooperation with the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (MIC), MOFA, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT), and the Council of Local Authorities for International Relations (CLAIR). Through the program, young foreign nationals are invited to Japan and appointed to posts in local governments and schools. MOFA is responsible for the application and screening process, pre-departure orientation, and support for the activities of the JET Alumni Association (JETAA), which operates in 18 countries and has about 24,000 members. JETAA conducts activities to introduce Japan in many countries. Many of those who went through the JET Programme are important human and diplomatic assets for Japan, as they go on to work in a variety of fields around the world as supporters for Japan and experts of Japan. In spite of the impact of the global COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, some of the accepted participants were able to come to Japan after taking the necessary measures.

C Sports Exchange

Sports enable communication beyond language and can be an effective tool for promoting friendly relations and a better understanding of Japan. As Japan gains more attention for the TOKYO 2020 Games, since January 2014, the Government of Japan has been implementing the “Sport for Tomorrow (SFT)” program as an international cooperation initiative through sports with the goal of spreading the value of sports to over 10 million people in more than 100 countries by 2020. The program achieved this goal ahead of schedule in September 2019. SFT also includes the “Projects for Sports Diplomacy Enhancement” scheme, a sports exchange program started in FY2015 that includes projects such as dispatching and inviting athletes and instructors, providing equipment and holding sports-related receptions at diplomatic missions overseas. The projects have also contributed to the development of bilateral relations.



Presentation of triathlon supplies, delivered through the provision of equipment project under the SFT program (February, Rwanda)

Column

Leaving a Legacy in People's Hearts through the Paralympic Games

Kawai Junichi, President of the Japanese Paralympic Committee

As a Paralympian, I have had the opportunity to visit various countries and interact with people from these countries. I have traveled for competitions and training camps, and also as a speaker or a lecturer at conferences and lectures. An activity that left a particularly deep impression on me was teaching swimming to children with a visual disability in Malaysia in 2006, when I visited the country as a member of the Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers under the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). It was an experience that made me realize how sports has the power to transcend cultures, religions, languages, and disabilities. As a part of the "Sport for Tomorrow"* program, I received an invitation from China in 2016 to give lectures on "The Paralympics and an Inclusive Society" at universities and schools for the blind. At the time, I felt strongly that I was able to convey the four Paralympic values of Courage, Determination, Inspiration, and Equality, precisely because I was a Paralympian, and I realized that I have the responsibility to continue conveying and spreading these values.

In Japan, too, after Tokyo became a host city for the Olympic and Paralympic Games, moves toward resolving many social issues materialized through the processes of preparing for the Paralympic Games. For example, the Tokyo 2020 Accessibility Guidelines were compiled. At the same time, stadiums, arenas and other venues were designed in line with the standards for competition venues, and those hardware and infrastructure were developed as a legacy. In 2017, we launched the Japanese version of the "I'mPOSSIBLE" education program of the Paralympic Movement in cooperation with the Nippon Foundation Paralympic Support Center. This also provides the opportunity to learn about the creative efforts and change in mindset (as represented by the apostrophe mark) that are interspersed throughout the Paralympics and are needed to transform the "Impossible" elements into "I'mPOSSIBLE." Furthermore, Paralympic education contents have been included in curriculum guidelines from FY2020, marking the increasing promotion of Paralympic education at schools. In other words, efforts to leave a legacy in people's hearts are advancing steadily.

I consider the Paralympic Games to be a "celebration of human potential." Through the Paralympic Games, we can discover the potential of humans in para athletes' performances that go beyond our imagination, and this in turn gives us the opportunity to become aware of the potential inherent in ourselves. Losing my sight at the age of 15 made me realize that the world I had been able to see until then, or a situation that I had taken for granted, was something which should not be taken for granted. I believe that the Paralympians' way of thinking and way of confronting unjust difficulties can serve as a good reference not only to children, but to people in the world who have lost the "normal" parts of their lives due to the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

Therefore, through the Paralympic Games, I hope to send the various discoveries that can transform the "impossible" into the "possible" to the world. I believe that this will be the legacy in people's hearts created through the Paralympic Games Tokyo 2020.

"Exceed, in everyone."



Winning a gold medal at my fourth Paralympic Games, for the third consecutive Games!



Teaching swimming to children with a visual disability as a member of JICA's Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers. Children everywhere in the world have the same aspirations!

*An international contribution through sport initiative implemented by the Government of Japan in cooperation with the public and private sectors.

Due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 that restricted the global movement of people, exchanges were held through support for the provision of equipment. These SFT programs have contributed to enhancing the presence of those Japanese parties engaged in sports within the international sports community.

D Japan's Friendship Ties Programs

Through these programs, the Government of Japan invites and dispatches future leaders with a view to the development of bilateral and region-to-region relationships between Japan and countries/regions in the Asia-Pacific, North America, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean. Along with promoting a better understanding of Japan's politics, economy, society, culture, history, foreign policy and other elements, the programs produce supporters and experts of Japan. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, lectures and other programs were held online before and after the invitation and dispatch, enabling the program to continue running even under the conditions of the pandemic. Furthermore, by having program participants actively conveying Japan's foreign policies and charms via social media and other channels, it strengthens external communication and expands Japan's diplomatic infrastructure.

(4) Exchange in the Intellectual Field

A Japanese Studies

The JF comprehensively supports a range of overseas research activities related to the politics, economy, society and culture of Japan. Many Japanese studies researchers overseas visit Japan every year through JF's Japanese Studies Fellowship Programme. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, projects that involve the global movement of people around the world had to be postponed. Given this situation, the JF produced and released a video series that featured foreign Japanese studies researchers who had come to Japan in previous years and



Release of video series discussing Japan during the COVID-19 pandemic, through the eyes of foreign Japanese studies researchers and from the perspective of their respective expertise (Photo: Japan Foundation)

continued to stay in Japan under the COVID-19 pandemic, discussing, from the perspectives of their respective expertise, how the Japanese people have responded to COVID-19 and how Japan has changed during the pandemic.

The JF also expanded the collection of books on Japan, dispensed research grants, and provided support for organizing seminars and symposiums, to a total of 39 institutions of Japanese studies in 19 countries and regions. In addition, it provides support to academic societies with the goal of promoting network building among Japanese studies researchers and research institutions around the world.

B Intellectual Exchanges

MOFA also conducts intellectual exchange programs through the JF. For example, support is provided for seminars and symposiums on common international issues and programs that aim to deepen understanding of modern Japan through lectures and other activities at major universities overseas. Additionally, various projects are also organized or supported such as the program for dispatching Japan-U.S. cultural exchange facilitators and Japanese language education supporters, as well as the exchange projects that strengthen relationships and deepen mutual understanding between people through dialogue in various fields and at various levels with NPOs and other exchange organizations.

C U.S.-Japan Conference on Cultural and Educational Interchange (CULCON)

CULCON is a public-private binational advisory panel comprising experts from Japan and the U.S. that discusses issues on educational and cultural exchange between the two countries. Its subcommittees, the Arts Dialogue Committee and Education Exchange Review Committee, prepared final reports. The report by the Arts Dialogue Committee covered specific activities, such as the nurturing of next-generation art experts and publicity that utilizes networking technology. The report by the Education Exchange Review Committee widely covered specific initiatives undertaken by the public and private sectors of Japan and the U.S. to achieve CULCON's goal of doubling the number of Japan-U.S. exchange students from the target established by the CULCON Education Task Force in 2013, alongside data on the changes in social conditions and trends in the actual number of international students during the review period.



Strengthening Japan-U.S. relations from the grassroots (dispatch program) (March, Texas, U.S.; Photo: The Japan Foundation for Global Partnership)

D Cooperation with the United Nations University (UNU)

The UNU contributes to the international community through study and research on global issues and human resource development. Recognizing the organization's importance, the Government of Japan persuaded the organization to establish its headquarters in Japan in 1975, and since

then, has provided support and cooperation for its activities. Through collaboration with Japanese universities and research institutions, the UNU engages in studies on international issues of importance to Japan, including peace, development and the environment, and consequently helps introduce the policies of the Government of Japan to the world. The UNU established Master's and Doctoral programs in 2010 and 2012 respectively, and has made efforts to improve the quality of its global human resource development programs.

(5) Promotion of the Japanese Language

As the globalization of Japan's economy prompts more Japanese companies to do business overseas and Japanese pop culture finds increasing global popularity, interest in learning Japanese is growing around the world, especially among young people. A better understanding of the Japanese language overseas naturally leads to a more favorable international environment for Japanese people and companies. A survey conducted by the JF in FY2018 found that approximately 3.85 million people in 142 countries and regions overseas learn Japanese. In 2019, the Japanese Language Proficiency Test offered by the JF was conducted in 307 cities of 87 countries and regions worldwide, with applicants numbering about 1.37 million, the highest number to date (including those taking the test in Japan). (The test was conducted partially in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.) However, it is clear that a shortage of Japanese language instructors is a major challenge in the pursuit of satisfying the increasingly diverse interests in and needs concerning Japanese language learning in these many countries and regions.

Through the JF, MOFA works to address the diverse needs related to Japanese language education overseas. For example, MOFA dispatches Japanese language specialists abroad, carries out training programs allowing Japanese language instructors, foreign diplomats and civil servants to learn the language in Japan, conducts

preparatory Japanese language pre-arrival training for nurse and care worker candidates based on the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) with Indonesia and the Philippines, encourages educational institutions in each country and region to introduce Japanese language education and supports Japanese language educational activities, develops teaching materials, runs e-learning programs, and promotes the “JF Standard for Japanese- Language Education,” which corresponds with international standards for foreign language education.

To address labor force shortages in Japan brought about by aging and depopulation, Japan began accepting foreign workers under the new “Specified Skilled Worker” residence status since April 2019. In line with this effort, MOFA conducts the Japan Foundation Test for Basic Japanese (JFT-Basic), which assesses the Japanese language ability of foreign nationals who come to Japan based on the “Comprehensive Measures for Acceptance and Coexistence of Foreign Nationals” (decided upon at the December 25, 2018, Ministerial Conference on Acceptance and Coexistence of Foreign Nationals). MOFA is also taking new measures that include developing and disseminating learning materials and curriculum with the goal of fostering people’s Japanese language ability effectively, as well as nurturing local Japanese language instructors who teach Japanese to those who wish to work in Japan.

(6) Cultural Grant Assistance

To promote culture and higher education in developing countries, and thereby enhance mutual understanding and friendly relations between Japan and these countries, the Government of Japan provides Cultural Grant Assistance as part of the Official Development Assistance (ODA). The assistance implemented in 2020 consisted of three General Cultural Grant Assistance projects (totaling around 561 million Japanese yen) and 16 Grant Assistance for Cultural Grassroots Projects (totaling around 120 million Japanese yen). In

2020, General Cultural Grant Assistance was implemented with an emphasis on the provision of equipment for the preservation and exhibition of cultural heritage and digitalization of a library, while Grant Assistance for Cultural Grassroots Projects centered on cooperation in promoting sports and Japanese language studies.

(7) Cooperation through United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

Japan is actively involved in a variety of UNESCO projects in the fields of education, science and culture. Since 1951, when UNESCO became the first international organization to which post-war Japan became a member state, UNESCO has been cooperating with Japan on education, science, culture and other fields in developing countries.

In the field of culture, Japan cooperates actively toward the preservation and promotion of the world’s tangible and intangible cultural heritage, while providing support in the field of human resource development. Japan also actively participates in the international framework for safeguarding cultural heritage. As part of such activities, Japan supports many projects involving the preservation and restoration of sites such as Angkor in Cambodia and the Kasubi Tombs in Uganda, as well as post-earthquake recovery efforts for Cultural Heritage sites in Nepal. With Japanese experts playing a leading role, Japan also aids human resource development to enable local people to protect such sites by themselves in the future. In particular, since 1994 Japan has provided continuous support for preserving and restoring Angkor in Cambodia. In Afghanistan, since 2003 Japan has also been implementing a project to preserve and restore the Bamiyan ruins, which hold a special place in the heart of the Afghan people. As for the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage, support is provided to projects to pass on traditional performing arts such as music, dance, and traditional arts and crafts to the

next generation in developing countries, as well as projects involving developing domestic institutions and capacity building for relevant parties to enhance countries' ability to protect intangible cultural heritage by themselves.

In the field of social and human sciences, Japan has been contributing to discussions aimed at formulating normative documents at UNESCO concerning ethics of artificial intelligence (AI). For example, Japan and UNESCO co-hosted the Panel Discussion on AI Utilization at TICAD7 held in August 2019, and participated actively in a number of expert meetings that have been held since April 2020.

Japan also supports UNESCO's efforts at strategic transformation toward de-politicization under Director-General Audrey Azoulay. In October, Foreign Minister Motegi visited the UNESCO headquarters in Paris and held a meeting with Director-General Azoulay. He expressed support for her efforts to strengthen UNESCO, including organizational reform. At the meeting, he also conveyed that Japan will continue to contribute actively from the intellectual and personnel aspects in the fields of education, culture, science, and information and communication.

A World Heritage Convention

The World Heritage Convention aims to protect cultural heritage and natural heritage internationally as heritage belonging to all mankind. Japan became a party to the Convention in 1992 (194 parties are in the Convention as of December 2020). The sites listed on the "World Heritage List" are known as "World Heritage Sites." They are classified into "Cultural Heritage Sites" (monuments and remains), "Natural Heritage Sites" (natural areas) and "Mixed Heritage Sites" (sites with both cultural and natural elements). As of December 2020, a total of 1,121 World Heritage Sites are inscribed on the World Heritage List. Of these, the number of listed sites in Japan now stands at 23: 19 Cultural Heritage Sites and 4 Natural Heritage Sites.

In March 2020, the Government of Japan established the Industrial Heritage Information Centre, which is engaged in activities such as disseminating information on industrial heritage, with a focus on the World Cultural Heritage "Sites of Japan's Meiji Industrial Revolution."

B Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage

The Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage aims to develop an international system for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage such as traditional performing arts and traditional craftsmanship techniques (as of December 2020, the number of parties to the convention is 180). Japan, with wealthy experience in safeguarding domestic intangible cultural properties, has contributed actively to the drafting process of the convention as a leading force, including formulating operational directives for the implementation of the Convention. At the 15th Session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage held in December 2020, "Traditional skills, techniques and knowledge for the conservation and transmission of wooden architecture in Japan" was decided to be inscribed on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. As a result, a total of 22 elements of intangible cultural heritage in Japan are inscribed on this List.

C UNESCO Memory of the World Programme

The UNESCO Memory of the World Programme was established in 1992 to preserve and promote valuable historical documents. As of December 2020, 427 items have been inscribed.

The fact that the submission and inscription of nominations was done without engagement of member states, despite the possibility of there being clear discrepancies between the views of the concerned member states, is in violation of the founding principle of UNESCO: promoting friendly ties and mutual understanding among member

states. Improvements to the review process, while the nomination cycle for new nominations had been stopped, are therefore being advanced. A revised action plan concerning the comprehensive review process was adopted at a meeting of the Executive Board of UNESCO held in October

2018. Although discussions were held over a one-year period, an extension of discussions was decided at the sessions of the Executive Board of UNESCO held in October 2019 and July 2020. Discussions have since been held toward improving the process based on the plan.

Chapter 5

Japan's Diplomacy Open to the Public

Section 1	Japanese Society and People Deepening Their Ties with the World	324
Section 2	Supporting Japanese Nationals Overseas	339
Section 3	Diplomacy with the Support of the Public	351

Section 1

Japanese Society and People Deepening Their Ties with the World

1 Japan's Growth and Acceptance of Foreign Nationals

(1) Growth Strategy and Visa System

At the end of March 2016, the Government of Japan formulated the “Tourism Vision to Support the Future of Japan,” heading toward a new nation-building as an “advanced tourism nation.” It set new goals for the number of foreign visitors to 40 million in 2020 and 60 million in 2030. In the vision, it is stated that the Government will engage in strategic relaxation of visa requirements for the five countries whose nationals are currently required to obtain a visa to visit Japan (China, Russia, India, the Philippines and Viet Nam) out of 20 countries and regions that have big markets of potential tourists to Japan. Based on the above mentioned vision, MOFA had thus far been implementing a relaxation of visa requirements with these countries, including simplification of application forms and expansion of target persons for visa issuance from the perspective of promoting people-to-people exchanges, strengthening bilateral relations, etc. However, in 2020, the number of foreign nationals visiting Japan fell due to the impact of tighter border control measures mutually imposed by Japan and various foreign countries with the aim of halting the spread of the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19), which subdued the total number of foreign visitors to

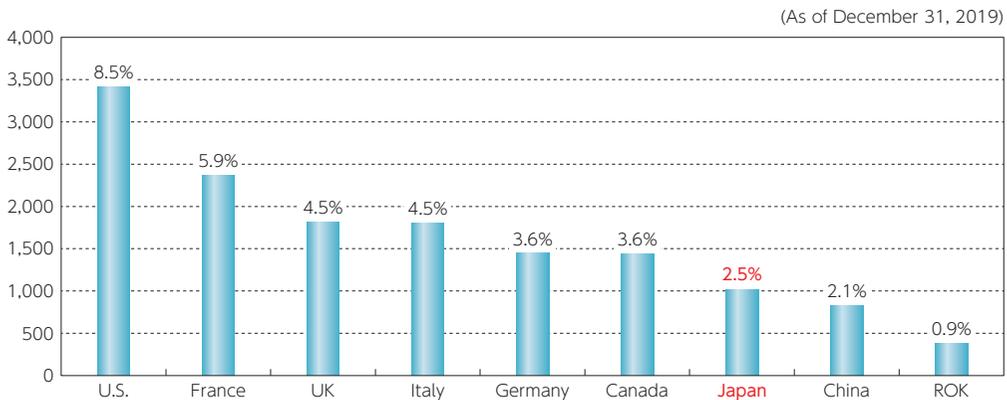
approximately 4.12 million. Relaxing visa requirements is effective to a certain extent for promoting people-to-people exchanges and Japan's economic growth. As such, the relaxation of visa requirements should be further promoted, while assessing the COVID-19 situation inside and outside Japan.

Meanwhile, intensifying visa control, as one part of border control measures designed to prevent the entry of criminals and foreign visitors planning to work illegally, as well as those who could become victims of human trafficking, is also an important challenge. MOFA will keep working on the relaxation of visa requirements in order to increase the number of foreign visitors to Japan while maintaining “Japan as the safest country in the world,” and to contribute to making Japan a tourism-oriented country both in quality and quantity through attracting the wealthy, repeating and younger visitors. MOFA intends to carry out this relaxation of visa requirements while taking into account bilateral relations, its diplomatic significance and other factors in a comprehensive manner, as well as considering their balance with border control measures.

(2) Hosting Foreign Human Resources and Their Social Integration

Since the financial crisis in 2008, the number of long-term foreign residents in Japan had kept decreasing until 2012 when the trend turned upward.

Number of Staff Members at UN-related Agencies by Nationality (professional or higher)



Note 1: This graph includes the number of professional staff members or higher with a term of one year or longer.

Note 2: The percentage represents the ratio against the total number of employees (40,241).

Source: Created by MOFA from UN document (CEB/2020/HCLM/HR/12)

While the aging of the population continues with a low birth rate resulting in the decrease of the population, it is important for Japan to secure capable human resources, in Japan or from abroad, in order to further vitalize Japan's economy and improve its competitiveness. In December 2018, the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act was revised, and Japan started accepting foreign human resources by way of introducing the status of residence "Specified Skilled Worker" in April 2019. It is expected that the number of competent foreign nationals living in Japan will further increase in the future.

MOFA cooperates with the relevant ministries and agencies on the above-mentioned policies while also taking into account the circumstances surrounding COVID-19. As part of that exercise, it hosts the "International Forum on Acceptance of Foreign Nationals and Their Integration into Japan," aiming to encourage debate among the people by providing opportunities to discuss concrete challenges and measures. At the forum that MOFA co-hosted with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in February 2021 under the theme of "Disseminating Information to Foreign Residents in Japan: The Current Situation and Issues seen in the COVID-19 Pandemic," good practice and issues associated with the

dissemination of information to foreign nationals in Japan during the pandemic of COVID-19 were introduced, and a rigorous discussion took place.

2 Japanese Taking Active Roles in the International Community

(1) Japanese Taking Active Roles in International Organizations

International organizations are founded to serve the common interest of the international community. People of various nationalities join these international organizations, and draw on their skills and traits to create an environment where people of the world can live in peace and enjoy prosperity. There are many international organizations working to solve global issues that cannot be addressed by individual countries, such as conflict prevention/peacebuilding, sustainable development, food, energy, climate change, disaster prevention, health, education, labor, human rights/humanitarian issues and gender equality.

Talented individuals with specialized knowledge, passion and capabilities to contribute to the world's interests are needed so that international organizations can competently perform their duties and fulfill the roles expected of them. As a member country of these international

Column

**Voices of People Who Have Been Supporting the United Nations' Activities
Promoting Global Innovation Through the Spread of Intellectual Property Systems and Services**
Takagi Yoshiyuki, former Assistant Director General, World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)

In 1986 when I was a patent examiner at the Japan Patent Office, I applied for the Junior Professional Officer (JPO) Programme that deploys participants overseas, through which I had the opportunity to work at the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) in Geneva. As I had gone straight into working at an international organization without any prior experience of studying or working abroad, I went through a baptism of fire during the two-year program abroad. Through the JPO Program under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, participants are encouraged to take regular posts at international organizations. However, due to the fierce global competition, I was not employed formally immediately after the program, but returned to the Japan Patent Office instead. I then had the opportunity to participate in the negotiations team for the agreement on intellectual property of the GATT Uruguay Round. Through that, I was then seconded to the Permanent Mission of Japan to the International Organizations in Geneva, where I gained experience in international negotiations and successfully built up a network of personal relationships. In 1994, I was appointed as the Director of WIPO's Industrial Property Information Division.

In 2004, the Japanese Staff Association of International Organizations in Geneva (JSAG) was established as a cross-cutting, voluntary organization of Japanese staff working in international organizations in Geneva. I was involved in its establishment and, after that, have participated in its activities as its President, working in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Permanent Mission of Japan to the International Organizations in Geneva to enable outstanding Japanese to play more active roles in international organizations. While the pool of people has gradually expanded and some talented people have emerged and taken an executive post, there is still much room for growth.

My work in WIPO was to develop global innovation ecosystems* through the expansion of intellectual property systems and information services, and, through that, resolve global issues. During my time in office, I contributed to achievements in the following areas: management of strategic policy and formulation of budgets and activity plans; construction of new buildings at the WIPO Headquarters; opening of the WIPO Singapore and Tokyo Offices; development of the Industrial Property Automation System (IPAS) that connected 90 developing countries; establishment of the Master's Degree in Intellectual Property (MIP) program at Africa University; setting up of on-line intellectual property courses; building of global databases for intellectual property information; development and implementation of a state-of-the-art neural machine translation system for the translation of technical documents, as well as an AI-based image search tool for device trademarks; and launched a data-driven, global digital timestamping service for the management of innovation output.

In 2008, I stood as a candidate for the WIPO Director General election with the support of the Government of Japan. Although I did not make it to the final ballot, I left a good result. After that, I served as the Assistant Director General for two terms, during which I oversaw the digital transformation of WIPO.

The predecessor of Intellectual Property (BIRPI) established in 1893, and WIPO became a specialized agency of the UN in 1974. For half a century after that, WIPO's activities expanded as it surfed the waves of the globalization of the world economy and the growth of the knowledge economy brought about by technological innovation.

As a resource-poor country that had developed on the basis of its technologies and knowledge, Japan's strategies, policies and knowledge are invaluable to many countries. Japan has much to contribute to a world that faces the need to address global environmental issues, and a world that needs to transform into a more sustainable place that is supported by knowledge and rich culture.

I retired at the end of 2020 after working for 28 years in this international organization. Through this experience, I can say with conviction that it feels wonderfully rewarding to be able to fully apply your creativity and efforts, and play an active role at the leading edge of the world. I certainly hope that more Japanese people will take on active roles in international organizations.



WIPO Headquarters building during the COVID-19 lockdown (May)



The author addressing staff at the 2020 New Year celebration (February, WIPO Headquarters)

*Innovation ecosystems: Refers to environments in which various actors, such as administrative organizations, universities, research institutes, and companies, are mutually involved in the constant creation of technological innovation.

Column

**Voices of People Who Have Been Supporting the United Nations' Activities
Reflecting on 2020, the Year of the COVID-19 Pandemic****Noda Shoko, Resident Representative, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) India**

The novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) was spreading across the world including India when I was entering my second year as Resident Representative in UNDP India. My plans to travel to various project sites and to meet stakeholders on the ground had to be changed. Instead, I had to quickly introduce the new working-from-home modality to about 500 staff members in mid-March. A week later, the nation-wide lockdown started.

Immediately after the lockdown came into force, domestic and foreign media channels started to show images of highways crowded with migrant workers who had suddenly lost their jobs and were forced to walk for several hundreds of kilometres from large cities back to their native villages. In India, more than 80 percent of the work force is in the informal sector, such as street vendors and auto rickshaw drivers. With the staggered economic growth, there is a strong possibility that many such workers and their families will be falling back into poverty. It is truly heart-breaking.

Days were filled with pressure and anxiety at the start of this unprecedented situation. For instance, I had to launch a new COVID-19 response programme as quickly as possible, make relevant adjustments to the ongoing programmes, manage more than 500 staff members virtually, hold endless online meetings outside of regular working hours with the Bangkok Regional Hub as well as the New York Headquarters despite the significant time difference, and worry at the same time about my parents in Japan. I had worked in nine countries before India, and thought that I had experienced a wide range of crises including recovery after civil wars and natural disasters, climate change, and handling sensitive political dialogues. However, despite 22 years of these experiences in the UN, the COVID-19 pandemic called for a different level of crisis management skills altogether.

With the end of the pandemic nowhere in sight, it has been clearly challenging to implement the various programmes. UNDP staff are located in every state and union territory of India, and programs are run through these staff and in partnership with CSOs on the ground. As the safety of our staff is the first priority in implementing programmes, we make sure that they adhere to the COVID-19 safety measures. I, too, visit our programme sites together with my team. The other day I had an opportunity to visit a community and to hand over relief supplies to female waste collectors supported by our project for plastic waste management. We extended our heartfelt gratitude to those women, who were making a living cleaning unsafe waste including disposable masks.

The year 2020 was full of depressing news and heavy workloads. To express the appreciation of the senior management in the UNDP Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific for the hard work by all the staff, at the end of the year, I was requested to coordinate production of a fun video. The video featured short dance clips of all Resident Representatives in each country in Asia, plus the Regional Bureau Director and Deputy Regional Director, with the song "Can't Stop the Feeling!" by the popular US singer, Justin Timberlake. This unique video capturing the dances of 25 managers was well received by all the staff.

Is the UN making a meaningful contribution to India and the world to combat the pandemic? Am I living up to expectations? For the past one year, I kept asking myself these questions while doing my best every day. It is by no means easy to ensure that all my colleagues remain united, stay healthy and motivated, and remain productive at the level they used to be or even higher. In this unprecedented crisis, I strive to be an empathetic leader, who stands with the team.



"Tama," a feline companion, who offers solace through long working hours at home. In this photo, Tama is sitting on the author's lap and staring at the screen. (Photo: ©UNDP)



Presenting relief supplies and expressing appreciation to the waste collectors, who continue to work hard to keep our environment clean in the midst of the COVID-19 crisis. (Photo: ©UNDP)

organizations, Japan, in addition to policy contributions, makes assessed and voluntary contributions. Furthermore, it can be said that the activities and services of Japanese staff are, in a broad sense, also Japan's contributions.

Currently, Japanese nationals are serving in important posts at international organizations including the UN. In particular, Japanese nationals are actively performing leadership roles at the World Customs Organization (WCO), Asian Development Bank (ADB) and other organizations. In addition, for many years Japan has sent a succession of Japanese judges to international courts such as the International Court of Justice (ICJ), the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS) and the International Criminal Court (ICC). In light of the importance of international organizations for addressing global challenges, securing important posts that contribute to strengthening ties between Japan and international organizations, including as the heads of international organizations, is an important challenge. On the other hand, important posts, including as heads of international organizations, are not something that can be secured overnight. It is necessary to make a finely-tuned response by adopting a long-term perspective while cultivating appropriate personnel.

Currently, over 900 Japanese nationals are working as professional-level or higher-level staff in UN-related agencies around the world, which is a record figure. With the aim of further increasing such Japanese personnel, the Government of Japan has set the objective of increasing the number of Japanese staff working at UN-related agencies to 1,000 by 2025. To this end, in collaboration with universities, related ministries and agencies, and organizations, MOFA is actively recruiting, training and supporting Japanese nationals who can play active roles and make a contribution on the global stage. As part of this effort, MOFA runs the Junior Professional Officer (JPO) Programme that sends young Japanese nationals to positions in international organizations for a term of two

years in principle with the aim of gaining regular staff positions in such organizations after the term. MOFA also runs a program to send mid-career and higher Japanese nationals who can be future managerial candidates. In addition to increasing the number of Japanese staff through these efforts, MOFA is also working to coordinate with international organizations and gather information for the employment and promotion of Japanese staff.

MOFA provides useful and timely information such as vacancy announcements to Japanese candidates seeking positions at international organizations through the website for MOFA's Recruitment Center for International Organizations, mailing lists, and social media such as Facebook and Twitter, and provides support related to application procedures for such positions. Public relations efforts include holding guidance seminars (including online) to enhance the attractiveness of working at international organizations and to deliver methods to apply for a job, and holding recruitment seminars when senior officials or human resource experts from international organizations visit Japan.

A larger number of talented Japanese people taking on active roles in international organizations will further enhance Japan's presence in the international community more visibly. Japanese staff are involved in various fields and duties at different locations, but they share the same goal of solving various issues facing the international community (see the Columns on pages 326 and 327).

Moreover, increasing the number of globally-minded human resources who have professional experience at international organizations and who can play an active role on the international stage will in turn lead to enrichment of the human resources of Japan, contributing to the development of Japan as a whole.

MOFA will continue to be even more active in undertaking measures that increase the number of Japanese nationals working in international organizations and support their promotion, so that

a larger number of competent Japanese nationals who have high aspirations and passion to contribute to solving global issues can take part in international organizations.

(2) Activities of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)

A Development Cooperation

In the interest of leveraging the capabilities of organizations outside of the Government of Japan to conduct all-Japan diplomacy, the role that NGOs play in development cooperation is expanding significantly, as organizations that provide support to various nations, including developing countries.

Through NGOs, MOFA actively provides Official Development Assistance (ODA) via financial cooperation in the form of grant assistance for economic and social development projects implemented by Japanese NGOs in developing countries and regions (Grant Assistance for Japanese NGO Projects). The projects cover a wide range of assistance, including health, medical and hygienic care (maternal and child health, countermeasures for tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS, water/hygiene, etc.), rural development (environmental development/technological improvement for agriculture), support for people with disabilities (vocational training/job seeking assistance, provision of wheelchairs for children, etc.), education (building schools, etc.), disaster risk reduction, and the clearance of landmines and unexploded ordnances (UXO). In 2020, 62 Japanese NGOs

implemented 104 projects in 31 countries and regions including Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and Central and South America under the Grant Assistance for Japanese NGO Projects (see the Column on page 330). Moreover, subsidies are provided with the objective of supporting activities that will enhance the project execution capabilities and expertise of Japanese NGOs (NGO Project Subsidies).

Additionally, Japan Platform (JPF) was established in 2000 with the aim of conducting emergency humanitarian assistance more effectively and promptly through cooperation and partnerships among the Government, NGOs, and business communities at the time of large-scale natural disasters or conflicts.

As of the end of December 2020, 44 NGOs are members of JPF. In 2020, JPF launched Emergency Response to Locust Crisis in South Asia and Africa, Emergency Response to the Taal Volcanic Eruption Disaster in the Philippines, Emergency Response to Cyclone Amphan in Bangladesh, Coronavirus (COVID-19) Emergency Response, and emergency response to the explosion in Beirut, Lebanon, as well as implemented response programs for humanitarian crises in Bangladesh, South Sudan and their neighboring countries, and Uganda, Venezuela, Iraq, Syria and their neighboring countries.

In this way, NGOs assume important roles in the area of development cooperation and humanitarian assistance. Identifying such NGOs as partners in international cooperation, MOFA and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) provide indirect support for NGO activities through various policy measures with the aim of enhancing their capacity and expertise as well as developing human resources so that NGOs can strengthen the foundation for their activities and perform further tasks. In 2020, MOFA implemented four programs - namely, the “NGO Consultant Scheme,” “NGO Study Program,” “NGO Intern Program” and “NGO Study Group.”

The usual schedule for the general meeting of



Children who have received a food basket at a refugee camp in Lebanon (© PARCIC (PARC Interpeoples' Cooperation))

Column

Toward Sustainable School Library Administration

Action with Lao Children (ALC) (Non-profit organization)

While all schools have libraries (or reading rooms) in Japan, only 100 secondary schools out of 1,500 secondary schools are equipped with a library in Laos. Hence, reading environments are not adequately developed despite the importance that the Lao government attaches to them. Even in Vientiane, the capital of Laos, there are only several bookstores. We naturally come to realize, through interactions with local people, that they may need more skills in reading comprehension, expressing themselves in writing, and information processing. Access to books and libraries is of vital importance in a child's development.

Hence, in the regions with inadequate educational environments, Action with Lao Children (ALC) aims to demonstrate the potential for improving education by establishing libraries and improving the learning environment. To that end, through the Grant Assistance for Japanese NGO Project titled "Reading Promotion Project through setting up school libraries at secondary schools in Vientiane Province," we have provided three secondary schools (benefitting about 140 teachers and 2,900 students) in Phonhong District and Hinherb District of Vientiane Province with 3,000 books per school. Furthermore, under the guidance of professional Japanese architects, we have built a 120 m² library with reading and learning spaces.

In this project, we have put particular effort into creating a system for the sustainable management of libraries. As we felt that there was a need to move from the previous management system relying solely on school teachers, to a system in which school libraries are supported by the whole region, we decided to develop a system where a library is managed through cooperation between the school and the village educational development committee, and supervised by the education bureau of the district. The participation rate in the training program was very high among members of the district education bureau and the village education development committee. In the course of training, there was a strong sense that the respective organizations recognized their roles and developed a sense of ownership that they should be responsible for protecting their own libraries.

With regard to daily library operations, the teachers in charge and the volunteer student librarians were given training on how to maintain library visitor records and book registers, and how to carry out borrowing and returning procedures on their own. Going forward, further progressive initiatives will be in the pipeline. These include taking turns reading, recitation and book-based play for teachers to make more active use of libraries for their lessons, while setting up library signboards and holding book fairs. Efforts will also be made to create mutually supportive networks among school libraries, including through using Facebook and other social media to exchange or disseminate information on respective school library activities.

In April, the whole of Laos entered lockdown due to the COVID-19. As a result, all schools were closed temporarily from the end of March till the end of May. Although this meant that the libraries built in this project had to be shut temporarily, school administrators put in place preventive measures such as increasing the number of handwashing facilities in the schools. Consequently, the libraries could be opened once again from September. In the activities carried out by our organization, movement across provincial borders was also restricted during the lockdown, which made it still impossible to dispatch experts even now. However, through using social media to connect experts with the locals online and facilitate their exchanges through Japanese expatriates, we aim to continue our activities, while remaining flexible and responsive as the situation demands.



Students enjoying reading in the completed library



Completed school library



Staff receiving online training from experts



The first meeting of the Partnership Promotion Committee of the NGO-MOFA Regular Consultation Meeting (November 24, Tokyo)

the NGO-MOFA Regular Consultation Meeting, the purpose of which is to promote dialogue and coordination with NGOs, was amended due to the impact of the spread of COVID-19, and the first meeting of the Partnership Promotion Committee to discuss support and cooperation measures for NGOs was held in November. In addition, MOFA has been working on initiatives to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) while exchanging views with various stakeholders, including NGOs, through the SDGs Promotion Roundtable and other fora. Furthermore, NGOs also participated in the Peer Review of Japan that was carried out by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)'s Development Assistance Committee (DAC) from 2019 to 2020, where they exchanged views with the DAC's review panel.

Moreover, from October 6 the EARTH CAMP online campaign was co-hosted by MOFA, JICA and the Japan NGO Center for International Cooperation (JANIC), as a substitute for Global Festa JAPAN, which was cancelled due to the impact of COVID-19.

B Partnership in Other Major Diplomatic Areas

The Government of Japan has also initiated dialogues with civil society including NGO representatives and experts on matters related to government reports to be submitted based on various conventions on human rights, third country resettlement projects, and the National Action

Plan on Women, Peace and Security based on the UN Security Council (UNSC) resolution 1325 and related resolutions.

In the area of conventional weapons, MOFA works in cooperation with NGOs in implementing clearance of mines and UXOs, and mine risk education projects, in countries affected by mines and UXOs.

Furthermore, in the area of nuclear disarmament, MOFA has been conducting dialogues with various NGOs and experts. The Government supports the activities of NGOs and others to convey atomic bomb survivors' testimonies regarding the realities of the devastation caused by the use of nuclear weapons to the international community, through the commissioned projects known as the "Special Communicator for a World without Nuclear Weapons" and the "Youth Communicator for a World without Nuclear Weapons." As of December 2020, a total of 299 Special Communicators on 101 occasions and a total of 405 Youth Communicators on 35 occasions have been dispatched to the world through these commission programs.

In regard to measures to combat transnational organized crime, coordination with civil society, such as NGOs, is essential, especially in the area of trafficking in persons. With this in mind, the Government actively exchanges opinions with NGOs and other stakeholders to identify recent victimization trends of trafficking in persons and to consult on appropriate measures to tackle it.

(3) Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers, Experts and Others

The Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCV, JICA Volunteer Program) is JICA's program aimed at cooperation and assistance for the socio-economic development of the communities of developing countries, whereby Japanese nationals from 20 to 69 years of age with skills, knowledge, and experience live and work together with local people in these countries while fostering mutual understanding with these people. As of

Column

Toward the Widespread Adoption of Organic Farming in Rural Areas in Nepal

Ishikawa Hidetaka, Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteer (JOCV)
(Specialty: Vegetable Growing), Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)

About 70% of the citizens follow the plow in Nepal, home to the world's highest mountain, Mount Everest. There is a significant elevation difference between the flatlands at an elevation of 200 m, and the Himalayas reaching up to 8,000 m high in the Gorkha district where my activities were based. While a wide variety of vegetables such as cabbages and tomatoes are cultivated, the rugged terrain and weak transportation infrastructure there hinder their distribution. Hence, most of the farmers operate on a small scale, living self-sufficiently and focusing mainly on local consumption. In recent years, the local road networks have improved gradually and enhanced access to major consumer areas such as Kathmandu and Pokhara. As a result, among local farmers in the Gorkha district, hopes of improvement to their income through the sale of agricultural produce to residents in the cities are growing.

JICA and Takushoku University launched a collaborative project, "Joint rural development project on agriculture in Nepal by JICA and Takushoku university" against this backdrop. I was dispatched to Nepal for this project, as a JOCV (Specialty: Vegetable Growing), to engage in activities such as improving and promoting organic farming techniques, expanding sales channels, and uncovering business needs, so as to respond to the expansion of the market and the diversification of consumer needs. I first began with activities aimed at promoting and branding organic farming. There was strong interest in organic farming in the local region, and many farmers were actively engaged in it. However, there was no way to certify agricultural produce by organic farming as legal systems of organic farming were not developed in Nepal. Therefore, I discussed the matter with the staff at the Agriculture Service Center that I had been assigned to, and it was decided to establish standards within the Gorkha district that are in line with the laws and regulations of countries such as Japan and the West. We aimed to sell vegetables certified with the "Organic Gorkha Mark" to various parts of Nepal, and visited farmers in the Gorkha district to promote organic farming. We began by teaching them the concepts of organic farming and explained its merits and demerits to them. Consequently, the number of farmers joining in our initiative increased. We also taught better and more suitable farming methods to the farmers who had already started organic farming. I surprisingly found out, through these activities, that many people are illiterate. We faced a challenge of how to pass skills to people who cannot read memos and manuals. We decided to make videos that can be watched repeatedly, in light of that. We first made videos summarizing organic farming methods and how to spray pesticides safely, and distributed them to the local community. We obtained a large and good response to the videos from the community.

However, amid the COVID-19 pandemic, I had no choice but to return to Japan. After returning to Japan, I started to grow vegetables in my own fields, using methods that can also be applied in Nepal, and to make videos for Nepal. Using social media, I contact people in the local community and continue to teach them remotely. Though I had to return home before achieving my goals, I will continue to provide support to them remotely from Japan.



Visiting farmers and explaining nature-derived organic pesticides and how to use goggles, gloves and jumpers when spraying these pesticides (the author on the left)



Teaching farmers agricultural methods (the author is fourth from the left)



With farmers who studied agricultural methods (the author is in the front row, fourth from the left)

the end of March 2020, 54,418 JOCVs have been dispatched to 98 countries in total since the program's launch in 1965. The dispatched volunteers have been engaged in about 190 types of work in nine sectors: planning/administration, commerce/tourism, public utility works, human resources, agriculture/forestry/fishery, health/medical care, mining, social welfare and energy.

Ex-volunteers have been contributing to Japanese society through initiatives such as sharing their experiences in educational, regional and business activities. These unique participatory initiatives by Japan have been highly appreciated and expected both within and outside of Japan, including recipient countries.

JOCVs who had been working in recipient countries sequentially returned to Japan on a temporary basis from mid-March in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The deployment of JOCVs scheduled to be carried out from April was also postponed. From the end of November 2020, these JOCVs sequentially went back and were deployed to Viet Nam and other recipient countries that satisfied certain conditions.

JICA experts with specialized knowledge, insights, skills, and experience are dispatched to governmental agencies and other sites in developing countries. The experts provide high-level policy advice and transfer necessary skills and knowledge to government officials and engineers. Furthermore, they work together with their counterparts to develop, promote and disseminate technologies and systems that are suitable to each country's context. The experts aim to enhance comprehensively the capacity of developing countries so that people in these countries can tackle their development challenges by themselves. The experts engage in their activities while considering elements of each developing country such as its regional characteristics, its historical background and its language.

8,012 experts were newly dispatched to 105 countries and regions in FY2019. The experts actively engage in a wide range of sectors, including

those addressing basic human needs such as health/medical care and water/sanitation, and those of socio-economic development such as legal system development and urban planning. The experts contribute to the social and economic development of developing countries and to fostering mutual trust between Japan and developing countries through their activities.

A large number of JICA experts also had to temporarily return to Japan due to the COVID-19 pandemic. They had been carrying out their duties by staying in touch with their counterparts remotely while being on standby in Japan. These experts sequentially went back to recipient countries from June 2020, based on conditions such as the circumstances of these countries.

3 Cooperation with Local Governments

Regional revitalization is one of the priority issues of the Cabinet. MOFA actively works on the issue and strives to deploy measures that strengthen comprehensive diplomatic capabilities through collaboration with regions.

In Japan, as part of efforts to support regional revitalization, the Foreign Minister and respective prefectural governors invite members of diplomatic corps, foreign chambers of commerce and industry, and tourism-related parties in Japan to the Iikura Guest House, co-hosting receptions and setting up booths as means of broadly promoting the various attractive qualities of regions to audiences both in Japan and abroad. In 2020, the Foreign Minister co-hosted a reception with Iwate Prefecture. The reception was successful with approximately 250 attendees. In addition to publicizing Iwate Prefecture's tourism, food ingredients, and traditional arts and crafts, the reception also served as an opportunity to broadly convey the prefecture's diverse appeal and initiatives, including showing the course of its recovery from the Great East Japan Earthquake up to now, introducing the Rugby World Cup 2019 matches, which were held at Kamaishi, outlining the Host



Foreign Minister Motegi presenting a greeting at a reception co-hosted with the Governor of Iwate Prefecture (February 7, Iikura Guest House, MOFA, Tokyo)



Lacquering experience by attendees (February 7, Iikura Guest House, MOFA, Tokyo)

Town Initiative in the run-up to the Olympic and Paralympic Games Tokyo 2020, and presenting dance performances of Morioka Sansa Odori. It provided an opportunity to promote further exchange and collaboration between the co-hosting local governments and attendees, which included members of the diplomatic corps, foreign chambers of commerce and industry in Japan and company representatives.

In addition, MOFA cooperated with multiple local governments to host Regional Promotion Seminars in Tokyo, which have been held 26 times since 2008. Conducted for members of diplomatic corps, foreign chambers of commerce and industry, tourism-related companies and other organizations, these seminars highlight the characteristics, advantages and attractions of regions for industry, tourism, investment and business promotion. These events have been well received by attendees as valuable opportunities to directly experience the attractiveness of regional Japan



Diplomatic corps visiting the Karako Kagi Remains History Park, Tawaramoto Town, Nara Prefecture on Diplomats' Study Tour (November 18)

while being in Tokyo. The seminars also promote networking among local governments and foreign organization members, including diplomatic corps. A seminar that had been scheduled for September was cancelled due to the impact of COVID-19.

Furthermore, MOFA and Japanese local governments co-organized "Diplomats' Study Tours" for the diplomatic corps in Japan, with the goal of enabling them to directly experience the attractions of each region by actually visiting them. Nine individuals from diplomatic corps in Japan participated in a tour to Tawaramoto Town in Nara Prefecture in November. The diplomatic corps, including ambassadors, visited historical and cultural facilities in the community, which offered them a deeper insight into the community's industries and the local government's initiatives, and allowed them to experience the region's abundant attractions. Thus far, as a result of the tours, some local governments have started exchanges and collaborations with participating countries, while others have aimed to increase the number of visitors to such communities by utilizing connections with participating diplomatic corps.

Moreover, MOFA actively provides local governments with explanations of Japan's current diplomatic policies and opportunities to exchange views. As a part of such activities, MOFA held the "Local Partnership Cooperation Forum" in January. Part one of the Forum was the foreign policy briefing session, which consisted of a presentation by MOFA staff titled "Japan-Mekong



Local Partnership Cooperation Forum Participants interacting at an opinion exchange (January 22, Tokyo)

Cooperation.” In part two of the forum, which featured sectional meetings, participants exchanged views on the themes of “The Environment and Climate Change: Circular Economies and What Local Governments Can Do,” “Regional Internationalization through MICE,¹” and “Entrenching the Momentum of the Olympics and Paralympics: Continuing Exchanges and Regional Development.” Additionally, at a following discussion session hosted by Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs Nakatani Shinichi, diplomatic corps members and other participants had a lively discussion with members of local governments.

With regard to projects overseas as a way to dispel international reputational damage stemming from the Great East Japan Earthquake, together with efforts to eliminate and ease import restrictions, MOFA conducted the comprehensive PR program called “Project to Support Overseas Presentations to Promote the Attractiveness of Regions” in China in December mainly in online formats. This programme shared the attractiveness of regions, promoted exports of prefectural products, and supported tourism for regional revitalization. To allow Chinese consumers to better experience the charms of Japan’s local regions, including tourism, culture and cuisine during the program, short movies shot in the various Japanese locations by the 50 participating local



Live broadcast event held as a part of the Project to Support Overseas Presentations to Promote the Attractiveness of Regions (December 19, Beijing, China)

governments were posted on the account of the Embassy of Japan in China with Chinese social media platform Weibo. Live-streamed events were also held in Beijing, and were delivered on the Weibo account of Sina Weibo (a Chinese Internet distribution platform provider). Chinese Key Opinion Leaders (influencers) introduced ways of enjoying Japanese regions, including cuisine, crafts and tourism, and close to 1.7 million viewers took part in the live broadcasting, which linked Hokkaido Prefecture, Miyagi Prefecture, Shizuoka Prefecture and Kochi Prefecture. In addition, during the event, a lot of collaboration events were conducted such as sales activities related to Japanese cuisine and specialties promoted by retailers, e-commerce companies and Japanese restaurants based in China.

“Regional Promotion Projects” were also conducted on a total of two occasions in Asia and North America as measures to support local governments in promoting the development of local industries and regional economies through the attractiveness of each region by making use of Japan’s diplomatic facilities overseas.

In addition, on the occasion of the receptions for celebrating the birthday of His Majesty the Emperor, which are held at diplomatic missions overseas every year, Japanese attractions such as local productions and events are presented. In

¹ MICE — A term coined from Meeting (corporate and other meetings), Incentive Travel (reward or training travels undertaken by companies and others), Convention (held by international institutions, groups, academic societies and so on) and Exhibition/Event (exhibitions, trade shows and events), which is used as a general term for all such business events.

2019, a total of 50 local governments attended these occasions in 107 diplomatic facilities to offer information on their attractiveness.

Furthermore, MOFA supports international exchanges between both Japanese and foreign local governments through various initiatives such as sister-city exchanges between Japanese local governments and their counterparts overseas and the Host Town Initiative for the Olympic and Paralympic Games Tokyo 2020, which were postponed until the following year. Specifically, in order to support the international activities of local governments and municipal communities, Japanese diplomats visit sister cities of Japanese municipalities in their assigned countries or regions and share opinions with officials responsible for international and economic affairs. The heads of Japanese diplomatic missions also visit local municipalities in Japan to have dialogues on the activities related to the sister city or the Host Town Initiative or deliver lectures prior to their departure for new posts or when they temporarily return to Japan. In cases where any foreign local governmental bodies wish to newly establish sister-city relationships with any Japanese municipal communities, MOFA supports them by posting the related information on the website of “Local Partnership Cooperation” (named “Glocal (global and local) Diplomatic Network”) on MOFA’s website.

MOFA utilizes Twitter to introduce various information such as the charms and attractions of Japanese local governments, from a unique perspective. Besides the presentation of the above-mentioned activities, MOFA posts various information such as “Local Cuisine,” which showcases foods rich in regional flavor, “#HostTown,”

which presents the activities and exchanges between Japanese local governments and foreign teams related to the Olympic and Paralympic Games Tokyo 2020, and “Local Quiz Trip,” which introduces information concerning local governments in connection with sister cities and Host-Towns.²

Additionally, as part of the overseas promotion activities for Japanese alcoholic beverages (Japanese sake, wine, shochu, awamori, etc.) produced in various parts of Japan, the diplomatic missions are actively engaged in promoting their charms, by offering tasting occasions at official dinners/lunches with government leaders of the assigned countries or foreign diplomatic corps, and by using Japanese sake on the occasion of making toasts at grand events such as the receptions for celebrating the birthday of His Majesty the Emperor.

MOFA is also working to respond to the growing demands for issues such as water treatment, waste disposal, urban transportation and anti-pollution measures caused as a result of rapid economic development in developing countries. These efforts involve making use of ODA and leveraging Japanese local governments’ experience and expertise, as well as conducting development cooperation using outstanding technologies and products from local SMEs. Through these efforts, MOFA provides support for matching these countries’ development needs with companies’ products and technologies. These efforts not only contribute to the global outreach of Japanese local companies and the development of globally competent human resources, but also to vitalizing regional economies and the Japanese economy as a whole.

² Local partnership MOFA JAPAN Twitter
<https://twitter.com/localmofa>



Column

Sending Hearts across the Seas, and Building Bonds beyond 2020: The Dawning of a New Era in Host Town Exchanges - The Paths and Miracles Woven Online

“We feel the same as you do. Let’s overcome this difficult time together!”

As COVID-19 swept across the world in mid-March, the Boccia national team of Thailand sent an encouraging video message via social media to the people of Odate City and Akita Prefecture. Odate City, which has been designated as a “Leading Host Town of a Harmonious and Inclusive Society,”* hosted the Thai team in 2019 for its pre-Games training camp, and at the same time, held exchanges between the athletes and the local citizens. This message of support had been sent from Thailand, a long distance away, at the start of 2020, in the midst of widespread fear over the spread of COVID-19 around the world and concern among governments about the spread of the disease within their own countries. After receiving this video message, Odate citizens of all ages and genders, from the Mayor to elementary school students, conveyed their expressions of support and gratitude also via social media to the people of Thailand in a video message that incorporated the Thai language and music.

Sending messages expressing concern for people in a country far away across the seas—the expression of such warm relationships, conveyed through social media before the start of the Olympic and Paralympic Games Tokyo 2020 (Tokyo 2020) scheduled to be held in 2021, is not only a sign of the deepening bonds developed through the Host Town exchanges, but can also be regarded as proof that such ties can also be developed without physical visits between countries as a result of the immediacy of social media. Amidst the increasing difficulty of physical socializing between people around the world and the renewed search for ways of interacting, this was an event that brought us new hope.

Triggered by this, the sight of Host Towns and sister cities sending messages of encouragement and support to one another such as “Let’s overcome the COVID-19 pandemic!” has become a common sight on social media. Support is actually shown in various ways. Fujieda City in Shizuoka Prefecture showed its support for its Host Town partner, Italy, by lighting up a bridge in the colors of the Italian national flag. Zermatt in Switzerland illuminated the Matterhorn with the national flag of Japan as a dynamic way of showing its support to its sister cities of Myoko City in Niigata Prefecture and Fujikawaguchiko Town in Yamanashi Prefecture.

Exchanges taking place during the COVID-19 pandemic are not limited to such exchanges of support. Tsuruoka City of Yamagata Prefecture held an online friendly match, “Japan-Moldova Remote Archery Match KAKEHASHI 2020,” with its partner country Moldova across a six-hour time difference. Undaunted by the physical distance of 8,400 km, a heated match was held for about two hours in real time. This exchange through a competition highlighted the great future potential of the online medium.

To begin with, Japan is a country that is surrounded by oceans, and is physically separated from its partner countries and regions by some distance. However, a new form of exchange that takes place online has emerged, overcoming this physical distance in an instant. Information and communications technology (ICT) is making remarkable advancements



Show of support from Thailand
Show of support from Odate City, Akita Prefecture
(March 13, Photo: Odate City, Akita Prefecture)



Archery friendly match between Chişinău, Moldova and Tsuruoka City, Yamagata Prefecture
(September 12, Photo: Tsuruoka City, Yamagata Prefecture)

today. It is likely that Host Towns across Japan will carve out a new era of exchanges further ahead in the future with their desire to overcome distances and other barriers.

We are finally approaching the date for the opening day of Tokyo 2020. Many "bridges" of bonds built through the Host Town exchanges have sprung up across the overflowing rivers of emotion and inspiration. There are also new "bridges" of bonds that will be built now through Tokyo 2020, connecting Japan with countries and regions as the legacy of Tokyo 2020. We hope that these will become thicker and stronger, and look forward to a future of "hybrid" international exchanges that combine online and real-life exchanges even after the COVID-19 pandemic has ended.

*"Host Towns of a Harmonious and Inclusive Society" refer to Host Towns that have implemented initiatives such as a barrier-free mindset and urban planning based on universal design, with the aim of realizing a harmonious and inclusive society through exchanges with Paralympians, and will continue with these initiatives as a legacy of the Olympic and Paralympic Games Tokyo 2020. Odate City is a Leading Host Town of a Harmonious and Inclusive Society that comprehensively implements leading and advanced initiatives related to a barrier-free mindset and urban planning based on universal design. For example, it has set up a Boccia court at the station in cooperation with a private company, and become the first municipality in Akita Prefecture to enforce an ordinance on sign language.

Section 2

Supporting Japanese Nationals Overseas

1 Risks and Safety of Japanese Nationals Overseas

(1) Incidents and Accidents in 2020 and Countermeasures

As of 2019, approximately 20 million Japanese nationals¹ travelled overseas over the course of the year, and approximately 1.41 million Japanese nationals live abroad (as of October 2019). Hence, protecting the lives and health of Japanese nationals traveling and residing abroad, as well as promoting their interests, is one of the most important missions of MOFA.

No Japanese nationals were the victims of terrorism incidents in 2020, but a large number of terrorist attacks continued to occur in various regions. The main terrorism incidents included a fatal knife attack in a suburb of Paris, France (January), a knife attack in South London, UK (February), a suicide bombing near the U.S. Embassy in Tunis, Tunisia (March), a fatal knife attack in Romans-sur-Isere, France (April), an attack on police officers in a Paris suburb (April), car crash incidents on an expressway in Berlin, Germany (August), a knife attack in front of the former head office of the satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo in Paris (September), the murder of a teacher in a Paris suburb (October), a fatal knife attack in Nice,

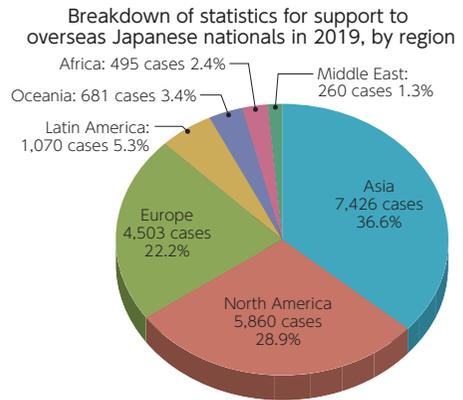
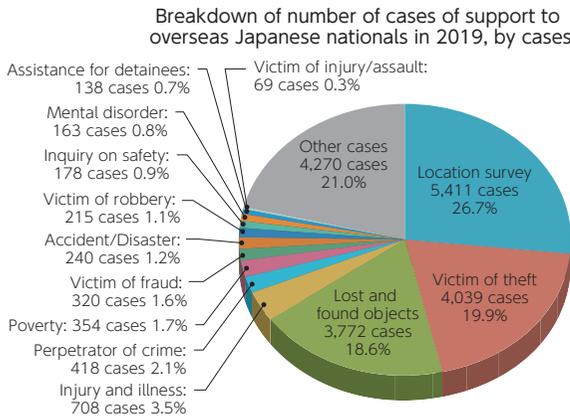
France (October), a shooting in Vienna, Austria (November), and a bombing at a ceremony venue in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia (November).

Regions where terrorist attacks have occurred in recent years are not limited to the Middle East and Africa alone – they are widening to Europe, the U.S. and Asia, regions where many Japanese travel and reside. Homegrown terrorism perpetrated by those born in Western countries and indoctrinated through websites or other means by foreign Islamic extremists, and lone-wolf terrorism perpetrated by those acting on their own with little organizational background are occurring in large numbers, but terrorist attacks believed to be backed by organizations such as Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) have also been occurring, such as the shooting incident in Vienna in November. Additionally, there continues to be a large number of terrorist attacks occurring that are aimed at “soft targets” – locations where unspecified numbers of the general public gather every day.

In 2020, the impact of the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) meant the number of people traveling overseas fell substantially. The number of incidents in which Japanese nationals fell victim to crimes consequently also declined compared to normal years. Nevertheless, incidents

¹ Source: Ministry of Justice. “Statistics on Legal Migrants”

Breakdown of number of cases of support to Japanese nationals, by cases and regions (2019)



Top 20 foreign diplomatic missions with a large number of support cases

Rank	Diplomatic mission	Number of cases
1	Embassy of Japan in Thailand	1,521
2	Embassy of Japan in the Philippines	1,187
3	Embassy of Japan in the UK	981
4	Embassy of Japan in Korea	775
5	Embassy of Japan in France	750
6	Consulate-General of Japan in Los Angeles	626
7	Consulate-General of Japan in Honolulu	615
8	Consulate-General of Japan in Shanghai	595
9	Consulate-General of Japan in Barcelona	591
10	Consulate-General of Japan in San Francisco	559

Rank	Diplomatic mission	Number of cases
11	Consulate-General of Japan in Hong Kong	449
12	Consulate-General of Japan in New York	445
13	Consulate-General of Japan in Cebu	368
14	Embassy of Japan in Italy	356
15	Consulate-General of Japan in Denpasar	282
16	Consulate-General of Japan in Hagatna	277
17	Consulate-General of Japan in Atlanta	268
18	Consulate-General of Japan in Seattle	265
19	Consulate-General of Japan in Houston	233
20	Consular Office of Japan in Portland	231

(Figures are shown for the 20 diplomatic missions with the largest number of support cases, including embassies, consulate-generals, and consular offices.)

involving Japanese being killed in robberies have been occurring worldwide.

Furthermore, accompanying the spread of COVID-19 from China to the rest of the world, anti-Asian sentiment has been witnessed in a number of countries, and in some instances Japanese nationals have suffered attacks.

Many natural disasters also occurred around the world and caused great damage. These included a volcanic eruption on Luzon in the Philippines in January, cyclone “Linfa” in May, the Aegean Sea earthquake in October, and hurricane “Eta” in November.

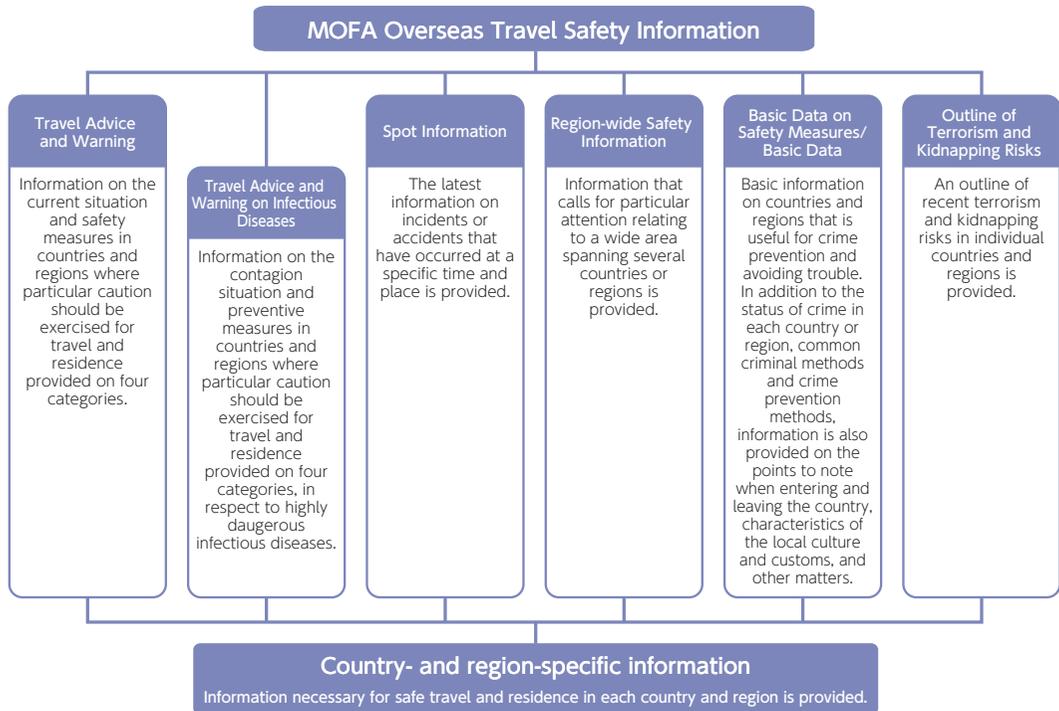
Additionally, in 2020, large-scale protests were held successively in Hong Kong, the U.S. and other parts of the world, resulting in MOFA utilizing its Overseas Safety website and other channels to call on Japanese nationals to avoid going near demonstrations and protests. Depending on the

regional circumstances, and as occasion demanded, MOFA also published overseas travel safety information concerning countries and regions where particular caution was conceivably needed when traveling and residing. In 2020, MOFA raised the risk levels for Ethiopia, Azerbaijan, Armenia and Cote d’Ivoire, among others.

As was the case in the previous year, there were continued reports of people falling ill during a trip abroad and dying at the hotels or other accommodations they were staying at. In some of these accidents and illnesses, victims faced difficulties in dealing with higher medical and transportation costs, and receiving insufficient medical services compared to those in Japan.

Whenever necessary, MOFA issues overseas travel safety information on infectious diseases, air pollution and other risks in countries and regions where health and medical caution is required, in

Main Overseas Safety Information posted on MOFA's Overseas Safety Website (structure and overview)



order to communicate the current outbreak situation and prevention measures, and highlight matters worth paying attention to when travelling and staying in the affected regions.

Since the end of 2019, the COVID-19 outbreak that began in China has raged across the world. In response, MOFA has been disseminating information such as Travel Advice and Warning on Infectious Diseases and Spot Safety Information to Japanese nationals residing or traveling abroad and raising their awareness in a timely and appropriate manner, via its website and e-mails. In addition, MOFA used government charter flights to repatriate Japanese nationals and others who had been residing in Hubei Province, China. MOFA had also succeeded in bringing back a total of over 12,000 Japanese nationals from 101 countries with the support of Japanese Embassies and Consulates-General there by the end of November (see the Opening Special Feature on page 2)

As for other infectious diseases, cases of Ebola were reported in the Democratic Republic of the

Congo and Uganda, and measles was prevalent in various parts of the world. In addition, cases of the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) continue to be reported in the Middle East. Mosquito-borne diseases, including the Zika virus, yellow fever, dengue fever and malaria, also continued to spread throughout the world.

(2) Safety Measures for Japanese Nationals Overseas

The number of incidents of Japanese nationals receiving support or protection from Japanese diplomatic missions overseas and the Japan-Taiwan Exchange Association fell marginally in 2019, to 20,295 cases involving a total of 21,175 people.

However, threats to the safety of Japanese nationals occur constantly in various regions throughout the world. Since the beginning of 2020 in particular, Japanese nationals traveling abroad are being required to respond appropriately to complex risks such as infectious diseases and terrorism, amid entry and movement restrictions

imposed on the travelers of various countries and various constraints such as reduced flights that have accompanied the spread of COVID-19. In addition, because it is becoming more difficult than ever before to respond in cases where such travelers are unfortunate enough to encounter a terrorist attack or other incident or accident while overseas, the need for every possible effort to be expended on overseas safety measures is increasing all the more.

Based on this perspective, MOFA works to enhance the safety awareness of Japanese nationals and promote its safety measures by disseminating information widely to the general public.

Specifically, MOFA issues the latest safety information for each country and region on the Overseas Safety website, and emails the latest safety information on travel destinations and places of residence to Japanese nationals who are staying overseas and have Overseas Residential Registrations, and short-term travelers who have registered with Tabi-Regi, MOFA's overseas travel registration system.

MOFA strives to enhance the knowledge and capability of the Japanese people concerning overseas safety measures and crisis management through seminars and trainings. In 2020, in order to address the need for safety measures under the global spread of COVID-19, MOFA hosted safety measure seminars inside and outside Japan, and also dispatched lecturers from the Consular Affairs Bureau to deliver lectures on safety measures at seminars held throughout Japan by domestic organizations, associations and other groups (ten times overseas and seven times within Japan).

In addition, even overseas, the public and private sectors are cooperating to advance safety measures, and the diplomatic missions in each country host regular meetings of Security Consultation and Liaison Committees. Even amid the COVID-19 pandemic, the diplomatic missions overseas are continuing to share information, exchange opinions and bolster collaboration in preparation for emergencies with local Japanese



MOFA Overseas Travel Registration "Tabi-Regi"
<https://www.ezairyu.mofa.go.jp/tabireg/index.html>
 (only in the Japanese language)



MOFA Overseas Safety App
 Overseas safety website "About the Overseas Safety App"
 Can be downloaded from: (https://www.anzen.mofa.go.jp/c_info/oshirase_kaian_app.html)
 (only in the Japanese language)



nationals in their respective countries, including by hosting such events online.

The terrorist attack in Dhaka in July 2016 brought renewed recognition for rising awareness among international cooperation personnel, as well as small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), students studying abroad and short-term travelers, who have limited access to information on safety. In light of that, where SMEs were concerned, MOFA promoted awareness through Golgo 13's Security Guidelines for Japanese SMEs Abroad, which uses manga (comics) to explain basic safety measures for companies in an easy-to-understand manner.

Furthermore, with regard to Japanese students studying overseas, MOFA personnel are holding lectures at universities and other educational

institutions, on the grounds that many such institutions have not accumulated sufficient expertise or experience on safety measures and dealing with emergency situations. Requests for lectures from educational institutions declined in 2020 due to the impact of COVID-19, but MOFA nevertheless continues to strive to help those institutions to raise awareness of safety measures among their students and build in-house crisis management structures, including by holding online lectures on safety measures. MOFA is moving ahead with efforts to connect government agencies with educational institutions, overseas study agencies and students studying abroad, by beginning automatic Tabi-Regi registration system with some overseas study institutions.

As for safety measures for short-term travelers, MOFA is engaged in PR activities mainly focused on promoting registration to the above-mentioned Tabi-Regi, including by distributing information cards and the *Kaigai Anzen Tora no Maki* (handbook for overseas travelers).

As of November 2020, the number of travelers who had registered on Tabi-Regi since its launch in July 2014 exceeded 6.67 million, reflecting initiatives for enhancing the system's convenience and activities which aim at promoting registration.

2 Consular Service and Assistance for Japanese Living Overseas

(1) Improving Consular Service

With the aim of providing quality consular services to Japanese nationals overseas, MOFA conducts a questionnaire survey every year on services such as consular staff's attitudes in over-the-counter and telephone responses as well as work implementation status at diplomatic missions overseas. The survey conducted in January 2021 covered 145 diplomatic missions overseas and received valid responses from 18,349 people. The survey results suggested that respondents were for the most part satisfied with the level of consular services provided by diplomatic missions

overseas. Nevertheless, some respondents also submitted views calling for improvements in consular staff's attitude to users, including that staff seem to adopt matter-of-fact attitudes and terms of speech. MOFA takes user feedback such as this seriously, and will continue its efforts to enhance services and make improvements so as to provide better consular services that are oriented to the perspective of its users.

(2) Passports: Maintaining trustworthiness, enhancing convenience and making administrative tasks more efficient

From February 2020, MOFA began issuing new passports that adopt Katsushika Hokusai's "Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji" series on all the visa pages (see the Special Feature on page 347).

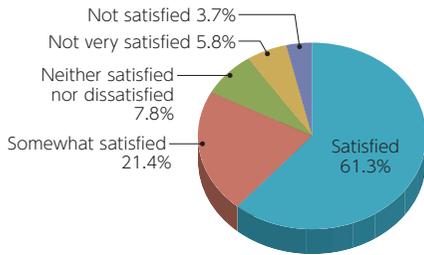
1.34 million passports were issued in 2020, falling by 70.3% compared to 2019 and reflecting the significant drop in the number of people heading overseas amid the global spread of COVID-19. As of the end of December, there were approximately 27.71 million valid passports in circulation.

Realizing a digital society is becoming a pressing issue, which is also the case where passport issuance applications are concerned. On the basis of the "Digital Government Execution Plan" that was amended in December, from FY2022, it will become possible to apply for passports online. In designing that system, MOFA is striving to utilize existing infrastructure, including the My Number Portal (a government-run online service concerning administrative procedures and other processes), reduce the number of times necessary for applicants to appear before the counters in person, and digitalize administrative operations, while simultaneously maintaining the trustworthiness of Japanese passports.

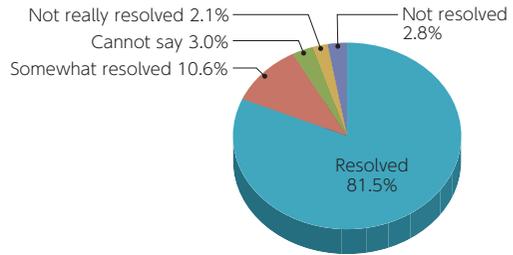
With regard to the indication of former surnames on passports, up to now this had been permitted under extremely strict conditions, but MOFA decided to ease those conditions for applications filed from April 2021, and also to change the way names are recorded on passports. More

Results of a survey of consular service users (FY2020: 145 diplomatic missions)

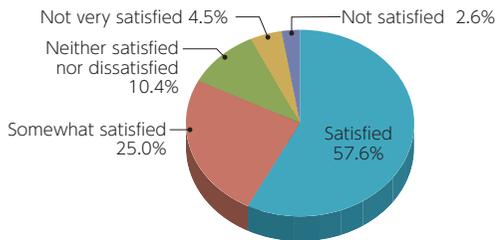
Overall, how satisfied are you with the consular services you have received?



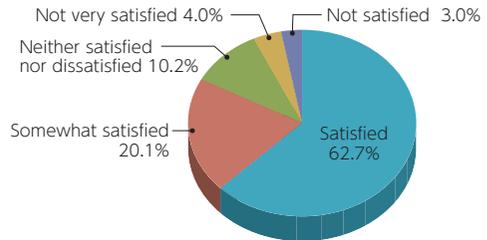
Has your problem (application, notification, consultations, etc.) been resolved through the use of consular services?



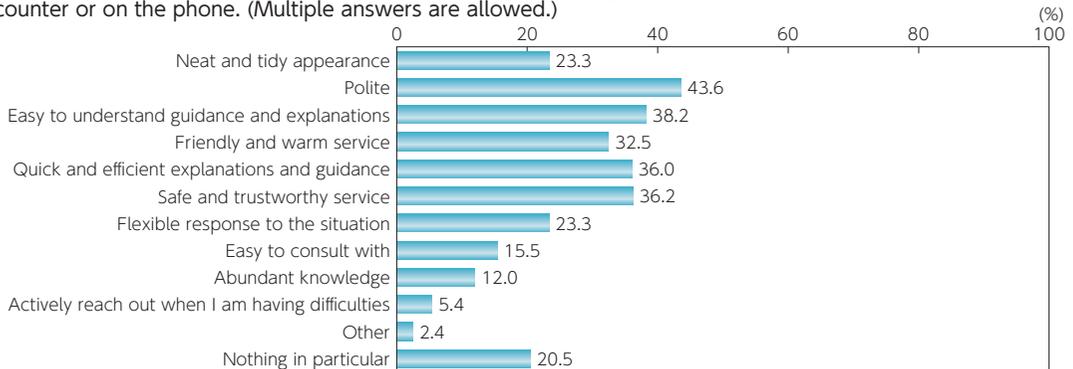
How satisfied are you with the knowledge of duties and processing speed of the consular services?



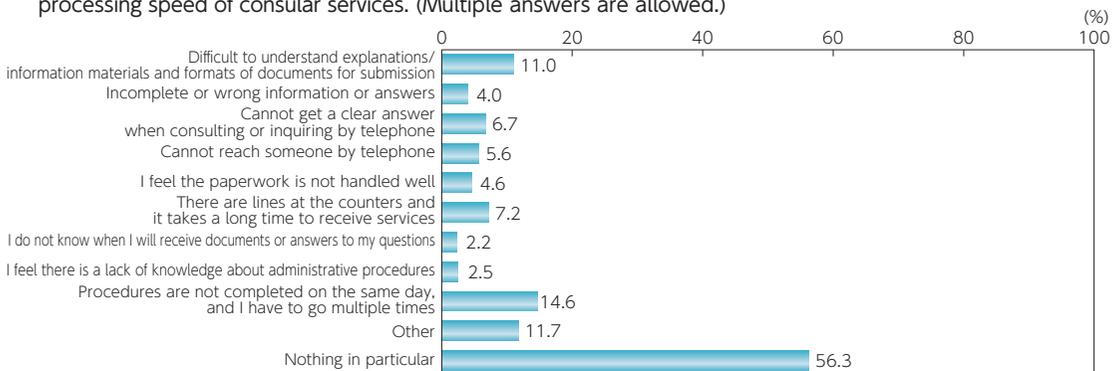
How satisfied were you with the customer service manners of staff while receiving consular services?



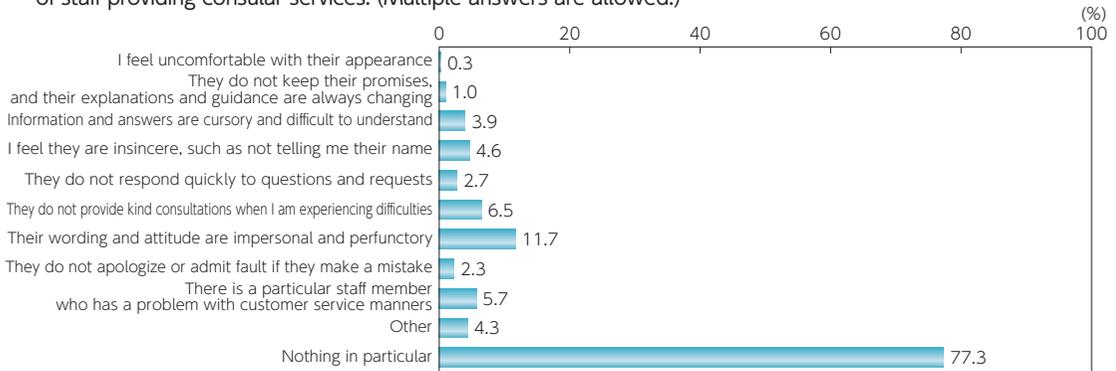
Please select any of the following items that you found to be "good" about the staff at the consular service counter or on the phone. (Multiple answers are allowed.)



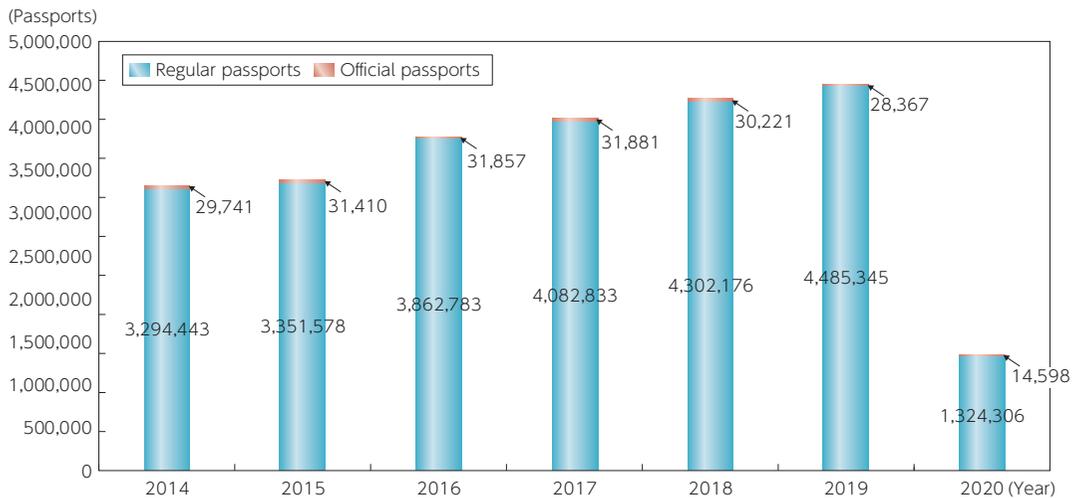
Please select all that apply if you feel that improvement needs to be made for the knowledge of duties and processing speed of consular services. (Multiple answers are allowed.)



Please select all that apply if you feel that improvement needs to be made for the customer service manners of staff providing consular services. (Multiple answers are allowed.)



Changes in the number of passports issued



Note: Official passports include diplomatic passports.

Source: Prepared based on passport statistics for 2020 (MOFA's Passport Division)

specifically, when applicants want to have their former surname jointly recorded on their passports, they will be permitted to do so provided it is possible to confirm their former surname from either an official copy of their family register, an official copy of their resident registration, or an Individual Number Card (My Number Card) that displays their former surname. MOFA also decided to add the explanation "former surname" in English to the identification page of such passports to make it clearer to foreign immigration officials that the indicated name is the passport holder's former surname.

In 2020, there were 15 confirmed cases of illicit acquisitions of passports by impersonation

or other means. Ten cases of illegal passport use overseas were also confirmed.

Following the introduction of ePassports in 2006, new security technologies are being proactively adopted. Measures have also been taken with the new 2020 passports to prevent forgery, including by bolstering the capacity for preventing personal information from being stolen from passports' IC chips, and using different design patterns on all the visa pages.

Based on a study by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), which sets out the international standards for passports, some countries in Europe, Asia and elsewhere are moving to introduce new technologies such as laser printing



on thermoplastic material. Following these countries, Japan is aiming to introduce next-generation passports that incorporate these advanced technologies in FY2024.

In a passport index based on trustworthiness and other factors that was announced by a private-sector UK company in January 2021, Japanese passports ranked first out of 110 countries. In any event, MOFA will continue to engage in maintaining the trustworthiness of Japanese passports while enhancing convenience for applicants and making passport administrative operation more efficient.

(3) Overseas Voting

The overseas voting system allows Japanese voters living overseas to vote in national elections. In order to vote through the overseas voting system, it is necessary to be registered in advance on the overseas voter directory managed by the election board of the city or town government and to obtain overseas voter identification. Starting in June 2018, in addition to the conventional method of applying through a diplomatic mission overseas after moving there, Japanese nationals can now apply at their municipal service counter at the same time as filing their notice of moving overseas. As a result, there is no longer a need to appear in person at a diplomatic mission overseas after moving outside Japan, which simplifies procedures. Voters can vote by choosing one of the three methods of voting, a) voting at diplomatic missions overseas, b) voting by mail, or c) voting in Japan.

The diplomatic missions overseas have been making efforts to spread the overseas voting

system and to increase the number of registered voters by publicizing the overseas voting system to the territories under their jurisdiction and carrying out a visiting service for the registration of Japanese nationals living in remote areas. In addition, whenever an election is held, diplomatic missions overseas are responsible for voting administration, including PR prior to elections.

(4) Assistance for Japanese Nationals Living and Engaging in Activities Overseas

A Japanese Schools and Supplementary Education Schools

Education for children is one of the major concerns for Japanese nationals living abroad. In cooperation with the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, MOFA provides assistance to the Japanese Schools (partial assistance for school building rental fees, remuneration for locally hired teachers, and safety measures expenses) so that the overseas school children at the age of compulsory education in Japan can receive a level of education equivalent to that in Japan. MOFA also provides the same assistance for Japanese Schools to Supplementary Education Schools (educational institutions established to maintain children's academic ability, such as Japanese language proficiency) mainly in areas where Japanese Schools are not located. In particular, MOFA is further strengthening and expanding assistance related to safety measures in light of the recent changes in the international terrorism situation. MOFA will continue providing these forms of support in the future.

B Medical/Health Measures

MOFA gathers information on infectious diseases being spread overseas and provides this information to a broad audience through the overseas safety website, websites of diplomatic missions overseas, emails and other means. Furthermore, in order to provide health advice through consultations to Japanese nationals residing in countries where the medical situation is poor, MOFA

Special
Feature

Issuance of the New 2020 Passport: Preventing Counterfeiting while Promoting Japanese Culture through the “Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji”

Issuance of new passports commenced from applications received on February 4.

Passports incorporating new technologies have previously been developed, including machine-readable passports in 1992 and ePassports in 2006. For the passport that is currently in use, first issued in 2013, anti-counterfeiting measures have also been adopted through sophisticated technologies, such as black-and-white watermarks, holograms and special printing. This has brought the incidence of passport forgery or alteration to an extremely low level. Now, a new passport incorporating new technologies has been introduced for the further prevention of passport counterfeiting.

The integrated circuit (IC) chips in the new passport have reinforced functions to prevent the illicit reading and copying of personal information. Changes have also been made to the design on the visa pages with the introduction of the “Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji*1” by the artist Katsushika Hokusai, as a way of preventing passport forgery or alteration. While every visa page in the passport has had the same design before this, printing a different picture on each page has made it even more difficult to forge or alter.

The decision to use beautiful Japanese designs for the visa pages was made from the viewpoint of preventing counterfeiting, and also for the purpose of contributing to the promotion of Japanese culture. In the selection of the basic design, the “Preparatory Conference for the Selection of the Next Passport Design” was convened by five expert members with specialized knowledge in the areas of design, travel, journalism and sports. The final decision was made by the Minister for Foreign Affairs based on their discussions about the multiple candidates under consideration.

Various designs were proposed, including designs based on the motif of unique Japanese scenes such as New Year’s Day and the Doll’s Festival (*Hinamatsuri*), the crane in association with traveling through the air, and plants that represent the seasons in Japan such as the cherry blossom. Based on factors such as Japanese character, dignity and familiarity, “Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji” was selected as the final design. This is a masterpiece that is representative of the genre of Japanese art known as *ukiyo-e*. Widely known around the world, the work is based on Mount Fuji, also a World Heritage Site.

The passport with ten years of validity has 48 visa pages, and one print is used for every two-page spread. Hence, 24 prints are used in total (18 prints in the 36-page passport with five years of validity). In considering which of the “Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji” to be used in this passport, consideration was given to the balance of the design and the objectivity of the selection method. In the end, it was decided that the first 24 prints would be used, based on the titles of the prints in the order of the Japanese syllabary.

Since the start of the issuance of the new passport in February, the impact of the global spread of the novel coronavirus disease has resulted in a significant drop in the number of passports issued in Japan. However, those who did receive the new passport have spoken favorably about the new design that uses the “Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji” artwork.



“Under the Wave off Kanagawa” from “Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji” used in the design of the 2020 passport *2

*1 “Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji” is a series of *ukiyo-e* woodblock prints based on the theme of Mount Fuji created by Katsushika Hokusai (1760-1849), a master of *ukiyo-e* in the mid- and late Edo era. Renowned prints from this series include “South Wind, Clear Sky,” “Under the Wave off Kanagawa,” and “Rainstorm Beneath the Summit.” The series comprised 36 prints at the time of their publication, but due to their popularity, 10 prints were added to make a total of 46 prints.

*2 Visit the link below to see the other prints from the “Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji” used in the 2020 passport.
<https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/files/000432933.pdf>



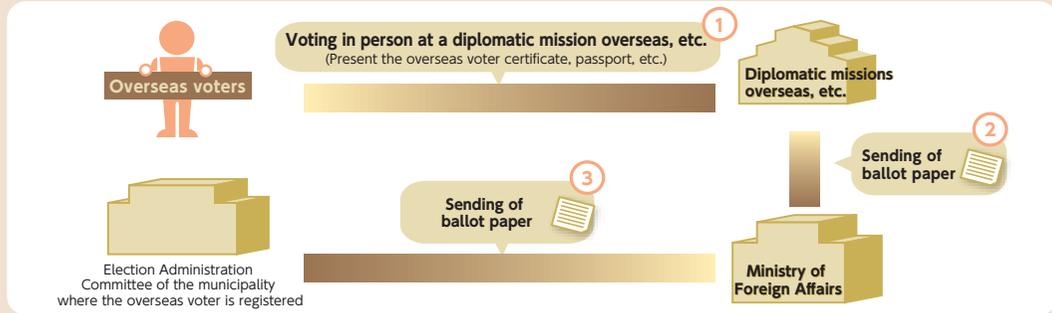
Poster announcing the issuance of the 2020 passport



Voting in elections for overseas voters

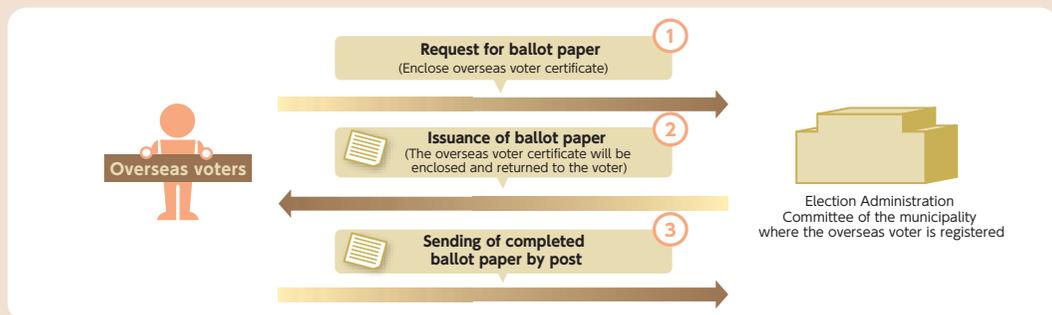
a. Voting at a foreign diplomatic mission

Voters who are registered on the overseas electoral roll may vote by presenting their overseas voter certificates, passports and other necessary documents to a diplomatic mission overseas set up as a polling station. (The period and time of voting differs depending on the diplomatic mission.)



b. Postal voting

Send the overseas voter certificate and request form for ballot paper to the chairperson of the Election Administration Committee of the municipality that you are registered with to request for a ballot paper. Complete and return the ballot paper to the chairperson of the Election Administration Committee of the municipality, ensuring that the ballot paper reaches the polling station by the time the voting ends on the date of the election in Japan (8:00 p.m. Japan time). (Voting is carried out from the day after the date of public notice.)



c. Voting in Japan

In the case where the overseas voter returns temporarily to Japan at the time of the elections, or where the overseas voter is not yet registered on the electoral roll in Japan after returning to Japan, he or she may vote through the same voting methods as voters in Japan (early voting, absentee voting, voting on election day).

dispatches medical teams with the cooperation of domestic medical institutions (not implemented in FY2020 due to the impact of COVID-19). MOFA also dispatches medical specialists to regions where infectious diseases or air pollution are becoming serious issues, and organizes health and safety lectures (not implemented in FY2020 due to the impact of COVID-19).

C Support for Japanese Nationals Living Overseas and Japanese Descendants (Nikkei)

Between March and December 2021, in order to support Japanese nationals living overseas and Japanese descendants (Nikkei) whose lifestyles are being disrupted by the spread of COVID-19, MOFA carried out the Program to Strengthen Livelihood and Business Foundations for Japanese Nationals Overseas and People of Japanese Descent (Nikkei) through support for projects that are being implemented by Japan societies,

Japanese chambers of commerce and industry and Nikkei groups overseas for the purposes of halting the spread of infections in communities of Japanese living overseas and Nikkei communities, and nurturing their business environments.

▣ Responses to Other Needs

In order to eliminate the complexity of various procedures for Japanese nationals living overseas (such as converting Japanese driver's licenses, obtaining residence/work permits) and to make living abroad more comfortable, MOFA continues to engage with the authorities in the respective countries where Japanese nationals reside.

For example, when converting driver's licenses issued in foreign countries to Japanese driver's licenses, all persons with driver's licenses issued in a foreign country are exempted from taking certain sections of the Japanese driver's license examination (theory/practical), when it has been confirmed that they have no problems with driving vehicles. On the other hand, as it is mandatory for Japanese nationals to take driving tests when converting Japanese driver's licenses to local licenses in some countries and states, MOFA is calling for those countries to simplify the procedures for license conversion to the same degree as in Japan.

MOFA also supports victims of atomic bombings living overseas in applying for the authorization of Atomic Bomb Diseases and for the issuance of Health Check Certificates, via diplomatic and consular missions.

3 Cooperation with Emigrants and Japanese Descendants (Nikkei)

The migration of Japanese nationals overseas has a history of 152 years, as of 2020. There are an estimated 3.8 million overseas Japanese and Japanese descendants (Nikkei) around the world, with especially large numbers residing in North, Central and South America. They make a significant contribution to the development of the countries in various fields, including politics, the

economy, education and culture, and at the same time, they act as a bridge between Japan and these countries in developing close relations.

Together with the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), MOFA provides cooperation in Central and South America, where an estimated 2.24 million Nikkei live. Various forms of assistance are offered, including welfare support for aging emigrants, training in Japan for Nikkei people, and dispatch of volunteers to the local Nikkei communities. MOFA is also working to further strengthen relationships with Nikkei communities based on the report submitted to the Minister of Foreign Affairs from the Panel of Experts on Collaborating with Nikkei Communities in Latin America and the Caribbean in May 2017.

Thus far, invitation programs to Japan for Nikkei leaders in various fields, and from various countries and regions, have been carried out in North, Central and South America. In addition, efforts are underway to strengthen relations with Nikkei people in these regions through close cooperation between the diplomatic missions in each country with Nikkei communities, including actively creating opportunities for senior officials from Japan to meet with Nikkei persons during their visits to these countries.

The Convention of Nikkei and Japanese Abroad, which is held every year in October, was cancelled in 2020 due to the impact of COVID-19. Accompanying that, the welcome reception hosted by the Foreign Minister was also cancelled, but an online forum was held to deepen ties with Nikkei communities and cultivate the groundwork for next year's convention. A video message from Foreign Minister Motegi was played at the forum. Going forward also, along with providing support to Japanese abroad and Nikkei people, MOFA will promote cooperation with the younger generation and strengthen their bonds with Japan.

4 The Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction (the Hague Convention) and its Implementation

The Hague Convention is designed as an international mechanism for addressing disputes arising from the wrongful removal or retention of children across borders in the belief that the interests of children are of paramount importance. It requires cooperation between Contracting States to the Convention for returning children to their state of habitual residence and establishing opportunities for transboundary parent-child access.

This Convention came into force in Japan on April 1, 2014. As of December 31, 2020, 101 countries including Japan are parties to the Convention.

The Convention is implemented through mutual cooperation among the governmental agencies designated as the Central Authority in Contracting States to the Convention. In Japan, MOFA as the Central Authority avails itself of experts in various fields, communicates/cooperates with foreign Central Authorities, and provides assistance to the parties such as locating the whereabouts of the child and arranging mediation services aimed at amicable resolutions.

In the six years and nine months between the entry into force of the Convention and the end of December 2020, MOFA received a total number of 425 applications: 271 applications seeking the return of the child and 154 applications seeking access to the child. Of the cases seeking the return of the child from Japan to another country,

children were returned in 47 cases and conclusions were reached not to return the child in 42 cases. Of the cases requesting the return of the child from another country to Japan, children were returned in 47 cases and conclusions were reached not to return the child in 28 cases.

As a part of outreach activities to non-Contracting States to the Convention, at an online seminar for Viet Nam's supreme court and judiciary held in December 2020, Japan introduced its experience up to joining the Convention, and its initiatives concerning matters such as its domestic implementation structure after becoming a Contracting State to the Convention.

In addition to this, in the interest of making the Hague Convention known to a wider bracket of citizens, MOFA publishes information concerning the convention and in information magazines for Japanese nationals living overseas and on their web sites, and holds online seminars to raise awareness among Japanese nationals living overseas. MOFA also puts efforts into PR activities by holding seminars in Japan for local governments, and relevant institutions such as bar associations.

Number of Applications for Assistance Received by the Minister for Foreign Affairs Based on the Implementation Act of the Hague Convention (as of end - December 2020)

	Applications for support for return of children	Application for assistance on face-to-face meeting
Applications related to children located in Japan	150	120
Applications related to children located overseas	121	34

Section 3

Diplomacy with the Support of the Public

1 Proactive Communications to the Public

(1) Overview

Public understanding and support are indispensable for the smooth implementation of Japan's foreign policy. As such, providing prompt and clear explanations on the policy details and on the role of the government is crucial. Accordingly, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) is making efforts in timely and effective public relations, using various forms of media, lectures, publications and others.

(2) Providing Information through Domestic Media

MOFA has committed itself to promptly and accurately providing information through various media, such as newspapers, television and the Internet, in order to gain the understanding and support of Japanese nationals for Japan's foreign policy. To provide information effectively, regular press conferences are conducted by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Press Secretary, while extraordinary press conferences are held as necessary. Press conferences by the Foreign Minister are open to various media including Internet media, and the records and videos of the press conferences are posted on MOFA's website.

During foreign visits by the Prime Minister or the Foreign Minister, MOFA provides information



Extraordinary Press Conference by Foreign Minister Motegi (August 6, London, UK)

Dissemination of Information through Press Conferences

Minister for Foreign Affairs	112 times
Press Secretary	40 times
Total	152 times

*From January 1 to December 31, 2020

Dissemination of Information through Documents

Statements by the Minister for Foreign Affairs	13 times
Statements by the Press Secretary	43 times
Press releases by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs	1,072 times
Total	1,128 times

*From January 1 to December 31, 2020

from visiting countries/regions via multiple means, including the Internet, so that people can promptly follow and understand the details and the outcomes of the visits. MOFA also regularly releases statements by the Minister for Foreign Affairs or

Press Secretary on individual international issues, expressing the position of the Government of Japan. Similarly, MOFA frequently provides press releases on its daily diplomatic activities. Additionally, the Minister and State Ministers for Foreign Affairs explain the Government's foreign policies directly to the public through appearances on various media and interviews.

(3) Information Provision through the Internet

MOFA's website (in Japanese and English) is a

way to promptly provide information on the diplomatic activities of the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister as well as on Japan's foreign policy including territory/sovereignty, recognition of history and security along with the latest international relations and other basic relevant information.

Furthermore, MOFA's website in the Japanese language provides a variety of contents for Japanese nationals across a wide range of levels, including the "Anything Report from Around the World" and "MOFA for Kids." In particular, "MOFA for Kids" publishes contents such as



MOFA's official website
<https://www.mofa.go.jp/index.html>



MOFA's official twitter account
https://twitter.com/MofaJapan_en



MOFA's official facebook account
<https://www.facebook.com/Mofa.Japan.en>



MOFA for Kids
<https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/kids/index.html>
 (Japanese language website only)

MOFA's official website



MOFA's official facebook account



MOFA's official twitter account



MOFA for Kids



videos and quizzes that use unique characters to explain MOFA's activities in an easy-to-understand way, and Q&A corners explaining vocabularies and international issues that are covered frequently in the news and newspapers.

In addition to these, MOFA provides a variety of information through various social media platforms. As face-to-face activities were significantly constrained due to the impact of the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in 2020, efforts were made to provide information in new ways through the Internet, such as online video live streaming of the regular press conferences by the Foreign Minister.

(4) Dialogue with Japanese Nationals

With the notion of "Public Relations through Dialogue," MOFA provides the people of Japan with opportunities to directly talk to the Foreign Minister, the State Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs and MOFA officials.

At the "Dialogue with Students," a MOFA seminar for students held in February, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs Omi Asako gave the opening address, and also observed group debates by the participating students and commented on their reports on the debate outcomes. Furthermore, at a gathering following the seminar, she exchanged views with a large number of the participating students.

Various programs had to be cancelled or postponed due to the spread of COVID-19, among them "Visits by elementary, junior and senior-high school students to MOFA" as well as "Lectures on the International Situations," "Diplomatic Talks" and "Talks for High School," in which MOFA sends its officials to venues such as international exchange organizations, universities and high schools throughout Japan, and "Children's Kasumigaseki Tour Day," which parents and children take part in together. However, from September "Talks for High School," "Diplomatic Talks" and "Lectures on the International



Lectures on the International Situations
(November 26, Fukushima City Board of Education)



One of the Talks for High School
(October 22, Shizuoka Prefectural Yaizu Chuo High School)



One of the Diplomatic Talks (December 7, Ferris University)



Periodical journal "Diplomacy"

Online Domestic Public Relations Initiatives under the Novel Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Pandemic

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) provides opportunities for people in a wide age range to learn about Japan's foreign policy and global issues, through various public relations programs including sending MOFA officials to high schools and universities to give lectures, such as the "Talks for High School" and "Diplomatic Talks" programs.

Due to the spread of the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19), programs that we had been engaged in, such as the sending of officials to conduct talks on site and visits by students to MOFA, have been suspended for the time being. In place of these activities, online lectures and talks have been conducted since autumn 2020 as a new initiative that meets the needs of the COVID-19 era.

1. Online lectures that connect students to the MOFA Headquarters (Tokyo)

The first online "Talks for High School" was held in September at Hachinohe Kita High School, an Aomori prefectural high school. On the day of the talk, a MOFA official presented the talk from the Headquarters in Tokyo, using many materials such as photographs and figures to make the contents easy to understand even in an online talk, and staying mindful of speaking more slowly and clearly than usual to make it easier to hear and understand. Other creative efforts such as introducing quizzes in the middle of the talk were also made to prevent the talk from becoming monotonous and tedious.



"Talks for High School" at Hachinohe Kita High School

At the school, each student prepared cards in three colors beforehand, and used them to answer the quiz questions. Such unique ideas and creative efforts by the school also helped to facilitate a lively two-way exchange in spite of the online format.

2. Online lectures that connect students to diplomatic missions overseas

More than half of MOFA's officials serve as diplomats at the Embassies, Consulates and Permanent Missions of Japan in 195 countries around the world. The opportunity to hear directly from a diplomat who works overseas is probably one of the appeals of MOFA's domestic public relations initiatives. In fact, there have been requests to incorporate topics related to the overseas work experience of MOFA's officials into the "Talks for High School" and "Diplomatic Talks" programs.

However, using the traditional method of sending speakers to the site of the talk would mean bringing a diplomat working overseas back to Japan, then dispatching him or her to each school. This is, of course, impossible. Hence, this has always involved sending an official working at the MOFA Headquarters in Tokyo to talk about their past experience of working overseas.

In this respect, an online talk creates the opportunity to hear a timely and immersive talk from an official who is currently serving as a diplomat on the global stage. The online domestic public relations initiative can be described as a measure that can fully demonstrate MOFA's strengths.

Since October, MOFA's Domestic Public Relations Division has been conducting lectures and talks led by officials working at diplomatic missions overseas. MOFA's officials based in not only countries that are relatively close to Japan such as Indonesia and Mongolia, but also other parts of the world including Africa, the Middle East, Central and South America, and Europe, such as Rwanda and Brazil, have also served as speakers in these initiatives.

Going forward, there are also plans to launch an initiative of virtual tours of MOFA.

Even under the COVID-19 pandemic, MOFA will continue to implement domestic public relations initiatives that are equally, or more, enriching and effective than before.

Situations” were switched to an online format and conducted sequentially (at the “Diplomatic Talks” and “Talks for High School,” the advantages offered by the online format have been capitalized on to include lectures by MOFA staff working at embassies and consulates-general overseas) (See the Column on page 354). Through these programs, MOFA is working to promote better understanding of foreign policy and international affairs among young people, who will bear the future of Japan on their shoulders.

MOFA also introduces Japan’s ODA policies and specific measures to the public through various symposia, lectures and “ODA Delivery Lectures” in which MOFA officials take part (33 lectures in 2019).

Additionally, MOFA publishes the periodical journal “Diplomacy,” widely sharing information on discussions taking place in various areas and at various levels concerning diplomacy and international affairs relevant to Japan. In 2020 the journal took up various diplomatic challenges as themes, including the transformation of the international order by COVID-19 and the course of the U.S. presidential election, and featured a large number of essays and other articles from renowned experts both inside and outside Japan.

Moreover, MOFA also produced various pamphlets in order to promote understanding on the organizational structure and foreign policies of MOFA in an understandable manner. In addition to the above, MOFA accepts individual public opinions and impressions through various channels, including its website. Comments and opinions from the public are accordingly shared within MOFA and used as a reference in policy making and planning.

(5) Promotion of the Declassification of Diplomatic Records and Access to Information

To further enhance the public understanding of and confidence in Japan’s foreign policy, MOFA is actively engaging itself in the smooth transfer

of records and their declassification. In addition, MOFA has been engaged in efforts to facilitate greater convenience in the public use of diplomatic documents.

MOFA preserves more than 120,000 historical materials, including 40,000 prewar historical documents in its diplomatic archives and has declassified its postwar diplomatic records since 1976 as a voluntary initiative. The Rules on the Declassification of Diplomatic Records, which were established in May 2010, stipulate: (1) the declassification of diplomatic documents created more than 30 years ago in principle and (2) the establishment of the “Committee for the Promotion of the Declassification of the Diplomatic Records” which is chaired by the State Minister for Foreign Affairs or the Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs as well as attended by external experts, to further promote the declassification of diplomatic records and improve its transparency. The number of files which have been transferred to the Diplomatic Archives and made public since then reached approximately 35,000 by the end of 2020.

Furthermore, MOFA discloses information pursuant to the Act on Access to Information Held by Administrative Organs, while giving considerations to national security, the relationship of mutual trust with other countries, the impact on diplomatic negotiations and the protection of personal information. In 2020, MOFA received 781 requests for disclosure, and documents totaling 42,914 pages were disclosed.

2 Strengthening the Foreign Policy Implementation Structure

The security environment surrounding Japan has become even more severe, and changes in the power balance of the international community accelerate and become more complex. Amid such a situation, and also amid the spread of COVID-19, MOFA must enhance its foreign policy implementation structure while looking ahead to the

Column

Executive Chefs for Ambassadors/Consuls-General of Japan:
At the Forefront of Diplomacy

Executive Chefs for ambassadors/consuls-general of Japan are licensed cooks or persons with a considerable experience working as chefs, who have been recognized by the Minister for Foreign Affairs to engage in official catering work at official residences and other venues for the head of a diplomatic mission overseas (ambassador/consul-general). Diplomatic missions overseas are the center for diplomatic activities such as negotiations with governments, information gathering, and the development of personal networks. One of the most effective means of diplomacy is to create opportunities for meals at the official residence of the ambassador/consul-general, with guests such as influential politicians, businessmen and government officials from the country of assignment, as well as the diplomatic corps from various countries. For this reason, the head of the diplomatic mission is usually accompanied by the Executive Chef for the ambassador/consul-general, an exclusively appointed chef whose aim is to provide high-quality meals.

Unfamiliar ingredients and Japanese cuisine: Activities during the COVID-19 pandemic

Shingu Takeo, Executive Chef for the Consul-General of Japan in Rio de Janeiro

After serving as the Executive Chef for the Consul-General of Japan in Milano, I started working as the Executive Chef of Mr. Otsuru, Consul-General in Rio de Janeiro, from November 2019. Before working as an Executive Chef, I visited 13 countries around the world and actively tried out various ingredients from all parts of the world. As I discovered new ingredients, I aspired to become an Executive Chef and I wanted to convey the wonderful qualities of Japanese cuisine by using local ingredients.

To serve up delicious Japanese cuisine, it is important to ensure that the ingredients are fresh. In this hot country where it is possible to swim in the sea even in winter, I was worried that I might not be able to obtain seafood that can be used to make sashimi and sushi. However, fresh seafood is surprisingly available in abundance. Furthermore, Japanese immigrants came to Brazil in 1908, and they have since created the world's largest Nikkei (Japanese immigrants and their descendants) community of about 2 million people here. Through their efforts, many Japanese vegetables and fruits are now produced in Brazil. Hence, it is possible to buy vegetables such as cucumbers and Japanese white radish at supermarkets and open-air markets, and the Japanese names of some ingredients have even been introduced into Portuguese, the official language of Brazil (for example, shiitake mushrooms (*shitake*), shimeji mushrooms (*shimeji*), Chinese leeks (*nirá*), and persimmon (*caqui*)).

By contrast, I incorporate unique Brazilian ingredients into my Japanese cuisine. For example, the plant known as *jambu* has a flower that is numbing like the Japanese pepper, so it can be boiled or sprinkled over spicy dish of "mapo tofu." Its leaf is delicious when boiled in soy sauce and served as *tsukudani*. *Cará* is an ingredient similar to yam, and it is very useful as a binding agent. Fish from the trout family in the Amazon region are fatty and go well with rice when served with grated Japanese white radish, soy sauce, and lemon. *Açaí* and *acerola* are well known even in Japan, but the local *açaí* tastes completely different from the *açaí* available in Japan. Freshly picked *açaí* has a



At the reception for celebrating the birthday of His Majesty the Emperor



Steamed dish (Seafood *chawanmushi*)



Publishing videos on Japanese cuisine on Instagram

raw, grassy smell and a mushy texture. However, adding a little sugar gives it a refreshing taste and makes it surprisingly delicious.

There are three dishes on my menu that I would definitely like guests to enjoy. The first is the roasted or grilled dish. For this, I serve up beef that has been cooked at a low temperature for two hours, with a passionfruit sauce. For the steamed dish, I serve up seafood and bamboo shoots in Japanese steamed egg custard (*chawanmushi*), covered in a prawn-based sauce stewed for two days. For the fried dish, I present fresh prawn tempura with powdered green tea (*matcha*) and salt. These are three dishes that I always serve guests attending a meal for the first time, and I am glad that they have been well received by all the guests.

Unfortunately, due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, there was a period from April 2020 when we could not host any meals. During this period, I published videos through the Consul-General's official Instagram account, introducing recipes for Japanese cuisine made with local ingredients that can also be prepared at home by the general public in Brazil. The recipe video for tempura was especially popular. Viewers were also interested to find out that the word tempura, a representative dish in Japanese cuisine, comes from the Portuguese word *tempero* (meaning "seasoning"). Since around August 2020, we have been able to host meals again for small groups with adequate measures against COVID-19 in place.

As there are still many ingredients in Brazil that I do not know about, I will continue to learn diligently, in order to incorporate such ingredients into the making of delicious Japanese cuisine.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs accepts applications at any time from candidates who wish to serve in diplomacy as Executive Chefs for ambassadors/consuls-general of Japan. If you are interested, please inquire through the following website or the QR code.
[International Hospitality and Conference Service Association.

<http://www.ihcsa.or.jp/zaigaikoukan/cook-1/>]



You can also read more about the activities of Executive Chefs for ambassadors/consuls-general of Japan through the "MOFA Japan Chef" social media accounts (Facebook and Twitter).

Facebook:
<https://www.facebook.com/MofaJapanChef>

Twitter:
https://twitter.com/mofa_japan_chef



(only in the Japanese language)

post-COVID-19 world, in order to pursue flexible diplomacy and promote diplomacy that ensures the safety and security of Japanese nationals. To that end, MOFA is strengthening both the quantity and quality of its diplomatic missions overseas, and reinforcing the organizational and personnel structures at its headquarters.

Diplomatic missions overseas, such as embassies and consulates-general, not only represent Japan and promote diplomatic agenda, but also play a key role in areas such as information-gathering and strategic communication at the frontline of diplomacy. At the same time, overseas missions also carry out operations directly related to enhancing the interests of Japanese nationals, such as protecting their lives and safety, providing support for Japanese companies, promoting investment and tourism, and securing energy and other resources.

In January 2021, Japan established a new embassy in Haiti and a new consulate-general in Cebu in the Philippines. As a result, the number of diplomatic missions overseas as of FY2020 is 229 (153 embassies, 66 consulates general and 10 permanent missions).

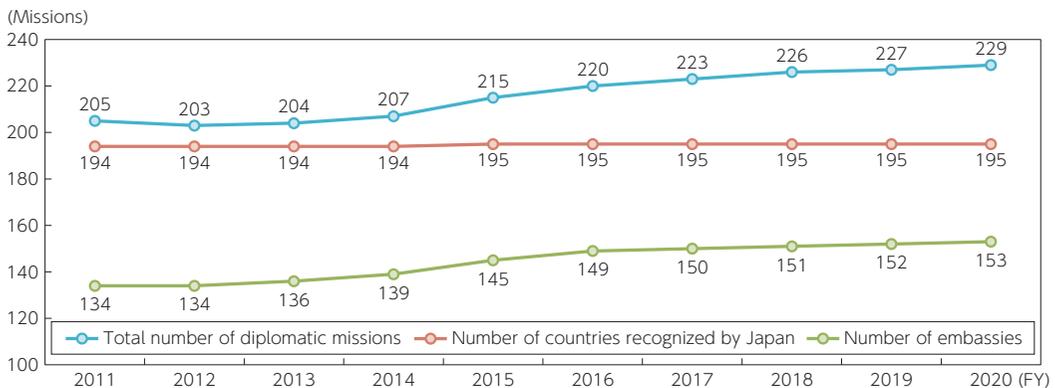
While Haiti has the largest population in the Caribbean Community, it is also the poorest country in Latin America and the Caribbean, and interest from the international community over the country remains high amidst its frequently-occurring natural disasters. Haiti is also traditionally

one of the friendliest countries to Japan that has supported many of Japan's positions in the international arena. Cebu is the second-largest metropolitan area in the Philippines after Manila. In recent years, there has been a significant increase in the number of Japanese companies and travelers, such as tourists and language students in Cebu and the Visayas region at large. By establishing the embassy in Haiti and consulate-general in Cebu, Japan will not only build a higher level of bilateral relations with the both countries, it will also strengthen its capacity to protect Japanese nationals, support Japanese companies and cooperate in the international arena.

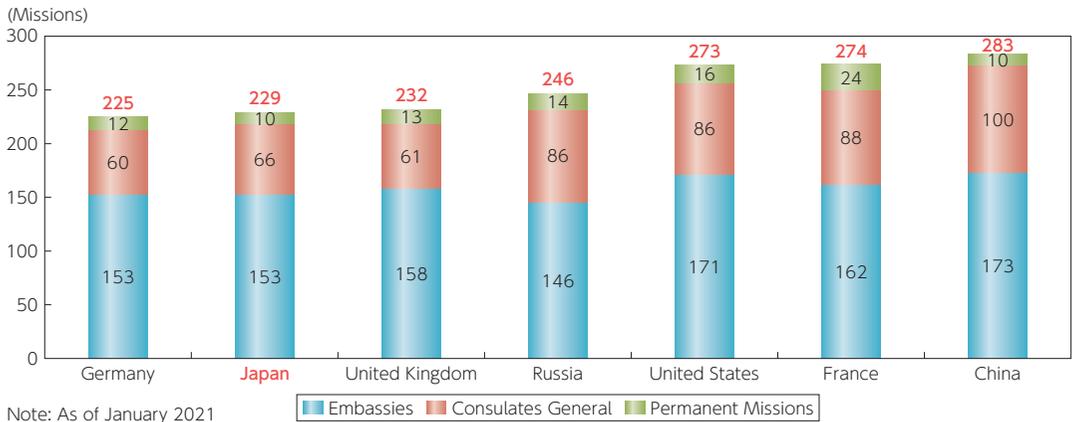
In FY2021, Japan will establish a new consulate-general in Da Nang in Viet Nam. Da Nang is achieving remarkable economic growth, and the numbers of Japanese companies in operation and Japanese nationals living there are both increasing. Additionally, Da Nang occupies an important position on the security front facing the South China Sea. Since it is situated at the starting point of the East-West Economic Corridor, Da Nang is recognized as one of important strategic locations toward promoting "Free and Open Indo-Pacific" (FOIP). It is essential for Japan to deepen its relations with the Da Nang region in a multi-layered manner by establishing a basis for information gathering on security and economic affairs in the area.

In addition to establishing more diplomatic missions overseas, it is important to secure and

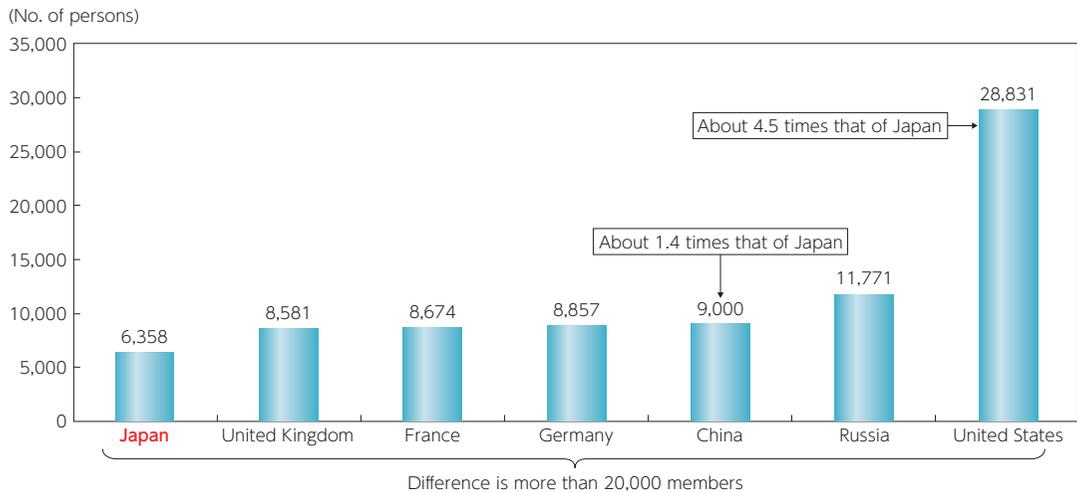
Changes in the Number of Diplomatic Missions



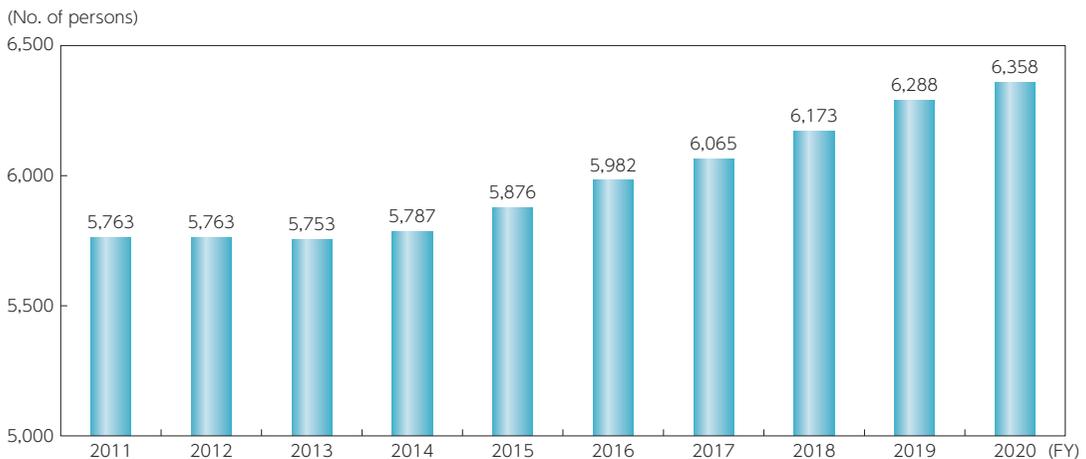
Comparison of the Number of Diplomatic Missions of Japan with Major Countries



Comparison of the Number of Staff Members at Ministries of Foreign Affairs in Major Countries



Number of Staff Members at MOFA



increase the number of staff members to support diplomacy at the MOFA headquarters and diplomatic missions overseas. In the context of the Government's policy to reduce the overall personnel expenses due to the current severe budget situation, the number of staff members at MOFA was increased to 6,358 (6,288 in 2019) in order to advance Japan's "Proactive Contribution to Peace" policy, implement protection and safety measures for Japanese nationals abroad, strengthen information-gathering and analysis capabilities, further vitalize the Japanese economy including the promotion of infrastructure exports, advance strategic communications, and address bilateral relations and regional situations. The number of staff members, however, remains insufficient in comparison with other major countries. MOFA continues its efforts to build a structure that is commensurate with Japan's national power and diplomatic policy. In the meantime, based on the belief that enhancing the foreign policy implementation structure remains essential in FY2021, MOFA will increase its workforce by 72 staff.

Furthermore, MOFA appropriated a budget of 712.0 billion yen in the budget for FY2020 (an increase of 18.6 billion yen from FY2019) in order to realize FOIP and fortify the structure for strengthening the international order based on the rule of law. As for MOFA's FY2020 supplementary budgets, it appropriated a budget of 102.8 billion yen in the first supplementary budget, 2.1 billion yen in the second supplementary budget, and 134.9 billion yen in the third supplementary budget. The funding appropriated in the first supplementary budget was chiefly for supporting the halting and prevention of the spread of COVID-19 in developing countries in Asia, Oceania, the Middle East, Africa, Central and South America and other regions in order to mitigate the impact of COVID-19, and for supporting Japanese companies overseas. Similarly, in the third supplementary budget, MOFA appropriated funding for halting the global spread of COVID-19 and supporting people being affected by the impact of that.

MOFA's FY2021 initial government budget proposal appropriated 709.7 billion yen (of which a digital-related budget of 13.8 billion yen is appropriated under the Cabinet Secretariat budget) based on the following priorities: (1) overcoming COVID-19, which poses a threat to human security, while also moving forward with initiatives that look ahead to the post-COVID-19 world; (2) promoting "diplomacy with a sense of caring" in order to preserve the safety of Japan and its nationals; and (3) promoting "diplomacy with robustness" in order to further advance collaboration and cooperation with the international community. Within that, in order to bolster support for developing countries in the healthcare and medical fields, the budget for providing assistance bilaterally and through international organizations has been enhanced. Additionally, partly based on experiences under the spread of COVID-19, the budget for evacuating Japanese nationals in emergency situations, the budget for charter flights for the Foreign Minister and related budgets have been enhanced and appropriated as budgets deemed necessary for bolstering the protection of Japanese nationals overseas, including in responding to emergency situations, and for the continuous implementation of diplomatic and consular duties. In addition, MOFA also appropriated funding for hosting conferences and meetings to strengthen cooperation with allies and like-minded countries, creating new rules to be effective in space and cyberspace, and other matters.

In order to promote Japan's national interests, Japan will continue to proceed strategically to develop the foreign policy implementation structure and enhance it further, while making efforts to streamline operations.

3 Role of Experts in Diplomacy

In shaping the future international order in the drastically changing world, it is becoming more apparent that free discussions on foreign policies among experts from the private sector, apart from the official view of each country, have an impact

on the international public opinion as well as policy making of the governments.

Some examples may include: the World Economic Forum (Davos Forum), which has a major influence on the trade policies of each country; the Shangri-La Dialogue, which provides prominent experts and ministers of the world with an opportunity to discuss Asian security issues; the Munich Security Conference, which is a forum for a broad-ranging discussion of regional and global security issues, not limited to Europe alone; and the Manama Dialogue, which deals with the security issues in the Middle East. In major countries, there is an ever-increasing importance of developing think tanks and human resources capable of participating in such discussions, as well as making use of experts such as university professors.

In order to strengthen Japan's diplomacy in the mid- to long-term, the expansion of Japan's intellectual base in the areas of foreign policy and security, and promotion of diplomacy involving a wide range of public views are inevitable. With this view, MOFA provides subsidies to support Japanese think tanks' activities in those areas in order to strengthen their abilities on collection,

analysis and dissemination of information as well as on making policy proposals. In addition, MOFA launched a new subsidy scheme in FY2017 that aims at supporting research and information dissemination of Japanese think tank in the areas of territory, sovereignty and history. Under the scheme, the Japan Institute of International Affairs (JIIA)¹ conducts such activities as collection, organization and public release of materials found in Japan and overseas as well as convention of open symposiums in Japan and in other countries. As a part of the outcome, JIIA released a video at the National Museum of Territory and Sovereignty that enables the audience to experience the view of an albatross flying over the Senkaku Islands and learn about the history and the nature of the Islands. Furthermore, some articles such as on aeronautical charts created by the U.S. government that referred to Takeshima as the Japanese territory were released. It is expected that the scheme will support Japanese think tank in accumulating historical records and knowledge pertaining to Japan's territory, sovereignty and history, and enhancing their information dissemination domestically and abroad.

¹ The relevant section of the Japan Institute of International Affairs' website can be found here: <https://www.jiia-jic.jp/en/>



References

The Issue of Comfort Women

364

**The Issue of Former Civilian Workers from the Korean Peninsula
(CWKs)**

367

The Issue of Comfort Women

Announcement by Foreign Ministers of Japan and the Republic of Korea at the Joint Press Occasion



December 28, 2015

(Scan here for publications on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs website)

1. Foreign Minister Kishida

The Government of Japan and the Government of the Republic of Korea (ROK) have intensively discussed the issue of comfort women between Japan and the ROK at bilateral meetings including the Director-General consultations. Based on the result of such discussions, I, on behalf of the Government of Japan, state the following:

(1) The issue of comfort women, with an involvement of the Japanese military authorities at that time, was a grave affront to the honor and dignity of large numbers of women, and the Government of Japan is painfully aware of responsibilities from this perspective. As Prime Minister of Japan, Prime Minister Abe expresses anew his most sincere apologies and remorse to all the women who underwent immeasurable and painful experiences and suffered incurable physical and psychological wounds as comfort women.

(2) The Government of Japan has been sincerely dealing with this issue. Building on such experience, the Government of Japan will now take measures to heal psychological wounds of all former comfort women through its budget. To be more specific, it has been decided that the Government of the ROK establish a foundation for the purpose of providing support for the former comfort women, that its funds be contributed by the Government of Japan as a one-time contribution through its budget, and that projects for recovering the honor and dignity and healing the psychological wounds of all former comfort women be carried out under the cooperation between the Government of Japan and the Government of the ROK.

(3) While stating the above, the Government of

Japan confirms that this issue is resolved finally and irreversibly with this announcement, on the premise that the Government will steadily implement the measures specified in (2) above. In addition, together with the Government of the ROK, the Government of Japan will refrain from accusing or criticizing each other regarding this issue in the international community, including at the United Nations.

2. Foreign Minister Yun

The Government of the Republic of Korea (ROK) and the Government of Japan have intensively discussed the issue of comfort women between the ROK and Japan at bilateral meetings including the Director-General consultations. Based on the result of such discussions, I, on behalf of the Government of the ROK, state the following:

(1) The Government of the ROK values the GOJ's announcement and efforts made by the Government of Japan in the lead-up to the issuance of the announcement and confirms, together with the GOJ, that the issue is resolved finally and irreversibly with this announcement, on the premise that the Government of Japan will steadily implement the measures specified in 1. (2) above. The Government of the ROK will cooperate in the implementation of the Government of Japan's measures.

(2) The Government of the ROK acknowledges the fact that the Government of Japan is concerned about the statue built in front of the Embassy of Japan in Seoul from the viewpoint of preventing any disturbance of the peace of the mission or impairment of its dignity, and will strive to solve this issue in an appropriate manner

through taking measures such as consulting with related organizations about possible ways of addressing this issue.

(3) The Government of the ROK, together with the Government of Japan, will refrain from

accusing or criticizing each other regarding this issue in the international community, including at the United Nations, on the premise that the Government of Japan will steadily implement the measures it announced.

Regarding the Confirmation of the Judgment of the Seoul Central District Court of the Republic of Korea in the Lawsuit Filed by Former Comfort Women and Others
(Statement by Foreign Minister MOTEGI Toshimitsu)



(Scan here for publications on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs website)

January 23, 2021

1. In the lawsuit filed by former comfort women and others against the Government of Japan on January 8, 2021, the Seoul Central District Court of the Republic of Korea rendered a judgment which ordered the Government of Japan, *inter alia*, to pay compensation to the plaintiffs, denying the application of the principle of State immunity under international law. On January 23, 2021, this judgment was confirmed.
2. Under international law, a state is, in principle, not to be subject to the jurisdiction of other states, as each state has sovereignty and states exist on an equal basis with each other. Japan has repeatedly expressed its position that this lawsuit therefore must be dismissed because it is not acceptable for the Government of Japan to be subject to the jurisdiction of the Republic of Korea in accordance with this principle of State immunity in international law. The fact that the Seoul Central District Court of the Republic of Korea recently rendered the judgment denying the application of the principle of State immunity is clearly contrary to the international law which was also articulated in the judgment of the International Court of Justice.
3. The Agreement on the Settlement of Problem concerning Property and Claims and on the Economic Co-operation between Japan and the Republic of Korea of 1965 stipulated that the issue concerning property and claims between Japan and the Republic of Korea, including the

issue of comfort women, was “settled completely and finally” and no contention shall be made (Article II). As such, this Agreement has provided the basis for the bilateral relationship up until now.

4. In addition, it is confirmed that the issue of comfort women was “resolved finally and irreversibly” with the agreement reached at the Japan-ROK Foreign Ministers’ Meeting in December 2015. The Government of Japan has implemented all measures it committed to under this agreement. The Government of the Republic of Korea also acknowledges that this agreement is an official agreement between the two governments and the international community has been closely following the implementation of the agreement by the Government of the Republic of Korea.
5. This judgment is extremely regrettable and absolutely unacceptable, as it is clearly contrary to international law and agreements between the two countries.
6. Japan once again strongly urges the Republic of Korea to immediately take appropriate measures to remedy the status of its breaches of international law on its own responsibility as a country.

(Reference 1) Agreement on the Settlement of Problem Concerning Property and Claims and on the Economic Co-operation between Japan and the Republic of Korea (entered into force on

December 18, 1965)

Article II

1. The Contracting Parties confirm that problem concerning property, rights and interests of the two Contracting Parties and their nationals (including juridical persons) and concerning claims between the Contracting Parties and their nationals, including those provided for in Article IV, paragraph (a) of the Treaty of Peace with Japan signed at the city of San Francisco on September 8, 1951, is settled completely and finally.

...

3. Subject to the provisions of paragraph 2, no contention shall be made with respect to the measures on property, rights and interests of either Contracting Party and its nationals which are within the jurisdiction of the other Contracting Party on the date of the signing of the present Agreement, or with respect to any claims of either Contracting Party and its

nationals against the other Contracting Party and its nationals arising from the causes which occurred on or before the said date.

(Reference 2) Announcement by Foreign Ministers of Japan and the Republic of Korea at the Joint Press Occasion

https://www.mofa.go.jp/a_o/na/kr/page4e_000364.html



(Reference 3) Japan's Efforts on the Issue of Comfort Women (PDF)

<https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/files/100104783.pdf>



Please see the Ministry of Foreign Affairs website for other related documents.

https://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/postwar/page22e_000883.html



The Issue of Former Civilian Workers from the Korean Peninsula (CWKs)

Failure of the Republic of Korea to comply with obligations regarding arbitration under the Agreement on the Settlement of Problem concerning Property and Claims and on Economic Co-operation between Japan and the Republic of Korea (Statement by Foreign Minister Taro Kono)



(Scan here for publications on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs website)

July 19, 2019

1. Japan and the Republic of Korea have built a close, friendly and cooperative relationship based on the Treaty on Basic Relations between Japan and the Republic of Korea and other relevant agreements that the two countries concluded when they normalized their relationship in 1965. The Agreement on the Settlement of Problem concerning Property and Claims and on Economic Co-operation between Japan and the Republic of Korea (the “Agreement”), which is the core of these agreements, stipulates that Japan shall supply to the Republic of Korea 300 million USD in grants and extend loans up to 200 million USD (Article I), and that problem concerning property, rights and interests of the two Contracting Parties and their nationals (including juridical persons), as well as concerning claims between the Contracting Parties and their nationals, are “settled completely and finally,” and no contention shall be made thereof (Article II). As such, the Agreement has provided the basis for the bilateral relationship up until now.

2. In spite of the above, a series of judgments of the Supreme Court of the Republic of Korea last year ordered respondent Japanese companies, *inter alia*, to pay compensation to the plaintiffs. These decisions are extremely regrettable and totally unacceptable. The decisions clearly violate Article II of the Agreement and inflict unjustifiable damage and costs on the said Japanese companies. Above all, the decisions completely overthrow the legal foundation of the friendly and cooperative relationship that

Japan and the Republic of Korea have developed since the normalization of diplomatic relations in 1965.

3. Japan has long placed an emphasis on the rule of law in the international community. Consistent with its strong belief in the importance for States, irrespective of domestic circumstances, to abide by their commitments under international law, the Government of Japan, on 9 January 2019, requested diplomatic consultations with the Government of the Republic of Korea under the Agreement. This was the initial step to settle the issue of breaches of international law by the Republic of Korea due to the judgments of the Supreme Court of the Republic of Korea rendered last year, as well as related judgments and proceedings.
4. However, the Government of the Republic of Korea failed to respond to the request for diplomatic consultations, taking no action as the Korean claimants took steps to attach assets of the respondent Japanese companies in satisfaction of the judgments of the Korean Supreme Court. Given that failure by the Government of the Republic of Korea, the Government of Japan transmitted a Notification and Statement of Claim to the Republic of Korea on 20 May 2019 (“Notification”). By this Notification, the Government of Japan invoked the arbitration clause in the Agreement, referring the dispute to arbitration in accordance with Article III.2 of the Agreement; and Japan has proceeded with the arbitration process up to the present. The Government of the Republic of Korea, however,

did not follow the procedures set forth in Article III of the Agreement and failed to comply with its obligation not only to appoint an arbitrator, but also to choose a third country, the government of which is to appoint an arbitrator for the Contracting Party, within the period provided for in the Agreement.

5. Japan deeply regrets that, as a consequence, an arbitration board under the Agreement referred to on 20 May could not be constituted.
6. The repeated failures of the Republic of Korea to take the steps toward the constitution of the arbitration board, which is the agreed dispute settlement procedure provided under the Agreement, constitute further breaches of the Agreement, in addition to the breaches already caused by the series of judgments of the Supreme Court of the Republic of Korea last year, as well as related judgments and proceedings.
7. Given the severe situation surrounding the Japan-Republic of Korea relationship caused by the Republic of Korea side, including the aforementioned, the Government of Japan will be taking necessary measures against the Republic of Korea.
8. The settlement of this dispute requires the Republic of Korea to remedy its accumulated breaches of international law. Japan renews its request for the Republic of Korea to take concrete actions for that purpose immediately.

(Reference 1) Agreement on the Settlement of Problem Concerning Property and Claim on the Economic Co-operation between Japan and the Republic of Korea (entered into force on December 18, 1965)

Article II

1 The Contracting Parties confirm that problem concerning property, rights, and interests of the two Contracting Parties and their nationals (including juridical persons) and concerning claims between the Contracting Parties and their nationals, including those provided for in

Article IV, paragraph (a) of the Treaty of Peace with Japan signed at the city of San Francisco on September 8, 1951, is settled completely and finally.

. . .

- 3 Subject to the provisions of paragraph 2 above, no contention shall be made with respect to the measures on property, rights and interests of either Contracting Party and its nationals which are within the jurisdiction of the other Contracting Party on the date of the signing of the present Agreement, or with respect to any claims of either Contracting Party and its nationals against the other Contracting Party and its nationals arising from the causes which occurred on or before the said date.

Article III

- 1 Any dispute between the Contracting Parties concerning the interpretation and implementation of the present Agreement shall be settled, first of all, through diplomatic channels.
- 2 Any dispute which fails to be settled under the provision of paragraph 1 shall be referred for decision to an arbitration board composed of three arbitrators, one to be appointed by the Government of each Contracting Party within a period of thirty days from the date of receipt by the Government of either Contracting Party from the Government of the other of a note requesting arbitration of the dispute, and the third arbitrator to be agreed upon by the two arbitrators so chosen within a further period of thirty days or the third arbitrator to be appointed by the government of a third country agreed upon within such further period by the two arbitrators, provided that the third arbitrator shall not be a national of either Contracting Party.
- 3 If, within the periods respectively referred to, the Government of either Contracting Party fails to appoint an arbitrator, or the third arbitrator or a third country is not agreed upon, the arbitration board shall be composed of the two arbitrators to be designated by each of the governments of the two countries respectively chosen by the

Governments of the Contracting Parties within a period of thirty days and the third arbitrator to be designated by the government of a third country to be determined upon consultation between the governments so chosen.

4 The Governments of the Contracting Parties shall abide by any award made by the arbitration board under the provisions of the present Article.

(Reference 2) Background and Position of the Government of Japan Concerning the issue of former civilian workers from the Korean Peninsula (FACT SHEET)

English (PDF)

<https://www.mofa.go.jp/files/000499948.pdf>

Japanese (PDF)

<https://www.mofa.go.jp/files/000499946.pdf>



Please see the Ministry of Foreign Affairs website for other related documents.

https://www.mofa.go.jp/a_o/na/kr/page4e_000947.html

