DIPLOMATIC BLUEBOOK 2026



Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan

Diplomatic Bluebook 2026

Japanese Diplomacy and
International Situation in 2025

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan

Preface to the Diplomatic Bluebook 2026

The world is facing a historic period of great transformation, marked by the intensification of geopolitical competition, the instability of the international order, the rise of the Global South, and the accelerating pace of technological innovation, including artificial intelligence (AI). The security environment surrounding Japan has become as severe and complex as it has ever been since the end of World War II, and the international environment surrounding Japanese diplomacy has grown unprecedentedly challenging. At the same time, even amid these circumstances, I recognize that the expectations of the international community toward Japan are greater than ever before.

In order to protect our national interests and to meet the expectations of the international community, Japan intends to develop a "diplomacy that has inclusiveness and strength leading multifaceted and multilayered cooperation" that is responsive to changes in the international situation.

Specifically, Japan will uphold and clearly assert principles such as the rule of law, freedom, democracy, and the peaceful settlement of disputes, thereby contributing to the maintenance and strengthening of the international order. Japan will also lead the coordination among like-minded countries such as Japan-Australia-India-U.S. (Quad), as well as multilateral frameworks such as the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) in the area of trade. Through these efforts, Japan will advance a distinctively Japanese diplomacy that enhances its presence in the international community.

In addition to taking a broad and comprehensive view of developments across all regions, Japan is determined to squarely address the widening scope of diplomatic engagement — including economic security, energy and food security, the climate change issue, and global health — and to lead international cooperation in each of these areas.

To this end, Japan will first further deepen the Japan-U.S. Alliance and further strengthen its deterrence and response capabilities. Furthermore, Japan will leverage the various frameworks it has built to date to strengthen the network of cooperation with like-minded countries.

The year 2026 marks the 10th anniversary of Japan's advocacy of a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)." Over this period, the international landscape has changed dramatically — with the growing importance of economic security, the multiplication of complex challenges to economic growth, and the increasingly prominent challenges to the existing international order. Taking these developments into account, Japan will continue to uphold FOIP as a pillar of its diplomacy and will strategically update it in line with the changes of the times. Toward its realization, Japan will also cooperate closely and attentively with developing and emerging countries, known as the Global South.

Furthermore, while promoting multifaceted economic diplomacy, Japan will also strengthen its efforts in the area of economic security, including enhancing supply chain resilience for critical minerals.

This Diplomatic Bluebook presents a wide range of Japan's diplomatic efforts based on these perspectives. I hope that this Diplomatic Bluebook will serve as a valuable source for readers both at home and abroad in deepening their understanding of Japanese diplomacy.



Minister for Foreign Affairs

MOTEGI Toshimitsu

In principle, Diplomatic Bluebook 2026 describes an overview of the international affairs and Japan's diplomatic activities from January 1 to December 31 of 2025; however, some important events that occurred until early 2026 are also included.

Chapters 1 to 4 offer overviews of Japan's diplomatic activities throughout 2025 in a concise and easy-to-understand manner, and also include special features delving into specific foreign policy themes and column articles, including contributions from 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 2026 in French and Spanish are also due to be available on the website by autumn 2026.

For more details with respect to Chapter 3, Section 2, "Japan's International Cooperation," please refer to MOFA's publication, *White Paper on Development Cooperation - Japan's International Cooperation*. It is 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 time of the events. Website links and 2D codes in this book are those as of publication and may be changed or deleted later. 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 or accurately reflect other details such as borderlines.

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

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

Contents

Opening Special Feature

"Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan" Diplomacy
— 184 Days of the World Gathering in Osaka to Co-Create the Future — ····· 002

Opening Special Feature

TICAD 9 Co-create Innovative Solutions with Africa ····· 008

Chapter 1 Overview of the International Situation and Outlook for Japan's Diplomacy

1 Overview of the International Situation ····· 012
2 Outlook for Japan's Diplomacy ····· 015

Chapter 2 Japan's Foreign Policy by Region

Section 1 Promotion of a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)" Based on the Rule of Law ··· 024
1 Overview ····· 024
2 Collaboration and Cooperation with Other Countries ····· 025

Section 2 Asia and Oceania ····· 030
1 Overview ····· 030
2 China / Mongolia, etc. ····· 035
Column Visit to Mongolia by Their Majesties the Emperor and Empress of Japan ····· 051
3 Korean Peninsula ····· 052
Special Feature Efforts to Address North Korea's Cyber-Related Threats ····· 055
Column The 60th Anniversary of the Normalization of Diplomatic Relations between Japan and the Republic of Korea (ROK) ····· 069
4 Southeast Asia ····· 070
Column Timor-Leste and the Future of ASEAN ····· 077
Column The 70th Anniversary of the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between Japan and Laos ··· 078
5 South Asia ····· 079
Column Visit to Japan by Prime Minister Modi of India
— Building Relations through a Regional Visit — ····· 080
6 Oceania ····· 083
Column Establishment of Diplomatic Relations: 50th Anniversary with Papua New Guinea, 10th Anniversary with Niue ····· 091
7 Regional and Inter-Regional Cooperation ····· 092
Column Working Together with Southeast Asian Countries to Strengthen Disaster Resilience
Building a Resilient Region through Cooperation with the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management (AHA Centre) ····· 100

Section 3 North America ····· 102
1 Overview ····· 102

2 The United States ··· 103
Column "The Roots of Japanese Baseball" — Horace Wilson — ··· 116
3 Canada ··· 117

Section 4 Latin America and the Caribbean ··· 122
1 Overview ··· 122
2 Regional Organizations ··· 123
3 LAC Countries ··· 124
Column Japan-SICA Friendship Year 2025 — Partners Across the Pacific Ocean — ··· 132
Column Japan-Brazil Friendship Exchange Year (the 130th Anniversary of the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between Japan and Brazil) ··· 133

Section 5 Europe ··· 134
1 Overview ··· 134
2 Regional Situations in Europe ··· 136
3 Collaboration with Regional Institutions ··· 145
Column The First Conclave in 12 Years and the Inauguration of Pope Leo XIV ··· 153

Section 6 Russia and Belarus, Central Asia and the Caucasus ··· 154
1 Overview ··· 154
2 Russia and Belarus ··· 155
3 Central Asian and Caucasus countries ··· 160
Column Summit of the "Central Asia plus Japan" Dialogue ··· 165

Section 7 The Middle East and North Africa ··· 166
1 Overview ··· 166
2 Situation in the Middle East ··· 167
Special Feature Fourth Ministerial Meeting of the Conference on Cooperation among East Asian Countries for Palestinian Development (CEAPAD) ··· 169
Column 70 Years of Bonds, a Future Woven at the Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan — The 70th Anniversary of the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between Japan and Saudi Arabia — ··· 179
3 The Situation in North Africa ··· 180
Column Grand Opening of the Grand Egyptian Museum ··· 183

Section 8 Africa ··· 184
1 Overview ··· 184
2 African Union (AU) ··· 185
3 East Africa ··· 186
4 Southern Africa ··· 189
5 Central Africa ··· 192
6 West Africa ··· 193
Column Celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between Japan and Cabo Verde ··· 198

Contents

Chapter 3 Japan's Foreign Policy to Promote National and Global Interests

Section 1 Efforts for Peace and Stability of Japan and the International Community ····· 200

1 National Security Initiatives ····· 200

2 Japan-U.S. Security Arrangements ····· 202

Column Japan-U.S. Exchange Student Ambassadors ····· 206

Column Thirty Years of "Yokosuka Community Patrol" ····· 207

3 Global Security ····· 208

Regional Security (p.208), Cyber (p.213), Maintaining and Developing the International Maritime Order (p.214), Outer Space (p.219), Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding (p.222), Initiatives to Combat Security Threats (p.225)

Column Peacebuilding on the Ground through Governance and Electoral Assistance — The Gambia — ····· 226

4 Disarmament and Nonproliferation and the Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy ····· 230

Special Feature "80 Years since the Atomic Bombings: Testimonies to the World" Program ····· 235

Special Feature Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) Japan-Hosted Exercise "Pacific Shield 25" ····· 239

5 Japan's Efforts at the United Nations ····· 248

Special Feature United Nations 80th Anniversary ····· 249

6 The Rule of Law in the International Community ····· 253

7 Human Rights ····· 258

Special Feature Progress in Initiatives on "Business and Human Rights" and Revision of the National Action Plan ····· 261

Column The Contemporary Significance of the Work of the Committee against Torture — On the Occasion of Re-election as a Committee Member — ····· 262

8 Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment ····· 263

Special Feature Initiatives for the 25th Anniversary of Women, Peace and Security (WPS) ····· 267

Section 2 Japan's International Cooperation (Development Cooperation and Response to Global Issues) ····· 268

1 Development Cooperation ····· 268

Development Cooperation Charter and Japan's ODA Allocation (p.268), Development Cooperation in 2025 (p.269), Initiatives in Major Regions (p.271), Approaches to Appropriate and Effective Implementation of ODA (p.277)

Special Feature ODA Evaluation Workshop — A Quarter Century of Elevating the Quality of International Cooperation together with Recipients — ····· 279

2 Response to Global Issues ····· 280

2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (p.280), Global Health (p.282), Labor and Employment (p.283), Environmental Issues and Climate Change (p.283), Arctic and Antarctic (p.288)

Special Feature Japan's SDGs Progress Report: Voluntary National Review (VNR) 2025 ····· 290

3 Science and Technology Diplomacy ····· 291

Column Strategic Strengthening of Science and Technology Diplomacy Centered on International Brain Circulation ····· 293

Section 3 Economic Diplomacy ····· **294**

1 Overview of Economic Diplomacy ····· **294**

2 Revitalizing the Economy through Support for the Overseas Expansion of Japanese Companies and Inbound Demand and Investment ····· **295**

Promotion of Japanese Companies' Overseas Business Expansion by MOFA and Diplomatic Missions Overseas (p.295), Promotion of the Japanese Infrastructure System in Overseas Business Expansion (p.296), Promotion of the Export of Japanese Agricultural, Forestry and Fishery Products and Food (Including Efforts toward the Removal of Import Restrictions on Japanese Food Products after the Great East Japan Earthquake) (p.296), Foreign Direct Investment in Japan (p.297), Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan and International Horticultural Expo 2027, Yokohama, Japan (GREEN×EXPO 2027) (p.298)

Column Support for Japanese Companies through Diplomatic Missions Overseas ····· **299**

3 Maintaining and Strengthening a Rules-Based, Free and Fair International Economic Order ··· **300**

Promotion of Economic Partnerships (p.300), International Organizations (p.306), G7 (p.308), G20 (p.310), Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) (p.311), Intellectual Property Protection (p.311)

4 Economic Security ····· **312**

Economic Security (p.312), Securing a Stable Supply of Energy at Affordable Prices (p.316), Ensuring Food Security (p.319), Fisheries (Tuna, Whaling, etc.) (p.320)

Special Feature OECD × Southeast Asia — Co-creating a New Future with AI — ····· **322**

Section 4 Efforts to Promote Understanding and Trust in Japan ····· **323**

1 Strategic Communications ····· **323**

General Overview (p.323), Responding to Information Warfare, Including Countering Disinformation (p.324), Information Provision Through the Internet (p.325), Media Coverage of Japan in Other Countries and Regions, and Dissemination to Foreign Media (p.325), JAPAN HOUSE (p.326)

2 Cultural, Sports, and Tourism Diplomacy ····· **326**

Overview (p.326), Cultural Programs (p.327), People-to-People Exchange and Exchange in the Area of Education and Sports (p.329), Exchange in the Intellectual Field (p.331), Promotion of the Japanese Language (p.333), Cooperation through United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (p.334)

Column At the Frontline of Diplomacy: Locally Attuned Communications by Diplomatic Missions Overseas ····· **336**

Column Number One in the World per Capita! The Achievements of the JET Programme in New Zealand ····· **338**

Column Connecting through Culture, Partnership toward the Future — Asia, Africa, and Beyond — ····· **339**

Contents

Chapter 4 Japan's Diplomacy Open to the Public

Section 1 Japanese Society and People Deepening Their Ties with the World ····· 342

1 MOFA's Contribution toward Realizing a Society of Well-Ordered and Harmonious Coexistence with Foreign Nationals ····· 342

2 Japanese Playing an Important Role in the International Community ····· 343

Column Election of ONUMA Toshiyuki as Council President of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) ····· 344

Column Voices of Japanese Staff Who Have Been Supporting Activities of the United Nations Pursuing a United Nations (UN) Career in quest of the Prevention and Peaceful Resolution of Conflicts ··· 345

Column Building the Future through a Circle of Support: 25th Anniversary of the Foundation of Japan Platform ····· 348

Column 60th Anniversary of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) Overseas Cooperation Volunteers ····· 349

3 Cooperation with Local Governments ····· 350

Section 2 Supporting Japanese Nationals Overseas ····· 354

1 Risks and Safety of Japanese Nationals Overseas ····· 354

Special Feature Preparing for Emergencies Abroad!
— MOFA's Efforts to Protect Japanese Nationals and Cooperation with Other Countries — ····· 356

2 Consular Service and Assistance for Japanese Living Overseas ····· 358

3 Cooperation with Emigrants and Japanese Descendants (Nikkei) ····· 362

4 Implementation Status of the Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction (The Hague Convention) ····· 362

Column The Hague Convention: Convention Implementation Centered on the Needs of Parents and Children ····· 364

Section 3 Diplomacy with the Support of the Public ····· 365

1 Proactive Communications to the Public ····· 365

2 Strengthening the Foreign Policy Implementation Structure ····· 369

Column Executive Chef for the Ambassador at the Embassy of Japan in India ····· 373

Column Construction of New Overseas Establishment Facilities in Climates, Natural Features, and Environments Different from Japan ····· 374

Column Imagery Intelligence Analyst — An Intelligence Specialist Viewing the World from Space — ··· 375

3 The Roles of Think Tanks and Experts in Diplomacy ····· 376

References

The Issue of Comfort Women 378

The Issue of Former Civilian Workers from the Korean Peninsula (CWKs) 380

Opening Special Feature

Chapter 1

Opening Special Feature	"Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan" Diplomacy — 184 Days of the World Gathering in Osaka to Co-Create the Future —	002
Opening Special Feature	TICAD 9 Co-create Innovative Solutions with Africa	008
Chapter 1	Overview of the International Situation and Outlook for Japan's Diplomacy	012



Opening Special Feature

“Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan” Diplomacy

— 184 Days of the World Gathering in Osaka to Co-Create the Future —



Photo: Japan Association for the 2025 World Exposition ©Expo 2025

1 Osaka to the World — Designing Future Society for Our Lives



▲Opening ceremony (April 12, Osaka; Photo: Official Website of the Prime Minister's Office of Japan)

Under the theme "Designing Future Society for Our Lives," Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan was held for 184 days, from April 13 to October 13, on Yumeshima in Osaka City, Osaka Prefecture.

Following the Japan World Exposition 1970 (Expo'70) held in Osaka in 1970 and the 2005 World Exposition, Aichi, Japan (Expo 2005) held in Aichi in 2005, Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan was the first "International Registered Exhibition" (formerly known as a "General Exhibition") hosted by Japan in 20 years. With the official participation of 158 countries and regions and seven international organizations,[(1)] it marked the largest number of participants in any international exposition held in Japan, with the number of visitors exceeding 29 million.

People from across the world engaged in dialogue and co-creation and saw their cultures resonate with each other, united in diversity. They co-created the Expo together and brought forth their messages toward the future society for our lives.

	Japan World Exposition Osaka 1970 (1970)	Expo 2005, Aichi, Japan (2005)	Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan (2025)
Period	3/15 – 9/13 (183 days)	3/25 – 9/25 (185 days)	4/13 – 10/13 (184 days)
Theme	"Progress and Harmony for Mankind"	"Nature's Wisdom"	"Designing Future Society for Our Lives"
Total visitors	Approx. 64.22 million	Approx. 22.05 million	Approx. 29.02 million
Participating countries/ regions International organizations	77 countries (including Japan) 4 organizations	121 countries (including Japan) 4 international organizations	158 countries/regions 7 international organizations

(1) Of these, the United Nations (UN) comprises a total of 35 UN entities.

2 Bringing the World to Osaka — Invitation to Participate and Momentum-Building

In the lead-up to Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) engaged proactively in activities to invite the international community to participate in the Expo, playing a significant role in securing a record-high number of Official Participants. Prior to the opening of the Expo, MOFA also actively conducted momentum-building activities at numerous diplomatic missions overseas, making full use of receptions and events.

Furthermore, in connection with exhibitions by developing countries, the Government of Japan provided comprehensive and tailored support to enable these countries to participate in the Expo without difficulty, and to make their exhibits attractive and in keeping with the theme. As a result of providing broad and attentive support covering installation work and operations, accommodation for personnel, and the holding of National Day celebrations, a wide range of countries, including those in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Pacific, were able to fully showcase the appeal of their respective nations through exhibitions and events.

In this way, participation from all parts of the world was realized, and Osaka became, in the truest sense, a stage upon which the world gathered.



▲Reception for Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan at the Embassy of Japan in Austria (March 24, Embassy of Japan in Austria)



▲Exterior view of Commons-A (Osaka; Photo: Japan Association for the 2025 World Exposition ©Expo 2025)

COLUMN

"Japan-Jordan Relations Woven Through Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan and Into the Future"

At the Expo, Jordan, under the pavilion theme "Weaving Possibilities," transported approximately 22 tons of sand from the iconic Wadi Rum desert to Japan to recreate it on site, captivating the hearts of visitors. The Jordan Pavilion, where visitors could take off their shoes and walk on the cool sand, won the Gold Award in the Theme Development category for Module pavilions at the Official Participant Awards. A special bond of friendship also emerged through this shared connection to sand, as a "Sand Alliance" was formed with Tottori Prefecture, which had recreated the Tottori Sand Dunes at the Expo site.

On May 7, Jordan's National Day, His Royal Highness Crown Prince Al Hussein bin Abdullah II visited Japan. Her Imperial Highness Princess Takamado, who has built close ties with the Jordanian Royal Family, welcomed H.R.H. Crown Prince Al Hussein in Osaka, and the deepening of their friendship symbolized the development of Japan-Jordan friendly relations through the Expo. H.R.H. Crown Prince Al Hussein also visited Tokyo, where Their Imperial Highnesses Crown Prince and Crown Princess Akishino, Her Imperial Highness Princess Kako of Akishino, and His Imperial Highness Prince Hisahito of Akishino invited the Crown Prince to dinner at the residence of Prince Akishino. H.R.H. Crown Prince Al Hussein also met with Prime Minister Ishiba and engaged in in-depth discussions on the further development of bilateral relations and on various issues in the Middle East, including the situation in Gaza. Additionally, Ayman Al Safadi, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates, who also visited Japan, held separate meetings with Chief Cabinet Secretary HAYASHI Yoshimasa and Foreign Minister Iwaya.

Japan has built multifaceted relations with Jordan, which continues to play a role as a linchpin for the stability of the Middle East, as a strategic partner and as a good friend. Japan-Jordan diplomatic relations marked their 70th anniversary in 2024. The year 2025 became a year of "Weaving the Future," as Japan and Jordan reaffirmed their bonds through Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan.



▲Jordan Pavilion featuring a recreation of the Wadi Rum desert (Osaka; Photo: Japan Association for the 2025 World Exposition ©Expo 2025)

3 Days of Building Friendship and Trust — National Days and Special Days

Throughout the period of Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan, National Days (for countries and regions) and Special Days (for international organizations) were held on a daily basis with the aim of honoring the participation of countries, regions, and international organizations, deepening understanding of their respective cultures, and contributing to the promotion of international goodwill. In conjunction with the National Days and Special Days, MOFA invited representatives of the participating countries, regions, and international organizations as official guests of the Expo, and played a significant role in hosting the delegations of these guests throughout the day within the Expo site.

State Ministers for Foreign Affairs and Parliamentary Vice-Ministers for Foreign Affairs, along with other senior MOFA officials, attended the official ceremonies and official events (cultural events), luncheons, and dinners on a daily basis, and accompanied visiting delegations on tours of the Japan Pavilion and other countries' pavilions. At the official ceremonies and official events, MOFA deepened exchanges not only with the Official Participants from countries, regions, and international organizations, but also with general visitors. Furthermore, on the National Days of countries and regions, individual pavilions frequently held their own events, and through these occasions, friendship and trust between Japan and people from around the world were nurtured.



▲Viet Nam National Day (September 9, Osaka; Photo: Japan Association for the 2025 World Exposition ©Expo 2025)



▲Tour of the Tanzania Pavilion by Prime Minister Kassim Majaliwa Majaliwa and State Minister for Foreign Affairs FUJII Hisayuki on the occasion of Tanzania's National Day (May 25, Osaka)

4 Tackling Global Challenges — The Expo 2025 and the SDGs

The year 2025 was a pivotal year in which only five years remained until 2030, the target year for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set by the UN, making it an extremely important year for accelerating efforts to realize the SDGs. Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan, held at this milestone moment, served as a platform for confronting global challenges as well.

The Japan Pavilion showcased Japan's world-class technologies and culture to many guests and visitors from both Japan and abroad, under the theme "Between Lives," expressing diverse forms of "circulation."

In addition, at the opening of the SDGs symposium "OSAKA JAPAN SDGs Forum"(2) held within the Expo site, Foreign Minister Iwaya delivered a video message, emphasizing that the Expo is a platform for intellectual exchange and for sharing the knowledge that forms the basis of the SDGs with the international community.



▲The "water basin" in the Japan Pavilion, filled with water reclaimed from waste (Osaka; Photo: Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry)

(2) OSAKA JAPAN SDGs Forum: Until 2024, this forum was held under the name "SDGs National Forum." In 2025, it was hosted by Osaka Prefecture in conjunction with Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan. Its objectives are to address regional challenges and achieve regional revitalization through the promotion of the SDGs, to share leading practices related to the SDGs, and to promote partnerships including public-private collaboration.

5 Outcomes of High-Level Visits from Around the World — Expo Diplomacy

Since the opening of the Expo, many dignitaries from countries around the world visited the Expo site on their National Days and Special Days and other occasions. The dignitaries who visited the Expo include approximately 90 heads of state and government leaders and approximately 50 foreign minister-level officials. Seizing these opportunities, Prime Minister Ishiba held approximately 50 meetings, while Foreign Minister Iwaya held approximately 40 meetings, enabling them to further strengthen cooperation while maintaining close communication with various countries on bilateral relations and challenges facing the international community.

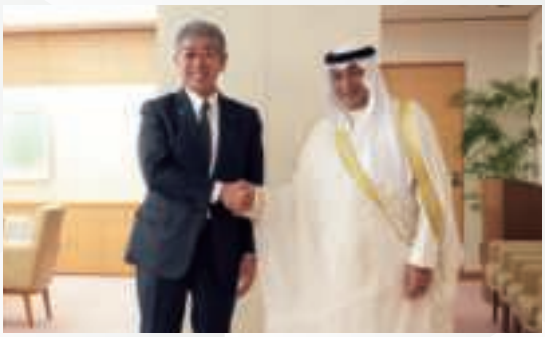
The opportunity for the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister to exchange views at length on bilateral relations and the international situation, including with countries that they would otherwise rarely have the chance to visit on official trips, was an outcome made uniquely possible by Japan's hosting of the Expo. The dignitaries who visited Japan on the occasion of the Expo must have gained an overall sense of the Japan embodied in the Expo's theme "Designing Future Society for Our Lives," and Japan has successfully built a robust network that will underpin its future diplomacy.

The Expo also served as an opportunity to bring overseas vitality to Japan. Foreign dignitaries' visits to Japan often included business-related events in their itineraries, generating significant synergistic effects. Furthermore, many visited regions outside Osaka, which also contributed to regional revitalization.



▲Thumbnail of "Banpaku Tsushin (Expo Updates) FINAL," distributed via MOFA's official social media

In addition, through the Expo, not only government officials but also many Japanese citizens, including those from the business, academic, and cultural communities, deepened their exchanges with those from around the world, broadening the scope of Japan's diplomacy and offering a valuable opportunity to widely showcase Japan's charm to the international community.



▲Meeting between Foreign Minister Iwaya and Secretary General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Jasem Al Budaiwi (July 7, Tokyo)



▲Courtesy call on Prime Minister Ishiba by U.S. Secretary of the Treasury Scott Bessent and other members of the U.S. Presidential Delegation (July 18, Tokyo; Photo: Official Website of the Prime Minister's Office of Japan)



▲Japan-Latvia Foreign Ministers' Meeting (September 18, Tokyo)

6 184 Days of Co-Creating the Future — A Legacy to Be Passed On to the Next Generation

On October 13, the closing day, the "Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan Declaration Forum" was held, and the "Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan Declaration" was announced in order to share the outcomes of the Expo with the world. The following is an excerpt from the Declaration.

Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan Declaration

For 184 days, participants and exhibitors from around the world gathered in Osaka, Kansai for a World Expo, under the theme "Designing Future Society for Our Lives," welcoming over 28 million visitors in total.

Overcoming various constraints and challenges, from the construction of pavilions and preparation of exhibits to daily operation during the event, stakeholders maintained close collaboration and continually improved their offerings, successfully bringing the Expo to its completion. At a time when the international community faces diverse challenges and growing uncertainty about the future, the 165 official participants and their host country celebrated each other's National Days and Special Days, powerfully expressing their unique cultures and agendas. They, and the visitors from around the world, co-created the Expo, conveying the message of "Unity in Diversity" as embodied by the Grand Ring.

(…)

At Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan, participants and visitors engaged in dialogue and co-creation and saw their culture resonate with each other, united in diversity in bringing forth their messages towards the future society for our lives. Through this declaration, we express our hope that these discussions and practices will be carried forward to upcoming Expos and contribute to efforts around the world in designing our future society.



▲Flag Parade on the closing day (October 13, Osaka; Photo: Japan Association for the 2025 World Exposition ©Expo 2025)

Opening Special Feature

TICAD 9

Co-create Innovative Solutions with Africa

What is TICAD?

Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) is an international conference on African development launched by Japan in 1993. It supports African development based on the fundamental principles of “ownership” by Africa and “partnership” with the international community, including Japan.



▲Commemorative photo of leaders attending TICAD 9 (August 20, Yokohama; Photo: Official Website of the Prime Minister's Office of Japan)

1 TICAD 9 — Theme and Overview

TICAD 9 (the Ninth Tokyo International Conference on African Development) was held in Yokohama from August 20 to 22, 2025. It was attended by 49 African countries (including 33 heads of state), as well as co-organizers (the United Nations, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Bank, the African Union Commission (AUC)), international organizations, private companies, Diet members, and members of civil society, among others.

At TICAD 9, discussions were held under the theme "Co-create innovative solutions with Africa."



▲Prime Minister Ishiba co-chairing the opening ceremony with President João Manuel Gonçalves Lourenço of Angola (August 20, Yokohama; Photo: Official Website of the Prime Minister's Office of Japan)



▲Plenary session in progress (screen shows former Prime Minister Kishida serving as Acting Co-chair) (August 21, Yokohama)

2 Plenary Sessions and the Yokohama Declaration

At TICAD 9, plenary sessions were held on the three pillars of economy, society, and peace and stability. Active discussions were held with a particular focus on private-sector-led sustainable growth, youth and women, and regional integration and connectivity within and beyond the region, as cross-cutting priorities.

The outcomes of the three days of discussions were compiled into the leaders' declaration, the "TICAD 9 Yokohama Declaration," which was adopted on the final day. At the joint press conference held after the conclusion of the conference, Prime Minister Ishiba stated that Japan will work to continuously develop TICAD into something better, while building upon the original concept of TICAD.



▲Prime Minister Ishiba adopting the outcome document at the closing ceremony (August 22, Yokohama; Photo: Official Website of the Prime Minister's Office of Japan)



▲Theme and key priorities of TICAD 9

3 Japan's Initiatives

At TICAD 9, Prime Minister Ishiba announced that Japan will accelerate its efforts in the following seven areas: (1) promoting investment in Africa; (2) promoting the mobilization of private capital; (3) strengthening industrial cooperation, including the use of AI (Artificial Intelligence) and DX (Digital Transformation) and strengthening the resilience of mineral resource supply chains; (4) enhancing connectivity within and beyond Africa; (5) strengthening health policies; (6) human resource development and exchanges focusing on youth and women; and (7) progressing efforts toward peace and stability in Africa.

The following introduces some of the specific initiatives announced at TICAD 9.

Economic Region Initiative of Indian Ocean-Africa

This initiative aims to contribute to Africa's regional integration and industrial development by collaborating with countries across the Indian Ocean and supporting the strengthening of inter-regional connectivity and the building of a free and fair economic region.

Region-wide Co-creation for Common Agenda Initiative[(1)] for Mozambique, Malawi, and Zambia: "Strengthening the Global Supply Chain through Nacala Corridor Development"

A region-wide co-creation for common agenda initiative was launched to improve and strengthen transportation infrastructure and promote industrial development in the Nacala Corridor, which connects the landlocked countries of Zambia and Malawi to the Indian Ocean via Nacala Port in Mozambique.

Establishment of the Study Group on Strengthening of Japan-Africa Economic Partnership

A committee is to be established to hold discussions among relevant institutions and experts from both Japan and Africa on cooperation toward the realization of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), an important policy of the African Union (AU), and on the possibilities for future economic partnership.

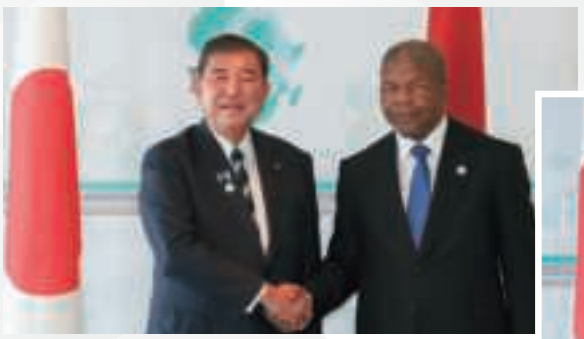
Investment Promotion Package for Sustainable Health in Africa

African countries themselves need to work on improving governance, enhancing their investment environment, and mobilizing domestic resources as an investment in their future. To support such efforts, the "Investment Promotion Package for Sustainable Health in Africa" was launched.

4 Meetings with African Countries and International Organizations

On the occasion of TICAD 9, Prime Minister Ishiba held 34 meetings and Foreign Minister Iwaya held 30 meetings with representatives of African countries and international organizations. State Minister for Foreign Affairs FUJII Hisayuki, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs MATSUMOTO Hisashi, and Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs ERI Arfiya also met with various counterparts.

Through the effective use of these extensive diplomatic opportunities, Japan was able to exchange views with a wide range of stakeholders on cooperation in line with the needs of African countries, as well as cooperation in the international arena, including UN Security Council (UNSC) reform. In addition, many representatives from countries and organizations expressed their gratitude for Japan's support.



▲Summit meeting between Prime Minister Ishiba and President Lourenço of Angola, who served as co-chair (August 20, Yokohama; Photo: Official Website of the Prime Minister's Office of Japan)



▲Meeting between Prime Minister Ishiba and UN Secretary-General António Guterres (August 20, Yokohama; Photo: Official Website of the Prime Minister's Office of Japan)

(1) Co-creation for Common Agenda Initiative: A measure in which Japan proactively proposes to developing countries attractive cooperation packages that leverage Japan's strengths and combine ODA, Other Official Flows (OOF), and private sector funds in the areas that should be strategically addressed from a foreign policy perspective.

5 Business Promotion

Since the concept of "From Aid to Investment" was put forward at TICAD V in 2013, interest among Japanese companies in Africa has been growing steadily. At TICAD 9, a total of 324 business-related cooperation documents were signed, more than three times the number recorded at TICAD 8. In addition, the number of exhibitors from companies and organizations reached a record high at the TICAD Business Expo & Conference, a thematic event organized by the Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO), and approximately 10,000 participants from both Japanese and African companies attended the event.



▲Signing ceremony for cooperation documents (August 21, Yokohama; Photo: Official Website of the Prime Minister's Office of Japan)



▲Prime Minister Ishiba visiting company booths at the "TICAD Business Expo & Conference" (August 21, Yokohama; Photo: Official Website of the Prime Minister's Office of Japan)

6 Youth Engagement

It is projected that by 2050, African countries will account for more than one-third of the world's youth population.(2) Against this backdrop, TICAD 9 placed particular emphasis on "youth," and announced that it would promote efforts related to human resource development and people-to-people exchanges for youth.

From the perspective of incorporating the voices of youth from both Japan and Africa, numerous youth-led events were held during TICAD 9. At the Youth Forum 2025, held as the Youth Edition of TICAD and attended by approximately 400 participants from Japan and Africa, the youth policy proposal "Youth Agenda 2055: The Future We Want" was presented, outlining a vision for the future of Africa and Japan.

Furthermore, the Model African Union in Japan, based on the Model United Nations, was also held during TICAD 9, in which students and youth from Japan and Africa formed teams, debated over themes of economy, politics, and science and technology as representatives of AU member states, and adopted three Assembly resolutions.



▲Scene from the Youth Forum (August 20, Yokohama)



▲Scene from the Model African Union in Japan (August 20, Yokohama; Photo: UNDP)

(2) Source: International Labour Organization (ILO), Global Employment Trends for Youth 2024, p. 56

Chapter 1 Overview of the International Situation and Outlook for Japan's Diplomacy

In order for Japan to ensure its national interests in the diplomatic, security and economic domains, to prevent crises, and to secure the safety and prosperity of the lives of its citizens, including Japanese nationals living abroad, it is necessary to maintain and develop an international order based on values and principles such as freedom, democracy, human rights, and the rule of law, as well as to proactively create a peaceful and stable international environment, through close cooperation with a wide range of partners. To this end, Japan needs to advance its foreign policy strategically, proactively, and multifacetedly, while grasping changes and trends in international affairs with a clear view and adapting to changes.

This chapter outlines a broad overview of the international situation surrounding Japan and the outlook for Japan's diplomacy.

1 Overview of the International Situation

The year 2025, marking 80 years since the end of World War II and the 80th anniversary of the founding of the United Nations (UN), can be considered a milestone for the international community.

In the post-Cold War era, international trends characterized by the expansion of the free and open international order, the advancement of globalization, and the deepening of interdependence among nations brought prosperity and stability to many countries.

However, the free and open international order is greatly shaken. The world is facing a historic period of great transformation, driven by the shift in the power balance and intensified geopolitical competition. Amidst this, the security environment surrounding Japan is now as severe, complex, and tense as it has ever been since the end of World War II. The relatively stable era once known as the "post-Cold War era" can be said to have already ended.

Russia's aggression against Ukraine, which began in February 2022, is an outrageous act that shakes the very foundations of the international order and constitutes a grave violation of international law, including the Charter of the United Nations. Furthermore, in the Middle East, the entire region has become unstable after the terror attacks against Israel by Hamas and others in October 2023. In particular, the deepening complexity of the international community's confrontational structure over the situation surrounding Gaza, as well as the escalation of tensions surrounding Iran, have become a challenge for the entire international community transcending regional borders.

At the same time, changes in the security environment surrounding Japan and the international community are accelerating in various fields. In the vicinity of Japan, concerning developments are observed, such as China's diplomatic posture and military activities, North Korea's nuclear and missile development, and the advancement of the military cooperation between Russia and North Korea. These individual phenomena are interconnected in the global international community and are bringing about diverse changes in regional and international affairs.

Furthermore, the rise of developing and emerging countries, known as the Global South, is challenging the maintenance of the existing international order and global governance[(1)] system. The voices and influence

(1) Global Governance: Efforts to provide predictability, stability, and order in dealing with interstate issues (the totality of institutions, policies, norms, procedures, and initiatives) in the international community, which lacks a higher level of governing bodies, unlike the domestic system.

of Global South countries are rapidly growing in international politics, backed by their economic growth and population expansion. Many of these countries are increasingly vocal in pointing out the limitations of the existing international order and international organizations, and in calling for reforms toward a more equitable and inclusive system. Against the backdrop of such dissatisfaction, some countries are trying to reshape the international order for their own convenience, while acting as if they were defenders of the international order based on their own narratives.

In recent years, as various challenges have emerged in areas spanning national security and the economy, the importance of economic security, including strengthening supply chain resilience, has been increasing. Furthermore, the advancement of science and technology in modern society is unprecedented in its speed and scope of impact. Innovations in cutting-edge fields such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) and quantum technology are advancing at an accelerating pace, and their importance is increasing as a major factor that can even influence national power. In addition, with the advancement of digital technology, threats in cyberspace, including state-sponsored cyberattacks, are rapidly increasing, making the enhancement of capabilities in the field of cybersecurity an urgent task. Under these circumstances, competition among nations over "technological hegemony" is intensifying, ushering in an era where the development of next-generation technologies is directly linked to national security of each country, while also exerting a significant impact on future national power and the medium- to long-term international order.

With the above recognition, the following part explains the major issues facing the international community.

(1) Responding to Challenge to the Free and Open International Order based on the Rule of Law

In various regions around the world, the shift in the power balance and geopolitical competition have intensified. As these factors interlink, the free and open international order based on the rule of law has begun to waver significantly.

Russia has been continuing its aggression against Ukraine since February 2022. This act, in which a permanent member of the UN Security Council (UNSC) blatantly violates the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, such as respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, and the general prohibition of the use of force, poses a challenge to the international order based on the rule of law. The achievement of a just and lasting peace in Ukraine is essential from the perspective of upholding the rule of law in the international community. In addition, in the Middle East, the fighting between Israel and Hamas has intensified since October 2023, causing a serious humanitarian crisis and becoming a challenge for the entire international community transcending regional borders.

In this situation, the United States (U.S.) has been actively engaging in diplomacy toward achieving peace in Ukraine and resolving conflicts around the world, and Japan is supporting these diplomatic efforts of the U.S. The role of the U.S. remains indispensable for maintaining and strengthening peace and stability in the international community.

The security of the Indo-Pacific and Euro-Atlantic regions is inseparable, and responding to Russia's aggression against Ukraine is important from the perspective of preventing unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force in East Asia as well. The security environment surrounding Japan is as severe and complex as it has ever been since the end of World War II. The military activities of China, North Korea, and Russia have become matters of serious concern, particularly China's unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force or coercion in the East China Sea and the South China Sea, the growing tensions over the Taiwan Strait, North Korea's continuing nuclear and missile development, the advancement of the military cooperation between Russia and North Korea, and the strengthening of military cooperation between China and Russia.

Under these circumstances, the importance of further strengthening the deterrence and response capabilities of the Japan-U.S. Alliance, which is the cornerstone of Japan's foreign and security policy and the foundation of the peace and prosperity of the Indo-Pacific, is increasing even more. Furthermore, it is essential that the U.S. maintain and strengthen its commitment to

the Indo-Pacific region. At the same time, it is extremely important to strengthen cooperation with like-minded countries that value the maintenance and development of the free and open international order, by leveraging multifaceted cooperation frameworks. It is important to strengthen multilayered cooperation with like-minded countries, including the G7 (Group of Seven), Australia, India, the Republic of Korea (ROK), Southeast Asian countries, and the Pacific Island countries, by utilizing frameworks, such as Japan-U.S.-ROK, Japan-U.S.-Australia, Japan-U.S.-Philippines, and Japan-Australia-India-U.S. (Quad). Furthermore, from the perspective that the security of the Indo-Pacific and Euro-Atlantic regions is inseparable, it is also important to deepen cooperation with a wide range of partners, including the European Union (EU), and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

Through these efforts, Japan will strongly promote a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)," which upholds the core principles of defending "freedom" and "the rule of law" and respecting "diversity," "inclusiveness," and "openness," and will strategically update it to align with the times.

At the same time, it is important to build stable relations with neighboring countries, while directly addressing difficult issues and challenges. Regarding Japan-China relations, the overarching direction of comprehensively promoting a "Mutually Beneficial Relationship Based on Common Strategic Interests" and building "constructive and stable Japan-China relations" has been consistent. Precisely because there are various pending issues and challenges, it is all the more important for Japan and China to communicate with each other. Japan intends to continue responding calmly and appropriately going forward.

(2) Global Governance Reform and Moves toward Resolving Global Issues

The year 2025 marks the 80th anniversary of the founding of the UN, providing a timely opportunity to reaffirm the importance of multilateralism and re-evaluate the nature of international cooperation. Many global issues remain today, such as climate change, the environment, global health, and disasters, and these issues cannot be solved by any one country alone, making international cooperation even more necessary.

For 80 years since the end of World War II, Japan has promoted multilateral diplomacy with the UN at its core and has consistently contributed to the peace, stability, and prosperity of the international community. However, the reality is that the existing international organizations and fora, including the UN Security Council, have not adequately fulfilled their expected roles in the face of current issues. To adapt to the changes of the times and perform more effectively, urgent reforms are needed in the structure and functions of these organizations.

Strengthening networks with a wide range of like-minded countries and steadily promoting cooperation will also contribute to strengthening global governance. By deepening international cooperation based on shared values, it becomes possible to respond more effectively to the complex crises facing the international community. Furthermore, while the multilateral systems centered on the UN face difficulties, it can be said that cooperation among allies and like-minded countries is becoming increasingly important.

In response to the shift in the power balance of the international community, Global South countries are increasing their voice and influence in the international community. There are also moves where some countries are trying to spread their own narratives about the international order, while acting as if they were defenders of the international order. Although Global South countries are dissatisfied with the existing systems and rules, it is essential for them to jointly play a commensurate role and share the burden in order to strengthen global governance.

"BRICs," which was originally formalized by four countries — Brazil, Russia, India, and China — later became "BRICS" with the inclusion of South Africa. As of 2025, there are signs of expanding membership, with ten countries having officially joined. While such trends are observed among Global South countries, their interests, intentions, political systems, economic situations, and needs vary. In the current international community, there is an increasing need to develop a fine-tuned diplomacy while listening to the individual voices of Global South countries.

(3) Responding to Impacts of Intensifying International Competition and Development of Science and Technology

In the modern international community, the intensification of international competition and the rapid development of science and technology are having significant impacts on relations between nations and on security.

In recent years, the vulnerabilities of food and energy supply chains have been revealed due to COVID-19 and Russia's aggression against Ukraine. In addition, the international competition for critical minerals and advanced technologies continues to intensify, and the world is entering an era in which economic superiority directly translates into security superiority. This expands the scope of security beyond traditional military and diplomatic domains to include a wide range of fields such as the economy, technology, and social life. To cope with this change, responding to economic security challenges, including enhancing supply chain resilience, has become an urgent issue.

Establishing governance for emerging technologies is also an urgent task. While the evolution of emerging technologies, including AI, and cyberspace brings significant benefits to society, their misuse poses serious risks and has become a severe risk factor that threatens the stability of nations and society. The emergence of "new ways of warfare," including the mass use of drones in the Ukraine conflict, symbolizes the significant impact that innovation has on the military domain. Furthermore, amidst intensifying geopolitical competition, international information warfare in the cognitive domain through information manipulation, including the spread of disinformation, is constantly occurring, and addressing this challenge has become increasingly critical. To minimize the risks posed by these innovations and maximize their benefits, ensuring appropriate governance across the international community is indispensable. Therefore, establishing ethical norms in the development and use of technology, formulating norms in cyberspace, and fostering international cooperation on measures to counter disinformation are urgent issues that need to be addressed.

Nationalism and protectionist trends, as well as a series of tariff measures, are also observed.

There are instances where countries leverage their economic influence to put pressure on other countries based on economic dependencies, their own large markets, and their natural resources. Non-market policies and practices are also observed. For example, cases such as export restrictions on critical minerals indicate that excessive reliance on specific countries that do not adhere to international rules and norms poses a significant risk to economic security.

To respond to this series of developments, it is essential not only to strive for international rule-making efforts and the maintenance and strengthening of a free and fair international economic order, but also to promote initiatives such as enhancing supply chain resilience, including those related to critical minerals. However, these issues are difficult for one country alone to address, and it is becoming increasingly necessary to cooperate with allies, like-minded countries, and Global South countries.

2 Outlook for Japan's Diplomacy

The security environment surrounding the international community and Japan has been changing rapidly across various fields. Concerning developments continue, including Russia's aggression against Ukraine, the unstable situation in the Middle East, China's diplomatic posture and military activities around Japan, North Korea's nuclear and missile development, and the advancement of the military cooperation between Russia and North Korea. Meanwhile, the Global South is enhancing its presence, and the international community is diversifying. In addition, some countries are experiencing increasing domestic divisions and political tensions. Multilateralism with the UN as its core faces difficulties, but there are a host of global issues including climate change, new threats such as cyberattacks and information manipulation, including the spread of disinformation, and economic security issues, which need to be addressed by the international community as a whole, thus calling for cooperation among nations more than ever before.

With the international situation remaining severe, Japan must ensure the peace, security, and prosperity of its own country and people, proactively create a peaceful and stable international environment by maintaining and strengthening the international order based on values and principles such as freedom, democracy, human rights, and the rule of law.

Japan has consistently followed the path of a peace-loving nation since the end of World War II, contributing to the peace, stability, and prosperity of the international community including the Asia-Pacific region, and working to maintain and strengthen the free and open international order based on the rule of law. It has also developed a fine-tuned diplomacy with all countries, respecting the diversity of each country, discussing common issues from the same perspective, and providing support that is truly needed by the other party. Furthermore, Japan, as a flag-bearer of free trade, has maintained and reinforced the rules-based, free, and fair international economic order under a multilateral trading system. At the same time, Japan has cooperated with developing countries based on the concept of human security(2) and worked toward the resolution of global issues, including the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), through Official Development Assistance (ODA) for infrastructure development, capacity building support, and other measures. It has also actively contributed to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation and international peacebuilding efforts. As the world is facing a historic period of great transformation, based on the trust gained through these diplomatic efforts, Japan will protect its national interests and develop a "diplomacy that has inclusiveness and strength leading multifaceted and multilayered cooperation" that is responsive to changes in the international community, by proactively fulfilling the roles and responsibilities expected of Japan by the international community across various fields in order to promote the "'Responsible Japanese Diplomacy' Creating Peace and Prosperity" advocated by the Takaichi Cabinet.

(1) Maintain the Free and Open International Order based on the Rule of Law

A Strengthening of the Japan-U.S. Alliance

The Japan-U.S. Alliance is the cornerstone of Japan's foreign and security policy, and the foundation of the peace and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific.

On the security front, Japan and the U.S. will promote broad security cooperation, further strengthen deterrence and response capabilities of the Japan-U.S. Alliance and optimize the response capabilities of U.S. forces in Japan. Japan will also promote efforts to mitigate impact on local communities, including Okinawa, through efforts to expeditiously relocate the Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) Futenma to Henoko while maintaining the stable presence of U.S. forces.

On the economic front, Japan and the U.S. will continue to expand and deepen broad Japan-U.S. collaboration in the economic field, achieving growth and strengthening economic security for both countries through the steady implementation of the agreement on tariffs between Japan and the U.S. The two countries will also further strengthen their multilayered people-to-people exchanges.

Through these efforts, Japan will strive to build a strong relationship of trust with the Trump administration and further deepen Japan-U.S. relations. At the same time, Japan will continue to coordinate closely with the U.S. at all levels, including between leaders and foreign ministers.

B Cooperation with Allies and Like-minded Countries

As a pillar of Japan's diplomacy, Japan will strategically update the "Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)," which upholds the core principles of defending "freedom" and "the rule of law" and respecting "diversity," "inclusiveness," and "openness," adapting it to the changes of the times. In order to realize FOIP, it is important to build and expand networks with like-minded countries, in addition to strengthening the Japan-U.S. Alliance. To this end, Japan will continue to further strengthen cooperation with the G7, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Australia, India, the Pacific Island

(2) Human security is a concept that pursues freedom from fear and want, and the right of individuals to live happily and in dignity through their protection and empowerment.

countries, the EU, NATO, and others, and expand practical and multifaceted cooperation such as among Japan-U.S.-ROK, Japan-U.S.-Australia, Japan-U.S.-Philippines, and Japan-Australia-India-U.S. (Quad).

The G7 is working closely to address the various issues facing the international community, such as Russia's aggression against Ukraine and the situation in the Middle East. As the security in Europe, the Middle East, and the Indo-Pacific becomes increasingly intertwined, Japan will contribute to further strengthening of cooperation of the G7 in order to maintain and strengthen the free and open international order based on the rule of law.

With Australia, as a central pillar of the coordination among like-minded countries, Japan has established a close cooperative relationship in a wide range of fields. The two countries will work to further deepen their "Special Strategic Partnership," including by strengthening security cooperation, in fields such as defense equipment, economic security and cyber.

With the EU and NATO, Japan will further strengthen security cooperation based on the recognition that the security of the Euro-Atlantic and Indo-Pacific regions is inseparable and in light of the progress made in cooperation in recent years.

Japan will promote cooperation among like-minded countries such as Japan-U.S.-ROK, Japan-U.S.-Australia, Japan-U.S.-Philippines, and Japan-Australia-India-U.S. (Quad), and continue to strengthen such multilayered cooperation in the future.

C Japan's Own Efforts

As the security environment surrounding the international community and Japan becomes increasingly severe, Japan is working to review the National Security Strategy, National Defense Strategy, and Defense Buildup Program. In addition, Japan will promote defense equipment and technology transfers, Official Security Assistance (OSA), and cybersecurity, and work to strengthen its intelligence capabilities in close coordination with relevant ministries and agencies.

Japan will promote the rule of law in the international community and also work on international cooperation in countering terrorism and violent extremism, as well as combating transnational organized crime, including cybercrime.

Furthermore, Japan will strengthen its information security infrastructure. Concurrently, to counter foreign information manipulation, including the spread of disinformation, Japan will advance its measures to counter information warfare, including by strengthening its capabilities to collect and analyze information, and strategic external communications. Japan will also work toward a fundamental strengthening of its cultural diplomacy, including people-to-people exchanges, to foster an environment where Japan's communications are received positively.

(2) Relations with Neighboring Countries and Others

Japan will build stable relations with neighboring countries, while directly addressing difficult issues and challenges.

A Japan-China Relations

Between Japan and China, there are a number of challenges and concerns, such as unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force or coercion in the East China Sea, including the situation surrounding the Senkaku Islands, and the South China Sea, and a series of military activities around Japan. Peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait are also important. Japan is also seriously concerned about the human rights situation in China and the situation in Hong Kong.

At the same time, both Japan and China share significant responsibility for the peace and prosperity of the region and the world. Japan's policy of comprehensively promoting a "Mutually Beneficial Relationship Based on Common Strategic Interests" and building a "constructive and stable Japan-China relations" with China remains consistent. Precisely because there are pending issues and challenges, it is all the more important for Japan and China to communicate with each other. Japan remains open to various dialogues with China. Under this stance, Japan intends to continue communicating with China and to respond calmly and appropriately going forward from the perspective of national interests.

B Japan-Republic of Korea (ROK) Relations

Japan and the ROK are important neighbors which should work as partners on various challenges in the

international community. In light of the current strategic environment, the importance of Japan-ROK relations has grown even more. Japan and the ROK will develop Japan-ROK relations in a future-oriented and stable manner, based on the foundation of the Japan-ROK relations which has been established since the normalization of Japan-ROK relations. Furthermore, Japan continues working closely together bilaterally with the ROK and trilaterally with the U.S. and the ROK, including on policies toward North Korea.

Takeshima is an inherent territory of Japan in light of historical facts and based on international law. Japan will deal with the issue in a resolute manner based on this consistent position.

C Japan-China-ROK Trilateral Cooperation

Japan-China-ROK Trilateral Cooperation is also important not only for peace and prosperity of the region, but of the world, from a broad perspective. As the chair country of the Japan-China-ROK Summit, Japan will continue to coordinate the holding of the Summit in Japan at an appropriate time.

D North Korea

North Korea's nuclear and missile development is totally unacceptable. Japan is also seriously concerned about the advancement of the military cooperation between Russia and North Korea such as the deployment of North Korean troops to Russia and Russia's procurement and use of weapons and munitions including ballistic missiles from North Korea, given their impact not only on the situation in Ukraine but also on the security of the region surrounding Japan. Japan will advance efforts toward the full implementation of the relevant UN Security Council resolutions and seek the complete dismantlement of North Korea's nuclear and ballistic missile programs in cooperation with the international community, including the U.S. and the ROK.

Japan's basic policy remains unchanged: Japan will achieve the normalization of relations with North Korea, in accordance with the Japan-DPRK Pyongyang Declaration, by comprehensively resolving outstanding issues of concern, such as the abductions, nuclear and missile issues, as well as settlement of the unfortunate past.

In particular, with the aging of the abductees and their families, the abductions issue is a humanitarian matter with lives at stake, which must be resolved immediately, as well as a matter of infringement of the sovereignty of Japan. Japan will spare no effort and utilize all available means in order to realize the return of all abductees at the earliest possible date and resolve the outstanding issues of concern between Japan and North Korea.

(3) Response to Russia's Aggression against Ukraine and Japan-Russia Relations

Russia's aggression against Ukraine is an outrageous act that shakes the very foundations of the international order. Japan welcomes the united diplomatic efforts toward peace by the U.S. and European nations. It is important to end Russia's aggression against Ukraine, and achieve a just and lasting peace as soon as possible. To that end, Japan will work in close cooperation with the G7 and other countries to continue its support for Ukraine and sanctions against Russia.

While Japan-Russia relations continue to face a difficult situation, regarding the Northern Territories issue, which is the greatest concern between Japan and Russia, Japan's policy is to resolve the issue of the attribution of the Four Northern Islands and conclude a peace treaty. In addition, there are numerous pending issues between Japan and Russia that must be resolved as neighboring countries, and it is necessary to communicate appropriately with the Russian side. Regarding the resumption of the Four-Island Exchange and Visit Program, which is one of its top priorities, taking into account the earnest wishes of the elderly former residents of the islands, Japan will persistently urge the Russian side to resume these initiatives, with a particular focus on visits to graves in the Northern Territories.

(4) Economic Diplomacy

To enhance Japan's economic power, Japan will provide diplomatic support for Japan's superior technological and problem-solving capabilities, as well as for Japanese companies' overseas business expansion, thereby contributing to the creation of new markets and innovation.

It is also important to maintain and reinforce the rules-based, free, and fair international economic

order. Japan will work toward promoting economic partnerships, including maintaining the high standards of the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) and its strategic expansion, promoting the reform of World Trade Organization (WTO), and establishing a "safe, secure, and trustworthy artificial intelligence (AI)" ecosystem. At the same time, to address the increasingly critical challenges of economic security, Japan will make full efforts not only to ensure the stable supply of energy and food, but also to enhance supply chain resilience for critical minerals among others, counter economic coercion, and protect and promote critical and emerging technologies.

Japan will promote initiatives to ensure the success of the International Horticultural Expo 2027, Yokohama, Japan (GREEN×EXPO 2027).

(5) Strengthening Cooperation with the Global South and Regional Diplomacy Issues

Close cooperation with Global South countries, which are gaining increasing influence in the international community, is essential. By delivering security cooperation through OSA and "visible Japanese development cooperation" through ODA, Japan will continue tailored cooperation that meets the needs of partner countries. Furthermore, Japan will strategically and effectively use ODA to address critical issues such as economic security and promote private investment catalyzed by ODA.

ASEAN, located at the center of the Indo-Pacific, is the growth center of the world and the key to the realization of FOIP. Its stability and prosperity are of vital importance to Japan and the entire region, and Japan has been working to strengthen its relationship with ASEAN, which is enhancing its presence both politically and economically, as one of its top diplomatic priorities. As "Trusted Partners" with "heart to heart" connections, Japan will deepen cooperation with Southeast Asian countries and further strengthen its relationship with the region in a wide range of fields, such as maritime security, digital (including AI), Green Transformation (GX), connectivity, and human resource development, utilizing OSA and ODA.

India is an important partner in realizing FOIP, which shares fundamental values and strategic interests. Japan and India, both democratic countries in Asia, share a great responsibility for peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific region and the world. In order to build a mutually complementary relationship that co-creates the socio-economic values needed to resolve the challenges that future generations will face, both countries will further deepen cooperation in a wide range of fields, including security, economy, investment and innovation, people-to-people exchanges, etc., under the "Special Strategic and Global Partnership."

Southwest Asia, including India, is a strategically important region located along the sea lanes linking Japan with the Middle East and Africa. With a population of over 1.9 billion, including a large young population, and high rate of economic growth, it is an attractive market and production base for Japanese companies. The countries in Southwest Asia and Japan have longstanding friendly ties, and over the years, Japan has deepened its engagement in a wide range of areas. Building on this foundation, Japan will further deepen its relations with the countries in Southwest Asia, which are important partners.

The Pacific Island countries, which have deep historical ties with Japan, constitute a critical region from the perspective of cooperation in the international arena and realizing FOIP. Based on the outcome of the 10th Pacific Islands Leaders Meeting (PALM10) held in 2024, Japan will continue to strongly support the development of the Pacific Island countries and their unity, respecting the needs of each country.

The Middle East is one of the major sources of energy supply for the international community, and Japan depends on the region for about 90% of its crude oil imports. Therefore, peace and stability in the region, including the safety of navigation on the sea lanes, are extremely important for energy security as well as the stability and growth of the global economy including Japan. Regarding the issue of Israel and Palestine, which significantly impacts peace and stability in the Middle East, Japan will continue to play an active role in promoting prompt humanitarian assistance and early recovery and reconstruction in Gaza, and in realizing a "two-state solution."

In addition, regarding the situation surrounding Iran, Japan has swiftly been taking various measures following attacks by the U.S. and Israel against Iran on

February 28, 2026, and the subsequent exchanges of attacks between the U.S. and Israel and Iran. Japan is working closely with relevant countries to gather information, and is taking all possible measures to ensure the safety of Japanese nationals across the region including in the countries neighboring Iran, as well as working to grasp the situation of maritime and air traffic and to share information to relevant parties. Furthermore, from Japan's consistent stance that Iran's development of nuclear weapons must never be allowed, Japan externally communicated that it strongly urges Iran to stop its development of nuclear weapons and actions that destabilize the region, including attacks on neighboring countries, and to seek a diplomatic solution. This position was clearly stated in the Statement by the Foreign Minister on March 1. Moreover, as Iran's attacks have extended to civilian and diplomatic facilities, including energy facilities in neighboring countries, resulting in civilian casualties, and as Iran has mentioned the closure of the Strait of Hormuz, with civilian vessels actually being attacked in the Strait and its surrounding waters, Japan has condemned such actions by Iran. Based on Japan's stance that the early de-escalation of the situation is of utmost importance, Foreign Minister Motegi, immediately after the outbreak of the incident, participated in the G7 Foreign Ministers' Telephone Calls, and held meetings with relevant countries in the region, including the Gulf countries, as well as telephone calls with the parties involved, including Israel and Iran, to directly convey Japan's stance and to request cooperation for ensuring the safety of Japanese nationals.

The peace and stability of the Middle East, including energy security, and maintaining the international non-proliferation regime are of utmost importance to Japan. Japan will continue to make all necessary diplomatic efforts, in coordination with the international community, to bring about an early de-escalation of the situation.

Africa, which is projected to account for a quarter of the world's population by 2050 and is endowed with abundant natural resources, is a young and hopeful continent with significant potential for dynamic growth. Furthermore, strengthening cooperation with African countries, which forms a key block of the Global South, not only advances Japan's national interests, including economic development, but is also increasingly important to guiding the international community from division toward cooperation. For over 30 years since the launch of the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) in 1993, Japan has consistently advanced cooperation based on the spirit of supporting African-led development. At the 9th Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD 9), held in August under the theme of "Co-creating innovative solutions with Africa," discussions focused on creating solutions that lead to prosperity for both Japan and Africa by leveraging Japan's technologies and expertise. Japan will continue to strengthen its relations with Africa, including through the materialization of the "Economic Region Initiative of Indian Ocean-Africa" announced at TICAD 9.

Latin American and the Caribbean (LAC) countries, many of which share values and principles with Japan, are important partners in countering the challenges to the current international order. Furthermore, LAC is an important region for Japan's economic security, producing critical minerals and food resources, and the Nikkei (Japanese immigrants and their descendants) communities, numbering approximately 3.1 million in this region, are the foundation of the friendship and trust. Japan will continue to promote cooperation with LAC countries through the "Diplomatic Initiative toward Latin America and the Caribbean," under the policy of recognizing the diversity of LAC and tackling common challenges through dialogue.

The countries in Central Asia and the Caucasus, while having close historical and economic ties with Russia, have been affected in various aspects by Russia's aggression against Ukraine. Japan will promote cooperation as a partner in maintaining and strengthening the free and open international order based on the rule of law, while utilizing frameworks such as the "Central Asia plus Japan" Dialogue (CA+JAD), the Summit of which was held for the first time in December.

(6) Promotion of Multilateral Diplomacy

The year 2026 marks the 70th anniversary of Japan's admission to the UN. To address the challenges facing the world, Japan will promote multilateral diplomacy with the UN at its core and work to strengthen UN functions, including reform of the UN Security

Council. In addition, Japan will continue to promote human rights diplomacy in its own way and diplomacy centered on the participation of women by actively advancing Women, Peace and Security (WPS).

With regard to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, toward realizing a world without nuclear weapons, Japan will advance realistic and practical efforts to maintain and strengthen the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) regime, including through the NPT Review Conference in April 2026.

Regarding the safety of the discharge of ALPS treated water[(3)] into the sea, Japan will continue to maintain close coordination with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), provide detailed explanation both domestically and internationally, based on scientific evidence in a highly transparent manner.

(7) Resolving Global Issues

On global issues such as climate change, global health, and disaster risk reduction, Japan will advance its efforts to achieve the SDGs based on the concept of human security and lead international discussions with an eye toward the period beyond 2030. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) will support activities of Japanese nationals who work in international organizations.

(8) Fundamentally Enhancing the Diplomatic and Consular Implementation Structure

Amidst an international situation that remains more severe than ever before, Japan will continue to fundamentally enhance the diplomatic and consular implementation structure to achieve even greater results through these diplomatic efforts. In particular, MOFA will promote the strengthening of the systems and infrastructure at MOFA headquarters and diplomatic missions overseas to ensure full preparedness for responding to crises, the protection of Japanese nationals, and the bolstering of information security, among others, while also advancing proactive diplomacy. Furthermore, MOFA will work to reduce passport fees. MOFA will advance initiatives toward realizing a society of well-ordered and harmonious coexistence with foreign nationals.

(3) ALPS treated water is water that contained radioactive substances from inside the buildings of the Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO)'s Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station (FDNPS) and has been purified and treated through multiple treatment facilities, including ALPS (Advanced Liquid Processing System), until the concentrations of all radioactive substances besides tritium satisfy the safety regulatory standards. As for tritium, the water is significantly diluted with seawater before the discharge into the sea so that it fully satisfies safety regulatory standards.

Chapter 2

Japan's Foreign Policy by Region

Section 1	Promotion of a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)" Based on the Rule of Law	024
Section 2	Asia and Oceania	030
Section 3	North America	102
Section 4	Latin America and the Caribbean	122
Section 5	Europe	134
Section 6	Russia and Belarus, Central Asia and the Caucasus	154
Section 7	The Middle East and North Africa	166
Section 8	Africa	184



Section 1 Promotion of a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)" Based on the Rule of Law

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, supporting more than half of the world's population and possessing high economic potential. At the same time, the region is home to several countries with strong military capabilities, and there have been some ongoing and strengthening acts that shake the very foundations of the international order based on the rule of law. 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 Sixth 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 combining "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.

Furthermore, in March 2023 in India, Prime Minister Kishida announced the New Plan(1) for a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)." He explained in detail the approach and efforts for FOIP at a historic turning point to achieve the goal of leading the international community toward cooperation rather than division and confrontation.

The new plan clearly emphasizes the importance of "rulemaking through dialogue," "equal partnership among nations," and an approach focusing on "human" as the approaches to be taken going forward, while maintaining principles of defending "freedom" and "the rule of law," and respecting "diversity," "inclusiveness," and "openness." The new plan also clarifies that Japan will strengthen coordination with various countries, expand the networks among countries that share the FOIP vision, and direct efforts in the spirit of co-creation. Furthermore, it sets forth "four pillars" of cooperation for FOIP (Principles for Peace and Rules for Prosperity, Addressing Challenges in an Indo-Pacific Way, Multi-layered Connectivity, and Extending Efforts for Security and Safe Use from the "Sea" to the "Air").

During this period, Japan has widely promoted efforts to realize FOIP based on the rule of law in cooperation with like-minded countries. As a result, many countries and regions in the international community, including the United States (U.S.), Australia, India, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Republic of Korea (ROK), the European Union (EU), and European countries, share the principles that FOIP emphasizes — "freedom," "openness," "diversity,"

(1) For more information on the New Plan for FOIP, see the Ministry of Foreign Affairs website: https://www.mofa.go.jp/fp/pc/page3e_001336.html

"inclusiveness," and "the rule of law" — and various consultations and cooperation are advancing toward the realization of FOIP. The U.S., Japan's ally, released its Indo-Pacific Strategy in February 2022, and its "commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific" was reaffirmed in the U.S. National Security Strategy issued in December 2025 following the inauguration of the second Trump administration. Japan and the U.S. also affirmed their commitment to upholding FOIP in the U.S.-Japan Joint Leaders' Statement in February 2025. Furthermore, ASEAN, which is situated in a crucial spot in the Indian and Pacific Oceans and is key to the realization of FOIP, adopted in 2019 the "ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP)," which shares fundamental principles with FOIP, and Japan was among the first to express its full support for the AOIP to advance FOIP. The Joint Statement adopted at the ASEAN-Japan Summit in October 2025 confirmed the promotion of concrete cooperation contributing to the fundamental principles shared by FOIP and the AOIP. Furthermore, European countries such as the United Kingdom (UK), France, and Germany have formulated their own documents on the Indo-Pacific and expressed their active commitment to the Indo-Pacific region with concrete initiatives in various fields.

In October 2025, Prime Minister Takaichi, in her first policy speech to the Diet since assuming the post of Prime Minister, stated that Japan would continue to vigorously advance FOIP as a pillar of its diplomacy and further evolve it in line with the times, and Japan continues advancing various initiatives under FOIP.

2 Collaboration and Cooperation with Other Countries

In 2025, Japan remained actively engaged in diplomatic activities for the realization of FOIP.

(1) United States (U.S.)

In February, Prime Minister Ishiba made an official visit to the U.S. and held a Japan-U.S. Summit Meeting with President Donald J. Trump in Washington, D.C., where both leaders shared their view on the severe and complex security environment, and concurred to work closely to realize FOIP and to elevate the Japan-U.S. Alliance to new heights.

At the Japan-U.S. Summit Meeting held during President Trump's visit to Japan in October, Prime Minister Takaichi stated that the Japan-U.S. Alliance is the foundation for peace and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific region and emphasized that strengthening the Japan-U.S. Alliance is a top priority in Japan's foreign and security policy, and that Japan is an indispensable partner for the U.S. in the Indo-Pacific region. Prime Minister Takaichi also expressed her determination to continue strongly promoting FOIP as a pillar of Japan's diplomacy and to develop the concept in line with the eras. Additionally, the two leaders affirmed their commitment to work closely together to strongly advance the FOIP. Under this vision, they also affirmed the importance of strengthening regional networks among like-minded partners, such as Japan-U.S.- ROK, Japan-U.S.-Philippines, and Japan-Australia-India-U.S. (Quad).

In addition, the new National Security Strategy released by the U.S. in December reaffirmed its commitment to FOIP.

Both Japan and the U.S. have confirmed their intention to continue close cooperation toward the realization of FOIP through various opportunities, including Japan-U.S. Foreign Ministers' meetings and U.S.-Japan Dialogue on FOIP.

(2) Japan-Australia-India-U.S. (Quad)

The four countries of Japan, Australia, India, and the U.S. share recognition of the importance of promoting practical cooperation in various fields, including critical and emerging technologies and maritime security, and expanding cooperation to more countries in order to realize FOIP, with the goal of strengthening a rules-based free and open international order. The Quad also fully supports the AOIP and welcomes the proactive efforts by European and other countries toward FOIP. In January, a Quad Foreign Ministers' Meeting was held the day after the inauguration of the new U.S. administration, and a joint statement was released reaffirming the shared commitment to strengthening FOIP. In addition, at the Quad Foreign Ministers' Meeting held in

the U.S. in July, the foreign ministers of the four countries reaffirmed their commitment to the realization of FOIP, confirmed that they would promote four priority areas of cooperation, namely maritime and transnational security, economic prosperity and security, critical and emerging technologies, and humanitarian assistance and emergency response, and concurred with continuing practical cooperation that benefits the region.

(3) Japan-U.S.-ROK

As the strategic environment surrounding Japan, the U.S., and the ROK becomes increasingly severe, the three countries have been communicating at multiple levels and strengthening their unity toward the realization of FOIP, holding five foreign ministers' meetings in 2025. At the foreign ministers' meeting in October, the three countries reaffirmed the importance of continuing to show the robust Japan-U.S. and U.S.-ROK alliances and their strategic coordination to realize FOIP. The Joint Statements of the Japan-U.S.-ROK Foreign Ministers issued at the foreign ministers' meetings in February, April, and September have also repeatedly reaffirmed the commitment to maintaining FOIP. In addition, a Japan-U.S.-ROK Trilateral Vice Foreign Ministerial Meeting was held in July, and Japan-U.S.-ROK Trilateral Coordinating Secretariat Meetings have also been held on multiple occasions.

Through these meetings, the three countries have engaged in action-oriented discussions and have delivered concrete initiatives, particularly in the fields of their coordination on North Korea and security, including economic security.

In particular, toward the realization of FOIP, in May, the coast guard agencies of Japan, the U.S., and the ROK jointly provided capacity-building support to ASEAN. In September, the Japan-U.S.-ROK joint exercise Freedom Edge was conducted across multiple domains. In addition, in the field of economic security, the three countries have been advancing efforts toward the protection and promotion of critical and emerging technologies, including by holding the Japan-U.S.-ROK Trilateral Meetings on the Protection of Quantum Technology in September as well as the strengthening of supply chain resilience, including for critical minerals.

(4) India

In August, Prime Minister Ishiba held a summit meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi during his visit to Japan, stating that Japan and India, which share fundamental values and strategic interests, bear great responsibility for peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific region and international society, and that Japan would like to fulfill this responsibility together with Prime Minister Modi. The two leaders affirmed the importance of realizing FOIP.

In addition, under the Takaichi Cabinet, cooperation toward the realization of FOIP was also confirmed at the Japan-India Foreign Ministers' Meeting held on the occasion of the ASEAN-related Summit Meetings in October and the Japan-India Summit Meeting held on the occasion of the G20 Summit in November.

(5) Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)

Japan and ASEAN released the Joint Statement of the 23rd ASEAN-Japan Summit on Cooperation on ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific in 2020, confirming that the AOIP and FOIP share fundamental principles. At the time of the announcement of the new plan for FOIP by Prime Minister Kishida in 2023, he emphasized that the AOIP and FOIP are visions that resonate with each other, and at the ASEAN-Japan Summit in September of the same year, the Japan-ASEAN Comprehensive Connectivity Initiative was announced to further strengthen ASEAN's connectivity and promote further regional integration. At the ASEAN-Japan Summit in 2025, Prime Minister Takaichi repositioned FOIP as a pillar of Japan's diplomacy, expressed Japan's intention to evolve it in line with the changes in the times, and in particular to further strengthen collaboration with AOIP to make Japan and ASEAN stronger and more prosperous. Furthermore, at the same meeting, the "Joint Statement of the 28th ASEAN-Japan Summit on Further Promotion and Implementation of the AOIP" was adopted, reaffirming that the AOIP and FOIP share fundamental principles and confirming the promotion and advancement of further cooperation, as well as concurring to implement AOIP projects that contribute to the fundamental principles shared by the AOIP and FOIP. At the East Asia Summit (EAS) held

in the same month, Foreign Minister Motegi, attending on behalf of Prime Minister Takaichi, stated that Japan would further promote concrete cooperation in line with the joint statement on AOIP cooperation.

(6) Australia and New Zealand

With regard to Australia, a joint statement was issued on the occasion of the 12th Japan-Australia 2+2 Foreign and Defence Ministerial Consultations ("2+2") held in September, acknowledging the unprecedented strategic alignment, shared will and capability of Japan and Australia to play a leading role in realizing FOIP that is inclusive and resilient. In addition, in October, Prime Minister Takaichi held a summit meeting with Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and stated that Japan and Australia are like-minded countries with the will and capability to play a leading role in realizing FOIP.

With regard to New Zealand, Foreign Minister Iwaya held a foreign ministers' meeting with Minister of Foreign Affairs Winston Peters in July, and stated that amidst an increasingly severe regional strategic environment, the strengthening of cooperation between the two countries as partners in promoting FOIP was reassuring, and looked forward to enhancing "Strategic Cooperative Partnership."

(7) Canada

Canada announced its Indo-Pacific Strategy in 2022, and Japan and Canada have been steadily advancing concrete initiatives based on the "Japan-Canada Action Plan for contributing to a free and open Indo-Pacific region."

In November, Prime Minister Takaichi and Prime Minister Mark Carney concurred on closely cooperating toward the realization of FOIP, on the basis of the "Japan-Canada Action Plan."

Under the "Japan-Canada Action Plan," Canada has continuously deployed aircraft and ships to the region to conduct surveillance operations against illicit maritime activities, including ship-to-ship transfers(2), and has also dispatched coast guard vessels to carry out missions such as measures against illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing.

(8) Europe

A The EU

In July, Prime Minister Ishiba held the 30th Japan-EU Summit with President of the European Council António Luís Santos da Costa and President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen. Both sides reaffirmed that the security of the Euro-Atlantic and Indo-Pacific regions is inseparable and confirmed that Japan and the EU will closely coordinate with each other in maintaining and strengthening the free and open international order based on the rule of law. In November, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs ERI Arfiya attended the 4th EU Indo-Pacific Ministerial Forum held in Brussels, Belgium, and emphasized that Japan would continue to actively promote FOIP and adapt it to contemporary challenges.

B The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)

On the occasion of the NATO Summit held in The Hague, the Netherlands in June, a meeting between NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte and the four Indo-Pacific partners (IP4: Japan, Australia, New Zealand, and the ROK) was held, which Foreign Minister Iwaya attended. At the meeting, views were exchanged on the international security environment, and the importance of concrete cooperation between NATO and the Indo-Pacific partners, including in the field of defense industry, as well as NATO's expanded engagement with the Indo-Pacific, was confirmed.

C The United Kingdom (UK)

In March, the inaugural meeting of the Japan-UK Economic 2+2 Ministers' Meeting ("Economic 2+2") was held, at which ministerial-level discussions were conducted on Japan-UK cooperation in economic security, and both countries reaffirmed that they should remain advocates of a free, open, and rules-based international economic order. From August to September, the UK Carrier Strike Group (CSG25) made port calls in Yokosuka and Tokyo, during which Prime Minister Ishiba inspected the UK aircraft carrier and a Japan-UK Defence Ministers' Meeting was held. An international

(2) In this context, "ship-to-ship transfers" refers to the transfers to or from North Korea-flagged vessels of any goods or items at sea, which UN Security Council resolution 2375 (adopted in September 2017) prohibits the UN member states from facilitating or engaging in.

symposium entitled "Pacific Future Forum" was also held to discuss strengthening cooperation on security and economic matters in the Indo-Pacific region, at which the defense ministers of Japan and the UK delivered keynote speeches. At the Japan-UK Summit Meeting held in November, Prime Minister Takaichi and Prime Minister Keir Starmer exchanged views on the international situations, including developments in East Asia, and concurred that Japan and the UK would continue to coordinate their efforts on various issues in the international community.

D France

In May, Foreign Minister Iwaya held a Japan-France Foreign Ministers' Meeting with Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs Jean-Noël Barrot and confirmed progress in Japan-France cooperation in the security field in the Indo-Pacific region and in cooperation for strengthening the resilience of mineral resource supply chains. In November, Foreign Minister Motegi held a Japan-France Foreign Ministers' Meeting with Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs Barrot and discussed close cooperation with France, which is also an Indo-Pacific nation, toward realizing FOIP as well as maintaining and strengthening the free and open international order based on the rule of law. In the same month, Prime Minister Takaichi and President Emmanuel Macron exchanged views and concurred that Japan and France, as "exceptional partners," sharing the recognition that the security of the Euro-Atlantic and Indo-Pacific is inseparable, would continue to closely cooperate in all fields, including security and the economy.

E Germany

Based on Germany's Indo-Pacific guidelines approved by the Cabinet in September 2020, the Government of Germany has been working to strengthen its engagement with the region, and security cooperation between Japan and Germany has further deepened. In August, Minister for Foreign Affairs Johann Wadephul visited Japan and the 1st Japan-Germany Foreign Ministerial Strategic Dialogue was held. Foreign Minister Iwaya stated that Japan welcomed Germany's continued engagement in the Indo-Pacific region through asset deployments and other efforts, and the two foreign ministers concurred on holding the next Foreign and Defense Ministers' Meeting ("2+2") at an early date to further materialize bilateral cooperation in the security field. In addition, cooperation through both countries' asset deployments to date and the entry into force of the Japan-Germany Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (Japan-Germany ACSA) further advanced, including the first-ever visit by Japan Air Self-Defense Force F-15 aircraft in September and others to Germany. Furthermore, in November, Prime Minister Takaichi held a meeting with Chancellor Friedrich Merz and stated that Japan would like to cooperate toward the realization of FOIP, given that the security of the Euro-Atlantic and Indo-Pacific is inseparable.

F Italy

In March, Prime Minister Ishiba held a Japan-Italy Summit Meeting with President Sergio Mattarella, welcomed the deepening of bilateral cooperation in a wide range of fields including security, and concurred on further strengthening Japan-Italy relations based on the "Japan-Italy Action Plan" announced in 2024. From March to April, the Italian Navy frigate *Antonio Marceglia* made port calls in Yokosuka and Osaka and conducted surveillance operations against illicit maritime activities, including ship-to-ship transfers by North Korea-flagged vessels. In May, Prime Minister Ishiba held a Japan-Italy Summit telephone call with President of the Council of Ministers Giorgia Meloni and concurred on further progress on security cooperation, including the Global Combat Air Programme (GCAP), as Italy increases its involvement in the Indo-Pacific. In September, the Japan-Italy Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (Japan-Italy ACSA), which was signed in November 2024, entered into force.

G The Netherlands

In February, Foreign Minister Iwaya held a foreign ministers' meeting with Minister of Foreign Affairs Caspar Veldkamp at the Munich Security Conference and concurred on deepening defense cooperation and other areas. In April, Prime Minister Ishiba held a summit meeting with Prime Minister Dick Schoof during his visit to Japan and concurred on cooperating on various global challenges. In June, Foreign Minister Iwaya met with Prime Minister Schoof on the occasion

of the NATO Summit and concurred on commencing negotiations on an Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA). In September, Prime Minister Ishiba held a summit meeting with Prime Minister Schoof on the occasion of the UN General Assembly and concurred on closely cooperating on urgent international issues. In December, the Japan-Netherlands Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (Japan-Netherlands ACSA) was signed.

Section 2 Asia and Oceania

1 Overview

(General Overview)

The Asia-Oceania region is a dynamic region in which countries and regions at various stages of development exist, and where diverse cultures and races intermingle and influence each other. More than half — approximately 4.2 billion people — of the world's population (approximately 8.2 billion) reside in the countries participating in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Regional Forum (ARF),(1) excluding the United States, Canada, and Russia.(2) Moreover, the combined nominal gross domestic product (GDP) of these countries accounts for more than 30% of the world total (2024),(3) and supported by an abundance of human resources, this region is a center of growth and prosperity for the international community.

The strong growth and sustained stability of this closely interrelated region are directly linked to the peace and prosperity of the international community, including Japan. On the other hand, the security environment in this region is becoming increasingly severe and complex, owing to North Korea's nuclear and missile development; the strengthening and modernization of military forces in a manner that lacks transparency; unilateral attempts to change the status quo that run counter to the rule of law and openness; and the heightening of tensions among relevant countries and regions over maritime issues. There are also factors that impede the stable growth of the region, including economic and financial systems still under development, economic coercion and non-market policies and practices, transnational organized crime, climate change, instability in the supply and demand of food and resources, frequent natural disasters, terrorism, and aging birthrates coupled with declining populations. Amid these circumstances surrounding the region, and despite growing tensions in Japan-China relations (See 2(1)B on page 40.), Japan has been actively engaging in diplomacy in this region, including at the leader and foreign ministerial levels, and is maintaining and developing good relations with neighboring countries.

With regard to diplomacy at the summit level, Prime Minister Ishiba visited Malaysia and Indonesia in January as his first bilateral visits after assuming office, and held summit meetings with the respective leaders. He also held a meeting with the Prime Minister of Laos, who visited Japan thereafter, and at these meetings, the two leaders concurred to advance practical cooperation in areas such as maritime security, disaster response, and decarbonization. In February and March, summit meetings were held with Palau, the Marshall Islands, and the Federated States of Micronesia.

In April, Prime Minister Ishiba visited Viet Nam and the Philippines, confirming that cooperation, including in the security field, would be strengthened toward the realization of a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)" based on the rule of law. In May, Prime Minister Ishiba respectively held meetings with the leaders of Laos, Bangladesh, and Cambodia, who visited Japan. In June, at the G7 Kananaskis Summit held in Canada, Prime Minister Ishiba held meetings with the leaders of the Republic of Korea (ROK) and Australia, and in July he held a meeting with the Prime Minister

(1) ASEAN member states (Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Timor-Leste, and Viet Nam), Japan, the United States, India, Australia, Canada, the Republic of Korea, Sri Lanka, China, New Zealand, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Bangladesh, Mongolia, and Russia (25 countries). Additionally, one country and one organization participate (North Korea; the EU).

(2) Source: United Nations Population Fund

(3) Source: World Bank

of Papua New Guinea. In August, he held a meeting with Prime Minister Modi of India, who visited Japan, and announced outcome documents including a Joint Statement. In the same month, Prime Minister Ishiba also held meetings with the leaders of the ROK and Timor-Leste.

In September, Prime Minister Ishiba, visiting the ROK, held a meeting with ROK President Lee Jae-myung, concurring on significantly developing Japan-ROK relations in a stable manner, and affirming that the two countries would continue strategic communication on security and economic security areas. That same month, Prime Minister Ishiba also held a meeting with the leader of Sri Lanka.

In October, Prime Minister Takaichi visited Malaysia to attend the ASEAN-related Summit Meetings as her first overseas visit after assuming office as Prime Minister, confirming strengthened coordination with ASEAN countries, which are a key to the realization of FOIP, and conveying her determination to strengthen collaboration to make Japan and ASEAN stronger and more prosperous together. Furthermore, on the occasion of the same visit, Prime Minister Takaichi held summit meetings with the leaders of Australia, Malaysia, and the Philippines, and also greeted and held informal talks with the leaders of each ASEAN country. That same month, Prime Minister Takaichi, visiting the ROK to attend the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Leaders' Meeting, held summit meetings with the leaders of China and the ROK.

In November, Prime Minister Takaichi held a meeting with the leader of Fiji, and further that month, when she visited South Africa to attend the G20 Leaders' Summit, she held meetings and brief exchanges of views with the leaders of India, the ROK, Australia, Viet Nam, and Malaysia.

In January 2026, Prime Minister Takaichi held a meeting with President Lee Jae-myung of the ROK, who was visiting Japan, sharing the recognition of the strategic importance of Japan-ROK relations, affirming that both countries should work together to play a role in ensuring the stability of the region, and concurring to continue close communication going forward.

With regard to diplomacy at the foreign ministerial level, Foreign Minister Iwaya visited the ROK, the Philippines, and Palau in January 2025, holding Foreign Ministers' Meetings in each country. That same month, he attended the Japan-Australia-India-U.S. (Quad) Foreign Ministers' Meeting held in Washington, D.C., U.S., reaffirming the commitment to the realization of FOIP, and also held Foreign Ministers' Meetings with Australia and India respectively. In February, a Japan-U.S.-ROK Foreign Ministers' Meeting was held in Germany, where Foreign Minister Iwaya visited to attend the Munich Security Conference. That same month, he also held a meeting with the Foreign Minister of Palau.

In March, Foreign Minister Iwaya held meetings with the respective Foreign Ministers of Mongolia and the Federated States of Micronesia, who visited Japan. That same month, at the Japan-China-ROK Trilateral Foreign Ministers' Meeting hosted by Japan as chair, it was confirmed that the three countries, which have significant influence and responsibility for the peace and prosperity of the international community, would jointly promote future-oriented exchanges and cooperation. On this occasion, bilateral Foreign Ministers' Meetings were held separately with China and the ROK, and a Japan-China High-Level Economic Dialogue was also convened, where candid discussions were held not only on cooperation items but also on resolving issues and concerns.

In April, Foreign Minister Iwaya visited Belgium to attend the Meeting of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Ministers of Foreign Affairs, where a Japan-U.S.-ROK Foreign Ministers' Meeting was also held. Foreign Minister Iwaya also held a meeting with the Foreign Minister of Tonga, who was visiting Japan. In May, Foreign Ministers' Meetings were held with Nepal, the Philippines, Cambodia, and Thailand. In July, Foreign Minister Iwaya held meetings with the Foreign Ministers of Australia and India. That same month, at the ASEAN-related Foreign Ministers' Meetings held in Malaysia, Japan confirmed its continued commitment to strengthening relations as a "Trusted Partner" of ASEAN. During the visit to Malaysia, Japan co-hosted the Mekong-Japan Foreign Ministers' Meeting, held a Japan-U.S.-Philippines Foreign Ministers' Meeting and a Japan-U.S.-ROK Foreign Ministers' Meeting, and further held meetings and informal talks with Viet Nam, New Zealand, China, Laos, Singapore, Malaysia, and the Philippines, among others.

In September, Foreign Minister Iwaya held the Japan-Australia Foreign and Defence Ministerial Consultations ("2+2") and the Japan-Australia Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Tokyo. At the "2+2," Japan and Australia shared a deep understanding of the increasingly severe strategic environment in the Indo-Pacific region and concurred on further developing cooperation to strengthen collective deterrence. Furthermore, that month, a Japan-U.S.-ROK Foreign Ministers' Meeting was held in New York, U.S., where Foreign Minister Iwaya was visiting to attend the United Nations General Assembly and other meetings, and Foreign Ministers' Meetings were also held with the Foreign Ministers of Cambodia and Thailand. That month, a Japan-Sri Lanka Foreign Ministers' Meeting was also held, and in October, a Foreign Ministers' Meeting with Solomon Islands was also conducted.

In October, Foreign Minister Motegi held a Foreign Ministers' Meeting with Palau. That same month, as his first overseas trip since taking office as Foreign Minister, he visited Malaysia and attended the ASEAN Plus Three (Japan, China, ROK) Summit, the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) Summit, and the East Asia Summit (EAS) as the Prime Minister's representative, and also held meetings with the Foreign Ministers of Viet Nam and India. Furthermore, at the APEC Ministerial Meeting held in the ROK, in addition to meetings and informal talks with the Foreign Ministers of Australia, the ROK, and Singapore, a Japan-U.S.-ROK Foreign Ministers' Meeting was also held.

In November, Foreign Minister Motegi hosted the Japan-Indonesia Foreign and Defense Ministerial Meeting ("2+2") and a bilateral Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Tokyo. At the "2+2," the four ministers, sharing their recognition of the current increasingly severe security environment, confirmed their commitment to further reinforcing the cooperative relationship to maintain and strengthen a free and open international order based on the rule of law. In December, Foreign Minister Motegi held a meeting with the Thai Foreign Minister, who visited Japan.

In January 2026, Foreign Minister Motegi visited the Philippines and India, and through Foreign Ministers' Meetings and other engagements in both countries, shared recognition of the current severe regional and international situation toward the realization of FOIP, and concurred on cooperating including within the Japan-U.S.-Philippines and Japan-Australia-India-U.S. (Quad) frameworks.

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

The Japan-U.S. Alliance is the cornerstone of Japan's diplomacy and security, and the foundation for peace and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific region and the international community. In the midst of an increasingly severe regional security environment, the importance of the Japan-U.S. Alliance has never been greater. Under the unprecedentedly strong cooperative relationship between Japan and the U.S., since the inauguration of President Trump in January, Japan and the U.S. have held 10 Summit Meetings and six Foreign Ministers' Meetings, including telephone calls (as of January 2026). The two countries have been striving to maintain peace and stability in the region and the international community by constantly communicating and collaborating at all levels, including at the summit level and at the foreign minister level. Both Japan and the U.S. are promoting cooperation toward realizing FOIP, and are also deepening their cooperation to address regional issues, including the situations in China, North Korea, Russia and Ukraine, and the Middle East.

In February, Prime Minister Ishiba visited Washington, D.C. and held a Japan-U.S. Summit Meeting with President Trump, the first in-person meeting between the two leaders. The two leaders shared their views on the severe and complex security environment and concurred to work closely to realize FOIP and to elevate the Japan-U.S. Alliance to new heights. The two leaders also concurred to strengthen the deterrence and response capabilities of the Japan-U.S. Alliance. Prime Minister Ishiba reiterated Japan's unwavering commitment to fundamentally reinforcing its defense capabilities and President Trump welcomed such commitment. President Trump underscored the unwavering commitment by the U.S. to the defense of Japan, using its full range of capabilities, including nuclear. The two leaders reaffirmed that Article V of the Japan-U.S. Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security applies to the Senkaku Islands, and confirmed their commitment to the steady implementation of

the realignment of U.S. Forces in Japan in accordance with the Okinawa Consolidation Plan, including the construction of the Futenma Replacement Facility at Henoko and the return of Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) Futenma. Furthermore, the two leaders exchanged views on regional situations, such as issues related to China and dealing with North Korea including on the nuclear and missile issues as well as the abductions issue.

Finally, the two leaders concurred on the importance of further developing coordination among like-minded countries, including Japan-Australia-India-U.S., Japan-U.S.-ROK, and Japan-U.S.-Philippines, shared their intention to maintain close partnership to further uphold and bolster Japan-U.S. relations, which have become stronger than ever, and they issued a United States-Japan Joint Leaders' Statement.

Between April and June, Prime Minister Ishiba held a total of four telephone calls with President Trump (on April 7, May 23, May 29, and June 13), and the two leaders exchanged views on a wide range of fields spanning foreign policy and security, and the economy, building on the outcomes of the Japan-U.S. Summit Meeting in February, in order to further advance Japan-U.S. cooperation.

In June, when Prime Minister Ishiba visited Canada to attend the G7 Kananaskis Summit, he held a Summit Meeting with President Trump. The two leaders concurred that both countries would further strengthen the Japan-U.S. Alliance to promote FOIP and to further contribute to the peace and prosperity of the world. They also had candid discussions on the series of tariff measures by the U.S. and concurred that they would instruct the ministers in charge to further advance their consultations.

Under the Takaichi administration, which took office in October, strengthening the Japan-U.S. Alliance also remains the top priority of its foreign and security policy. On October 25, shortly after the formation of the administration, Prime Minister Takaichi held her first telephone call with President Trump, and the two leaders confirmed that they will cooperate to continue elevating the Japan-U.S. Alliance to new heights. Furthermore, when President Trump visited Japan at the end of October, Prime Minister Takaichi met with him for a series of engagements, including a Japan-U.S. Summit Meeting and a signing ceremony, and achieved significant outcomes through candid discussions across a wide range of fields. The two leaders concurred to advance a broad range of security cooperation in order to further enhance the deterrence and response capabilities of the Japan-U.S. Alliance. Prime Minister Takaichi also expressed her determination to continue strongly promoting FOIP as a pillar of Japan's diplomacy and to update it to align with the times. Additionally, the two leaders affirmed their commitment to work closely together to strongly advance FOIP. Under this vision, the two leaders also confirmed the importance of strengthening regional networks among like-minded countries, including Japan-U.S.-ROK, Japan-U.S.-Philippines, and Japan-Australia-India-U.S.

In October, Foreign Minister Motegi also held a Japan-U.S. Foreign Ministers' Meeting with Secretary of State Marco Rubio, where the two ministers concurred on advancing concrete security cooperation to further strengthen Japan-U.S. Alliance deterrence and response capabilities, and confirmed that they would further develop networks of like-minded countries, including Japan-U.S.-ROK, Japan-U.S.-Philippines, and Japan-Australia-India-U.S. to realize FOIP. Prime Minister Takaichi also held a summit telephone call with President Trump at the end of November, and the two leaders exchanged views on strengthening the Japan-U.S. Alliance and on the situation and various challenges facing the Indo-Pacific region.

The two leaders also held a summit telephone call on January 2, 2026, during which Prime Minister Takaichi offered her congratulations on the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States, and affirmed that they will make this momentous anniversary a year in which they carve out a new chapter in the history of the Japan-U.S. Alliance, and that they will further deepen both the friendly relations between Japan and the U.S., as well as the broad range of Japan-U.S. cooperation, including in economy and security.

(Japan's Efforts on the Issue of Comfort Women)

(See 3(2)B(C) regarding the comfort women issue between Japan and the ROK on page 65.)

The Government of Japan has sincerely dealt with the issues of reparations, property and claims

pertaining to World War II, 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. Furthermore, 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"

The "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 UN, the Government of Japan has explained its position on a number of occasions such as during the consideration of the Seventh and Eighth Periodic Reports by the Government of Japan based on the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination

of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in February 2016,[4] the Ninth Periodic Report on the Implementation of the CEDAW submitted in September 2021, the examination of the 2024 Ninth Periodic Report submitted in October 2024, and the examination of the Seventh Report of Japan under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights in October 2022.

There have been installations of comfort woman statues[5] not only in the ROK but also in some other countries and regions. Such moves are extremely regrettable and incompatible with the position of the Government of Japan. The Government of Japan will continue reaching out to various people involved in this issue to explain its position.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs website below details Japan's Efforts on the Issue of Comfort Women.
https://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/postwar/page22e_000883.html

2 China / Mongolia, etc.

(1) China

A Situation in China

(A) Domestic Affairs

In March, the third session of the 14th National People's Congress (NPC) was held. Premier of the State Council Li Qiang delivered the Report on the Work of the Government and, in reviewing the previous year, stated that the path of development over the past year had been anything but ordinary, and that despite facing a complex and challenging situation of mounting external pressure and growing internal difficulties, economic performance had maintained stability while trending upward. With regard to the policy direction for 2025, Premier Li noted that the year is the concluding year of the 14th Five-Year Plan and that the foundation must be solidly laid for the 15th Five-Year Plan to get off to a good start. He also stated that the GDP growth rate target was set at roughly the same level as last year's initial goal (around 5%), but cautioned that achieving the 2025 targets would not be easy and that considerable effort would be required. Regarding the post-session press conference by the Premier of the State Council for both domestic and foreign journalists — which had continued for about 30 years — it was announced in 2024 that it would not take place for the next several years, and it was indeed not held in 2025 either.

In April, the Central Conference on Work Related to Neighboring Countries was held. A Party Central conference on the theme of neighboring diplomacy attended by members of the top leadership had not been held for approximately 12 years, since the "Conference on the Diplomatic Work with Neighboring Countries" in 2013. President Xi Jinping also visited two border minority autonomous regions in succession — the Tibet Autonomous Region in August, where he attended the "Celebrations of the 60th Founding Anniversary of the Tibet Autonomous Region," and the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region (XUAR) in September to attend the "Celebrations of the 70th Founding Anniversary of the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region."

The year 2025 marked the 80th anniversary of the end of World War II, and on September 3 China held the "Commemoration of the 80th Anniversary of the Victory of the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression and the World Anti-Fascist War" at Tian'anmen Square, where a military parade was also conducted. In his address, President Xi Jinping expressed pride in the fact that the "War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression" was an important part of the World Anti-Fascist War and that the Chinese people, at an enormous national sacrifice, made a major contribution to saving human civilization and safeguarding world peace. He also expressed

(4) For details, see the following website:
https://warp.ndl.go.jp/web/20240701202902/https://www.mofa.go.jp/a_o/rp/page24e_000163.html

(5) 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.

(4)

the view that humanity today is once again faced with choices between peace and war, dialogue and confrontation, and win-win cooperation versus a zero-sum game. President Xi further stated that the momentum toward the "great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation" is irresistible.

In October, the Fourth Plenary Session of the 20th Central Committee (the so-called "Fourth Plenary Session") was held, which adopted the "Recommendations of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China for Formulating the 15th Five-Year Plan" (hereinafter, the "Recommendations"). The Recommendations indicated recognition that China is "in a period of development where strategic opportunities exist alongside risks and challenges and uncertainties and unforeseen factors are rising." Among the major objectives for the period of the 15th Five-Year Plan, it set forth, inter alia, realizing significant achievements in high-quality development and substantial improvements in science and technological self-reliance and strength. On personnel matters, disciplinary actions against 14 senior officials, including former Vice Chairman of the Central Military Commission He Weidong, were ratified.

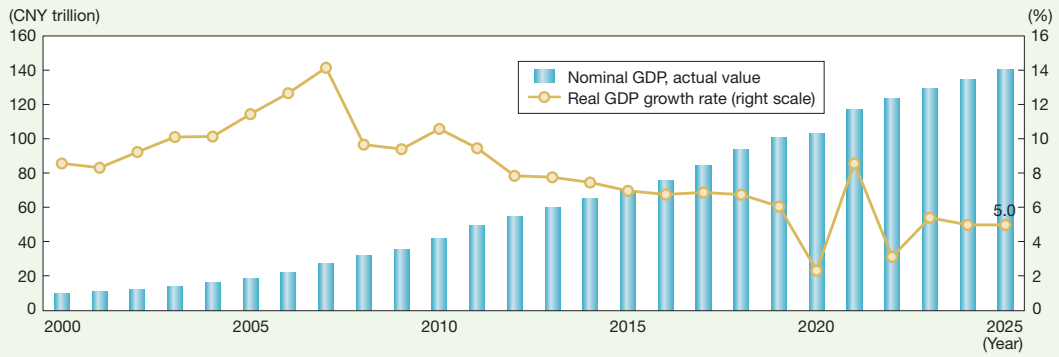
In December, the Central Economic Work Conference was held as usual.

The international community continues to express high interest in China's human rights situation, including in the XUAR and the situation surrounding Hong Kong. For example, in December, a G7 Foreign Ministers' Statement on the Jimmy Lai verdict in Hong Kong was issued, and concerns continued to be expressed about the deterioration of rights, freedoms, and autonomy in Hong Kong. Japan believes that it is important that universal values and principles of the international community, such as freedom, respect for fundamental human rights, and the rule of law, are guaranteed in China, and Japan has been directly communicating its position to the Government of China, for example by also taking summit meetings and foreign ministers' meetings as opportunities to express serious concern about these situations. Furthermore, at the UN, Japan has been the only member state from Asia to participate in a joint statement by like-minded countries expressing concerns about the human rights situation in China. At the Third Committee of the UN General Assembly in November, the United States made a joint statement on behalf of 15 countries, expressing deep concern about serious human rights violations occurring in China, including human rights abuses against ethnic and religious minorities such as Uyghurs and Tibetans, and Japan joined that statement. The Government of Japan will continue strongly urging China to take action while also closely cooperating with the international community.

(B) Economy

At the NPC held in March, the GDP growth rate target for 2025 was set at around 5%, the same as the previous year, while the consumer price inflation target was lowered to around 2% (compared to the 3% target for 2024). Premier Li Qiang also explicitly stated that "achieving this year's targets will not be easy." The deficit-to-GDP ratio was also raised to 4.0% (up from 3.0% the previous year), and the upper limit for new local government special-purpose bonds was modestly

China's GDP



Source: National Bureau of Statistics of China

set at 4.4 trillion CNY (up from 3.9 trillion CNY the previous year). As a result, China's full-year real GDP growth rate for 2025 increased by 5.0% year-on-year, achieving the target, and by quarter, the first quarter (January to March) increased by 5.4% year-on-year, the second quarter (April to June) increased by 5.2% year-on-year, the third quarter (July to September) increased by 4.8% year-on-year, and the fourth quarter (October to December) increased by 4.5% year-on-year.

China's economy has remained stalled due to a sluggish real estate market and deteriorating consumer sentiment. At the NPC in March, "expanding domestic demand" rose from third to first among the list of priority items. With respect to consumption, the trade-in subsidy policies for home appliances and electric vehicles (EVs) that had been launched in 2024 drove some positive performance in the first half of 2025, but momentum faded in the second half due to the waning effect of those policies. In addition, the government announced support measures to expand service consumption and fiscal expenditure in the livelihood sector — including the waiver of childcare and education fees for some children at public kindergartens — as measures related to expanding domestic demand, but consumer sentiment has yet to improve. Meanwhile, with domestic consumer sentiment remaining sluggish, sectors such as the automotive industry saw problems with excessive discounting toward consumers and cutthroat competition (known as "neijuan" [involution]), and the July Central Committee Political Bureau (CPC) meeting set out policy directions such as curbing disorderly competition among enterprises and promoting production capacity management in key industries. Subsequently, in October, the National Development and Reform Commission and the State Administration for Market Regulation issued a notice on "neijuan," with the government signaling an "anti-neijuan" stance.

On the other hand, with respect to imports and exports, while exports to the United States declined significantly due to U.S. tariff increases on Chinese goods resulting from the U.S.-China economic confrontation exports to ASEAN and other regions performed well, and exports continued to drive China's overall economy. Imports were weaker than exports, reflecting sluggish domestic demand.

Regarding the real estate market, no large-scale support measures were announced throughout 2024, and in December, a major real estate developer in which a state-owned enterprise is the largest shareholder announced the deferral of corporate bond redemptions, suggesting that the sector will continue to weigh on the overall economy.

In December, the Central Economic Work Conference was held, with 2025 described as a far-from-ordinary year. It was noted that China's economy had advanced through pressure and developed in new and positive directions. Challenges identified included the impact of shifts in the external environment and the domestic tension between oversupply and insufficient demand, while the conference indicated recognition that many of these issues arise in the course of development and transition and are therefore addressable. As the direction of economic policy for 2026, the conference called for improving the efficiency of macroeconomic governance through counter-cyclical and cross-cyclical adjustments, and announced the continuation, following 2025, of a "more proactive fiscal policy" and "appropriately accommodative monetary policy."

As a long-term economic goal, the Fourth Plenary Session of the 20th CPC Central Committee was held in October, at which the Recommendations from the Chinese Communist Party regarding the "15th Five-Year Plan" were deliberated upon and adopted. Among the major objectives for the period of the 15th Five-Year Plan, the Recommendations set forth, inter alia, realizing significant achievements in "high-quality development," substantial improvements in science and technological self-reliance and strength, and fresh breakthroughs in further deepening reform comprehensively, with the aim of reaching a per capita GDP at the level of a mid-level developed country by 2035. A supply-driven economic model centered on manufacturing and new quality productive forces continues to be prioritized, while the policy of expanding domestic demand is emphasized more strongly than before, and specific provisions are made regarding livelihood issues (such as improving the social security system) that would contribute to expanding disposable income.

In recent years, the problem of excess production capacity has become increasingly apparent, and overcapacity — or the risk thereof — has been identified

across multiple Chinese industrial sectors, including steel and EVs, leading countries to implement tariff increases and trade remedy measures against Chinese goods. It is important to address non-market policies and practices that constitute the root causes of this problem — such as opaque industrial subsidies — and to work toward the development of rules in order to ensure a level playing field on a global basis.

China also, as export control measures, added related items in five mineral categories including tungsten to its control list in February 2025, and added related items in seven medium and heavy rare earth mineral categories to its control list in April of the same year. Furthermore, in October of the same year, China announced a series of additional export control measures, including re-export restrictions and technology export restrictions on rare earth-related items, and the addition of related items in five new medium and heavy rare earth mineral categories to the control list. The measures announced in October were subsequently subject to an announced delay of approximately one year, following agreements reached at the China-U.S. Summit Meeting held in the same month. Additionally, in January 2026, China announced strengthened export control measures on dual-use items destined for Japan, and in February the Ministry of Commerce of China announced export bans and other restrictions on dual-use items targeting certain Japanese companies and others.

(C) Foreign Policy

At the Foreign Minister's press conference during the NPC sessions in March, Member of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee and Foreign Minister Wang Yi, speaking on China's summit diplomacy for 2025, stated that "President Xi is expected to make a number of overseas visits. The summit diplomacy will write a new chapter on the closer cooperation and shared success between China and the world." In 2025 as well, diplomatic activities at various levels, led by high-level engagements headed by President Xi Jinping, have remained active. In particular, China hosted ceremonies and conferences on its own soil — including the "Tianjin SCO Summit" in late August to early September, the "Commemoration of the 80th Anniversary of the Victory of the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression and the World Anti-Fascist War," and a "Global Leaders' Meeting on Women" in October — and conducted an active program of summit diplomacy by inviting heads of state and government leaders from various countries and holding bilateral summit meetings. At the SCO Summit in particular, President Xi Jinping, expressing his desire to work with all countries to promote the establishment of a more just and reasonable global governance system and to advance together toward a community with a shared future for humanity, proposed the "Global Governance Initiative" for the first time.

In relations with Russia, direct communication between the leaders of China and Russia remained frequent in 2025. President Xi Jinping visited Russia in May to attend the military parade commemorating the 80th anniversary of the Victory over Nazi Germany and held a China-Russia Summit Meeting, and President Vladimir Putin visited China in late August to early September on the occasion of the SCO Summit and the "Commemoration of the 80th Anniversary of the Victory of the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression and the World Anti-Fascist War." Notably, at the China-Russia Summit Meeting in May, a joint statement was issued on the further deepening of the comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination between the two countries, which affirmed that they regard each other consistently as priority partners for cooperation and that they will jointly counter any scheme seeking to interfere with or destroy the traditional friendship and deep mutual trust between China and Russia. Furthermore, on the occasion of the September "Commemoration of the 80th Anniversary of the Victory of the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression and the World Anti-Fascist War," President Kim Jong Un of North Korea also visited China.

In relations with neighboring countries, President Xi Jinping also traveled abroad actively, visiting Viet Nam, Malaysia, and Cambodia in April, traveling to Astana, Kazakhstan in June to attend the China-Central Asia Summit, and visiting Gyeongju, ROK in November to attend the APEC Leaders' Meeting, holding summit meetings with the leaders of each country visited.

In relations with Europe, in 2025 — which marked the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic

relations between the EU and China — a China-EU Summit was held in China in July, with President of the European Council António Costa and President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen visiting China and holding meetings with President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Qiang respectively. In addition, dignitaries of EU member states visited China individually, including King Felipe VI of Spain in November and French President Emmanuel Macron in December.

Between the U.S. and China, a broad exchange of trade restrictive measures including tariffs took place with the second Trump administration, which took office in January 2025. At the same time, communication between the U.S. and China has continued, including multiple rounds of ministerial-level U.S.-China Economic and Trade Meetings from May 2025 onward, a U.S.-China Foreign Ministers' Meeting in July, and in October the first in-person U.S.-China Summit Meeting between President Trump and President Xi Jinping since the second Trump administration took office — as well as a U.S.-China Defense Ministers' Meeting.

The U.S. announced in February 2025 an additional 10% tariff on imports from China aimed at halting the flow of illicit drugs such as fentanyl, and subsequently announced in March a further increase to a uniform 20% additional tariff, citing China's insufficient response. In reaction, China announced tariff increases on certain U.S. imports and export control measures on rare earths, among others. China expressed its strong dissatisfaction with the U.S. and declared that if the U.S. persists in waging a tariff war or trade war, China will see it through to the end. In April, the U.S. announced the introduction of reciprocal tariffs, declaring a 34% additional tariff on imports from China among other measures aimed at addressing trade deficits. China in turn announced additional measures in response, and the tariff measures of both countries escalated, temporarily reaching a situation of mutual additional tariffs of 125% (which amounted to 145% on the U.S. side when combined with the 20% additional tariff levied through March). Amid these circumstances, in May in Switzerland, the First U.S.-China Economic and Trade Meeting (ministerial-level) was held between U.S. Secretary of the Treasury Scott Bessent and U.S. Trade Representative Jamieson Greer on the American side, and Vice Premier of the State Council He Lifeng on the Chinese side, and a U.S.-China Joint Statement was issued. As a result, the U.S. and China announced the removal or suspension of mutually elevated tariffs and the elimination of non-tariff measures, and decided to establish an economic and trade consultation mechanism between the two countries. Subsequently, through U.S.-China leaders' telephone calls in June and September and at the U.S.-China Economic and Trade Meeting (ministerial-level), discussions continued on the extension of the tariff suspension, China's rare earth export control measures, and China's suspension of soybean imports from the U.S., among other issues. In October, a U.S.-China Summit Meeting was held in the ROK, and agreements were reached on reducing the fentanyl-related additional tariff from 20% to 10%, extending for one year the partial reduction of reciprocal tariffs from 34% to 10%, the suspension of China's rare earth export control measures, and large-scale purchases of U.S. soybeans.

As described above, while tensions between the U.S. and China had risen sharply at one point — with additional tariff rates under the second Trump administration exceeding 100% — the frequent high-level communication yielded some results, including the removal and suspension of certain trade restrictive measures.

Stable U.S.-China relations are important not only for Japan, but also for the entire international community. Japan will continue to closely monitor future developments with keen interest.

(D) Military Affairs and Security

At the 19th CPC National 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 fifth plenary session of 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). Furthermore, at the 20th CPC National Congress in 2022, he reiterated this point, stating that "Achieving the goals for the centenary of the People's Liberation Army in 2027 and more quickly elevating our people's armed forces to world-class standards are strategic tasks for building a modern socialist country in all

respects." The defense budget published by China does not sufficiently disclose its breakdown or the intentions behind its increases, and is believed to represent only a portion of actual military expenditures. Amidst such circumstances, China, under its "development strategy of civil-military fusion," has been extensively and rapidly enhancing the quality and quantity of its military power centered on its nuclear and missile capabilities and naval and air forces. In addition, China is placing importance on ensuring its superiority in new domains of outer space, cyberspace, the electromagnetic spectrum, AI, and unmanned systems, and promoting the modernization of its military through "integrated development of mechanization, informatization and intelligentization."

In 2025, China continued to conduct active operations in the vicinity of Japan. In June, Japan confirmed and publicly announced for the first time that the Chinese Navy aircraft carrier *Liaoning* had operated in waters east of Iwo To (i.e., in waters east of the so-called "Second Island Chain"), and that two aircraft carriers, *Liaoning* and *Shandong*, had simultaneously operated in the Pacific Ocean. In September, Japan confirmed and publicly announced for the first time the navigation of the aircraft carrier *Fujian*, which is larger than the previous two carriers and is believed to be equipped with electromagnetic catapults capable of operating fixed-wing early warning aircraft. In December, the aircraft carrier *Liaoning* advanced into the Pacific Ocean and was confirmed for the first time to have navigated high seas east of Okinawa Main Island and east of Amami Oshima. In addition, China conducted military exercises in the maritime and air domains surrounding Taiwan in April and December. In the South China Sea, China has been continuing and intensifying its unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force or coercion as well as dangerous and coercive actions that heighten regional tensions, which go against the rule of law and openness, based on its expansive maritime claims without legal merit — including further militarization of disputed features and dangerous maneuvers against coastal States and others such as the use of water cannons and ramming actions.

In recent years, China has grown to have a great influence on the international community, not only politically and economically, but also militarily. China's current external stance, military activities, and other activities have become a matter of serious concern for Japan and the international community, and present an unprecedented and the greatest strategic challenge in ensuring the peace and security of Japan and the peace and stability of the international community, as well as in strengthening the international order based on the rule of law, to which Japan should respond with its comprehensive national power and in cooperation with its ally, like-minded countries and others. With regard to China's rapid strengthening of its military capabilities and expansion of military activities, Japan will work in cooperation with its ally, like-minded countries, and others to encourage China to improve transparency and to cooperate constructively with international efforts for arms control, disarmament, and other such efforts. Furthermore, in order to build confidence between China and Japan, Japan will enhance communication with China in the security field through various dialogues and other means, promote efforts between Japan and China to avoid and prevent unforeseen situations, and work together with related countries to make efforts to dispel the concerns of the international community and Japan.

B Japan-China Relations

(A) Bilateral Relations: General

It is Japan's consistent policy to comprehensively promote a Mutually Beneficial Relationship Based on Common Strategic Interests with China and to build constructive and stable Japan-China relations. In relations with China, there are numerous outstanding concerns and challenges, including unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force or coercion in the East China Sea, including the situation surrounding the Senkaku Islands, and the South China Sea, a series of military activities in the vicinity of Japan including those conducted in coordination with Russia, and China's export control measures on rare earths and other items. Peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait is also important. Furthermore, Japan is seriously concerned about the situation in Hong Kong and the human rights situation in the XUAR. As China is an important neighboring country, and given the various pending concerns and challenges between Japan and China, Japan will continue communication and

respond calmly and appropriately from the perspective of its national interests.

On March 22, Foreign Minister Iwaya held a Japan-China Foreign Ministers' Meeting with Foreign Minister Wang Yi, who was visiting Japan to attend the Japan-China-ROK Trilateral Foreign Ministers' Meeting. The two foreign ministers confirmed that as the international situation changes significantly, it is important that the foreign ministers of Japan and China meeting face-to-face and discuss the resolution of issues and concerns candidly, amid significant changes in the international situation. The two foreign ministers also discussed how to proceed with Japan-China relations in 2025 and shared the view to ensure the progress of reducing issues and concerns and increasing cooperation and coordination, under a broad direction of comprehensively promoting a "Mutually Beneficial Relationship Based on Common Strategic Interests" and building "constructive and stable Japan-China relations" as confirmed by the leaders of both Japan and China. In addition, at the Sixth Japan-China High-Level Economic Dialogue, both sides confirmed the importance of continuing to strengthen cooperation in the fields of medical care, nursing care, and healthcare, and concurred on continuing the promotion of economic cooperation in the private-sector in third-country markets.

On July 10, Foreign Minister Iwaya, who was visiting Malaysia to attend the ASEAN-related Foreign Ministers' Meetings, held a meeting with Foreign Minister Wang Yi. The two foreign ministers confirmed that Japan and China have held discussions on various topics since their mutual visits in December 2024 and March 2025 toward resolving several specific pending issues, and that despite the remaining unsolved challenges, Japan and China will advance the bilateral relations forward by strengthening communication.

In addition, on July 11, the China National Day event was held at Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan. Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry MUTO Yoji attended the ceremony as the representative of the Government of Japan, and Vice Premier of the State Council He Lifeng attended from the Chinese side. Prior to the China National Day ceremony, Minister Muto, together with MORIYAMA Hiroshi, Secretary-General of the Liberal Democratic Party and Chairperson of the Japan-China Friendship Parliamentarians' Union, met with Vice Premier He Lifeng and exchanged views on developments in Japan-China relations, including in the economic field. On the same day, the Agreement between the Government of Japan and the Government of the People's Republic of China on Cooperation in Animal Health and Quarantine, which is a precondition of resumption of Japanese beef exports to China, entered into force. In light of the entry into force of this Agreement, the Government of Japan will continue to advance relevant consultations with the Government of China toward the early resumption of exports.



Japan-China Summit Meeting (October 31, ROK; Photo: Official Website of the Prime Minister's Office of Japan)

On October 31, Prime Minister Takaichi, who was visiting the ROK to attend the APEC Leaders' Meeting, held a summit meeting with President Xi Jinping. President Xi expressed his congratulations to Prime Minister Takaichi on her appointment. The two leaders reaffirmed the broad direction of Japan-China relations to comprehensively promote a "Mutually Beneficial Relationship Based on Common Strategic Interests" and building "constructive and stable Japan-China relations." On top of that, Prime Minister Takaichi raised to President Xi the importance of fulfilling the weighty responsibilities for ensuring peace and prosperity in the region and the international community. Prime Minister Takaichi pointed out that, precisely because there are concerns and issues between Japan and China, including on security and economic security, it is essential to reduce these concerns, increase mutual understanding and cooperation, and produce tangible achievements, while confirming the will to advance a Mutually Beneficial Relationship Based on Common Strategic Interests between the two leaders.

The two leaders affirmed the importance of dialogue between the leaders themselves and of multilayered communication across a wide range of fields between Japan and China.

Furthermore, with regard to the discharge of ALPS treated water(6) into the sea, the missions of additional measures under the framework of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) have been conducted multiple times, and the Government of China announced that the results of the analyses that had been completed were normal, and at the end of June 2025 issued a public notice restoring imports of aquatic products from certain regions of Japan. In light of these developments, the two leaders welcomed the resumption of imports of Japanese aquatic products and confirmed that they would continue to steadily implement the "Shared Recognition between Japan and China" announced by both governments in September 2024. Prime Minister Takaichi called on China to facilitate imports of Japanese aquatic products. In addition, she called for the promotion of relevant consultations to achieve the resumption of imports of Japanese beef and the prompt lifting of the remaining import restrictions on agricultural and aquatic products from 10 prefectures. The two leaders concurred to make progress on concrete cooperation in areas such as third-country market cooperation, green economy, and medical care, nursing care, and healthcare, and to cooperate on global issues. Prime Minister Takaichi expressed her congratulations on the China Pavilion at Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan, winning the Gold Award in the exhibition design category.

Prime Minister Takaichi expressed Japan's serious concerns over China's escalation and maritime survey activities in the East China Sea, including around the Senkaku Islands, and the intensification of Chinese military activities near Japan, and urged the Chinese side to address these issues. The two leaders also concurred on the importance of ensuring effective crisis management and communication between defense authorities. Prime Minister Takaichi expressed strong concerns regarding China's export control on rare earths. The two leaders affirmed that they would strengthen communication between relevant authorities, including through the Japan-China Export Control Dialogue. Prime Minister Takaichi demanded that the security of Japanese nationals be ensured and called for the early release of detained Japanese nationals, for the sake of Japanese citizens who feel uneasy about staying in China, in light of the cases of Japanese nationals being attacked, and detained in China. Prime Minister Takaichi reiterated the importance of peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait for the international community, including Japan. In addition, Prime Minister Takaichi once again expressed Japan's serious concerns about the situations in the South China Sea, Hong Kong, and the XUAR, and others.

The two leaders also exchanged views on the situation surrounding North Korea, including the abductions issue.

On November 1, on the occasion of the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting-Plus (ADMM-Plus) held in Malaysia, a Japan-China Defense Ministerial Meeting was also held between Minister of Defense KOIZUMI Shinjiro and Chinese Minister of Defense Dong Jun.

In 2025, exchanges between Japanese and Chinese lawmakers and political parties were also actively conducted. In January, a delegation led by Liberal Democratic Party Secretary-General MORIYAMA Hiroshi and Komeito Secretary General NISHIDA Makoto visited China to participate in the 9th Japan-China Ruling Party Exchange Council. In April, Komeito Chief Representative SAITO Tetsuo and his delegation, as well as a delegation from the Japan-China Friendship Parliamentarians' Union led by Chairman MORIYAMA Hiroshi, visited China in succession.

On the other hand, since November, China has intensified unilateral criticism and coercive measures against Japan, including in response to discussions in the Diet. Among such developments, social media posts by the Chinese Consul General in Osaka were extremely inappropriate as communications by a head of an overseas diplomatic mission, and Japan lodged

(6) ALPS treated water refers to water that contains radioactive substances from inside the buildings of the Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO)'s Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station(FDNPS) and has been purified and treated through multiple treatment facilities, including ALPS (Advanced Liquid Processing System), until the concentrations of all radioactive substances besides tritium satisfy the safety regulatory standards. As for tritium, the water is significantly diluted with seawater before the discharge into the sea so that it fully satisfies safety regulatory standards.

strong protests with the Chinese side on multiple occasions. In addition, the Government of China issued a request to Chinese nationals to refrain from traveling to Japan. Such announcements by the Chinese side risk discouraging bilateral people-to-people exchanges, including study and tourism, and Japan appropriately raised objections to the Chinese side. Furthermore, China's Permanent Representative to the United Nations issued letters on two occasions containing groundless assertions, and on November 21 the Chinese Embassy in Japan issued communications regarding the so-called "former enemy state clauses" in the Charter of the United Nations. On December 6, Chinese military fighter aircraft intermittently illuminated Japan Air Self-Defense Force fighter aircraft with their radar. This occurred while the Japan Air Self-Defense Force's fighter aircraft were carrying out countermeasures against airspace violations in response to the Chinese fighter aircraft. (See (D) on page 45.) The Government of Japan, while closely monitoring the situation, has been resolutely refuting and protesting against such factually incorrect communications and coercive measures by the Chinese side, and at the same time has been calling on the Chinese side to take appropriate action.

Furthermore, on January 6, 2026, China announced strengthened export control measures on dual-use items destined for Japan. In response, Japan made representations to the Chinese side that such measures, which target only Japan, deviate significantly from international practice, are by no means acceptable, and are extremely regrettable, lodged strong protests, and called for the withdrawal of the measures. In addition, on February 24, China announced bans on exports of dual-use items to certain Japanese companies and others. In response, Japan, similarly to the above-mentioned measures announced on January 6, made clear that such measures are absolutely unacceptable and extremely regrettable, lodged strong protests, and called for their withdrawal.

Precisely because there are pending issues and challenges between Japan and China, it is all the more important for Japan and China to communicate with each other. Japan keeps the door open to various dialogues with China and has not closed it. Under this stance, Japan intends to continue to engage in communication with the Chinese side and to continue responding calmly and appropriately from the perspective of national interests. In addition, it is extremely important to gain the understanding of various countries regarding the position and accurate factual basis of the Government of Japan, and the Government of Japan has hitherto explained Japan's position and views to various countries, including the United States, on every available occasion, and has been gaining the understanding of the international community. For example, as of February 2026, resolutions had been submitted in both the U.S. House of Representatives and the Senate which reaffirm an unwavering commitment to the Japan-U.S. Alliance and express support for Japan's efforts.

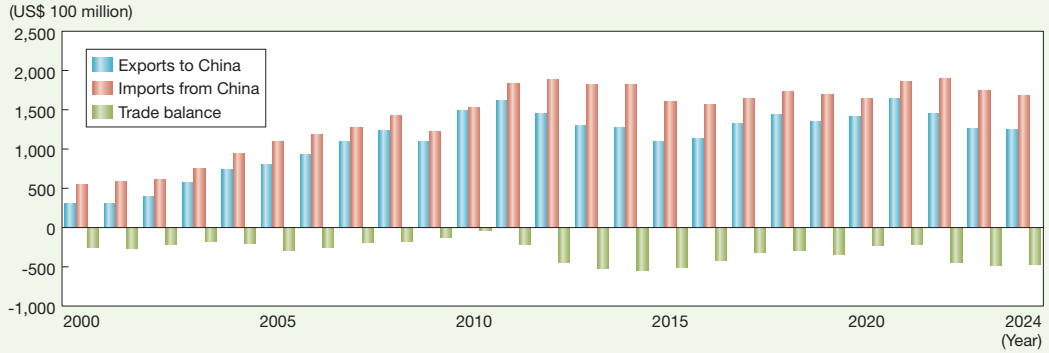
(B) Japan-China Economic Relations

Economic relations between Japan and China, including trade and investment, are very close. In 2024, the total trade between Japan and China (excluding Hong Kong) amounted to about 44.2 trillion Japanese yen (4.7% increase year-on-year), and China was Japan's largest trading partner for the second consecutive year.

Moreover, according to Chinese statistics, Japan's direct investment in China was about 2.13 billion U.S. dollars (a 45.2% decrease year-on-year, as estimated from officially published information on investment) in 2024. Japan ranks fourth in terms of the amount of direct investment to China (Singapore ranks first, the United States ranks second, and the ROK ranks third). According to balance of payment statistics, China is Japan's 14th largest investment destination, and is a source of direct investment income of approximately 2.7 trillion Japanese yen.

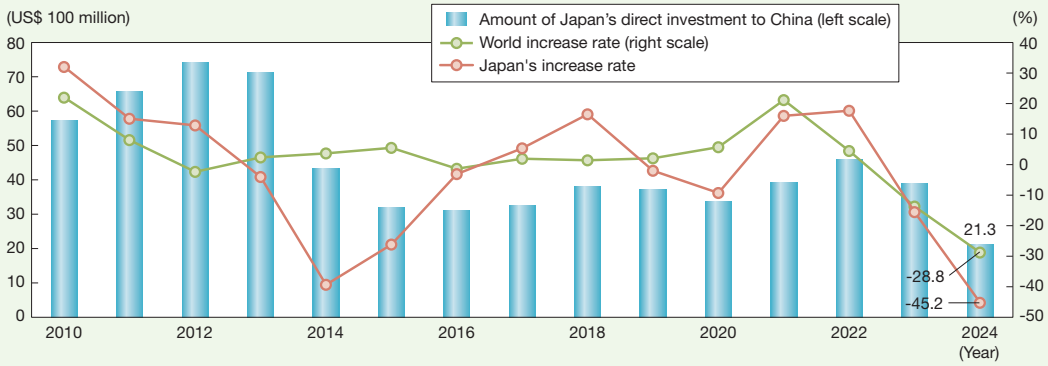
In addition, continuing on from 2024, in February a joint delegation to China comprised of the KEIDANREN (Japan Business Federation), the Japan-China Economic Association, and the Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry visited China and held meetings with Vice Premier of the State Council He Lifeng and others; and in June, the Japan Association for the Promotion of International Trade visited China.

Japan's Value of Trade with China



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

Japan's direct investment to China



Source: Ministry of Commerce of China
Note: Increase rate is estimated based on published amounts of investment.

(C) Promotion of Mutual Understanding Between Japanese and Chinese People (Current situation of people-to-people exchanges between Japan and China)

In 2025, the number of visitors to Japan from China reached approximately 9.096 million (provisional value from the Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO)), marking a substantial increase from approximately 6.981 million visitors in the previous year (finalized value from JNTO) and recovering to roughly 95 percent of the 2019 level. Meanwhile, on November 14, after the Chinese Government called on Chinese nationals to refrain from traveling to Japan, some cancellations of travel to Japan from China occurred; the pace of growth slowed in November 2025 (an approximately 3% increase year-on-year) and turned to a decline in December (an approximately 45% decrease year-on-year).

Regarding youth exchange programs for the next generation, under the JENESYS program to promote mutual understanding and understanding of Japan, students and young researchers from Japan and China deepened mutual understanding through exchanges, and sector-specific delegations also deepened their understanding of and interest in Japan's initiatives through site visits and lectures in related fields.

Moreover, personnel at various levels and fields such as politics, economics, governments, and academia in the central and regional settings are invited to Japan in an effort to build and strengthen wide-ranging partnerships. Through these exchanges, it is expected that invitees and Japanese counterparts will forge strong relationships and that an accurate understanding of Japan will be fostered.

Up until October, exchanges between Japan and China had been built up across a wide range of fields, including culture, economy, education, and regional cooperation. Since November, however, there has been a series of event cancellations and postponements.

(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. The Chinese military has also been rapidly expanding and increasing its activities in quality and quantity in the sea and in the airspace over the East China Sea.

The Senkaku Islands are indisputably an inherent 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. Subsequently, in 2008, two vessels belonging to China's State Oceanic Administration intruded into Japanese territorial sea surrounding the Senkaku Islands for the first time.(7)

During 2025, 27 incidents were recorded in which China Coast Guard vessels intruded into the Japanese territorial sea surrounding the Senkaku Islands (there were 39 incidents in 2024 and 34 incidents in 2023), and the number of confirmed days in 2025 in which China Coast Guard vessels navigated the contiguous zone around the Senkaku Islands reached a record high of 357 days. Furthermore, since May 2020, Chinese Coast Guard vessels have intruded into the Japanese territorial sea of the Senkaku Islands and there have been incidents in which China Coast Guard vessels frequently attempt to approach Japanese fishing boats in those waters, and the situation remains severe, as evidenced by an incident associated with such attempts that occurred in March 2025, in which an intrusion into Japan's territorial sea lasted more than 92 hours, the longest ever recorded. In addition, in May, a helicopter launched from a China Coast Guard vessel that had intruded into Japan's territorial sea surrounding the Senkaku Islands violated Japan's territorial airspace. The activities of the China Coast Guard vessels, which make their own assertions in Japan's territorial sea around the Senkaku Islands, are in violation of international law, and, in response to China's such unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force, through diplomatic routes the Government of Japan has repeatedly lodged strong protests, has called for the prompt withdrawal of Chinese vessels from Japan's territorial sea, and has demanded that such incidents be prevented from reoccurring. 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.

Chinese naval vessels and aircraft have also been accelerating their activities in the sea and airspace around Japan, including in the East China Sea. In May 2025, the aircraft carrier *Liaoning* navigated the East China Sea, and Japan observed that carrier-based fighters and carrier-based helicopters conducted take-offs and landings in waters close to Japan. In addition, following an unusual close approach over the high seas in the Pacific Ocean in June, in July, over the high seas in the East China Sea, Chinese military fighter-bombers flew in unusual close proximity toward Air Self-Defense Force aircrafts. Furthermore, in December, over the high seas southeast of Okinawa island, a fighter aircraft which took off from the Chinese aircraft carrier "Liaoning" intermittently illuminated Japan Air Self-Defense Force's fighter aircraft with its radar for approximately 30 minutes. This occurred while the Japan Air Self-Defense Force's fighter aircraft were carrying out countermeasures against airspace violations in response to the Chinese fighter aircraft. With regard to such incidents, given the possibility that they could trigger accidental collisions, Japan has expressed serious concerns and lodged strong protests calling for the prevention of recurrence through both diplomatic and defense channels. In addition, regarding China-Russia military cooperation around Japan, joint navigation

(7) 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





Chinese marine structures confirmed to have been installed 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

by Chinese and Russian naval vessels was confirmed in August, and joint flights by Chinese and Russian bombers were confirmed in December, as in the previous year. On multiple occasions Chinese naval vessels were also confirmed to be navigating waters surrounding Japan including in those around the Senkaku Islands. Japan has serious concerns in light of these recent developments by Chinese military, including China-Russia cooperation, in the sea and airspace around Japan, including in the East China Sea. Japan has appropriately raised objections with the Chinese side regarding each incident.

Chinese aircraft activity, including by unmanned aerial vehicles, continues to occur, and the number of scrambles by the Air Self-Defense Force in response to Chinese military aircraft since 2013 has remained high. In response to these recent activities by the Chinese military, Japan has repeatedly been raising the issues through diplomatic routes.

At the Japan-China Summit Meeting held in October, Prime Minister Takaichi expressed Japan's serious concerns regarding the intensifying activities of the Chinese military around Japan and called on the Chinese side to address them.

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. In addition to the four structures built by the Chinese side prior to the "2008 Agreement" on resource development in the East China Sea, the Government of Japan has confirmed 12 new structures built between June 2013 and May 2016 that are west of the geographical equidistance line, two new structures that have been built since 2022, and movements toward the installation of four further new structures confirmed between 2025 and 2026, for a total of 22 structures have been installed so far. 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 for the conclusion of international agreements based on the implementation of the "2008 Agreement" regarding the development of natural resources in the East China Sea. At the Japan-China Summit Meeting between Prime Minister Abe and President Xi Jinping in Osaka 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."

In recent years numerous activities by China to carry out maritime surveys in and around Japan's EEZ, including in the East China Sea, without obtaining Japan's approval, have also continued to be confirmed, and on each time this happens, Japan has lodged objections and protests with the Chinese side through diplomatic routes.

In order to appropriately deal with these maritime and security concerns, both Japan and China have been promoting dialogue and exchanges between the

authorities concerned. For example, in June 2018 the defense authorities of Japan and China began operation of the "Maritime and Aerial Communication Mechanism between the Japan-China Defense Authorities", which is highly significant for promoting mutual understanding between both countries and avoiding and preventing accidental collisions.

It is highly meaningful from the perspective of building trust and bolstering cooperation for diplomats from both countries to directly and frankly exchange opinions through the Japan-China Security Dialogue, the Japan-China High-Level Consultation on Maritime Affairs, and other discussions between related authorities of both countries. The Government of Japan will continue asserting Japan's position on individual issues through steady dialogue and bolstering of communication.

(Yamato Bank)

Regarding Japan's responses to Chinese fishing vessels engaging in illegal fishing in the waters around the Yamato Bank in the Sea of Japan, the number of vessels warned to depart by Fisheries Agency enforcement vessels and Japan Coast Guard patrol vessels was 32 in 2024 and 12 in 2025, and illegal fishing by Chinese fishing vessels continues to be confirmed. In light of this situation, Japan has repeatedly conveyed its concerns to the Chinese side on various occasions, and has strongly urged the Chinese side to take effective measures to resolve the issue of illegal fishing.

(Japanese Food Import Restrictions Issue)

Regarding China's import restrictions on Japanese food products, Japan has repeatedly and strongly urged for their elimination as soon as possible, at all levels, including at the leader and foreign ministerial levels.

In August 2023, in response to the start of the discharge of ALPS treated water into the sea, the Government of China announced a temporary suspension of all imports of Japanese aquatic products. However, in September 2024, the two governments announced a "Shared Recognition between Japan and China"(8) regarding the discharge of ALPS treated water into the sea and China's import restrictions on Japanese aquatic products. After conducting additional measures under the framework of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the Chinese side would initiate adjustment of its import restrictions on Japanese aquatic products, and would steadily restore imports of Japanese aquatic products. From October of that year onward, the missions of additional measures have been conducted on multiple occasions with the participation of experts from third countries including China, and the Government of China has announced that, the results of analysis of samples have been normal. At the Japan-China High-Level Economic Dialogue in March 2025, the two governments confirmed to conduct the additional measures under the framework of the IAEA, and concurred on promoting relevant consultations towards the resumption of imports of Japanese aquatic products, on the premise that no abnormalities are seen in the results of the analysis. Building on these exchanges, technical consultations between the authorities of Japan and China on the resumption of exports of Japanese aquatic products to China were held in March, April, and May of the same year, and at the fourth technical consultation on May 28, both sides reached an agreement on the technical requirements necessary for the resumption of Japanese aquatic product exports to China. At the end of June 2025, the Government of China issued an announcement restoring imports of aquatic products from certain regions of Japan, thereby initiating the procedures for re-registration of Japanese export-related facilities. With regard to the resumption of imports of Japanese aquatic products, it is above all important to steadily implement the "Shared Recognition between Japan and China" announced in September 2024, and the Government of Japan will continue to request the Chinese side to facilitate exports, including through the prompt re-registration of Japanese export-related facilities, while strongly calling for the lifting of import restrictions on aquatic products from the remaining 10 prefectures.

(8) For the "Shared Recognition between Japan and China" released on September 20, 2024, refer to the MOFA website: https://warp.ndl.go.jp/web/20250901233603/https://www.mofa.go.jp/press/release/pressite_000001_00598.html

(Cases of Detainment of Japanese Nationals)

Since May 2015, 17 Japanese nationals have been detained on charges related to China's "national security." In regard to successive cases of detainment of Japanese nationals, the Government of Japan has urged the early release of Japanese detainees on various occasions between Japan and China, including at summit and foreign ministers' meetings, and, so far, five Japanese nationals have been released before being arrested, one Japanese national died of illness while serving the sentence, six Japanese nationals have returned to Japan after serving their sentences, and as of the end of 2025, five Japanese nationals are being detained (currently serving their sentences).

The Government of Japan has strongly urged the Government of China to ensure the early release of detained individuals; to increase transparency in law enforcement and judicial processes, including the reasons for detention under the revised Counter-Espionage Law; to appropriately protect the rights of Japanese nationals; and to ensure fairness and impartiality, as well as humane treatment. In 2025, the Government of Japan raised these issues with the Government of China at various levels and opportunities, including at the leader and foreign ministerial levels, such as the Japan-China Summit Meeting in November and the Japan-China foreign ministers' telephone call in October, and Japan will continue to persistently urge them to do so. Additionally, from the perspective of protecting Japanese nationals, the Government of Japan is providing as much support as possible, including consular visits and contact with family members.

In response to these successive cases of Japanese nationals being detained, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, the Embassy of Japan in China, and the Consulates General of Japan in China have issued warnings on their websites urging Japanese residents to be aware that acts deemed to "endanger national security" are subject to investigation, and that they may not only be forced to spend long periods of time in detention, but may also face penalties such as imprisonment if convicted. Additionally, in response to the revised Counter-Espionage Law taking effect in July 2023, the content of the warning on the MOFA's Overseas Safety website has been updated to provide more detailed and specific warnings.

(Abandoned Chemical Weapons Issue)

The Government of Japan, in accordance with the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), has been steadily working on the disposal of abandoned chemical weapons left by the former Japanese military forces in China. In 2025, Japan carried out excavation, recovery, and destruction operations of Abandoned Chemical Weapons (ACW) in the Harbaling area of Dunhua City, Jilin Province, and destruction operations of ACW in Harbin City, Heilongjiang Province, and Wuhan City, Hubei Province. Additionally, Japan also carried out field surveys and the excavation and recovery operations of ACW in various other parts of China (as of December 2025 approximately 149,000 ACW have been destroyed).

(2) Taiwan

A Domestic Politics and Economy

Following the resignation in January 2025 of Taiwan People's Party (TPP) Chairman Ko Wen-je, who had been indicted on corruption charges, a by-election for party chairman was held in February, and Huang Kuo-chang assumed the chairmanship.

From January onward, a large-scale recall campaign led by civic groups was pursued with the aim of breaking the deadlock in the Legislative Yuan. Recall votes targeting 31 Kuomintang (KMT) legislators were held in July and August, but all failed to pass. On August 27, the Executive Yuan announced a cabinet reshuffle, including the establishment of a new Ministry of Sports.

In October, a KMT chairperson election was held upon expiration of the incumbent's term, and former legislator Cheng Li-wun was elected.

In recent years, Taiwan's economy has continued to perform strongly, underpinned by robust demand related to AI and information and communications equipment. Taiwan's real GDP growth rate in 2025 reached +8.63%, the highest level in the past 15 years, with per capita GDP reaching 37,826 U.S. dollars. The Lai Ching-te administration has been prioritizing industries such as semiconductors, AI, defense, and next-generation communications, and is working to strengthen whole-of-society defense resilience and to establish Taiwan's critical position in global supply chains.

B Cross-Strait Relations and External Relations

The military balance across the Taiwan Strait is rapidly shifting as a whole in a direction increasingly favorable to China. The activities of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) around Taiwan are on an increasing trend, and PLA aircraft crossing the equidistance line of the Taiwan Strait and naval vessel activities to the east of Taiwan have become routine occurrences.

On March 13, 2025, President Lai Ching-te convened a high-level national security meeting, announced 17 major strategies to respond to China's "united front threat," and stated that China meets the definition of a "foreign hostile force." In response, China conducted military exercises on April 1 and 2 with aircraft carriers and coast guard vessels operating in a coordinated manner.

In August, the Executive Yuan of Taiwan announced that the defense budget proposal for fiscal year 2026 would amount to 3.32% of GDP, and President Lai Ching-te declared a policy target of 5% of GDP by 2030.

On December 17, the United States Government announced its approval of an arms sale to Taiwan worth approximately 11.1 billion U.S. dollars — the largest ever — and initiated the required congressional notification procedures. On December 29, China announced that it would conduct military exercises around Taiwan beginning that day; the exercises continued through December 31. China described the exercises as a "stern warning to 'Taiwan independence' forces and external interference forces." The live-fire exercises in the waters surrounding Taiwan and the designation of exercise zones prohibiting the entry of aircraft and other vessels encircling Taiwan marked the first such occurrence since August 2022. In response, Japan issued a Statement by the Press Secretary saying that the military exercises constitute actions that increase tensions across the Taiwan Strait and the Government of Japan has conveyed its concerns to the Chinese side.

Visits by senior Taiwanese officials to countries that recognize Taiwan and to Western nations continued in 2025. In November, Vice President Hsiao Bi-khim attended the annual general meeting of the Inter-Parliamentary Alliance on China (IPAC) held in Brussels, Belgium, becoming the first senior Taiwanese official to address a parliament abroad.

Peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait are important for the stability of the entire international community. The G7 has also reaffirmed the importance of peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait and agreed to call for the peaceful resolution of cross-strait issues; the Joint Statement of G7 Foreign Ministers' Meeting in 2025 emphasizes the importance of maintaining peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait, and in particular expresses opposition to any unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force or coercion.

Taiwan has been unable to participate as an observer in the World Health Organization (WHO) General Assembly since 2017, having done so from 2009 to 2016. Japan has consistently maintained that there should be no geographical gaps in responding to international health issues, and from this perspective has consistently supported Taiwan's observer participation in the WHO General Assembly. The 2025 Joint Statement of the G7 Foreign Ministers' Meeting expresses support for Taiwan's meaningful participation in appropriate international organizations.

Regarding the reciprocal tariffs imposed by the U.S. on Taiwan in April, following six rounds of face-to-face negotiations, both the U.S. and Taiwan announced on January 15, 2026, that they had reached a trade and investment agreement under which the total rate of the U.S. reciprocal tariffs applied to Taiwanese products would be capped at 15%, and Taiwanese companies would make investments in the U.S. totaling 250 billion U.S. dollars, among other terms.

C Japan-Taiwan Relations

For Japan, Taiwan is an extremely important partner and a valuable friend, with which it shares fundamental values and principles such as freedom, democracy, basic human rights and the rule of law, and enjoys close economic relations and people-to-people exchanges. Japan-Taiwan relations are maintained as a non-governmental working relationship based on the Japan-China Joint Communiqué of 1972.

The mutual affinity between the peoples of Japan and Taiwan is generally positive. According to a survey conducted by the Japan-Taiwan Exchange Association between December 2024 and January 2025, 81%

of Taiwan residents responded that they feel close to Japan (or somewhat close to Japan), and according to a survey conducted by the Taipei Economic and Cultural Representative Office in Japan in October 2025, 74.5% of Japanese people responded that they feel close to Taiwan (or somewhat close to Taiwan).

In terms of people-to-people exchanges, while the number of overseas travelers from Japan is still recovering, the number of visitors from Taiwan to Japan reached 6.76 million, exceeding the 6.04 million recorded in 2024, and setting a new record high.

Regarding the import restrictions imposed in connection with the accident at Tokyo Electric Power Company's (TEPCO's) Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station in 2011, which had been progressively eased, Taiwan announced on November 21 that it would lift all restrictions on Japanese food products. Taiwan's decision supports the recovery of the disaster-affected areas, and the Government of Japan welcomes it. In addition, on May 22, the Taiwanese side announced the lifting of the age restriction on imports of Japanese beef, which had required the cattle to be under 30 months of age. This fully lifted Taiwan's import restrictions on Japanese beef that had been in place since 2001.

Japan and Taiwan are both prone to large-scale natural disasters and have extended helping hands to each other in the past whenever a disaster has occurred In October 2025, in response to a disaster caused by torrential rainfall from Typhoon No. 18 that struck Hualien County, Japan provided Taiwan with water level monitoring buoys to observe water levels in landslide dams (landslide-dammed lakes). It is expected that cooperation and exchanges between Japan and Taiwan in the field of disaster prevention will continue to deepen.

In December, the Japan-Taiwan Exchange Association and the Taiwan-Japan Relations Association signed the "Arrangement for the Mutual Cooperation on Digital Trade" and the "Memorandum on Cooperation in Regional Customs." Through these outcomes, it is expected that practical cooperation will be further strengthened in areas such as smooth and reliable free digital trade, as well as facilitation of border control measures and customs procedures. In addition, with regard to Japan-Taiwan cooperation in the semiconductor supply chain sector, Japan Advanced Semiconductor Manufacturing, Inc. (JASM) began mass production at its Kumamoto first plant in December 2024, and construction of its second plant commenced in October 2025, marking further progress in this area.

(3) Mongolia

A Domestic Politics

Prime Minister Luvsannamsrai Oyun-Erdene, who was reappointed as Prime Minister following the 9th State Great Hural elections in 2024, faced a surge of public discontent from May onward over the lavish lifestyle of his son and his fiancée, leading to daily protest demonstrations calling for his resignation and other demands. As a result, a motion of confidence in the Prime Minister submitted to the State Great Hural in June was voted down, and Prime Minister Oyun-Erdene resigned, with the entire cabinet tendering its resignation.

In June, a resolution to appoint Chief of Staff to the Office of the President Gombojav Zandanshatar as Prime Minister, on the recommendation of the Mongolian People's Party as the largest ruling party, was passed, and Prime Minister Zandanshatar came into office. Prime Minister Zandanshatar formed a coalition government comprising the Mongolian People's Party, the HUN Party, and the Civil Will-Green Party. Prime Minister Zandanshatar has emphasized his commitment to implementing slogans such as "human-centered" development and "a government that values fairness," while maintaining the policies of the Oyun-Erdene cabinet and party unity.

B Foreign Policy

Mongolia, which is situated between China and Russia and increasingly dependent on both countries in terms of economy and energy, has long pursued a foreign policy of maintaining good relations with both countries as a top priority while at the same time maintaining a balance by strengthening relations with other countries, including Japan and Western countries, which it positions as its "Third Neighbors."

In 2025 as well, the heads of state of Austria visited Mongolia in May, and those of Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan in June, respectively, while President Ukhnaa Khurelsukh, Prime Minister Oyun-Erdene,

Column

Visit to Mongolia by Their Majesties the Emperor and Empress of Japan

In July, Their Majesties the Emperor and Empress of Japan visited Mongolia as State Guests following the invitation of President Ukhnaa Khurelsukh. His Majesty the Emperor had previously visited Mongolia in 2007 (His Imperial Highness the Crown Prince at the time), making this his second visit, while for Her Majesty the Empress it was her first. It was also the first-ever visit to Mongolia by an Emperor and Empress of Japan. The visit not only demonstrated to both Japan and the world the deep bonds of friendship and goodwill between the two countries, but Their Majesties also received an exceptionally warm welcome, with President Khurelsukh stating that the visit marked a monumental milestone in the bilateral relationship between Japan and Mongolia.



Their Majesties greeted by President Khurelsukh and his spouse at the welcoming ceremony (July 8, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia; Photo: Imperial Household Agency)

Their Majesties attended a welcoming ceremony and a State Banquet, and at the national festival of *Naadam*, they observed the opening ceremony as well as various competitions including archery, horse racing, and *shagai* — a traditional Mongolian game in which players flick sheep anklebones with their fingers to shoot at a target. Throughout these events, Their Majesties received a warm welcome from President Khurelsukh and his spouse.

During the visit, Their Majesties offered flowers at the Monument to the Souls of Deceased Japanese People located on the outskirts of Ulaanbaatar, and paid their respects to those who, after the end of World War II, passed away far from their homeland through circumstances beyond their control.

Their Majesties also toured the Chinggis Khaan National Museum, Gandantegchinlen Monastery, and Hustai National Park — a specially protected area located approximately 100 kilometers west of Ulaanbaatar that is home to the *takhi* (Przewalski's horse), a wild horse native to Mongolia — and experienced Mongolia's history, culture, and natural splendors.

Furthermore, Their Majesties visited the Mongolia-Japan Hospital of MNUMS (Mongolian National University of Medical Sciences), constructed through Japan's grant aid, and inspected the Gachuurt Water Source, observing firsthand how Japan's support and cooperation are contributing to Mongolia's economic and social development. In the field of "water," in which His Majesty the Emperor takes a deep personal interest, His Majesty listened attentively to those involved as they explained Mongolia's water-related challenges.

Throughout the visit, Their Majesties held informal conversations with those who have long supported the friendship and goodwill between Japan and Mongolia, and warmly engaged with young Mongolians and children who will be responsible for the future of the bilateral relationship, including at School No.149 in Ulaanbaatar, Mongol Koosen College of Technology, and Shine Mongol School.

During the visit, large numbers of Mongolian citizens gathered near the sites Their Majesties visited and along the streets to express their welcome, and the visit received daily favorable coverage in the Mongolian media. In particular, the sight of Their Majesties partaking of *aaruul* (dried curds, dairy product) offered as a sign of welcome by the Mongolian side upon Their Majesties' arrival at the airport and at the sites they visited, as well as Their Majesties trying their hand at *shagai* at the *Naadam* venue, were received extremely favorably as expressions of the respect Their Majesties showed for the Mongolian culture.



Their Majesties experience *shagai* at *Naadam* (July 11, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia; Photo: Imperial Household Agency)

This visit served as an important opportunity to reaffirm the many exchanges and cooperative efforts that have taken place between Japan and Mongolia over the years, and to look ahead to a future of mutual understanding, friendship and goodwill for the younger generation. The Government of Japan will continue to work toward further deepening mutual understanding between the peoples of the two countries and toward the further development of friendship, goodwill, and cooperative relations between Japan and Mongolia.

Prime Minister Zandanshatar, and Foreign Minister Batmunkh Battsetseg each actively visited foreign countries and engaged in active dignitary diplomacy.

In terms of Mongolia's relations with its two neighboring countries, President Khurelsukh visited China from August to September to attend the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Summit and the grand commemorative meeting marking the 80th Anniversary of the Victory of the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression and the World Anti-Fascist War. In addition, in November, Prime Minister Zandanshatar visited Russia on the occasion of the SCO expanded meeting held in Russia.

C Economy

In 2025, the Mongolian economy continued to record positive growth, with robust exports of mineral resources such as coal and copper to China, despite the impact of falling international coal prices. Meanwhile, the inflation rate at the end of the year stood at 7.5%, remaining elevated at a level similar to the previous year. The economic growth rate for 2025 rose by 1.9 percentage points from the previous year to 6.8%. Mongolia's trade value for 2025 decreased by 0.5% in terms of exports and decreased by 2.6% in terms of imports when compared to the previous year. In addition, the international credit rating agency S&P upgraded Mongolia's credit rating from "B+" to "BB-."

D Japan-Mongolia Relations

In regard to relations with Japan, high-level exchanges and dialogues continued in 2025.

In March, Foreign Minister Battsetseg visited Japan as a guest of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, paid a courtesy call to Prime Minister Ishiba and held a meeting with Foreign Minister Iwaya. In late July, Deputy Prime Minister Togmid Dorjkhand visited Japan to attend the Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan. In August, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs IKUINA Akiko attended the World Women Entrepreneurs Forum hosted by the Government of Mongolia, paid a courtesy call on Foreign Minister Battsetseg, and inspected Chinggis Khaan International Airport.

In particular, with regard to bilateral cooperation, progress was made in the security field, including through the entry into force of the Agreement on the Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology in January. In addition, to promote economic exchanges, the 12th Japan-Mongolia Government and Business Sector Joint Committee was held in Japan in November, and Deputy Prime Minister Khassuuri Gankhuyag visited Japan to attend the Committee.

3 Korean Peninsula

(1) North Korea (including the Abductions Issue)

The Government of Japan has been taking various initiatives based on its basic policy of achieving the normalization of 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 September 2002.

In 2025, North Korea continued its nuclear and missile development, including through repeated launches of ballistic missiles. This series of actions by North Korea constitutes a grave and imminent threat to Japan's national security and poses a clear and serious challenge to the region and the international community, and is totally unacceptable. In addition, the maintenance of the international nuclear non-proliferation regime is of utmost importance to Japan. Japan will advance efforts toward the full implementation of the relevant UN Security Council resolutions and seek the complete dismantlement of North Korea's nuclear and ballistic missile programs in cooperation with the international community, including the U.S. and the Republic of Korea (ROK).

With the aging of the abductees and their families, the abductions issue is a humanitarian matter with lives at stake that must be resolved immediately, as well as a matter of infringement of the sovereignty of Japan.

Japan continues to call on North Korea to implement the May 2014 Japan-North Korea agreement (the

agreement in Stockholm)[9] and will work closely with the international community, including the U.S. and the ROK, and do its utmost, without ruling out any options, to resolve the various issues with North Korea, including the return of all abductees at the earliest possible date.

A North Korea Nuclear and Missile Issues

(A) Recent Trends in 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 the series of relevant UN Security Council resolutions.

In 2025, North Korea launched ballistic missiles four times(at least five launches). On January 6, it launched a ballistic missile which it described as a "new-type hypersonic intermediate-range ballistic missile;" on May 8, it launched ballistic missiles which it described as a "600mm multiple rocket launcher" and a "tactical ballistic missile 'Hwasongpho-11 Ka;'" on October 22, it launched a ballistic missile which it announced as a "hypersonic projectile;" and on November 7, it also launched a ballistic missile.

Despite North Korea's continued activities in violation of relevant UN Security Council resolutions, in April 2024, the Panel of Experts for the UNSC 1718 Sanctions Committee ended its activities due to the veto of Russia. In light of this situation, in October of that year, like-minded countries, including Japan established the Multilateral Sanctions Monitoring Team (MSMT)[10]. The MSMT is strengthening its efforts to contribute to the full implementation of relevant Security Council resolutions by sharing information among participating states on violations and evasions of sanctions imposed under those relevant Security Council resolutions, and by disseminating that information to the international community. Specifically, in May 2025, the MSMT published its first report on the theme of unlawful military cooperation, including arms transfers, between North Korea and Russia. The report contains specific information on violations and evasions of the sanction measures stipulated in the relevant Security Council resolutions on North Korea, such as arms transfers between North Korea and Russia, deployment of North Korean troops to Russia, and illicit trade networks. In July, MSMT participating countries held a briefing at UN Headquarters in New York on the report to share the key findings of the report with UN Member States, and confirm that they would continue to fulfill the role previously carried out by the Panel of Experts of monitoring and reporting on violations and evasions of sanction measures by North Korea. In October, the MSMT published its second report on the theme of North Korea's cyber and information technology (IT) worker activities. The report contains specific information on North Korea's cyber activities such as cryptocurrency thefts and its laundering and use, foreign currency earnings generated by IT workers, and information theft. Japan will continue to work closely with the international community, including MSMT participating countries, to advance efforts toward the full implementation of the relevant UN Security Council resolutions and call for the complete dismantlement of North Korea's nuclear and ballistic missile programs.

In addition, the Government of Japan has taken measures against North Korea, designating a total of 144 entities and 133 individuals as being subject to asset freezes and other measures.

Regarding North Korea's nuclear development-related activities, on February 8, 2025, the founding anniversary of the Korean People's Army, North Korean President of the State Affairs Commission Kim Jong Un visited the Ministry of National Defense, referred to new planning projects to strengthen all deterrent forces, including nuclear capabilities, and reiterated the policy of further advancing nuclear forces. In addition, according to an announcement by the Missile General Bureau, on September 8, President Kim Jong Un reportedly inspected a ground combustion test of a high-power solid-fuel engine using carbon fiber composite materials, and stated that the development of the

(9) 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.

(10) For the joint statement on the establishment of the MSMT, refer to the MOFA website: https://warp.ndl.go.jp/web/20250903125104/https://www.mofa.go.jp/press/release/pressite_000001_00652.html

(10)

engine would herald a significant change in the expansion and strengthening of strategic nuclear forces. Furthermore, on September 26, it was announced that President Kim Jong Un met with scientists and engineers in nuclear-related fields, including at the "Nuclear Weapons Institute," presided over an important consultative meeting on nuclear material production and nuclear weapons production, and put forward key tasks for advancing nuclear capabilities.

In addition, North Korea is expanding its malicious cyber activities, including cryptocurrency thefts and activities by IT workers, which serve as funding sources for its unlawful weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missile programs. According to the MSMT's second report published in October 2025, North Korea is utilizing cryptocurrency thefts and IT worker activities to advance its nuclear and missile programs, and it is pointed out that North Korea stole cryptocurrency worth approximately 1.2 billion U.S. dollars in 2024 and approximately 1.65 billion U.S. dollars between January and September 2025. The report also refers to the fact that North Korea dispatches IT workers abroad to generate income by obtaining work under false identities, that their methods are becoming increasingly sophisticated and their activities are expanding globally, and that there is a possibility that such IT workers are also engaged in malicious cyber activities, including information theft.

(B) Initiatives by Japan and Cooperation with the International Community

The repeated launches of ballistic missiles and others by North Korea are serious challenges not only to Japan, but also to the region and international community, and are totally unacceptable. In addition, the maintenance of the international nuclear non-proliferation regime is of utmost importance to Japan. 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. Japan has confirmed these points at meetings with the heads of state and foreign ministers of various countries.

In order to respond to North Korea's growing threat, Japan, the U.S., and the ROK have been communicating at multiple levels and strengthening their solidarity. In 2025, in particular, five Japan-U.S.-ROK Foreign Ministers' Meetings were held, and the three countries confirmed their commitment to further advancing their response to North Korea. At the September meeting, for example, the three ministers discussed the growing threats posed by North Korea and affirmed that they would further strengthen communication at all levels. Specifically, they expressed their serious concerns over North Korea's nuclear and missile development and reaffirmed the three countries' commitment toward the complete denuclearization of North Korea in accordance with UN Security Council resolutions. The three ministers also reaffirmed that they would work closely together on issues such as the advancement of Russia-North Korea military cooperation and North Korea's malicious cyber activities including cryptocurrency thefts, which fund its nuclear and missile programs. Furthermore, in response to North Korea's repeated ballistic missile launches, the three countries have held Foreign Ministries' Official Telephone Meetings on North Korea during which they have strongly condemned the launches as threats to the peace and security of the region and the international community and reaffirmed close coordination among Japan, the U.S., and the ROK. At the Japan-U.S. Summit Meeting held in October between U.S. President Trump, who was visiting Japan, and Prime Minister Takaichi, both leaders shared their views on the situation surrounding North Korea and affirmed the need to address its nuclear and missile issues together, as well as their resolute commitment to the complete denuclearization of North Korea.

Furthermore, as part of the Self-Defense Forces' surveillance operations and the Japan Coast Guard's patrolling 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

Special Feature

Efforts to Address North Korea's Cyber-Related Threats

In October, the Multilateral Sanctions Monitoring Team (MSMT), established by like-minded countries including Japan, released a report on the theme of "the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's (DPRK) cyber and information technology (IT) worker activities."

According to the report, North Korea is exploiting cryptocurrency thefts and the activities of IT workers to advance its nuclear and missile programs. It is indicated that North Korea stole approximately 1.2 billion U.S. dollars' worth of cryptocurrency in 2024, and approximately 1.65 billion U.S. dollars' worth between January and September 2025. The report also notes that North Korea dispatches its IT workers to foreign countries, where they generate income by obtaining work under false identification; that their methods have become increasingly sophisticated and their activities have expanded globally; and that these IT workers are also involved in malicious cyber activities, including the theft of information.

In Japan as well, in 2024, cryptocurrency was stolen from a cryptocurrency-related business by a North Korea-backed cyberattack group. Cases have also been confirmed in which North Korean IT workers, impersonating Japanese nationals, used online platforms provided by Japanese companies and others for placing and receiving work orders to obtain work and generate income.

As described above, the threat posed by North Korea's malicious cyber-related activities is escalating further. Japan expresses serious concern over such activities, which fund North Korea's unlawful weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missile programs, and has been responding in close coordination with the international community, including the United States (U.S.) and the Republic of Korea (ROK).


Japan-U.S.-ROK Public-Private Event (August 26, Tokyo)

Among Japan, the U.S. and the ROK, in August 2025, at the 4th Japan-U.S.-ROK Trilateral Diplomatic Working Group on North Korea's Cyber Threats, the three countries held action-oriented discussions and confirmed their commitment to advance tangible efforts. In addition, the "Joint Statement on Cryptocurrency Thefts by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Public-Private Collaboration" was issued in January, and the "Joint Statement on North Korean Information Technology Workers" was issued in August, respectively. Furthermore, in August, the Japan-U.S.-ROK Public-Private Event on North Korean IT Workers was co-hosted in Tokyo, and discussions were held for the public and private sectors to bolster their collective protection.

In addition, at the G7 level, at the Kananaskis Summit in June, Japan expressed its concerns regarding North Korea's cryptocurrency thefts, and the Chair's Summary stated that G7 leaders expressed the need to jointly address North Korea's cryptocurrency thefts.

In addition to such coordination with the international community, Japan has designated entities such as the Lazarus Group — which is said to be a subordinate organization of North Korean authorities and reported to target cryptocurrency-related companies and others — as subjects of Japan's own measures against North Korea. Furthermore, in August, Japan updated its domestic alert on North Korean IT workers' activities, informing relevant companies of the details of their methods and urging them to take measures such as strengthening identity verification procedures.

Japan will continue to strengthen its response to North Korea's malicious cyber-related activities in close coordination with the international community, including the U.S. and the ROK, as well as the private sector.

suspected to be violating the UN Security Council resolutions, including ship-to-ship transfers[(11)] with North Korean-flagged 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 Australia, Canada, New Zealand and France, in addition to U.S. aircraft, have, based on the UN Status of Forces Agreement, used U.S. military facilities and areas in Japan to engage in surveillance operations against illicit maritime activities, including ship-to-ship transfers. Monitoring and surveillance activities were also conducted in the waters surrounding Japan by naval vessels, such as vessels of the U.S. Navy and the ROK Navy, the UK Royal Navy patrol vessel *HMS Spey* and frigate *HMS Richmond*, Royal Australian Navy destroyer *HMAS Sydney*, the Royal Canadian Navy frigate *HMCS Ottawa* and patrol vessel *HMCS Max Bernays*, the Italian Navy frigate *Antonio Marceglia*, the Royal New Zealand Navy replenishment ship *HMNZS Aotearoa*, the French Navy replenishment ship *Jacques Chevallier*, and multi-purpose destroyer and frigate *Prairial*. From the perspective of further deepening the multinational cooperation, Japan considers it significant that concerned countries are sharing information and coordinating efforts to ensure that UN Security Council resolutions are implemented fully and effectively.

In addition, Japan is seriously concerned about North Korea's malicious cyber-related activities that fund its unlawful weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missile programs, and has been responding in close coordination with the international community, including the U.S. and the ROK. For example, at the 4th Japan-U.S.-ROK Trilateral Diplomacy Working Group for Foreign Ministry Cooperation on North Korea's Cyber Threats held in August, the three countries conducted action-oriented discussions and confirmed that they would advance tangible efforts. In addition, Japan, the U.S., and the ROK jointly issued a "Joint Statement on Cryptocurrency Thefts by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Public-Private Collaboration" in January, and a "Joint Statement on North Korean Information Technology Workers" in August. Furthermore, in August, the three countries co-hosted a Japan-U.S.-ROK Public-Private Event to Counter North Korean IT Worker Threats, which enabled discussions between the public and private sector to bolster their collective protection. In coordination with relevant ministries and agencies, in August, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the National Police Agency, the Ministry of Finance, and the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry updated a domestic alert on the activities of North Korean IT workers, notified relevant companies of the details of their methods, and called for measures such as strengthening identity verification procedures. Furthermore, at the G7 Kananaskis Summit in June, Japan expressed concern over North Korea's cryptocurrency thefts, and in the Chair's Summary G7 leaders expressed the need to jointly address North Korea's cryptocurrency thefts.

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 eight of these 12 abductees have died and that it is unable to confirm that the other four 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 constitute a universal issue among the international community as a violation of basic human rights. In addition, the abductions issue is a humanitarian matter with lives at stake which must be resolved immediately, with not just the abductees themselves, but also their families having reached an advanced age. Japan continues to work toward the resolution of this issue with a determination to "never give up." Based

(11) In this context, "ship-to-ship transfers" refers to the transfers to or from North Korean-flagged vessels of any goods or items at sea, which UN Security Council resolution 2375 (adopted in September 2017) prohibits UN member states from facilitating or engaging in.

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 October, Prime Minister Takaichi stated in her policy speech, "As the abductees and their families become older, the abductions issue is one of the highest priority issues for my administration. We are firmly committed to taking all necessary measures to bring all abductees home at the earliest possible time."

(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 abductees 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.

In November, Prime Minister Takaichi stated at the Citizens' Rally to Demand the Immediate Return to Japan of All Abductees at the Same Time, "Toward building a new and mutually fruitful relationship between the two sides, I intend to face President Kim Jong Un directly, take the initiative in engaging him at the leadership level, and act decisively and boldly in response to various circumstances to deliver tangible results. I am fully determined to make a breakthrough and resolve the abductions issue at all costs during my tenure, without ruling out any options."

(C) 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. For example, at the G7 Kananaskis Summit in June, Prime Minister Ishiba once again asked the G7 leaders for their continued understanding and cooperation toward the immediate resolution of the abductions issue. At the Japan-ASEAN Summit Meeting in October, Prime Minister Takaichi stated that the immediate resolution of the abductions issue by North Korea is an urgent task, and called for the continued understanding and cooperation of the participating countries. The ASEAN side also made reference to the importance of resolving the abductions issue. Furthermore, at the G7 Foreign Ministers' Meeting in November, Foreign Minister Motegi once again asked the G7 countries for their understanding and cooperation toward the immediate resolution of the abductions issue.

Regarding the U.S., at the Japan-U.S. Summit Meeting held between Prime Minister Ishiba and President Trump in February, Prime Minister Ishiba asked for continued understanding and cooperation of the U.S. for the immediate resolution of the abductions issue, and once again gained full support from President Trump. Furthermore, at the Japan-U.S. Summit Meeting held between Prime Minister Takaichi and President Trump in October, Prime Minister Takaichi asked for continued understanding and cooperation of the U.S. for the immediate resolution of the abductions issue, and gained full support from President Trump. In addition, President Trump and Secretary of State Rubio met with the families of abductees, and together with the Japan-U.S. Summit Meetings, this served as an opportunity to reconfirm the full cooperation of the United States and the strong Japan-U.S. partnership toward the immediate resolution of the abductions issue.

Regarding China, following the Japan-China Summit Meeting in November 2024, at the Japan-China Summit Meeting in October 2025 as well, the two leaders exchanged views on the situation surrounding North Korea, including the abductions issue.

Regarding the ROK, for example, at the Japan-ROK Summit Meetings in August 2025 and January

2026, Japan requested the continued understanding and cooperation of President Lee Jae Myung toward the immediate resolution of the abductions issue, and the two leaders concurred on the importance of such efforts.

The resolution on the situation of human rights in North Korea, for which Japan was a co-sponsor, was adopted without a vote at the UN Human Rights Council in April and the UN General Assembly in December. Japan will continue to closely coordinate and cooperate with relevant countries, including the U.S., toward the immediate resolution of the abductions issue.

C North Korea's External Relations, etc.

(A) U.S.-North Korea Relations

The United States has consistently stated, on various occasions, that it remains committed to the complete denuclearization of North Korea. For example, at the Japan-U.S. Summit Meeting held in October, Prime Minister Takaichi and President Trump shared their views on the situation surrounding North Korea and affirmed the need to address the nuclear and missile issues together, and their resolute commitment to the complete denuclearization of North Korea.

In addition, as measures in response to North Korea's nuclear and missile programs, illicit arms transfers from North Korea to Russia, and North Korea's illicit cyber activities, the U.S. decided to add individuals and entities to the list of targets subject to sanctions against North Korea in January, July, August, September, and November of 2025. Furthermore, the U.S., together with Japan and the ROK, conducted the third Japan-U.S.-ROK trilateral multi-domain exercise "Freedom Edge" in September.

While continuing such pressure on North Korea, President Trump, who took office in January, has communicated that he has built a good relationship with President Kim Jong Un, and stated at the U.S.-ROK Summit Meeting in August that he hoped to meet with President Kim Jong Un at an appropriate time.

In response, on September 21, President Kim Jong Un reportedly stated at the 13th Session of the 14th Supreme People's Assembly, "If the United States abandons its absurd obsession with denuclearization and, based on acknowledging reality, wishes to pursue genuine peaceful coexistence with us, there is no reason why we cannot face the United States. I still personally have good memories of the current U.S. President Trump."

Furthermore, on October 27, before his visit to the ROK, President Trump stated that he would be happy to meet with President Kim Jong Un if he wished to do so, but during his visit to the ROK on October 29, he stated that he was not the timing had not worked out.

(B) Inter-Korean Relations

In June, ROK President Lee Jae Myung emphasized in his inaugural address the importance of building peace on the Korean Peninsula through dialogue and cooperation, while defending against North Korean nuclear weapons and military provocations through strong deterrence based on the ROK-U.S. Alliance. In his Liberation Day address in August, President Lee Jae Myung stated that the ROK respects the North Korean system, will not pursue any form of unification by absorption, will take proactive, gradual steps to restore the "September 19 Military Agreement," and will usher in a new era of peaceful coexistence and shared growth on the Korean Peninsula. Furthermore, in his address to the UN General Assembly General Debate in September, President Lee Jae Myung put forward the "E.N.D. Initiative," which aims to end the era of hostility and confrontation on the Korean Peninsula through comprehensive dialogue centered on Exchange, Normalization, and Denuclearization, and also advocated a phased solution, beginning with a "stop" in the sophistication of nuclear and missile capabilities, going through a "reduction" process, and reaching "dismantlement." In addition, the Lee Jae Myung administration implemented a series of measures aimed at reducing tensions, including requesting the suspension of leaflet drops toward North Korea by private organizations and halting loudspeaker propaganda broadcasts directed at North Korea in June, suspending radio and television broadcasts directed at North Korea in July, and removing loudspeakers directed at North Korea that had been installed near the inter-Korean military demarcation line in August.

Meanwhile, at the 9th Enlarged Plenary Meeting of the 8th Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Korea (WPK) in December 2023, President Kim

Jong Un stated regarding inter-Korean relations that "The North-South relations have been completely fixed into the relations between two states hostile to each other and the relations between two belligerent states, not the consanguineous or homogeneous ones anymore," and declared the abandonment of the goal of unification. Furthermore, after the inauguration of the Lee Jae Myung administration in the ROK, in July 2025, through a statement by Vice Director of the WPK Central Committee Kim Yo-jong, North Korea asserted that the suspension of broadcasts directed at North Korea was a problem that the ROK had brought upon itself and was not worthy of appreciation, and that regardless of the administration in power, the ROK is not an object of reconciliation and cooperation. Then, at the 13th Session of the 14th Supreme People's Assembly in September, President Kim Jong Un stated that North Korea would have nothing whatsoever to do with the ROK, that there was absolutely no intention of pursuing unification, and that the fact that the two countries could never become one would be enshrined in national law.

(C) China-North Korea Relations

In 2025, high-level exchanges took place between China and North Korea. In September, President Kim Jong Un attended the "Commemoration of the 80th Anniversary of the Victory of the Chinese People's War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression and the World Anti-Fascist War" held in Beijing, and held a summit meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping, their first in approximately six years and three months. In the same month, Foreign Minister Choe Son Hui subsequently visited China and held a foreign ministers' meeting with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi. Furthermore, in October, Member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and Premier Li Qiang attended the celebrations marking the 80th anniversary of the founding of the Workers' Party of Korea (WPK) held in Pyongyang, and held a meeting with President Kim Jong Un.

According to figures released by Chinese authorities, trade between China and North Korea, which is estimated to account for more than 90% of North Korea's entire external trade, was significantly reduced compared to pre-COVID-19 levels due to traffic restrictions following the global spread of COVID-19, but recovered to near pre-pandemic levels in 2023. While the volume decreased slightly in 2024 compared to the previous year (2023), it increased by approximately 25.5% in 2025 compared to the previous year (2024).

(D) Russia-North Korea Relations

At the end of April 2025, Russia announced that North Korean soldiers had participated in combat in Russia's Kursk Oblast under the "Treaty on Comprehensive Strategic Partnership," which entered into force in December 2024. Following this announcement, North Korea also announced that it had "decided to participate in the war" based on the Treaty. High-level exchanges have continued alongside these developments in military cooperation. At the leader level, a telephone summit meeting was held between President Kim Jong Un and President Putin in August 2025, and in September, a summit meeting was held between President Kim Jong Un, who had visited China to attend the "Commemoration of the 80th Anniversary of the Victory of the Chinese People's War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression and the World Anti-Fascist War," and President Putin, at which President Putin stated that Russia-North Korea relations "have come to take on a dimension of alliance." At the foreign ministers' level, in July, Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov visited Wonsan, North Korea and held a strategic dialogue, and in October, Foreign Minister Choe Son Hui visited Moscow and held a foreign ministers' meeting.

The advancement of Russia-North Korea military cooperation is a development of grave concern not only because they lead to further deterioration of the situation in Ukraine, but also from the perspective of its impact on the security of the region surrounding Japan. It is also deeply concerning that Russian nuclear and missile-related technology could be transferred to North Korea in exchange for North Korea's military support, including the dispatch of troops to Russia. Based on this recognition, in May, the Multilateral Sanctions Monitoring Team (MSMT), including Japan, published its first report on the theme of illicit military cooperation between Russia and North Korea, including arms transfers. On this occasion, the MSMT

participating countries also issued a joint statement reaffirming their common resolve toward the full implementation of the relevant UN Security Council resolutions. Japan, in close coordination with the international community, including the U.S. and the ROK as well as G7, is gathering and analyzing relevant information, and working toward the full implementation of the relevant UN Security Council resolutions and the realization of a just and lasting peace in Ukraine at the earliest possible date through efforts such as expressing serious concern over Russia-North Korea military cooperation on multiple occasions.

(E) Other Issues

In 2025, a total of 12 drifting or wrecked wooden vessels presumed to be from North Korea were discovered on Japan's coast with the Sea of Japan (13 in 2024). The Government of Japan continues its effort to gather and analyze information, with great interest on relevant developments. In September 2020, a vessel that appeared to be an official North Korean vessel was confirmed in Japan's exclusive economic zone (EEZ) in the west of the Yamatotai bank in the Sea of Japan, and when this incident occurred 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

North Korea is believed to be advancing the strengthening of its military capabilities, including nuclear and missile development, based on the "Five-Year Plan for the Development of National Defense Science and the Weapons System" (2021–2025) and other plans reportedly presented at the 8th Congress of the Workers' Party of Korea (WPK) in January 2021. It was reported that when President Kim Jong Un inspected a nuclear material production base and the Nuclear Weapons Institute in January 2025, he stated that 2025 — the final year of the Five-Year Plan — is an extremely important year in which the plan for the production of weapons-grade nuclear material must be exceeded and an epoch-making achievement must be made in strengthening the nuclear shield. At the enlarged meeting of the WPK Central Military Commission in May, it was reported that "a series of new planning projects in the field of national defense science and industry" were approved. Furthermore, it was reported that during the inspection of "important munitions enterprises" in August, President Kim Jong Un highly praised the expansion of missile production capacity and the commencement of mass production of various types of missiles, and that at the 13th Session of the 14th Supreme People's Assembly in September, he gave a speech denying denuclearization and claiming that North Korea would not relinquish its nuclear weapons. In October, it was reported that a military parade was held to celebrate the 80th anniversary of the founding of the WPK where a formation of "intercontinental ballistic missiles of the Hwasong-20 type" participated. Regarding the participation of North Korean soldiers in combat in Russia's Kursk Oblast, in April, through a written statement of position by the WPK Central Military Commission, North Korea publicly acknowledged this for the first time domestically and internationally; in August, a commendation ceremony was held for overseas operational units of the Korean People's Army, and through Korean Central Television, it was revealed that the decision to dispatch troops was made in August 2024 and that they participated in combat from October of that year.

(B) Economy

It was reported that at the 12th Session of the 14th Supreme People's Assembly held in January, North Korea presented sector-specific tasks that must be achieved in 2025 — the final year of the "Five-Year Plan for National Economic Development" (2021–2025), which primarily focuses on self-reliance — and that the adopted budget proposal allocates 44.1% of total expenditure to economic construction. Furthermore, it was reported that at the 13th Session of the 14th Supreme People's Assembly in September, President Kim Jong Un stated that, while key industrial sectors and major economic sectors had not yet reached a satisfactory level, the Five-Year Plan was expected to be successfully completed, that the agricultural sector was in a stable harvest condition following on from 2024, and that housing construction in Pyongyang and in rural areas was also proceeding smoothly. In addition,

completion ceremonies for the Wonsan Kalma Coastal Tourist Zone in June and for the Pyongyang General Hospital in October were held in the presence of President Kim Jong Un.

E Other Issues

Defectors who have fled North Korea have to be kept in hiding to avoid being cracked down on 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 Situation in the ROK

(A) Domestic Affairs

On the night of December 3, 2024, President Yoon Suk Yeol declared emergency martial law, but before dawn on December 4, the National Assembly passed a "resolution calling for the lifting of emergency martial law," and President Yoon lifted it. The then-opposition parties, led by the Democratic Party of Korea, submitted a motion to impeach President Yoon on the grounds that the declaration of emergency martial law was unconstitutional. When the motion was passed in the National Assembly on December 14, President Yoon's authority to perform his duties was suspended. On January 15, 2025, President Yoon was, for the first time as a sitting president, arrested and detained, and on January 26, he was indicted on charges of leading insurrection as a ring leader.

On April 4, the Constitutional Court of Korea unanimously upheld the impeachment of President Yoon and declared his removal from office, and President Yoon was immediately dismissed. In the presidential election held on June 3 in response to this, Lee Jae-myung, the candidate from the opposition Democratic Party of Korea, defeated other candidates including Kim Moon-soo of the ruling People Power Party, and assumed office as the 21st President on June 4.

After taking office, President Lee advanced senior personnel appointments, including appointing Representative Wi Sung-lac (former Ambassador to Russia) as the National Security Office Director, former Minister of Unification Lee Jong-seok as Director of the National Intelligence Service, Representative Kim Min-seok as Prime Minister, former First Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs Cho Hyun as Minister of Foreign Affairs, Representative Ahn Gyu-back as Minister of National Defense, and Representative and former Minister of Unification Chung Dong-young as Minister of Unification, thereby establishing the lineup of the administration.

Meanwhile, former President Yoon was additionally indicted on charges including abuse of authority and benefitting the enemy in addition to leading insurrection as a ring leader, and former First Lady Kim Keon-hee was indicted on charges of bribery through the use of personal influence as well as violations of the Capital Markets Act and the Political Funds Act, while former Prime Minister Han Duck-soo was indicted on charges of aiding and abetting insurrection as a ring leader, with accountability proceedings against figures from the previous administration continuing to advance.

In the political arena, in August, the ruling Democratic Party of Korea elected Representative Jung Chung-rae as its new leader, and the opposition People Power Party elected Representative Jang Dong-hyeok as its new leader. Local elections, including elections for the Mayor of Seoul and the Mayor of Busan, are scheduled to be held in June 2026.

(B) Foreign Policy

During the first half of 2025, domestic political developments surrounding the presidential impeachment continued. In the meantime, on the diplomatic front, there were developments such as Foreign Minister Cho Tae-yul participating in the Japan-U.S.-ROK Foreign Ministers' Meeting held in Munich, Germany in February, and the 11th Japan-China-ROK Trilateral Foreign Ministers' Meeting held in Tokyo in March.

President Lee, who won the presidential election on June 3, held a telephone call with U.S. President Trump immediately after taking office, and in the same

month attended the G7 Kananaskis Summit held in Canada, meeting with leaders of various countries including Prime Minister Ishiba, thereby relaunching summit diplomacy. In addition, on October 31 and November 1, the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Leaders' Meeting was successfully held in Gyeongju with the participation of leaders of major countries including Prime Minister Takaichi.

Regarding relations with the U.S., Foreign Minister Cho Hyun visited the U.S. in July and met with Secretary of State Rubio. In August, President Lee visited the U.S. following his visit to Japan and held a summit meeting with President Trump. In October, President Trump visited the ROK on the occasion of the APEC Gyeongju Leaders' Meeting, and a second summit meeting was held between President Trump and President Lee. At the meeting, comprehensive discussions were held on the economy, modernization of the ROK-U.S. Alliance, the Korean Peninsula issue, regional affairs, and ROK-U.S. cooperation in shipbuilding and manufacturing, and in particular, the ROK side raised the issue of the introduction of nuclear submarines to the ROK against the backdrop of changes in the security environment. The U.S. side approved the ROK's construction of nuclear submarines and expressed its intention to support, in accordance with the ROK-U.S. Nuclear Agreement and U.S. legal requirements, processes leading to civilian uranium enrichment and spent fuel reprocessing for peaceful purposes by the ROK. In addition, both sides clarified the details of U.S. tariff measures on the ROK — on which a deal had been announced between the U.S. and the ROK in July —while also concurring on the breakdown of the ROK's 350 billion U.S. dollars investment in the U.S.

Regarding relations with China, National Assembly Speaker Woo Won-shik visited China in February and September and held meetings with Zhao Leji, Member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and Chairman of China's National People's Congress Standing Committee (and also met with President Xi Jinping during the February visit). In September, Foreign Minister Cho Hyun also visited China and held consultations with Wang Yi, Member of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee and Foreign Minister, on ROK-China relations, the Korean Peninsula issue, and other matters. In November, President Lee held his first in-person summit meeting with President Xi Jinping, who visited the ROK as a state guest on the occasion of the APEC Leaders' Meeting in Gyeongju. In addition to the Chinese side raising the issue of improving public sentiment, agreement was reached on extending the CNY-KRW currency swap, accelerating the second phase of negotiations on the ROK-China Free Trade Agreement (FTA), and strengthening cooperation to address cross-border fraud crimes.

(C) Economy

In 2025, the GDP growth rate in the ROK was 1.0%, down from 2.0% in the previous year (preliminary figures from the Bank of Korea). Total value of exports were approximately 709.7 billion U.S. dollars, which increased by 3.8% year-on-year, while total value of imports were approximately 631.7 billion U.S. dollars, roughly unchanged from the previous year, resulting in a trade surplus of approximately 78.0 billion U.S. dollars — the largest surplus since 2017 (figures published by the ROK Ministry of Trade, Industry and Resources).

Following the declaration of emergency martial law in December 2024, the Composite Consumer Sentiment Index (CCSI) fell sharply and economic growth remained sluggish, but the economy showed a gradual recovery heading into the second half of the year, driven by economic stimulus through a supplementary budget, a recovery in private consumption, and a recovery in exports centered on semiconductors. Subsequently, in September 2025, the Lee Jae-myung administration selected "123 National Policy Tasks" as a roadmap for priority government initiatives over the next five years, announcing in the economic field "A world-leading innovative economy," "Balanced growth to ensure prosperity for all," and "A society with strong fundamentals." In November, a joint fact sheet was announced containing agreements related to additional U.S. tariffs and the ROK's 350 billion U.S. dollars investment in the U.S.. Following this, the four major conglomerates of the ROK, including Samsung Group and SK Group, announced domestic investment plans totaling approximately 550 billion U.S. dollars.

B Japan-ROK Relations

(A) Bilateral Relations

Japan and the ROK are important neighboring countries that should cooperate with each other as partners in dealing with various issues in the international community, and in light of the current strategic environment, the importance of the Japan-ROK relations are further increasing. In 2025, close communication continued to be maintained between the two countries, including through "shuttle diplomacy" by the two leaders, as well as at other high levels, and cooperation in various fields was further expanded.

On June 17, Prime Minister Ishiba held a summit meeting with President Lee on the occasion of the G7 Kananaskis Summit held in Canada — their first in-person meeting — and the two leaders concurred to promote close communication between the two governments for stable development of the Japan-ROK relations. Taking note of the active people-to-people and economic exchanges between the two countries under the favorable trend in bilateral relations in recent years, they also concurred that the government would continue to support such efforts in 2025 as it marks the 60th anniversary of the normalization of diplomatic relations between Japan and the ROK. The two leaders also reaffirmed that they would continue to closely work together between Japan and the ROK, as well as among Japan, the ROK, and the U.S., on the policies toward North Korea, including on the nuclear and missile issues and the abductions issue.

On August 23, Prime Minister Ishiba held a summit meeting with President Lee, who was visiting Japan. In the joint press release issued, the two leaders concurred to significantly develop Japan-ROK relations in a future-oriented and stable manner, building on the foundation of the Japan-ROK relations that has been established since the normalization of diplomatic relations between Japan and the ROK in 1965. The two leaders concurred on the launch of a framework for consultations between the two governments to share knowledge with each other and cooperate to find solutions for common social and economic challenges facing both countries, such as regional revitalization, the declining birthrate and aging population, the rapid population decline, agriculture, and ensuring resilience against disasters. They also welcomed the decision to expand the working holiday program between the two countries and concurred that the government would support efforts to promote exchanges and mutual understanding between the peoples of the two countries. The two leaders also concurred to further promote bilateral cooperation on hydrogen, ammonia, AI, and other areas as new frontiers in the economic field.



Japan-ROK Summit Meeting (August 23, Tokyo; Photo: Official Website of the Prime Minister's Office of Japan)

On September 30, Prime Minister Ishiba visited Busan, ROK. At the summit meeting with President Lee, the two leaders concurred to significantly develop Japan-ROK relations in a stable manner, based on the outcomes of the August summit meeting in Tokyo, and also concurred to convene the Japan-Korea Committee on Scientific and Technological Cooperation to discuss cooperation in the field of science and technology, including AI. The two leaders affirmed that Japan and the ROK would continue strategic communication on security and economic security areas to respond in coordination amid the increasingly severe strategic environment. The two leaders also exchanged views on the regional situation including the Indo-Pacific and Palestine, and reconfirmed that, with regard to their policies toward North Korea including the nuclear and missile issues, they would work closely together between Japan and the ROK, as well as among Japan, the ROK and the U.S., toward the complete denuclearization of North Korea.

On October 30, Prime Minister Takaichi visited the ROK to attend the APEC Leaders' Meeting and held her first summit meeting with President Lee. The two leaders concurred that, while acknowledging that there are various issues on which their positions differ due to their proximity as neighboring countries, they would manage these issues through their leadership,



Japan-ROK Summit Meeting (January 13, 2026, Nara; Photo: Official Website of the Prime Minister's Office of Japan)



Drum session by the leaders of Japan and the ROK (January 13, 2026, Nara; Photo: Official Website of the Prime Minister's Office of Japan)

and that they would develop Japan-ROK relations in a future-oriented and stable manner, based on the foundation of the Japan-ROK relations which has been established since the normalization of the Japan-ROK relations. The two leaders also concurred to actively promote "shuttle diplomacy" and to continue close communication between the two governments.

On January 13, 2026, Prime Minister Takaichi held a summit meeting with President Lee, who was visiting Nara Prefecture. The two leaders shared their recognition of the strategic importance of the Japan-ROK relations and affirmed that they should work together to play a role in ensuring the stability of the region. The importance of strategic coordination, including security cooperation between Japan and the ROK as well as among Japan, the ROK and the U.S., was discussed. In addition, the two leaders concurred on deepening the discussions among relevant ministries in order to promote strategic and mutually beneficial cooperation in the fields of economy and economic security. The two leaders also discussed their policies toward North Korea, including the nuclear and missile issues, and reaffirmed that they would work closely together between Japan and the ROK, as well as among Japan, the ROK and the U.S. toward the complete denuclearization of North Korea. The two leaders concurred to continue close communication between the two governments going forward, including through the active promotion of "shuttle diplomacy."

In addition to such exchanges at the leader and ministerial levels, close communication was also actively conducted at various levels over the past year, including the Japan-ROK Vice-Ministerial Strategic Dialogue, Japan-ROK Consultations on Common Social Issues, and the Japan-ROK Committee on Science and Technology Cooperation.

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

The Government of Japan maintains the view that it is necessary to advance Japan-ROK relations based on the platform on which the friendly and cooperative bilateral relations have been built since the normalization of diplomatic relations in 1965, and that the issue of CWKs that was ruled on by the ROK Supreme Court in 2018 needs to be resolved to that end. Based on this recognition, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has engaged in close communication with its ROK counterparts including at the ministerial level on this issue.

On March 6, 2023, the Government of the ROK announced its position on the issue of CWKs, and stated that a ROK foundation would pay court-awarded fees and late charges to the plaintiffs in the 2018 final judgments by the ROK Supreme Court.

In response, on the same day, the Government of Japan made public its view, stating that it values the measures announced by the Government of the ROK as a move toward restoring Japan-ROK relations, which had been severely strained due to the ROK Supreme Court ruling in 2018, to a sound footing.(12)

Meanwhile, the ROK Supreme Court also rendered final judgments in December 2025 in multiple similar lawsuits, following the 2018 judgment, ordering Japanese companies to pay compensation. On these

(12) See References on the Issue of Former Civilian Workers from the Korean Peninsula (CWKs)

judgments, the Government of Japan has lodged representations based on Japan's consistent position to date. In its announcement of the measures on March 6, 2023, the Government of the ROK has stated that a ROK foundation would pay the court-awarded fees and late charges in the event that other currently pending CWK-related lawsuits (at the time of the announcement) end in favor of the plaintiffs.

As of November 2025, payments have been made by the ROK foundation to 26 plaintiffs who are CWKs. The Government of the ROK has stated that it will continue to make efforts to gain the understanding of the plaintiffs, and the Government of Japan will continue to maintain close communication with the ROK side.

The below Ministry of Foreign Affairs website details the issue of CWKs.

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

(C) The Issue of Comfort Women

Japan has sincerely dealt with the issue of comfort women as it has been a major diplomatic issue between Japan and the ROK since the 1990s. 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 Cooperation between Japan and the ROK. However, from the perspective of facilitating feasible remedies for the former comfort women, in 1995, the people and the Government of Japan cooperated to establish the Asian Women's Fund, 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. Furthermore, successive Prime Ministers have sent letters expressing their "apology and remorse" to former comfort women.

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. 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 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, 2023, 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 65 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 statue(13) was installed on the sidewalk facing the Consulate General of Japan in Busan. Later, the Moon Jae-in administration was 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, the position of the Government of the ROK on the issue of comfort women was announced to be 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 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. The moves to dissolve the Foundation are totally unacceptable for Japan in light of the 2015 Japan-ROK Agreement.

Moreover, on January 8, 2021, in the lawsuit filed by former comfort women and others against the

(13) 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.

Government of Japan, the Seoul Central District Court of the ROK 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.(14) On April 21 of the same year, in a similar lawsuit filed by former comfort women and others, the Seoul Central District Court dismissed the case, taking into account the principle of State immunity under international law, but on November 23, 2023, at the appeal in this case, the Seoul High Court rendered a judgment denying the application of the principle of State immunity under international law and allowing the plaintiff's lawsuit, and this judgment was confirmed on December 9 of that year. On April 25, 2025, in a lawsuit filed by the bereaved families of former comfort women against the Government of Japan, the Cheongju District Court rendered a judgment denying the principle of State immunity under international law and ordering the Government of Japan to pay compensation to the plaintiffs, and this judgment was confirmed on May 15 of that year. Japan has repeatedly expressed its position that this lawsuit must be dismissed because for these comfort women lawsuits it is not acceptable for the Government of Japan to be subject to the jurisdiction of the ROK in accordance with the 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 ROK 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, these judgments are extremely regrettable and absolutely unacceptable, as they are clearly contrary to international law and agreements between the two countries. Japan has strongly urged 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 abiding by promises made between two countries is the foundation of bilateral relations. The ROK has a responsibility to the international community to steadily implement the agreement. 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 Government of Japan will continue to strongly urge the ROK to steadily implement the Japan-ROK Agreement. (See page 33 for the comfort women issue in the international community.)

(D) Takeshima

Regarding the dispute between Japan and the ROK concerning the territorial sovereignty over Takeshima, Takeshima is indisputably an inherent territory of Japan both in light of historical facts and based on international law. However, 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 platforms.(15) Japan has also repeatedly lodged strong protests against the ROK over matters such as South Korean citizens including members of the ROK's National Assembly landing on the island, and the ROK's military exercises and marine surveys in and around Takeshima. In 2025, military exercises were conducted in and around Takeshima, and

(14) See References on the Issue of Comfort Women.
The relevant section of the MOFA website on Japan's efforts regarding the comfort women issue can be found here:
https://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/postwar/page22e_000883.html

(15) In February 2008, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs published a pamphlet entitled "Takeshima: 10 points to understand the Takeshima Dispute." 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. Furthermore, 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

(14)

(15)

the Government of Japan lodged strong protests against these acts based on Japan's consistent position on Takeshima.[16] Japan will continue to respond resolutely based on Japan's basic position regarding Takeshima.

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 persistent diplomatic efforts to settle the Takeshima dispute in a peaceful manner in accordance with international law.

(E) Exchanges and Travel

As for travel between Japan and the ROK, since early 2020, due to the strengthening of border measures related to the spread of COVID-19, the number of travelers between the two countries significantly decreased, and in 2021 approximately 30,000 people made trips between the two countries. In 2024 and 2025, the number of travelers solidly increased, reaching consecutive record highs of approximately 12.04 million in 2024 and approximately 13.11 million in 2025.

In Japan, K-POP and related content is widely accepted mainly among younger generations, and Korean dramas and movies have become widely popular amongst people of all ages. Interest in learning the Korean language is also growing. This content and the Korean language are believed to help make cross-cultural understanding more accessible. In addition, 2025 marks the 60th anniversary of the normalization of diplomatic relations between Japan and the ROK. Throughout this milestone year, a wide variety of exchanges took place across regions, generations, and fields. The major Japan-ROK grassroots exchange program "Japan-Korea Exchange Festival" (Nikkan Koryu Omatsuri) was held in Tokyo and Seoul in 2025, with a total of approximately 116,000 people from both countries participating. The Government of Japan, through "Japan Friendship Ties Programs (JENESYS2025)," is fostering mutual understanding, primarily between youth from Japan and the ROK, and is promoting friendly and cooperative relationships for the future.

(F) Other Issues

The Governments of Japan and the ROK concluded the Agreement on the Protection of Classified Military Information (GSOMIA) in November 2016 in order to strengthen cooperation and coordination 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 and notified the termination on the following day, August 23. Following this and after exchanges between Japan and the ROK, on November 22, 2019, the Government of the ROK announced that it would suspend the effect of the notification of termination of August 23. On March 21, 2023, immediately after President Yoon's visit to Japan, the Government of the ROK officially notified that it would withdraw its notification of August 2019 to terminate the Japan-ROK GSOMIA. In view of the current regional security environment, the Government of Japan 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),[17] the International Hydrographic Organization (IHO)

(16) In July and December, the ROK military conducted military exercises related to Takeshima. The Government of Japan immediately lodged strong protests based on Japan's consistent position on Takeshima.

(17) 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 notation methods for place names. In 2017, the UN Conferences on the Standardization of Geographical Names, 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 Geographical Names (UNGEGN).

and other international conferences. These assertions however are groundless, and Japan has firmly refuted these assertions each time they arise.(18)

A cultural property(19) which had been stolen and taken to the ROK, and for which the Government of Japan had been urging the Government of the ROK to promptly return, was returned from the ROK government to its rightful owner, a Japanese temple, in January 2025. Upon receipt from the Daejeon District Prosecutors' Office, Kannon-ji Temple temporarily lent the property to the ROK-side temple in light of the ROK-side temple's request to borrow the property for a 100-day memorial service. After the conclusion of the 100-day memorial service, in May of that year, the statue was returned from Buseoksa Temple to Kannon-ji Temple and brought back to Tsushima.

Japan has provided support and taken measures as much as possible from a humanitarian perspective in various fields, including responses for ethnic Koreans in Sakhalin,(20) addressing the issue of atomic bomb survivors living in the ROK,(21) and helping Hansen's disease patients admitted to sanitariums in the ROK.(22)

C Japan-ROK Economic Relations

The total value of trade between Japan and the ROK amounted to approximately 11.4621 trillion Japanese yen in 2025. Japan is the ROK's fifth largest trading partner, and the ROK is Japan's fourth largest trading partner. The ROK's trade deficit with Japan increased by approximately 8.5% from the previous year, reaching approximately 2.4562 trillion Japanese yen (Trade Statistics of Japan, Ministry of Finance). Japanese direct investment in the ROK totaled approximately 4.4 billion U.S. dollars (down 28.1% from the previous year) (figures published by the ROK Ministry of Trade, Industry and Resources).

Japan and the ROK also cooperate as parties to the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) Agreement, and work together in various economic frameworks, including the World Trade Organization (WTO), the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), and the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF).

As for import restrictions on Japanese food products by the Government of the ROK, Japan is taking various opportunities to urge the ROK to remove the restrictions as soon as possible.

(18)

(18) Ministry of Foreign Affairs website with information on the issue of the name "Sea of Japan": https://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/maritime/japan/index.html

(19) After being stolen in Tsushima City, Nagasaki Prefecture in 2012 and shipped to the ROK, the "Kanzeon Bosatsu Statue" was collected and stored by the Government of the ROK. A Korean temple asserting ownership of the statue has filed a claim seeking to have the Government of the ROK hand over the statue, and in January 2017 the Daejeon District Court issued a verdict of the first hearing to the plaintiff's side (the Korean temple), but in February 2023 the Daejeon High Court reversed the initial ruling and dismissed the plaintiff's claim. The plaintiffs have made an appeal, but in October 2023 the Supreme Court dismissed the appeal.

(20) 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.

(21) 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.

(22) 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 sanatoriums 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 sanatoriums. 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 Hansen's disease patients were also made eligible for compensation.

Column

The 60th Anniversary of the Normalization of Diplomatic Relations between Japan and the Republic of Korea (ROK)

On June 22, 1965, Japan and the ROK signed the "Treaty on Basic Relations between Japan and the Republic of Korea," and exchanged instruments of ratification on December 18 of the same year, thereby normalizing diplomatic relations. The year 2025 marks the milestone of the 60th anniversary of the normalization of diplomatic relations between Japan and the ROK. Over the past 60 years, Japan and the ROK have accumulated various exchanges and cooperation in diverse fields, including politics, economy, and culture.

In particular, one of the pillars supporting the current positive state of Japan-ROK relations is the active exchange between the peoples of the two countries. Throughout this year, a wide range of exchanges and initiatives have been conducted in both Japan and the ROK to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the normalization of diplomatic relations. Under the catchphrase "Joining Hands for a Better Future," over 500 commemorative events recognized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan and the ROK were held by private organizations, companies, and other entities from both Japan and the ROK. People-to-people exchanges between Japan and the ROK, particularly among younger generations, have now come to take place naturally. Japan looks forward to seeing the friendship between Japan and the ROK, nurtured through the 60th anniversary, continue to expand significantly in the years ahead.

On February 15, Tokyo Tower was illuminated under the theme "Japan-ROK Exchange: Lighting Our Way Together," with the hope of promoting people's growing interest in exchanges between Japan and the ROK and fostering mutual understanding. At the same time on the same day, Namsan Seoul Tower in the ROK was also illuminated, marking a vibrant occasion that impressively heralded the opening of the 60th anniversary year.

For a period of 30 days from June 1 to 30, the facilitation programs for immigration procedures were implemented at selected airports in both Japan and the ROK for nationals of both countries who met certain conditions. In the same month, commemorative receptions hosted by the Embassy of Japan in the ROK and the Embassy of the ROK in Japan were held in Seoul and Tokyo, respectively, where the 60th anniversary of the normalization of diplomatic relations was celebrated together with people who have engaged in exchanges between Japan and the ROK across a wide range of fields. At each reception, Prime Minister Ishiba and President Lee Jae Myung delivered congratulatory remarks. Prime Minister Ishiba stated that Japan would like to further expand the scope of Japan-ROK cooperation and ensure that the exchanges the two countries have cultivated are passed on to the next generation.

The "Japan-Korea Exchange Festival" (*Nikkan Koryu Omatsuri*), which began in Seoul on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the normalization of diplomatic relations in 2005, was held on a larger scale than in previous years (in Tokyo on September 27 and 28, and in Seoul on October 12). In Tokyo, a parade recreating the costumes of the "Joseon Tongsinsa (*Chōsen Tsūshinshi*)," the diplomatic mission that has long been a symbol of exchange between Japan and the ROK, enlivened the atmosphere at the venue with music and dance. Korean food booths offering dishes such as *jeon* (Korean savory pancakes) and *kimbap* (Korean-style rice rolls) were also set up, and K-pop concerts featuring artists from both Japan and the ROK were held on both days, attracting approximately 49,000 visitors. In Seoul, a special stage was presented where a Korean *gayageum* (traditional Korean stringed instrument) player, a Japanese *koto* player, and a Japanese calligrapher performed together, expressing "friendship" through music and calligraphy, among other events, attracting approximately 67,000 visitors.

In addition, many other commemorative events were held, including an exhibition of the Treaty on Basic Relations between Japan and the Republic of Korea and its related documents, signed and entered into force 60 years ago (held at the Diplomatic Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan), as well as the issuance of special stamps depicting, through illustrations, the culture, animals, and plants that represent the ROK.



Recreated Joseon Tongsinsa performance stage (above) and exhibition booths (below) at the Japan-Korea Exchange Festival (September 27 and 28, Tokyo)

4 Southeast Asia

(1) Indonesia

Indonesia is a major country in the Southeast Asia region with the fourth largest population in the world (at approximately 280 million people) and situated in a strategic location on sea lanes such as the Strait of Malacca, and plays a leading role in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Moreover, as ASEAN's sole G20 member and as one of the leading countries in the Global South, its importance in addressing regional and international challenges has been increasing. President Prabowo Subianto, who took office in October 2024, stated in his inaugural address that he would focus on poverty reduction (including the expansion of the free nutritious meal program), improving self-sufficiency in food and energy, and eradicating corruption, and has been advancing various policies under stable parliamentary management through his coalition government. In terms of foreign policy, while formally joining BRICS,(23) Indonesia pursues a foreign policy based on non-alignment, including by requesting its accession to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP). To that end, President Prabowo himself has also been actively visiting foreign countries. Japan and Indonesia, as Comprehensive Strategic Partners, have been strengthening cooperation across a wide range of fields including security and economy, and deepening their coordination in an increasingly severe regional and international situations. In January, Prime Minister Ishiba visited Indonesia as one of his first bilateral destinations following his assumption of the office of Prime Minister, and concurred with President Prabowo on further strengthening cooperative relations. In May, KISHIDA Fumio, member of the House of Representatives and Supreme Advisor to the Parliamentary Association of the Asia Zero Emission Community (AZEC), visited Indonesia as Special Envoy of the Prime Minister and confirmed the strengthening of bilateral cooperation on decarbonization and energy transition. Also in May, Coordinating Minister for Human Development and Cultural Affairs Pratikno visited Japan to attend the Indonesian National Day Event of Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan, and in September, President Prabowo also visited Japan to view the Expo. In November, the third Japan-Indonesia Foreign and Defense Ministerial Meeting ("2+2") was held in Tokyo, at which Foreign Minister Motegi, Defense Minister KOIZUMI Shinjiro, Foreign Minister Sugiono, and Defense Minister Sjafrie Sjamsuddin confirmed, while sharing strategic assessments on regional and international situations, that they would further strengthen bilateral security and defense cooperation. Through such high-level exchanges and communication, the two countries have been developing their Comprehensive Strategic Partnership based on their long-standing close relations of friendship and cooperation.

(2) Cambodia

Cambodia, located in the Mekong region, is a key country in strengthening connectivity and narrowing the development gap in the region. Due to the impact of COVID-19, Cambodia experienced negative growth in 2020, but has maintained 5–6% growth since 2022.

In terms of domestic affairs, the general election held in July 2023 saw the ruling Cambodian People's Party win a landslide victory after the Candlelight Party, which had become the largest opposition party in the 2022 commune council elections, was denied the right to register its candidates. Hun Sen, who had served as Prime Minister for many years, stepped down from his post, and a new Cabinet headed by Prime Minister Hun Manet was formed.

(23) BRICS: A term referring to a group consisting of countries such as Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa, and other countries. At the inaugural foreign ministers' meeting in 2006 and the inaugural summit meeting in 2009, the original four countries — Brazil, Russia, India, and China — participated. South Africa joined in 2011, giving the grouping its current name, BRICS. In 2024, Egypt, Ethiopia, the United Arab Emirates, and Iran joined as Member Countries, followed by Indonesia in 2025. At the summit meeting in October 2024, a new category of "BRICS Partner Countries" was introduced, and it was announced that Belarus, Bolivia, Kazakhstan, Cuba, Malaysia, Thailand, Uganda, Uzbekistan, and Nigeria joined as Partner Countries from January 2025, with Viet Nam's accession as a Partner Country announced in June of the same year.

Japan has cooperated with Cambodia's peace, reconstruction, and development efforts, including in the first full-scale deployment of UN peacekeeping operations (PKO) personnel in 1992. In recent years, in addition to the expansion of economic relations through investment by Japanese companies, cooperation has also been progressing in new fields such as security and digital technologies, and in April, Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force vessels called at Ream Naval Base as the first foreign naval vessel to do so following maintenance work.

At the Japan-Cambodia Summit Meeting in May, Prime Minister Ishiba and Prime Minister Hun Manet issued a joint statement and an "Economic Co-creation Package," and confirmed that they would cooperate in fields such as security, economy and investment, democracy, and countermeasures against online fraud under the "Comprehensive Strategic Partnership." On the international stage as well, Japan and Cambodia are cooperating on mine-clearance action in third countries such as Ukraine, drawing on their collaboration in mine-clearance efforts in Cambodia.

Military clashes between Cambodia and Thailand occurred near the border in May and July. Japan has been advancing efforts toward de-escalation, including the steady implementation of the cease-fire agreement between the two countries, through an Emergency Grant of approximately 1.8 million U.S. dollars in response to the emergency humanitarian needs in the border area of the two countries, and provision of equipment for cease-fire monitoring.

(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 May, the first general election since Prime Minister Lawrence Wong took office was held, with the ruling People's Action Party (PAP) winning 87 out of 97 contested seats. In his new cabinet, Prime Minister Wong has been addressing priorities such as securing Singapore's position in an unpredictable world — in particular deepening relations with the United States and China and cooperation with like-minded countries — as well as reviewing economic strategies, strengthening social compact, and domestically reinforcing solidarity. In Japan-Singapore relations, Prime Minister Ishiba held a telephone call with Prime Minister Wong in April, exchanging views primarily on the global economy and concurring on coordinating toward the promotion of a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)," and in August, met with Senior Minister Lee Hsien Loong (former Prime Minister), who had visited Japan for the Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan, and held a ceremony to present Senior Minister Lee with the Grand Cordon of the Order of the Rising Sun. Foreign Minister Iwaya held a foreign ministers' meeting with Foreign Minister Vivian Balakrishnan at the ASEAN-related Foreign Ministers' Meetings in Malaysia in July, and confirmed that they would promote cooperation in a wide range of fields such as digital, green, and security, looking ahead to the 60th anniversary of the establishment of Japan-Singapore diplomatic relations in 2026. In addition, through the "Japan-Singapore Partnership Programme for the 21st Century (JSPP21)," which provides joint technical cooperation to third countries, Japan and Singapore conducted training for approximately 170 people primarily in ASEAN countries in 2025, including in the fields of green and digital technologies. In September, the 18th Japan-Singapore Symposium was held in Tokyo, where a wide range of fields including politics, economy, and security were discussed.

(4) Thailand

Thailand is a constitutional monarchy located at the heart of the Southeast Asian mainland (Mekong region). It is also one of the original member states of ASEAN and holds significant geopolitical importance. Thailand has become a major production center for Japanese companies, including the automobile industry, and today is an indispensable part of the Japanese economy as a key part of regional supply chains, with more than 6,000 Japanese companies operating and more than 70,000 Japanese nationals living in Thailand.

In 2025, military clashes with Cambodia occurred and a subsequent change of government took place, making it a year of continued flux. In May, military clashes with Cambodia occurred, and as tensions rose due to border closures between the two countries and other factors, in June, Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra held a telephone call with Cambodian

Senate President Hun Sen to de-escalate the situation. However, following the leak of an audio recording of their conversation, the Constitutional Court ruled in August that Prime Minister Paetongtarn's remarks during the telephone call violated the ethical standards set forth in the Constitution, and she was removed from office. In September, following a vote for prime minister in the House of Representatives, Anutin Charnvirakul, who had criticized Prime Minister Paetongtarn's remarks and withdrawn from the coalition government, was appointed Prime Minister and a new government was formed.

Japan continues to work to strengthen bilateral relations with Thailand. In May, Foreign Minister Iwaya held a meeting with Foreign Minister Maris Sangiampongsa, who was visiting Japan, and confirmed the strengthening of cooperation in the fields of economy and security, and following the outbreak of armed conflict with Cambodia, urged de-escalation of the tension through Japan-Thailand Foreign Ministers' telephone calls and other means.

In December, Foreign Minister Motegi held a meeting with Foreign Minister Sihasak Phuangketkeow, who was visiting Japan, and concurred to strengthen cooperation in various fields under the "Comprehensive Strategic Partnership."

(5) Timor-Leste

Japan established diplomatic relations with Timor-Leste upon its independence in 2002. In 2022, the country celebrated the 20th anniversary of its independence; it has realized peace and stability with the support of the international community, and it has also been making nation building efforts based on the principle of democracy. As a result of the election for the National Parliament held in May 2023, a new government led by Prime Minister Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão was inaugurated in July 2023. As its economy is highly dependent on natural resources such as petroleum and natural gas, the country has been working on industrial diversification as the highest national priority. On the diplomatic front, Timor-Leste achieved full ASEAN membership at the ASEAN-related Summit Meetings in October. At the Japan-ASEAN Summit Meeting held on that occasion, Prime Minister Takaichi expressed her congratulations and extended a warm welcome to Prime Minister Gusmão. High-level exchanges have also taken place, with Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs Ikuina visiting Timor-Leste in July and paying courtesy calls on President José Ramos-Horta, Prime Minister Gusmão, and other senior government officials, and confirming the strengthening of bilateral cooperation and enhanced coordination on regional and international situations. On the occasion of the foreign ministers' meeting with Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation Bendito dos Santos Freitas, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs Ikuina signed and exchanged notes for the Grant Aid "the Project for Human Resource Development Scholarship." In August, President Ramos-Horta visited Japan to attend the National Day Event of the Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan and Prime Minister Ishiba held a summit meeting with President Ramos-Horta, confirming that they would strengthen the Comprehensive Partnership between the two countries. In addition, people-to-people exchanges between the two countries are also expanding - for example through an increase in the number of Timorese technical intern trainees accepted in Japan.

(6) The Philippines

The Philippines is a maritime nation situated at a strategic point on sea lanes, and shares strategic interests with Japan. The Philippines maintained an economic growth rate of 5.7% in 2024, making it one of the ASEAN countries with the highest economic growth rates, and it is on the verge of becoming an upper middle-income country. President Ferdinand Marcos Jr., now in his fourth year in office and reaching the midpoint of his term in 2025, continues to prioritize improving the quality of life of the people through agriculture, education, health, and social security, as well as the development of public infrastructure. As for the Mindanao Peace Process, despite the delays seen in the decommissioning of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) combatants and weapons, based on the amended Bangsamoro Organic Law, the process toward the establishment of an autonomous government following the first autonomous regional parliamentary election is continuing.

In Japan-Philippines relations, 2025 also saw visits at various levels beginning with Foreign Minister



Japan-Philippines Summit Meeting (October 26, Malaysia; Photo: Official Website of the Prime Minister's Office of Japan)

Iwaya's visit to the Philippines in January, and the further strengthening of the Strategic Partnership looking ahead to the 70th anniversary of the normalization of diplomatic relations in 2026 is advancing steadily. In April, Prime Minister Ishiba visited the Philippines, and at the summit meeting with President Marcos, the two leaders concurred on commencing government-level discussions on the negotiation of an Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA) and on an Agreement on the Security of Information, with active high-level exchanges continuing thereafter, including a foreign ministers' meeting in May. In the security field, the Japan-Philippines Reciprocal Access Agreement (RAA) entered into force in September, and was applied for the first time to the Japan-Philippines Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief joint exercise (Doshin-Bayanihan) conducted in October and to logistical transport support in response to the Cebu earthquake, and at the meeting between Prime Minister Takaichi and President Marcos in October, the agreement in principle on ACSA was confirmed. In the fields of economy and people-to-people exchanges, the Japan-Philippines High Level Joint Committee on Infrastructure Development and Economic Cooperation was held in March and September, with discussions on cooperation in infrastructure and the economic field in anticipation of the Philippines becoming an upper middle-income country, and in June, President Marcos visited Japan and inspected the Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan. In addition, in January 2026, Foreign Minister Motegi visited the Philippines and held a foreign ministers' meeting with Secretary for Foreign Affairs Maria Theresa Lazaro, signing the ACSA and confirming the further strengthening of bilateral cooperation in the fields of security, economy, and other areas on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the normalization of Japan-Philippines diplomatic relations. In addition, Foreign Minister Motegi met with other economic ministers and visited an ODA project (the Pasig-Marikina River Channel Improvement Project). In addition to the signing of the ACSA, notes were also signed and exchanged for the Official Security Assistance (OSA) and ODA.

In addition to such bilateral cooperation, trilateral Japan-U.S.-Philippines cooperation is also advancing steadily. In addition to a Japan-U.S.-Philippines Leaders' Video Conference in January, the first Japan-U.S.-Philippines Foreign Ministers' Meeting under the Trump administration was held in July, and concrete cooperation in a wide range of fields including security and economy continues to advance.

(7) Brunei

Brunei has achieved high economic standards and comprehensive social welfare backed by its abundant natural resources and is politically and economically stable. Under the constitutional monarchy, the Sultan serves concurrently as Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economy, Minister of Defense, and Minister of Foreign Affairs. Located in the center of Southeast Asia, Brunei is one of the countries involved in the issue of the South China Sea and has adopted a balanced diplomacy built on the pillar of promoting ASEAN unity and centrality. Brunei's economy is supported by natural gas production and oil refining ventures, but the Government of Brunei is aiming for economic diversification to avoid overreliance on energy resources.

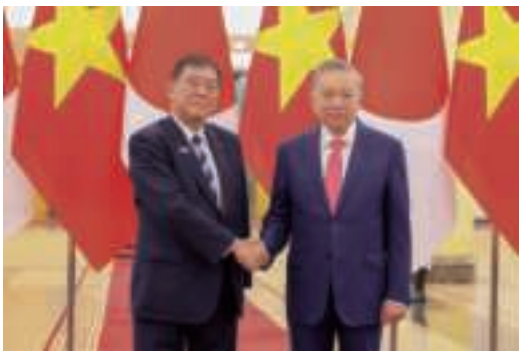
Japan and Brunei have been building an excellent relationship since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1984, symbolized by continued exchanges between the Imperial Family and the Royal Family. In addition, economic relations are also close, with more than 50% of Brunei's liquefied natural gas (LNG) exports bound for Japan. In July, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs Ikuina visited Brunei, welcoming the deepening of bilateral relations following the elevation of the relationship to a "Strategic Partnership" in 2024, and exchanged views on bilateral

cooperation and various issues facing the region and the international community.

(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. At the same time, in recent years, the movement to diversify supply chains has been gaining momentum, and foreign firms, including Japanese companies, have continued moving their production bases to Viet Nam. The country is promoting GX (Green Transformation) and DX (Digital Transformation) with the aim of joining the ranks of developed countries by 2045 and of becoming carbon neutral by 2050, and is currently striving to achieve stable economic growth through the stabilization of the macroeconomy, the promotion of foreign investment by the development of infrastructure and the improvement of the investment environment. Since 2022, the economy has been strengthening its recovery from the downturn caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, achieving a growth rate of 7.1% in 2024. General Secretary of the Communist Party of Viet Nam To Lam, looking ahead to the "new era" beginning with the 14th Party Congress in January 2026, has placed emphasis on pragmatic and rational socioeconomic development, and rapidly implemented large-scale administrative reforms including reorganization of ministries and agencies and consolidation of local governments.

Japan and Viet Nam established diplomatic relations on September 21, 1973, and in 2023, on the 50th anniversary, elevated the bilateral relationship to a "Comprehensive Strategic Partnership for Peace and Prosperity in Asia and the World." Under the new bilateral partnership, 2025 also continued to see active visits by dignitaries and high-level meetings. In April, Prime Minister Ishiba visited Viet Nam and held meetings with General Secretary To Lam, Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh, and other senior leaders, confirming the further concretization of security cooperation and support for upgrading and strengthening Viet Nam's industrial base through cooperation in new fields such as semiconductors and GX. Foreign Minister Motegi met with Foreign Minister Le Hoai Trung on the occasion of the ASEAN-related Summit Meetings in October and exchanged views on bilateral relations and regional and international affairs. In December, the 1st Vice-Ministerial Security Consultations (Vice-Ministerial 2+2) were held, at which strengthening of cooperation in the security field was discussed.



Meeting between Prime Minister Ishiba and General Secretary To Lam (April 27, Hanoi, Viet Nam; Photo: Official Website of the Prime Minister's Office of Japan)

The number of Vietnamese nationals residing in Japan, primarily technical intern trainees, is continuing to increase, from approximately 50,000 in 2012 to over 660,000 by the end of June 2025, making Vietnamese nationals the second largest group of foreign nationals residing in Japan by country, after Chinese nationals.

(9) Malaysia

Comprised of the Peninsular Malaysia of the Malay Peninsula and the East Malaysia of Borneo, Malaysia is a geopolitically important country facing the South China Sea and the Strait of Malacca that is situated in a crucial spot in the Indian and Pacific Oceans. Furthermore, 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) (70%), Chinese (23%) and Indian people (7%), among others. In particular, in 2025, Malaysia served as ASEAN Chair and demonstrated leadership and a prominent presence, including working to mediate reconciliation between Cambodia and Thailand — whose border conflict had broken out — while securing U.S. involvement.

Active high-level exchanges were achieved between Japan and Malaysia. In January, Prime Minister Ishiba visited Malaysia as one of his first bilateral destinations following his assumption of the office of Prime Minister



Japan-Malaysia Summit Meeting (October 26, Tokyo; Photo: Official Website of the Prime Minister's Office of Japan)

and held a summit meeting with Prime Minister Dato' Seri Anwar bin Ibrahim, and in May, KISHIDA Fumio, member of the House of Representatives and Supreme Advisor to the Parliamentary Association of the Asia Zero Emission Community (AZEC), visited Malaysia as Special Envoy of the Prime Minister. In July, Foreign Minister Iwaya visited Malaysia for the ASEAN-related Foreign Ministers' Meetings and held a foreign ministers' meeting with Foreign Minister Dato' Seri Utama Haji Mohamad bin Haji Hasan. Through these meetings, the two countries confirmed the strengthening of bilateral relations in various fields such as maritime security, economy, environmental issues, advanced technologies, and rare earths, and concurred on continuously coordinating to maintain and strengthen a free and open international order based on the rule of law.

In addition, in October, Prime Minister Takaichi visited Malaysia to attend the ASEAN-related Summit Meetings and held a summit meeting with Prime Minister Anwar, at which both leaders welcomed the delivery of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) and rescue boats through Japan's Official Security Assistance (OSA), as well as the signing and exchange of notes on the provision of a new diving support vessel and cease-fire monitoring equipment for the activities of the ASEAN Monitoring Mission at the Cambodia-Thailand border.

(10) Myanmar

More than five years have passed since the coup d'état by the Myanmar military on February 1, 2021, yet clashes continue to erupt across the country between the military and both pro-democracy forces and various ethnic armed organizations, resulting in a deteriorating situation and numerous civilian casualties. On March 28, a massive earthquake of magnitude 7.7 struck near Mandalay in central Myanmar, causing over 3,700 deaths and more than 5,100 injuries according to official figures, and resulting in severe damage including the collapse and damage of houses and public facilities. Immediately after the earthquake, the Government of Japan dispatched Japan Disaster Relief (JDR) medical teams and Self-Defense Forces aircraft to transport medical equipment to the disaster-affected areas, and provided emergency grant aid of approximately 6 million U.S. dollars through international organizations, as well as the provision of emergency relief goods through the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and emergency support kits through the Grant Assistance for Grass-roots Human Security Projects, among other measures.

On the political front, on July 31, the National Defence and Security Council announced the lifting of the state of emergency that had continued for four and a half years, and newly organized the State Security and Peace Council under the chairmanship of Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Min Aung Hlaing. In addition, the Union Election Commission announced that a general election would be held between December 28, 2025, and January 2026, and is steadily making preparations for the election, including scrutiny of candidate lists. In response to these developments, the Government of Japan issued a Foreign Minister's Statement expressing its concern that if a general election were to be held without seeing any moves toward political progress, peaceful resolution would become even more difficult, and expressing its strong desire for all parties to sincerely work toward the peaceful resolution of the situation, while noting that the general election should be positioned as a process toward the restoration of a democratic political system.

In addition, since the coup d'état, the Government of Japan, based on its belief that it is important for ASEAN to respond in a unified manner to resolve the situation in Myanmar, has been fully supporting

ASEAN's unified efforts, including the implementation of the "Five-Point Consensus,"(24) which encompasses humanitarian assistance. Japan has also actively participated in various discussions on Myanmar in international fora and has been working in cooperation with the international community, including by co-sponsoring the Human Rights Council resolution on the situation of human rights in Myanmar (April).

The serious deterioration of the humanitarian situation is an urgent challenge, and the Government of Japan, based on its consistent policy of supporting the people of Myanmar who are facing hardship, has been actively providing humanitarian assistance and support for improving the lives of the people through international organizations and NGOs and other channels in a way that directly benefits the people of Myanmar, providing a total of over approximately 200 million U.S. dollars in humanitarian assistance to date (as of the end of December 2025).

(11) Laos

Laos is a landlocked country bordering China, Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia, and Viet Nam, and is a key country for Mekong connectivity. On the domestic front, Prime Minister Sonexay Siphandone is addressing economic and fiscal management challenges, including surging prices and external debt issues, and at the 9th Ordinary Session of the 9th National Assembly's 9th Legislature in June, he reported that the inflation rate had significantly improved from approximately 24% in the previous year to approximately 11%. In terms of relations with Japan, 2025 marks the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations, and mutual high-level visits and other exchanges were carried out throughout the year. In January, Prime Minister Sonexay paid an Official Working Visit to Japan and, at the summit meeting with Prime Minister Ishiba, the two leaders concurred to elevate bilateral relations to a "Comprehensive Strategic Partnership," and a joint statement was signed. On March 5, the anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations, messages were exchanged between the leaders of the two countries.

In May, President Thongloun Sisoulith visited Japan and held a summit meeting with Prime Minister Ishiba, exchanging views on further developing bilateral relations under the Partnership. In July, on the occasion of the ASEAN-related Foreign Ministers' Meetings in Malaysia, Foreign Minister Iwaya and Foreign Minister Thongsavan had an informal talk, and Minister attached to the Prime Minister's Office Khamjane Vongphosy visited Japan to attend events related to Laos National Day at the Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan (July 9). In September, a delegation of the Laos-Japan Parliamentary Friendship Group headed by President Thoummaly Vongphachanh visited Japan at the invitation of the House of Representatives. In addition, throughout the year, various cultural and people-to-people exchange programs were conducted at both government and private levels, including a visit to Laos by TAKASHIMA Chisako, Goodwill Ambassador for the 70th Anniversary of the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations Between Japan and Laos.

(24) The Five-Point Consensus was announced at the ASEAN Leaders' Meeting held on April 24, 2021. It calls for (1) immediate cessation of violence, (2) commencement of constructive dialogue among all parties concerned, (3) mediation of the dialogue process by a special envoy of the ASEAN Chair, (4) providing humanitarian assistance through the AHA Centre, and (5) visiting Myanmar to meet with all parties concerned by the ASEAN special envoy and delegation.

Column

Timor-Leste and the Future of ASEAN

Another "Land of the Rising Sun"

Timor-Leste is an island nation located between Indonesia and Australia, with a population of 1.34 million and an area roughly the same size as Iwate Prefecture. Although the lack of direct flights from Japan may make it feel quite far away, it is one of the few countries that shares the same time zone as Japan. Moreover, the country's name in the local language, "*Timor Lorosa'e*," carries the same meaning as Japan — "Land of the Rising Sun."

Steps from Independence to Development and Bilateral Cooperation

Timor-Leste, which gained independence in 2002, was the first country to achieve independence in the 21st century. From the standpoint that the stability and development of Timor-Leste are important for peace in the Asia-Pacific region, Japan has consistently supported the country's nation-building, working together with Timor-Leste to promote infrastructure development and industrial diversification.

In 1999, Japan hosted the first Donors' Meeting on Timor-Leste. In 2002, shortly before independence, Prime Minister Koizumi visited the country and held talks with President-elect Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão. Japan also dispatched Japan Ground Self-Defense Force (JGSDF) units as part of United Nations peacekeeping operations (PKO). Even after nation-building was on track, Japan continued its assistance through Official Development Assistance (ODA). In 2018, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) constructed a bridge called "*Hinode* Bridge (Ponte *Hinode*)" in the capital, Dili, significantly improving traffic conditions within the city.

Japan's Comprehensive Partner — and the 11th ASEAN Member State

Bilateral relations between Japan and Timor-Leste have been deepening rapidly in recent years.

In the economic field, an increasing number of Japanese companies are showing interest in investing in Timor-Leste, with concrete developments already underway in areas such as shipbuilding and solar power plants. In terms of people-to-people exchanges, Kochi Prefecture became the first prefecture in Japan to accept technical intern trainees from Timor-Leste in 2023, and since then, Timorese nationals have been playing active roles in communities across Japan. In the security field as well, defense cooperation is advancing through such means as the participation of the Japan Self Defense Force in Exercise "*Hari'i Hamutuk*," a joint capacity building project conducted with the Australian, the U.S., New Zealand and Timor-Leste Defense Forces.

When Prime Minister Gusmão visited Japan in 2023, in light of this strengthening cooperation, the bilateral relationship was upgraded to a "Comprehensive Partnership" with Prime Minister Kishida. During President Ramos-Horta's visit to Japan in 2025, Prime Minister Ishiba and the President concurred, among other areas, on the implementation of Official Security Assistance (OSA) for Timor-Leste for the first time, marking a broadening scope of cooperation.

In October 2025, Timor-Leste officially became a member state of ASEAN. Japan has long supported the country's efforts toward this goal. Since gaining independence in 2002, Timor-Leste has faced challenges including peacebuilding, the development of basic infrastructure and national institutions, and economic development. This accession represents a major step forward toward its greater participation in the international community, and a demonstration of its commitment to contributing to regional peace and prosperity.

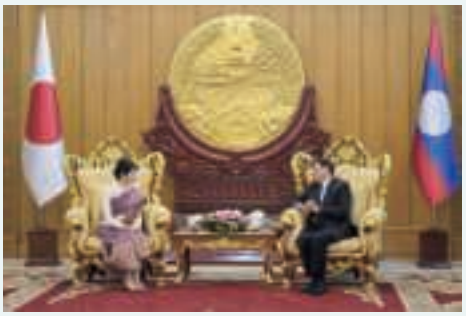


Japan-Timor-Leste Summit Meeting (August 26, Tokyo; Photo: Official Website of the Prime Minister's Office of Japan)

At a time when the international community faces complex crises, relations with Timor-Leste — a country that shares common values such as democracy and human rights, and is situated on a critical sea lane linking the Indian Ocean and the Western Pacific — are becoming increasingly important. As a member of ASEAN, Timor-Leste's efforts to work together with Japan toward maintaining and strengthening the international order based on the rule of law will serve as an important milestone for advancing peace and stability in the region.

Column

The 70th Anniversary of the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between Japan and Laos



Her Imperial Highness Princess Aiko paying a courtesy call on President Thongloun (November 18, Vientiane, Laos; Photo: Imperial Household Agency)

The year 2025 marked the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Japan and Laos. During Prime Minister Sonexay Siphandone's visit to Japan in January, the two countries elevated their bilateral relations to a "Comprehensive Strategic Partnership," and at the Japan-Laos Summit Meeting held during President Thongloun Sisoulith's visit to Japan in May, the two sides confirmed the further strengthening of their cooperative relationship. Furthermore, from November 17 to 22, Her Imperial Highness Princess Aiko officially visited Laos. Under the warm welcome extended by government dignitaries including President Thongloun, Vice President Pany Yathotou, and Prime Minister Sonexay, Her Imperial Highness Princess Aiko delivered addresses on Japan-Laos relations at an official dinner and, through visits to various facilities, deepened exchanges with the younger generation. This was the first visit to Laos by a member of the Imperial Family since His Imperial Highness the Crown Prince (now His Majesty the Emperor) visited in 2012, and it served as an opportunity to demonstrate, both domestically and internationally, the bonds between the two countries as they continue to develop toward the next generation.

In addition to such high-level exchanges, a wide range of commemorative events and exchange programs were held throughout the year in both countries.

As part of these efforts, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs appointed violinist TAKASHIMA Chisako as Goodwill Ambassador for the "70th Anniversary of the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between Japan and Laos." She played a leading role in grassroots exchanges in the fields of culture and education, including providing music instruction to local elementary school students. In addition, IDEBUCHI Koichi, a designer from Kagawa Prefecture, created a commemorative logo featuring an elephant and cherry blossoms — symbols of both countries — which was used in various public relations activities.

The foundation of the friendly relations between the two countries rests on the accumulation of people-to-people exchanges and cooperation over many years. In 1965, Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCVs) of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) were first dispatched to Laos, the program's first overseas deployment, and since then, approximately 1,100 volunteers have contributed to the country's development across a wide range of fields including education, health, and agriculture. Japan also dispatches "NIHONGO Partners" — who serve as assistants to the local Japanese-language teachers and as conversation partners for Japanese-language learners — thereby contributing to the support of Japanese-language education and the introduction of Japanese culture in Laos. Furthermore, elephants donated from Laos under the "Elephant Breeding Project at Kyoto City Zoo" and cherry trees planted in Houaphanh Province in Laos have become beloved symbols of friendship among many citizens. In addition, the number of former Lao students who have studied in Japan under the Japanese Government (Ministry of Education, Sports, Science and Technology) Scholarship has reached approximately 1,300, and they are active in a wide range of fields spanning politics, government, business, and academia.

In the development of economic and social infrastructure as well, Japan, as one of the largest donor countries, has implemented "Quality ODA," contributing to the strengthening of connectivity with neighboring countries through the construction of arterial roads and an international airport in the capital Vientiane, the Pakse Bridge in the southern region, and the rehabilitation of hydroelectric power stations. On the governance front, Japan has also been steadily implementing support for legal and judicial development, including assistance in the establishment and dissemination of Laos's first Civil Code. In recent years, sports cooperation has also expanded, with progress being made on the project for reconstruction of the Chao Anouvong Stadium in the center of the capital. On the tourism front, exchanges are expanding throughout the country, including cooperation and exchanges between Luang Prabang, a historic city in northern Laos, and Takayama City in Gifu Prefecture.

Based on the mutual trust and friendship deepened in this manner, the Government of Japan will continue to further develop the bilateral relationship with Laos, which is flourishing across all fields, and contribute to the interests of the peoples of both countries as well as to peace and prosperity in the region.

5 South Asia

(1) India

India is now the world's most populous country, the fifth largest economy, and is strengthening its presence in the international community. In terms of its economy, India has been achieving steady economic growth through various economic initiatives, including "Make in India, Make for the World." In diplomatic relations, India has been actively engaging in diplomacy, primarily in the Indo-Pacific region, under the "Act East" policy, and is increasingly exerting influence in the international arena as a global power, positioning itself as a voice of the "Global South."

Japan and India are the two largest democracies in Asia, sharing fundamental values as well as strategic interests. Under the "Japan-India Special Strategic and Global Partnership," the two countries have broadly deepened cooperation in a wide range of fields, such as economy, security, and people-to-people exchanges. India is also an important partner in realizing a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)," and multilateral cooperation such as Japan, Australia, India, and the U.S. framework is steadily making progress. 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. Japan-India relations are among the most promising bilateral relationships in the world, and its importance is growing amid increasing uncertainty in the existing international order.

In 2025, Japan and India held frequent high-level exchanges, including summit meetings. At the leaders' level, in August, Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Japan for the first time in approximately seven years under the framework of annual mutual leader visits. On this occasion, the two countries concurred to further strengthen cooperation in three areas — security, economy/investment/innovation, and people-to-people exchanges — by leveraging their respective strengths and building a mutually complementary relationship. Furthermore, in October, a Japan-India Summit Telephone Meeting was held soon after the inauguration of Prime Minister Takaichi,



18th Japan-India Foreign Ministers' Strategic Dialogue (January 16, 2026, Delhi, India)

and a face-to-face Japan-India Summit Meeting was held on the sidelines of the G20 Summit in South Africa in November. At the foreign ministerial level, Japan-India Foreign Ministers' Meetings were held in the United States in January (on the occasion of the inauguration of U.S. President Trump) and July (on the occasion of the Japan-Australia-India-U.S. Quad Foreign Ministers' Meeting), and a Japan-India Foreign Ministers' Meeting was also held shortly after Foreign Minister Motegi took office, on the occasion of the ASEAN-related Summit Meetings held in Malaysia in October. Furthermore, in January 2026, Foreign Minister Motegi visited India and held a Japan-India Foreign Ministers' Strategic Dialogue with Foreign Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar. To realize a FOIP, they shared their recognition of the current challenging regional and international situation and concurred to cooperate, including within the Quad framework. At the working level, the Japan-India Foreign Vice-Ministers' Dialogue was held in India in July.

(2) Pakistan

Pakistan is situated in a strategic location connecting Asia and the Middle East, and its political stability and economic development are essential for the stability and growth of the region. The country has a population of more than 200 million and approximately 65% of the total population is under 30 years old, which makes its economic potential significantly high, although improving the government's fiscal situation

Column

Visit to Japan by Prime Minister Modi of India
— Building Relations through a Regional Visit —

From August 29 to 30, Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi, visited Japan.

Japan and India have actively been conducting high-level exchanges, including at the leaders' level. This is seen in the two countries' agreement on the "Japan-India Annual Summit" framework in 2006, under which the leaders of the two countries visit each other's country in turn.

Prime Minister Modi's visit to Japan was the first such visit under the "Annual Summit" framework in about seven years. Prime Minister Modi has visited Kyoto, Hyogo, and Yamanashi prefectures in his past visits under this framework. The fact that the two leaders spend long stretches of time together, including through visits to regional areas that offer a different charm from Tokyo, has further strengthened the personal relationship between the leaders and has laid the foundation for today's robust Japan-India relations.

To ensure that this visit would further bring Japan and India closer together, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs proceeded with preparations for a visit to a regional area. In considering the destination, the Government of Japan placed particular emphasis on the direction that future Japan-India cooperation should take. Ten years have passed since Prime Minister Modi's first visit to Japan as Prime Minister in September 2014, when the two countries agreed to elevate the Japan-India relations to a "Special Strategic and Global Partnership." Since then, Japan-India cooperation has made remarkable strides in a wide range of fields. Against this backdrop, India today is home to a large pool of highly skilled personnel and is undergoing remarkable economic growth. Japan possesses advanced technological capabilities that drive global growth. During this visit, it was decided that the two countries would announce the "Japan-India Joint Vision for the Next Decade," which aims to build a mutually complementary relationship in which the two countries leverage their respective strengths and co-create solutions to shared challenges they face. The regional destination selected as fitting for this vision was Miyagi Prefecture. The decisive factor was Japan's cutting-edge technology.

First, in order to deepen understanding of the high speed rail project, a flagship project between Japan and India, the two leaders boarded the *Shinkansen* together and visited Sendai. During the 90-minute journey, Prime Minister Ishiba and Prime Minister Modi sat next to each other on the train and exchanged views. The trip also featured a variety of carefully arranged activities, including interaction with Indian train drivers undergoing training at the East Japan Railway Company, a tour of the *Shinkansen* driver's cabin, and a briefing on the experimental rolling stock "ALFA-X." After arriving in Miyagi Prefecture, the leaders toured a plant of Tokyo Electron Limited, which manufactures semiconductor production equipment. The semiconductor sector is another important area in which public-private cooperation is being advanced under the "Japan-India Economic Security Initiative."



Prime Minister Ishiba and Prime Minister Modi shaking hands in front of the *Shinkansen* (August 30, Tokyo Station; Photo: Official Website of the Prime Minister's Office of Japan)

The warm welcome extended by local residents to Prime Minister Modi and his delegation was also essential to the success of the regional visit.

The Japan-India relations, which have been further strengthened through this regional visit, are being firmly carried forward between Prime Minister Takaichi and Prime Minister Modi. Following the inauguration of Prime Minister Takaichi, the two leaders promptly held a telephone call and held an in-person meeting at the G20 Johannesburg Summit (South Africa) in November, at which they confirmed to achieve tangible results based on the vision outlined during Prime Minister Modi's visit to Japan. Going forward, Japan intends to further develop the Japan-India relations while leveraging the rich appeal of Japan's regional areas.

and breaking out of a period of low growth remains to be challenges.

In terms of relations with Japan, a Japan-Pakistan Foreign Ministers' telephone call was held in May. In September, the 13th Japan-Pakistan Vice-Ministerial Political Consultations and the 9th Japan-Pakistan High-Level Economic Dialogue were held, at which both sides exchanged views on economic relations and trade and investment cooperation, security and defense cooperation, people-to-people and cultural exchanges, disarmament and non-proliferation, global issues including climate change, cooperation through international organizations, and the regional situation. In recent years, Japan has been providing support to Pakistan, focusing on social sectors closely linked to people's livelihoods where Japan's strengths are most applicable, such as disaster prevention and climate change, health, education, and water and sewerage. In May, Notes concerning a "Project for Economic and Social Development (Water Supply-Related Equipment in Faisalabad)" (510 million yen) and other grant aid projects were signed and exchanged. Furthermore, Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan visited Japan in May, and Special Assistant to the Prime Minister for Industries and Production Haroon Akhtar Khan visited Japan in August.

(3) Bangladesh

Bangladesh, in which Muslims account for around 90% of the population, is located in the Bay of Bengal, at the crossroads of India and ASEAN, and in recent years has been experiencing sustained and stable growth (economic growth rate of 5.2% in 2024). With a population of around 170 million people, Bangladesh has been attracting attention as a production base with abundant high-quality labor and a potential market with considerable demand for infrastructure development. On the domestic front, following the political upheaval in August 2024, former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, who had led the government for over 15 years, stepped down, and the Interim Government was formed under Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus. Chief Adviser Yunus has pledged that, after implementing necessary reforms to state systems, a free, fair, and participatory election would be held at the earliest possible opportunity, and announced that a general election would be held in the first half of February 2026. In response to the deteriorating security situation in Rakhine State of Myanmar in August 2017, more than 750,000 displaced persons have flooded into Bangladesh, but their return has not yet been realized. There are concerns that their prolonged displacement will increase the burden on host communities and lead to a deterioration of local security.

As for relations with Japan, under the bilateral "Strategic Partnership," the Japan-Bangladesh Agreement concerning the Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology, for which negotiations were launched in April 2023, was signed in February 2026, and the Japan-Bangladesh Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA), for which the decision to launch negotiations was made in March 2024, was also signed in February 2026. The number of Japanese-affiliated companies operating in the country has increased from 61 in 2005 to 330 in 2025. Ensuring a stable power supply and developing infrastructure remain challenges for promoting investment by foreign companies, and Japan has been supporting Bangladesh's development through measures such as the provision of yen loans. In addition to the visit of Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs Ikuina to Bangladesh in February, Chief Adviser Yunus visited Japan in May and held a meeting with Prime Minister Ishiba, and Foreign Affairs Adviser Touhid Hossain, who accompanied the Chief Adviser, held a meeting with Foreign Minister Iwaya. At the working level, the 6th Japan-Bangladesh Foreign Secretary Level Consultation was held in May.

(4) Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka is situated in a strategic location on the sea lanes in the Indian Ocean, and its geopolitical importance is note-worthy. On the domestic front, local council elections were held nationwide in May, and the ruling National People's Power (NPP) won a majority in more than half of local parliaments. On the economic front, in March, notes on debt rescheduling were signed and exchanged between the Governments of Japan and Sri Lanka, formally completing the debt restructuring between the two countries. In July, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) completed the 4th review under the Extended Fund Facility (EFF) and approved borrowings of approximately 350

million U.S. dollars by the authorities of Sri Lanka, and in October, a staff-level agreement was reached on the 5th review of the facility. The Government of Sri Lanka continues to implement various reforms required under the EFF program. In its foreign policy, Sri Lanka fundamentally adheres to non-alignment and neutrality while placing importance on balanced diplomacy.

In relations with Japan, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs Ikuina visited Sri Lanka in February and attended the Independence Day Ceremony. In July, Japan-Sri Lanka Economic Cooperation Policy Consultations and the Japan-Sri Lanka Senior Official Level Policy Dialogue were held. In September, President Anura Kumara Dissanayake visited Japan on the occasion of the Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan and held a summit meeting with Prime Minister Ishiba, confirming the further strengthening of relations under the "Comprehensive Partnership" between the two countries. At the same time, notes were signed and exchanged on the provision of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) for surveillance and disaster response (500 million yen) as the first Official Security Assistance (OSA) project for Sri Lanka, and notes were also signed and exchanged on the Grant Aid for the Project for the Enhancement of Productivity in the Dairy Sector (463 million yen) to improve the livelihoods of low-income and small-scale dairy farmers in the northern and eastern provinces of Sri Lanka.

(5) Nepal

Nepal is a landlocked state in South Asia situated between the major powers of China and India, and has been moving forward as a democracy since the promulgation of its new constitution in 2015. On the domestic front, Prime Minister Sharma Oli, who assumed office in July 2024, resigned due to large-scale youth protests in the capital, Kathmandu, and other major cities in September which called for the lifting of social media restrictions and the eradication of corruption. Former Chief Justice of the Supreme Court Sushila Karki was appointed Prime Minister of an interim government, which subsequently dissolved the House of Representatives. It has been announced that a general election will be held on March 5, 2026. Economically, Nepal's growth rate from 2023 to 2024 stood at 3.7%, remaining sluggish, and due in part to domestic instability, breaking out of the low-growth cycle continues to be a challenge. In foreign affairs, Nepal traditionally adheres to non-alignment and neutrality, maintains strong economic and cultural ties with India, and also maintains good relations with China.

As for relations with Japan, the two countries have long built traditional friendly ties through people-to-people exchanges such as mountaineering, and the number of people studying Japanese has been increasing in recent years. As of 2025, over 270,000 Nepalese people reside in Japan and are active in various fields. In May, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs Ikuina participated in an international conference on climate change (Sagarmatha Sambaad) hosted by the Government of Nepal and conveyed Japan's commitment to climate change countermeasures. Japan has also been a major donor country to Nepal for many years, providing economic cooperation in a variety of fields, including the three priority areas of poverty reduction, disaster prevention and climate change countermeasures, and strengthening democratization. The Nagdhunga Tunnel (total length: 2,688 meters, a Japanese yen loan project), which became the first mountain transportation road tunnel in Nepal and was fully excavated in 2024, is expected to contribute to the region's social and economic development after its opening in 2026. This will be achieved by streamlining the transportation network in the relevant section, meeting rapidly increasing traffic demand, reducing travel time, and improving traffic safety.

(6) Bhutan

Bhutan is a landlocked country located between China and India. Guided by its Gross National Happiness (GNH)[(25)] framework, Bhutan's 13th Five-Year Plan (2024-2029) adopts a ten-year strategic roadmap aimed at transforming the economy into a high-income

(25) Gross National Happiness (GNH): A unique concept proposed by the Royal Government of Bhutan in contrast to Gross National Product (GNP). It reexamines an excessive focus on economic growth and development and emphasizes the importance of development that contributes to the happiness of the people, based on four pillars: (a) Economic growth and development, (b) Preservation of cultural heritage and promotion of traditional culture, (c) Conservation and sustainable use of a rich natural environment, (d) Good governance.

GNH model by 2034 and achieving a target GDP of 5 billion U.S. dollars by 2029. Under this plan, the Government of Bhutan is working to strengthen equitable, high-quality healthcare and education, safeguard sovereignty and territorial integrity, establish a trusted governance ecosystem, and accelerate economic growth. Bhutan maintains diplomatic relations only with 58 countries, including neighboring countries and Japan, as well as the EU, and has close ties with India in areas such as national defense. In terms of its relationship with Japan, exchanges between the Japanese Imperial Family and the Bhutanese Royal Family, as well as various forms of support in the field of economic cooperation, have been carried out over many years.

(7) The Maldives

Situated in a strategically important location on sea lanes, the Maldives is an important partner to Japan in realizing FOIP. On the domestic front, in the parliamentary election conducted in April 2024, the ruling People's National Congress (PNC) secured two-thirds of the seats, thereby consolidating President Mohamed Muizzu's governing mandate. Economically, the Maldives' primary industries are fisheries and tourism, which account for about 30% of its GDP, and although it was affected by the spread of COVID-19, the country's per-capita GDP has reached the highest level in the South Asia region. In terms of its diplomacy, President Muizzu has pursued a policy of balanced diplomacy since taking office.

In terms of relations with Japan, in July, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs Ikuina attended the 60th Anniversary celebration of the Independence of the Maldives as Special Envoy of the Prime Minister. Furthermore, in the field of economic cooperation, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs Ikuina and Foreign Minister Abdulla Khaleel signed and exchanged the Notes for Grant Aid project concerning the development of coastal disaster prevention facilities (seawalls) and other projects, with the aim of overcoming the capital city Malé's vulnerability to water disasters and ensuring the stability of the people's livelihoods and the socio-economic infrastructure.

6 Oceania

(1) Australia

A Brief Summary and Overview

The strategic visions of Japan and Australia toward maintaining and strengthening a free and open international order based on the rule of law are aligned in wide-ranging areas, and both Japan and Australia are like-minded countries with the will and capability to play a leading role in realizing a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)." With the region facing a variety of challenges, cooperation between the two countries is more important than ever, and looking ahead to the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Basic Treaty of Friendship and Co-operation between Japan and Australia in 2026, both countries are deepening bilateral cooperation across various areas — including security, economy, economic security, and people-to-people exchanges — with a view to elevating the "Special Strategic Partnership" to even greater heights, based on close coordination between their Prime Ministers and Foreign Ministers. Furthermore, with a view to contributing to the peace and prosperity of the Indo-Pacific region and the international community, both countries are further promoting multilayered cooperation with the U.S. and other like-minded countries, including through frameworks such as Japan-U.S.-Australia and Japan-Australia-India-U.S. (QUAD), on the basis of the Japan-Australia relationship, as the central pillar of the coordination among like-minded countries. In May, a federal election was held, and the Australian Labor Party, led by Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, won for the second consecutive time following the previous election in 2022, with Prime Minister Albanese and key cabinet ministers continuing in their posts.

In the economic sphere, Australia is Japan's third-largest trading partner, and Japan is Australia's second-largest trading partner, and the two countries are further developing their mutually complementary economic relations through the implementation of the Japan-Australia Economic Partnership Agreement

(EPA) in 2015, the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) in 2018, and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) Agreement in 2022.

At the summit level, Prime Minister Ishiba held a telephone call with Prime Minister Albanese immediately after the Australian federal election in May and confirmed that the two countries would work closely together across various fields to further strengthen the "Special Strategic Partnership" between Japan and Australia. At the Summit Meeting in June, Prime Minister Ishiba stated that Japan-Australia cooperation serves as a model for collaboration among like-minded countries, after which the two leaders exchanged views on the security environment of the Indo-Pacific region, including the situation in East Asia, concurred on further strengthening coordination, and confirmed the importance of deepening strategic cooperation between the two countries and promoting cooperation with allies and other like-minded countries. In October, the Japan-Australia Summit Meeting was held immediately after Prime Minister Takaichi took office and Prime Minister Takaichi stated that Japan and Australia are like-minded countries with the will and capability to play a leading role in realizing FOIP. The two leaders then concurred on further strengthening bilateral cooperation across a wide range of areas, including security, economy, and people-to-people exchanges to elevate the bilateral relationship to even greater heights, looking ahead to the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Basic Treaty of Friendship and Co-operation between Japan and Australia in 2026.

At the foreign minister level, in January, Foreign Minister Iwaya held a Japan-Australia Foreign Ministers' Meeting with Foreign Minister Wong and concurred on promoting multilayered cooperation with the United States and other like-minded countries, including efforts by the Quad, and confirmed that the two countries would steadily implement the commitments made at the Japan-Australia "2+2" meeting held in September 2024, regarding Japan-Australia security cooperation, including cyber and economic security. At the Japan-Australia Foreign Ministers' Working Dinner in September, the two foreign ministers confirmed that they would enhance cooperation and dialogue in the economic field and people-to-people exchanges, and concurred on further advancing cooperation in light of the "Japan-Australia Memorandum of Cooperation on Assisting Japanese and Australian Nationals Overseas" signed on the same day. In October, the Foreign Ministers' Meeting was held immediately after Foreign Minister Motegi took office, and the two ministers concurred on further promoting multilayered cooperation with like-minded countries in light of the current challenging strategic environment and on further advancing concrete cooperation in the field of economic security, including supply chains for critical minerals.



Japan-Australia Summit Meeting (October 26, Malaysia; Photo: Official Website of the Prime Minister's Office of Japan)

Japan and Australia are strengthening their cooperation in the following areas through such close communication between their Prime Ministers and Foreign Ministers as described above.

B Cooperation in the Security Field

Japan-Australia security cooperation has become broader and more robust than ever before. Under the Japan-Australia Reciprocal Access Agreement, which entered into force in 2023, force interoperability between the two countries has been strengthened, and the two countries have reinforced their collective engagement in maintaining peace and stability in the region.

In August, the Government of Australia announced its selection of the upgraded Japanese *Mogami* class frigate as Australia's future general-purpose frigates, marking a major step forward in elevating the overall Japan-Australia relationship, including security and defense cooperation, to even greater heights.

In September, the 12th Japan-Australia 2+2 Foreign and Defence Ministerial Consultations ("2+2") were

held in Tokyo, and Japan and Australia concurred on further developing cooperation to strengthen collective deterrence in line with the Japan-Australia Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation (JDSC),[(26)] issued in 2022, and on enhancing discussions between their foreign and defense authorities on potential contingencies that may affect their sovereignty and regional security interests, while sharing strategic assessments. The four ministers also confirmed that they would strengthen cooperation in areas such as operational cooperation, defense industry and advanced capabilities, economic security, strategic communication, and cyber and information security.

C Economic Relations

As shown by the two countries spearheading the CPTPP negotiations, Japan and Australia are working closely and demonstrating leadership in promoting the regional free trade order and building a free and fair economic order based on the rule of law.

Between the two countries, a mutually complementary economic relationship has developed over many years, in which Japan mainly exports industrial products such as automobiles to Australia and Australia mainly exports to Japan energy resources such as coal and natural gas, and agricultural and livestock products such as beef. In particular, in recent years, new cooperation has been advanced in areas such as critical minerals and hydrogen and ammonia-related fields.

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 424,000 people in Australia learn the Japanese language (the fourth largest group in the world), and that there are over 100 sister state and sister city relations. A variety of initiatives to strengthen the foundation of Japan-Australia relations are implemented, including the promotion of mutual understanding through the JET Programme (the Japan Exchange and Teaching Programme), the "New Colombo Plan," and the Japan-Australia Young Political Leaders Exchange Program. Both Japan and Australia will continue to work on the appropriate and steady operation of the Japan-Australia Working Holiday Program.

E Cooperation in the International Community

The two countries are strengthening cooperation toward making an active contribution to peace and stability in the international community. In particular, cooperation has been deepened on various challenges facing the region, such as maritime security and North Korea's nuclear and missile development. Against illicit maritime activities, including ship-to-ship transfers[(27)] with North Korean-flagged vessels, which are prohibited by UN Security Council resolutions, Australia deployed the destroyer *HMAS Sydney* in May to conduct its 13th monitoring and surveillance activities by naval vessel since 2018. In addition, in March and October, Australia conducted its 15th and 16th monitoring and surveillance activities by aircraft for the times since 2018.

(2) New Zealand

A Brief Summary

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. Under the "Strategic Cooperative Partnership" between the two countries, in addition to strengthening bilateral cooperation in areas including the economy, security, and people-to-people exchanges, the two countries are also strengthening their cooperative relations on challenges facing the region and the international community.

B High-Level Consultations

Amid the increasingly challenging regional situation, Japan and New Zealand have been maintaining close communication, including at the summit and foreign minister levels. At the summit level, in June, Prime Minister Ishiba held a telephone call with Prime Minister Luxon, in which Prime Minister Ishiba stated that New Zealand is an important partner in

(26) Document signed at the October 2022 Japan-Australia Leaders' Meeting outlining the direction of Japan-Australia security and defense cooperation for the next 10 years.

(27) In this context, "ship-to-ship transfers" refers to the transfers to or from North Korea-flagged vessels of any goods or items at sea, which UN Security Council resolution 2375 (adopted in September 2017) prohibits the UN member states from facilitating or engaging in.



Signing of the Japan-New Zealand Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA) and the Japan-New Zealand Information Security Agreement (December 19, Tokyo)

promoting a free and open international order based on the rule of law in the Indo-Pacific region, and the two leaders discussed a wide variety of economic issues, including increased uncertainty in the global economy and the multilateral free trade system, and concurred on further deepening bilateral relations, including in the field of security. At the foreign ministers' level, Foreign Minister Iwaya held a meeting with Foreign Minister Peters in July, in which Foreign Minister Iwaya stated that the strengthening of cooperation between Japan and New Zealand as partners in promoting FOIP was reassuring, and looked forward to enhancing the "Strategic Cooperative Partnership" in light of the steady deepening of bilateral security cooperation, while welcoming that the two countries have decided to commence negotiations toward the conclusion of the Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA). In addition, Foreign Minister Iwaya asked Minister Peters for continued understanding and cooperation for the immediate resolution of the abductions issue, and gained the support. The two foreign ministers also exchanged views on the severe security environment in the region, affirmed that the two countries would continue to closely communicate on the regional affairs, and concurred on strengthening multilayered cooperation with allies and like-minded countries to play an important role in tackling the strategic issues in the region. In August, a foreign ministers' telephone call was held at which the two foreign ministers exchanged views on the situations in Ukraine, Pacific Island countries, and the Middle East, and confirmed that they would work closely together to effectively address regional and international challenges.

In addition, in December, Foreign Minister Motegi signed the Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA) and the Information Security Agreement with New Zealand Minister of Defence Collins, who was visiting Japan. At a meeting following the signing ceremony, the two ministers exchanged views on bilateral security cooperation, economic security, regional issues, and the importance of U.S. engagement in the region, and concurred on the importance of further strengthening security cooperation between Japan and New Zealand.

C Economic Relations

The two countries enjoy complementary economic relations and have closely cooperated on the steady implementation of the CPTPP and RCEP Agreement, WTO reforms, and the promotion of a free trade system including Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF), and on building a free and fair economic order based on the rule of law. At the Japan-New Zealand Foreign Ministers' Meeting in July, the two ministers confirmed that they would further strengthen cooperation in the economic field including the CPTPP.

D Cultural and People-to-People Exchanges

People-to-people exchanges between Japan and New Zealand take place through exchange programs like JENESYS, and a cumulative total of more than 1,200 people had participated by 2025. By 2025, more than 3,600 people have also participated in the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Programme (on average approximately 100 people annually, and one in 1,500 people are former JET participants), and active exchanges are continuing. Additionally, 44 sister-city relationships have been established between municipalities in the two countries (the largest number of sister-city relationships that New Zealand has with any country).

E Cooperation in the International Community

The two countries are cooperating closely for the peace and stability of the international community in the international arena, including the United Nations. The two countries are playing a proactive role in regional

stability and development, for example by cooperating in regional cooperation frameworks such as the East Asia Summit (EAS), the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) and the Pacific Islands Leaders Meeting (PALM), and through cooperation in the Pacific Islands region and the Japan-Australia-New Zealand-ROK framework. In support of surveillance for illicit maritime activity, New Zealand deployed the Royal New Zealand Navy sustainment ship *HMNZS Aotearoa* in November for its second monitoring and surveillance activities by vessel since 2024 targeting illicit maritime activities including prohibited ship-to-ship transfers with North Korean vessels under UN Security Council resolutions. Furthermore, in April and November, New Zealand deployed a P-8A and conducted its 17th and 18th monitoring and surveillance activities by aircraft since 2018.

(3) Pacific Island Countries[28]

A Brief Summary and Overview

The Pacific Island countries, surrounded by the vast and beautiful ocean, are rich in marine resources and nature. This region can be divided into three subregions, Micronesia, Polynesia, and Melanesia, each with its own distinct characteristics. Many of these relatively young nations gained independence from colonial or trusteeship status following World War II, chiefly since the 1970s. At the same time, they face various vulnerabilities: "insularity," with their territories scattered across small islands; "smallness," with limited populations that preclude economies of scale; and "remoteness," lying far from major international markets. Among these vulnerabilities, climate change poses "the single greatest existential threat" to the Pacific Island countries. In response to these challenges, since 1971 the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF; formerly the South Pacific Forum (SPF) until 1999) has been developed as a forum for dialogue between the leaders of the Pacific Island countries and regions to advance regional cooperation across political, economic, security, and other domains.

The Pacific Island countries and Japan, bound by the Pacific Ocean, have deep historical ties, and are important partners in areas such as cooperation in the international arena and the supply of fisheries and mineral resources. They are becoming increasingly important as a cornerstone of FOIP, as they are located at the heart of the Pacific Ocean. In addition to bilateral cooperation, Japan is also promoting cooperation with the PIF. At its Leaders Meeting in 2022, the PIF announced the "2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent" (2050 Strategy), which outlines the ideal political, economic, and other conditions and strategic measures for Pacific Island countries and regions in 2050. Japan has consistently expressed strong support for the 2050 Strategy, and at the 10th Pacific Islands Leaders Meeting (PALM10) held in July 2024, discussions were held in line with this Strategy and the PALM Joint Action Plan was compiled.

B Pacific Islands Forum (PIF)

At the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF), the regional organization of Pacific Island countries, the Leaders Meeting was held in Solomon Islands in September, and the " Ocean of Peace Declaration" was approved in the Forum Communique as an initiative emphasizing regionally-led dialogue and consensus on peace and security, and ensuring peace and security through regional unity.

In March, Foreign Minister Iwaya met with PIF Secretary General Waqa, while he was visiting Japan, and conveyed that Japan had decided to contribute three million U.S. dollars to the "Pacific Resilience Facility (PRF)" as part of its effort to address climate change, which is the "single greatest existential threat" to the Pacific Island countries. Foreign Minister Iwaya also explained that the safety of the discharge of ALPS treated water[29] into the sea has been ensured, and that Japan would continue to keep transparency based on scientific evidence and work to enhance the confidence in the safety. In response, Secretary General Waqa expressed understanding of Japan's efforts. In

(28) Pacific Island countries: Palau, Federated States of Micronesia, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Kiribati, Tuvalu, Samoa, Cook Islands, Niue, Tonga, Fiji, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, and Papua New Guinea

(29) ALPS treated water is water that contained radioactive substances from inside the buildings of the Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO)'s Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station (FDNPS) and has been purified and treated through multiple treatment facilities, including ALPS (Advanced Liquid Processing System), until the concentrations of all radioactive substances besides tritium satisfy the safety regulatory standards. As for tritium, the water is significantly diluted with seawater before the discharge into the sea so that it fully satisfies safety regulatory standards.



Holding of the Japan-Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) Secretariat "Kizuna Talanoa" Consultations Japan-Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS) (July 11, Suva, Fiji)

addition, Foreign Minister Iwaya proposed the launch of a senior official level dialogue to strengthen communication between the two sides in order to further solidify their cooperative relationship. In response, the first Japan-Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat "Kizuna Talanoa" consultations were held in July ("Talanoa": a Fijian word meaning "open and transparent dialogue," a traditional concept among the Pacific Island countries).

C Country-Specific Developments

(A) Kiribati

In October, Ambassador for Pacific Islands Leaders Meeting Okuyama visited Kiribati, paid a courtesy call on President and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Immigration Maamau, and held meetings with ministers, exchanging views on cooperation ahead of PALM11, strengthening bilateral relations, and cooperation on the collection of remains.

(B) Cook Islands

In August, Ambassador of Japan to the Cook Islands Osawa attended the ceremony marking the 60th anniversary of the Cook Islands' self-governance as a representative of the Japanese Government, paid a courtesy call on Prime Minister Brown, held meetings with ministers, and exchanged views on strengthening bilateral cooperation and cooperative relations through the PALM process. On this occasion, a handover ceremony for an economic cooperation project was also held.

(C) Samoa

In September, a handover ceremony was held for the Samoa Integrated Training Centre for Community Development, which was constructed through Japan's Grant Assistance for Grass-Roots Human Security Projects, and a handover ceremony of equipment provided under the "Project to Strengthen Border Control and Response to Infectious Diseases" was also held at the Office of the Prime Minister of Samoa.

(D) Solomon Islands

In October, Solomon Islands' National Day was held at the Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan, attended by Minister of Foreign Affairs and External Trade Agovaka. Foreign Minister Iwaya also held a foreign ministers' meeting with Minister of Foreign Affairs and External Trade Agovaka and exchanged views on bilateral cooperation across a wide range of fields including fisheries, health, and human resource development, as well as the PALM process. In addition, Solomon Islands assumed the PIF Chairmanship from September and hosted the 54th PIF General Assembly from September 8 to 12.

(E) Tuvalu

In February, a signing and exchange ceremony was held in Tuvalu for notes concerning "The Project for the Provision of School Bus in Funafuti Atoll" and the "The Project for the Provision of School Bus in Vaitupu Island." In July, Tuvalu's National Day was held at the Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan, attended by Minister of Transport, Energy, Communications and Innovation Kofe. In June, recruitment of Tuvaluan nationals wishing to emigrate to Australia was carried out under the "Falepili Union Treaty" concluded between Tuvalu and Australia.

(F) Tonga

In April, Tonga's National Day was held at the Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan, attended by His Royal Highness, Crown Prince Tupouto'a 'Ulukalala, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister for His Majesty's Armed Forces and Her Royal Highness, Crown Princess Sinaitakala Tu'imatamoana'I Fanakavakilangi Fakafanua Tuku'aho. Foreign Minister Iwaya also held a foreign ministers' meeting with the Crown Prince, confirmed the further strengthening of

bilateral cooperative relations, expressed the intent to work together on shared challenges including climate change and the marine environment, and exchanged views on strengthening relations through bilateral cooperation and the PALM process. In December, notes were signed and exchanged on the first Official Security Assistance (OSA) project for Tonga. Tonga served as PIF Chair from August 2024 to September 2025.

(G) Nauru

In August, Nauru's National Day was held at the Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan, attended by Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade Kun. State Minister for Foreign Affairs FUJII Hisayuki held a meeting with Deputy Minister Kun, who was visiting Japan, and exchanged views on further strengthening relations through bilateral cooperation and the PALM process. In August, a cable landing ceremony was held as part of the East Micronesia Cable Project (a Japan-Australia-U.S. joint project).

(H) Niue

In 2025, Japan and Niue marked the 10th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations. In November, Japan decided to implement grant assistance providing disaster response equipment manufactured by Japanese companies for the strengthening of disaster preparedness in Niue and the promotion of its economic and social development. In December, State Minister for Foreign Affairs HORII Iwao held a meeting with Prime Minister Tagelagi, while he was in Japan.



Luncheon between State Minister for Foreign Affairs Horii and Prime Minister Tagelagi of Niue (December 11, Tokyo)

(I) Vanuatu

Following emergency assistance including the provision of goods in the wake of the major earthquake that struck in December 2024, in support of reconstruction and recovery under the "Build Back Better" approach, notes on the provision of earthquake disaster recovery equipment were signed and exchanged between the Governments of Japan and Vanuatu in March. In July, notes on the development of economic and social infrastructure centered on the reconstruction of damaged bridges were also signed and exchanged. In July, Vanuatu's National Day was held at the Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan, attended by First Policy Advisor of the Ministry of Trade and Commerce Marcellino Pipite.

(J) Papua New Guinea (PNG)

In 2025, Japan and Papua New Guinea marked the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations. In July, Papua New Guinea's National Day was held at the Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan, attended by Prime Minister Marape. Prime Minister Ishiba held a meeting with Prime Minister Marape and exchanged views on further strengthening bilateral relations and strengthening cooperation through bilateral cooperation and the PALM process. A joint foreign ministers' statement commemorating the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the two countries was issued on the Independence Day of September 16. On that day, State Minister for Foreign Affairs MIYAJI Takuma, who was visiting Papua New Guinea as Special Envoy of the Prime Minister, attended the Flag Raising Ceremony of the 50th Independence Anniversary of Papua New Guinea, and held meetings with Prime Minister Marape and Foreign Minister Tkatchenko, and signed and exchanged notes on the first OSA project for PNG with Foreign Minister Tkatchenko. In October, Prime Minister Marape signed the Papua New Guinea-Australia Mutual Defence Treaty (commonly known as the "Pukpuk Treaty") with Australian Prime Minister Albanese.

(K) Palau

In January, Foreign Minister Iwaya visited Palau, attended the inauguration ceremony of President Whipps for his second term, and held meetings with President Whipps and Minister of State Aitaro. At the

meetings, Foreign Minister Iwaya expressed Japan's intention to further strengthen its "*tokubetsu*" (special) relationship with Palau, which will serve as PIF Chair from 2026, ahead of PALM11. In February, Prime Minister Ishiba held a summit meeting with President Whipps, while he was visiting Japan, and expressed his intention to work toward further strengthening bilateral relations. In April, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Miyaji visited Palau and attended the ceremony to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the visit of Their Majesties the Emperor and Empress to Peleliu. Also in April, Palau's National Day was held at the Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan, attended by President Whipps. In October, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Horii attended the inaugural ceremony for the regular direct flights to Palau held at Narita International Airport. President Whipps visited Japan a total of five times during 2025.

(L) Fiji

In May, notes were signed and exchanged on the provision of a disaster response vessel. In addition, at the end of May, the handover of provided equipment under an OSA project took place — the first in the world since the establishment of the OSA framework in 2023. In September, Fiji's National Day was held at the Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan, attended by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for External Trade, Cooperatives, SMEs and Communications Kamikamica. In November, Prime Minister Takaichi held a meeting with Prime Minister Rabuka, who paid an Official Working Visit to Japan, confirmed cooperation toward the realization of FOIP, and signed a joint statement on the Japan-Fiji "Lomavata Kizuna Partnership" — which will serve as a guiding framework for strengthening bilateral cooperation across a wide range of fields to elevate the bilateral relationship to even greater heights ("Lomavata": a Fijian word meaning "unity").



Japan-Fiji Summit Meeting and Signing Ceremony (November 13, Tokyo; Photo: Official Website of the Prime Minister's Office of Japan)

(M) Marshall Islands

In March, Prime Minister Ishiba held a meeting with President Heine, while she was visiting Japan, and exchanged views on strengthening cooperation through bilateral cooperation and the PALM process. In May, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs Ikuina visited the Marshall Islands, paid courtesy calls on President Heine and Chairman for the Council of Iroij of the RMI Kabua, and held meetings with Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Minister of Education, Sports and Training) Zakios, Speaker of the Parliament of the RMI Wase, and others, and also laid a wreath at the "Monument of the War Dead in the Eastern Pacific." In September, the Marshall Islands National Day was held at the Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan, attended by Minister of Culture and Internal Affairs Gaspar Jr.

(N) Federated States of Micronesia

In March, President Simina paid an Official Working Visit to Japan. Prime Minister Ishiba held a meeting with President Simina, confirmed cooperation toward the realization of FOIP, and exchanged views on strengthening cooperation through bilateral cooperation and the PALM process. President Simina also visited the Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO)'s Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station (FDNPS) and deepened his understanding of the safety of Japan's discharge of ALPS treated water into the sea. Furthermore, Foreign Minister Iwaya held a meeting with Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs Robert, who visited Japan together with President Simina. In April, Vice President Palik visited Japan to attend the opening ceremony of the Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan, and held a meeting with Chief Cabinet Secretary HAYASHI Yoshimasa. In July, the Federated States of Micronesia National Day was held at the Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan, attended by President Simina and his spouse, Foreign Minister Robert, and others.

Column

Establishment of Diplomatic Relations: 50th Anniversary with Papua New Guinea, 10th Anniversary with Niue

The year 2025 marked the 50th and 10th anniversaries of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Japan and Papua New Guinea (PNG) and between Japan and Niue, respectively.

Both PNG and Niue are friends of Japan connected by the Pacific Ocean, and, like Japan, they are island nations. PNG is the largest country in the Pacific Islands countries region in terms of both population and territory, and is a country rich in diversity, with more than 800 tribes and languages and unique ecosystems. Niue, on the other hand, with a population of approximately 1,600 people, is the second least populous country in the world. Although both are Pacific Island countries, there are significant differences between them.



Logo for the 50th Anniversary of the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between Japan and PNG

Japan-PNG Relations

At the same time as PNG gained independence from Australian trusteeship in September 1975, Japan established diplomatic relations with the country and has supported PNG's nation building for more than 50 years. The current partnership between the two countries is robust, and Japan's cooperation has contributed to PNG's sustainable development and the improvement of the lives of its people in a wide range of fields. For example, the National Fisheries College, established through Japan's first grant aid to PNG, serves as a hub for the country's fisheries industry. The Nadzab airport, which was rehabilitated by Japan and opened in 2023, was named the "Nadzab *Tomodachi* (friendship) International Airport" by Prime Minister Marape and stands as a symbol of the friendly relations between the two countries. In September 2025, the implementation of Official Security Assistance (OSA) for PNG — the first OSA for the country — was decided. For Japan, PNG is an important supplier of liquefied natural gas (LNG), accounting for approximately six percent of Japan's total LNG imports. Such cordial relations are based on the long history of over 50 years of cooperation and friendship. Marking the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations as a milestone, and with the determination to stride forward together toward the next 50 years and to pass the baton on to the next generation, who will carry the future of both countries forward with trust and in a spirit of *Tomodachi*, the foreign ministers of both countries issued a Joint Statement by Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Japan and Papua New Guinea in September.



Nadzab *Tomodachi* International Airport in Lae (Photo: JICA)

Japan-Niue Relations

Niue became a territory of New Zealand in 1901 and adopted self-rule in 1974. In May 2015, Japan recognized Niue as a state, and diplomatic relations were established in August of the same year. Since then, Japan has worked over the past ten years to strengthen relations with Niue, and has supported the country's efforts to enhance its social infrastructure through cooperation in various fields, including infrastructure development, social services, and disaster risk reduction and response. Notably, even before the establishment of diplomatic relations with Japan, Niue has attended the Pacific Islands Leaders' Meeting (PALM) since its first meeting launched in 1997. On the occasion of PALM, held every three years, the leaders of the two countries have held meetings, promoting friendly relations. In July 2024, the Honorary Consulate of Niue in Tokyo was established as Niue's first honorary consulate, and Prime Minister Tagelagi, who visited Japan to attend the 10th Pacific Islands Leaders' Meeting (PALM10), attended the opening ceremony. In December 2025, on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations, Prime Minister Tagelagi visited Japan and exchanged views with State Minister for Foreign Affairs HORII Iwao on bilateral cooperation and on strengthening relations through the PALM process. As the strategic environment surrounding the Pacific Island countries changes, the bilateral relationship with Niue is becoming all the more important.

7 Regional and Inter-Regional Cooperation

In the Indo-Pacific region, which is the hub of global vitality, 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, while maintaining the Japan-U.S. Alliance as the cornerstone, Japan strategically advances initiatives toward realizing FOIP through multilateral cooperative frameworks, including the Japan-Australia-India-U.S. (Quad), Japan-U.S.-ROK, Japan-U.S.-Philippines, and Japan-U.S.-Australia frameworks, as well as various regional cooperative frameworks such as Japan-ASEAN, Japan-Mekong, ASEAN+3, EAS, ARF, and APEC, while also coordinating with like-minded countries including ASEAN, Australia, India, Pacific Island countries, and European countries.

In particular, Japan has consistently supported the "ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP),"(30) which ASEAN formulated in 2019. AOIP shares fundamental principles with FOIP, including openness, transparency, inclusivity, and respect for international law, and Japan has been assisting its mainstreaming. Japan intends to continue respecting ASEAN Centrality and unity and contribute to the stability and prosperity of the entire Indo-Pacific region by implementing concrete cooperation that contributes to the principles espoused by FOIP and AOIP.

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

Located at a geopolitical strategic point in the center of the Indo-Pacific, ASEAN is key to the realization of FOIP. In 2019, the AOIP, which is a guideline for ASEAN's engagement in the Indo-Pacific region and shares fundamental principles with FOIP, was adopted. ASEAN also plays an important role as a hub of regional cooperation, and is leading multilayered frameworks such as ASEAN+3, EAS, and ARF.

Since its founding, ASEAN has sought to build a community, and in 2015 declared the establishment of the "ASEAN Community," since which time it has been pursuing deeper integration in line with the "ASEAN Community Vision 2025." As a milestone marking the 10th anniversary of the Community's establishment, the ASEAN Summit in May adopted the "ASEAN Community Vision 2045," which carries forward that vision. In addition, Timor-Leste formally acceded to ASEAN in October, and ASEAN is pursuing even deeper integration, including through the implementation of the "ASEAN Community Vision 2045."

On the economic front, ASEAN has traditionally been an important production base for Japanese companies, particularly in the manufacturing industry, and in recent years has been attracting attention as a vibrant growth center for the global economy and as a growing consumer market. In addition, ASEAN has become a hub for free trade and building close economic relations in the region through the conclusion of agreements including the ASEAN-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership (AJCEP) Agreement with Japan, FTAs(31) with countries outside the region, and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) Agreement.

(2) Issues Surrounding the South China Sea

In the South China Sea, amidst disputes over territorial sovereignty, China has been continuing its unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force or coercion, which is against the rule of law and openness, and its dangerous and coercive actions that increase regional tensions, including the militarization of disputed features (See Chapter 3, Section 1, 3 (3) D on page 215.), and dangerous maneuvering against coastal countries and other countries such as the use of water cannons and

(30) AOIP: ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific
AOIP is a guideline for ASEAN's engagement in the Indo-Pacific region, and was adopted at the ASEAN Summit Meeting in June 2019. In addition to strengthening ASEAN centrality in the Indo-Pacific region, AOIP sets out to promote cooperation in areas such as maritime cooperation, connectivity, SDGs, and the economy based on the principles of openness, transparency, inclusiveness, rules-based frameworks, good governance, respect for sovereignty, non-interference, complementarity with existing cooperation frameworks, equality, mutual respect, mutual trust, mutual benefit, and respect for international laws including the UN Charter, the UNCLOS, and other relevant UN conventions.

(31) While FTA usually refers to a free trade agreement, ASEAN uses the term FTA to refer to a free trade area.

collisions. Moreover, China has been refusing to accept the Arbitral Tribunal's Award(32) 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).

Based on the position that the issues surrounding the South China Sea are directly related to the peace and stability of the region and are a legitimate concern of the entire international community as a whole, Japan, together with the international community, has repeatedly expressed serious concern and strong opposition to China's unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force or coercion as well as any actions that increase regional tensions. In addition, from the standpoint that the three principles of the rule of law at sea should be consistently adhered to (See Chapter 3, Section 1, 6 (2) on page 255.), Japan has also consistently emphasized the importance of all parties related to the South China Sea to work toward peaceful settlements of disputes based on international law, in particular UNCLOS. Moreover, Japan has also repeatedly pointed out that China's assertions in the South China Sea are not based on relevant provisions of UNCLOS; that the Arbitral Tribunal's Award, which determined that China's claim of "historical rights" based on the "nine-dash line," which has no clear basis in international law, violates UNCLOS, is final and legally binding on the parties to the dispute; and that it is important for the parties to comply with the award.

Cooperation among allies and like-minded countries is also important to maintain and strengthen a free and open international order based on the rule of law.

At the Japan-U.S. Summit Meeting in February, the two leaders reaffirmed their strong opposition to China's unlawful maritime claims, militarization of reclaimed features, and threatening and provocative activities in the South China Sea.

At the Japan-Australia-India-U.S. Foreign Ministers' Meeting in July, the four ministers expressed serious concern over dangerous and provocative actions in the South China Sea such as the unsafe use of water cannons and ramming and blocking actions, as well as the militarization of disputed features, and reaffirmed the importance of upholding unimpeded commerce consistent with international law. At the Japan-U.S.-Philippines Foreign Ministers' Meeting in the same month, they reaffirmed their opposition to unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force or coercion, and confirmed the importance of respecting the rule of law, and underscored the need to uphold freedom of navigation.

In the joint statement released on the occasion of the Japan-U.S.-ROK Foreign Ministers' Meeting in September, the three ministers strongly opposed unlawful maritime claims in the South China Sea as well as attempts to enforce such claims. At the G7 Foreign Ministers' Meeting in November, the G7 Foreign Ministers reaffirmed their strong opposition to any unilateral attempts to change the status quo in the South China Sea, in particular by force or coercion, and that the Arbitral Tribunal's Award is an important milestone, binding upon the parties. They also expressed serious concern over dangerous maneuvering and the use of water cannons in the South China Sea, as well as efforts to restrict freedom of navigation and overflight through militarization and coercion.

Furthermore, with regard to the Code of Conduct in the South China Sea (COC), which has been under discussion for many years between China and ASEAN, Japan has stated its position that it should be effective, substantive, consistent with international law, as reflected in UNCLOS, and respect the legitimate rights and interests of all stakeholders who use the South China Sea.

(3) Japan-ASEAN Relations

The stability and prosperity of ASEAN, the key to the realization of FOIP, is absolutely essential to the stability and prosperity of the region as a whole. Since the establishment of the ASEAN Community in 2015, Japan has been fully supporting ASEAN's efforts toward further integration based on the "ASEAN Community Vision 2025," and will continue its support toward the "ASEAN Community Vision 2045."

(32) In January 2013, the Government of the Philippines instituted arbitral proceedings under UNCLOS as to the disputes between the Philippines and China regarding the South China Sea, and on July 12, 2016, the Arbitral Tribunal organized by these proceedings rendered the final award. Japan issued a statement by the Foreign Minister, 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."

Currently, cooperation is being strengthened in a wide range of areas under the three pillars based on the "Joint Vision Statement on ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation" and its concrete "Implementation Plan," which were adopted at the Commemorative Summit for the 50th Year of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation held in December 2023: (a) connecting to the next generation and strengthening the long-standing relationship of trust as "Heart-to-Heart Partners across Generations," (b) finding solutions to common challenges as "Partners for Co-Creation of Economy and Society of the Future," and (c) promoting FOIP as "Partners for Peace and Stability."

Moreover, regarding AOIP, in addition to the "Joint Statement of the 23rd ASEAN-Japan Summit on Cooperation on ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific" adopted in 2020, Japan is using the "Joint Statement of the 28th ASEAN-Japan Summit on Further Promotion and Implementation of the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP)," adopted in October, as a guiding framework, and is advancing concrete cooperation centered on the four priority areas of cooperation of AOIP, namely maritime cooperation, connectivity, the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and economy.

At the ASEAN-Japan Foreign Ministers' Meeting in July, Foreign Minister Iwaya stated that the role of ASEAN, the key to the realization of FOIP and the world's growth center, is of increasing importance to the peace and prosperity of the region as a whole, and that Japan would support ASEAN's further integration while respecting ASEAN Centrality and unity. On regional and international affairs, Foreign Minister Iwaya also explained Japan's position on the situation in Myanmar and the East China Sea and the South China Sea, as well as on issues regarding North Korea, including the nuclear and missile issues and the abductions issue. The Foreign Ministers of ASEAN Member States expressed high expectations for further strengthening cooperation with Japan in the fields of economy, people-to-people exchanges, and security, and made statements regarding the importance of the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and the resolution of the abductions issue.

At the ASEAN-Japan Summit in October, Prime Minister Takaichi stated that Japan and ASEAN have built their relationship as "Trusted Partners" with "heart-to-heart" connections, expressed her consistent support for the AOIP, which shares fundamental principles with FOIP, and welcomed the adoption of a joint statement confirming the synergies between FOIP and AOIP and the promotion of further cooperation, as well as expressing her strong determination to further strengthen coordination with AOIP and advance cooperation to enable Japan and ASEAN to grow stronger and more prosperous together. Furthermore, Prime Minister Takaichi explained the steady progress of cooperation in line with the three pillars of the Joint Vision Statement announced at the 2023 ASEAN-Japan Commemorative Summit, referencing ODA, OSA, the launch of the "Japan-ASEAN AI Co-creation Initiative" to jointly build a safe, secure, and trustworthy AI ecosystem in the region, the dispatch of "NIHONGO Partners" (assistant Japanese language teachers) to the region, and various people-to-people exchange programs.



28th ASEAN-Japan Summit (October 26, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia; Photo: Official Website of the Prime Minister's Office of Japan)

Furthermore, in response to the high expectations expressed by ASEAN leaders for the strengthening of cooperation with Japan — including in new areas such as digital and green — as well as for the promotion of economic partnerships through the ASEAN-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership (AJCEP) Agreement and other instruments, Prime Minister Takaichi proposed launching a working group to strengthen Japan-ASEAN economic relations and discuss a wide range of measures, which was welcomed by the ASEAN side. On regional and international affairs, Prime Minister Takaichi stated that unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force or coercion must not be tolerated anywhere in the world, and explained

Japan's position on the situations surrounding the East China Sea, the South China Sea, Taiwan, North Korea, Myanmar, the Middle East, and Ukraine.

(4) Mekong-Japan Cooperation

Peace and prosperity in the Mekong region (Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, and Viet Nam) are extremely important to the region as a whole, including Japan, as they also contribute to narrowing the development gap within ASEAN and promoting regional integration.

In July, the Mekong-Japan Foreign Ministers' Meeting was held in Malaysia for the second consecutive year following 2024, and discussions were held on the progress of cooperation based on the "Mekong-Japan Cooperation Strategy 2024," with agreement to further deepen cooperation in each field. Foreign Minister Iwaya, who served as co-chair, stated that Japan wishes to coordinate and expand across the Mekong region as a whole the cooperation it is advancing bilaterally with each country in areas such as connectivity, disaster risk reduction, decarbonization, and digitalization, and also to strengthen countermeasures against transnational crimes such as organized fraud. Japan will continue to contribute to the prosperity and development of the region through the implementation of Japan-Mekong cooperation projects in various fields.

(5) ASEAN Plus Three

The ASEAN Plus Three was established in 1997, when the Asian financial crisis triggered the addition of three countries (China, Japan, and the ROK) to ASEAN. ASEAN Plus Three has developed with a focus on areas such as finance and food security. Today, it covers cooperation in 24 areas, including finance, agriculture and food, education, culture, tourism, health, energy and the environment. Further cooperation is progressing in each area under the "ASEAN Plus Three Cooperation Work Plan (2023-2027)."

At the ASEAN Plus Three Foreign Ministers' Meeting in July, Foreign Minister Iwaya stated that efforts are being made in areas important to Japan, while touching on the establishment of the "Rapid Financing Facility" (RFF) under the Chiang Mai Initiative Multilateralisation (CMIM)(33) in May, which strengthened the regional financial safety net against pandemics and natural disasters; the swift response of the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management (AHA Centre) following the earthquake in Myanmar in March; the importance of the ASEAN Plus Three Emergency Rice Reserve (APTERR)(34) and the ASEAN Food Security Information System (AFSIS)(35) initiatives; and support for capacity building through the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and information sharing among practitioners in Bangkok (Thailand). In addition, Foreign Minister Iwaya explained Japan's policies toward North Korea including the nuclear and missile issues and the abductions issue.

At the ASEAN Plus Three Summit in October, Foreign Minister Motegi, attending as the representative of Prime Minister Takaichi, pointed out that ASEAN Plus Three has contributed to building a regional safety net, and noted that in addition to finance and food security, it holds great potential for addressing shared challenges such as disaster response, the declining birthrate and aging population, and organized crime. Foreign Minister Motegi also expressed Japan's intention to further strengthen ASEAN Plus Three cooperation in line with the "ASEAN Community Vision 2045," which Japan fully supports, and introduced cooperation in the areas that Japan particularly values — namely financial cooperation, cooperation toward a sustainable society, and cooperation for the safety of the people — referring respectively to expectations for the role of the ASEAN Plus

(33) The Chiang Mai Initiative Multilateralisation (CMIM) is a framework agreed upon at the 2nd ASEAN+3 Finance Ministers' Meeting in Chiang Mai, Thailand, in May 2000, in response to the 1997-98 Asian financial crisis with the aim of preventing a recurrence of currency crises within East Asia. To forestall regional financial contagion and escalation, the CMIM enables member countries facing difficulties in meeting foreign-currency payments to obtain short-term U.S. dollar liquidity through currency swaps in exchange for local currency.

(34) A framework to prepare for emergencies such as large-scale disasters in order to enhance food security and eradicate poverty. It provides support to those affected by emergencies such as typhoons and floods, and support for poverty alleviation.

(35) Manages an agricultural statistics database and implements human resource development and other measures for the purpose of strengthening regional food security.

Three Macroeconomic Research Office (AMRO),[36] contributions to APTERR and AFSIS and initiatives under the East Asia Think-Tank Network (NEAT),[37] and cooperation to strengthen law enforcement capability through international organizations including UNODC and other means to address organized crime, which is causing significant economic harm to ASEAN Plus Three countries. Furthermore, Japan's position on North Korea, including the nuclear and missile issues and the abductions issue, was also expressed.

(6) East Asia Summit (EAS)

EAS was established in 2005 with the aim of facilitating discussions and cooperation on strategic challenges to the region, regarding politics, security, and economy. In order to maintain and strengthen a free and open international order based on the rule of law and to guide the region, where divisions and confrontations are deepening, toward cooperation, the importance of EAS as the Leaders-led premier forum of the region, where major regional countries gather together and engage in frank discussions, is becoming even more important.

At the EAS Foreign Ministers' Meeting in July, Foreign Minister Iwaya stated that EAS plays an extremely important role in guiding the region from division and confrontation toward dialogue and cooperation amid increasing severity and uncertainty in the international situation, and that Japan fully supports ASEAN Centrality and unity, the "ASEAN Community Vision 2045," and AOIP, and will advance concrete cooperation in accordance with principles such as openness, inclusivity, transparency, and rules-based frameworks.

On regional and international affairs, Foreign Minister Iwaya emphasized that unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force or coercion are unacceptable anywhere in the world, including in the East China Sea. Japan is seriously concerned about the intensified actions in the South China Sea that increase regional tensions. Peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait is important for the international community. Foreign Minister Iwaya also explained the importance of coordinated responses toward the complete denuclearization of North Korea in accordance with UN Security Council resolutions, called for continued understanding and cooperation from each country for the immediate resolution of the abductions issue, and explained Japan's positions on the situation in Myanmar, countermeasures against international organized crime, the situation in the Middle East, and the situation in Ukraine.

At the 20th EAS held in October, Foreign Minister Motegi, attending as the representative of Prime Minister Takaichi, stated that Japan, as a free and democratic peaceful nation that upholds human rights and the rule of law, has been contributing to regional peace and prosperity, and expressed Japan's intention to continue contributing to the peace, stability, and prosperity of the region through promoting FOIP, which is on the extended line of this path. Foreign Minister Motegi also stated that in order to lead the region toward cooperation and dialogue, Japan will promote FOIP based on the rule of law and actively contribute to ASEAN-led regional frameworks, particularly EAS.

On regional and international affairs, Foreign Minister Motegi emphasized that unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force or coercion are unacceptable anywhere in the world, including in the East China Sea. Japan is seriously concerned that in the South China Sea, dangerous and coercive activities are intensifying. From the perspective of supporting the full enforcement of the rule of law at sea, Japan hopes for the parties to the dispute to comply with the Arbitral Tribunal's Award and the disputes to be settled peacefully. Peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait are important for the international community. He also noted that North Korea is advancing its nuclear and missile capabilities, funded by cryptocurrency theft and gained combat experience through military cooperation with Russia, and that its threat is growing day by day, and once again asked for coordinated responses for the complete denuclearization of North Korea in accordance with UN Security Council resolutions

(36) Conducts analysis of regional economies, provides policy recommendations to ASEAN+3 countries, operates the Chiang Mai Initiative, and provides technical assistance to the government of member states, for the purpose of promoting regional economic stability.

(37) A network of government-recognized think tanks aimed at providing intellectual support for regional cooperation and fostering a sense of regional solidarity. Policy recommendations adopted at the annual general meeting are taken up at the ASEAN+3 Summit.



Foreign Minister Motegi attending the 20th EAS (October 27, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia)



Foreign Minister Iwaya attending the 11th Japan-China-ROK Trilateral Foreign Ministers' Meeting (March 22, Tokyo)

and reiterated the call for the continued understanding and cooperation from all countries for the immediate resolution of the abductions issue, which is an urgent matter. Foreign Minister Motegi also explained Japan's position that peace and stability in the Middle East are of the utmost importance to Japan, and that Japan will play a proactive role toward improvement of the humanitarian situation in Gaza, early recovery and reconstruction, and the realization of a two-state solution. In addition, he expressed serious concern about the situation in Myanmar, as well as respect for the diplomatic efforts of the U.S. and Malaysia in mediating a cease-fire agreement between Cambodia and Thailand, while also explaining Japan's positions on transnational issues and the situation in Ukraine.

(7) Japan-China-ROK Trilateral Cooperation

Japan, China, and the ROK share geographical proximity and deep historical ties, play a major role in the global economy, and are a driving force of the prosperity of the East Asian region. There is great potential for the three countries to promote exchanges and mutual understanding, and to cooperate in addressing various challenges in the international community.

Japan assumed the chairmanship from the ROK following the May 2024 Summit, and in March held the 11th Japan-China-ROK Trilateral Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Tokyo. Foreign Minister Iwaya stated that enhancing future-oriented exchanges and cooperation of the three countries which share the significant influence and responsibilities for the peace and prosperity of the region and the international community holds great significance. Both the Chinese and ROK Foreign Ministers also made remarks on the importance of Japan-China-ROK cooperation. The three Foreign Ministers concurred to promote future-oriented cooperation under the three pillars of (1) Knowing each other better, (2) Cooperation to shape and protect the livelihood, and (3) Joint efforts of all generations to tackle common challenges, and to accelerate coordination to achieve concrete outcomes ahead of the next Japan-China-ROK Trilateral Summit. The three Foreign Ministers also discussed regional and international affairs including the situation surrounding North Korea, the situation in Ukraine, and East Asian cooperation such as ASEAN and APEC, and Foreign Minister Iwaya asked for continued understanding and cooperation toward the immediate resolution of the abductions issue.

In addition to the Foreign Ministers' Meeting, a total of seven ministerial-level meetings were held within the Japan-China-ROK framework in 2025, and joint statements or documents similar to joint statements were adopted at five of those meetings. In December, the 18th Tripartite Health Ministers' Meeting was held, at which views were exchanged and a joint statement was adopted on the themes of "AI and Digital Health for Universal Health Coverage (UHC)," "Promoting Healthy and Active Ageing," and "Mental Health."

Regarding the Japan-China-ROK Summit, as scheduling could not be coordinated in 2025, Japan continues to work on coordinating arrangements for holding the Summit in Japan at an appropriate time under Japan's chairmanship.

(8) Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) (See Chapter 3, Section 3, 3 (5) on page 311.)

Consisting of 21 economies (countries and regions) in the Asia-Pacific region, APEC is an economic cooperation framework aimed at achieving sustainable growth and prosperity in the region. Promoting economic cooperation and strengthening trust in the Asia-Pacific region, which is the hub of growth and prosperity in the international community, is extremely important for Japan's further economic development.

At the APEC Leaders' Meeting held in Gyeongju, the ROK, at the end of October, the "Gyeongju Declaration" was adopted as the Leaders' Declaration. Prime Minister Takaichi, who attended the meeting, communicated the importance of a rules-based, free, and fair international economic order and the promotion of WTO reform, among other matters. In addition, it was decided that Japan will serve as APEC Chair in 2031.

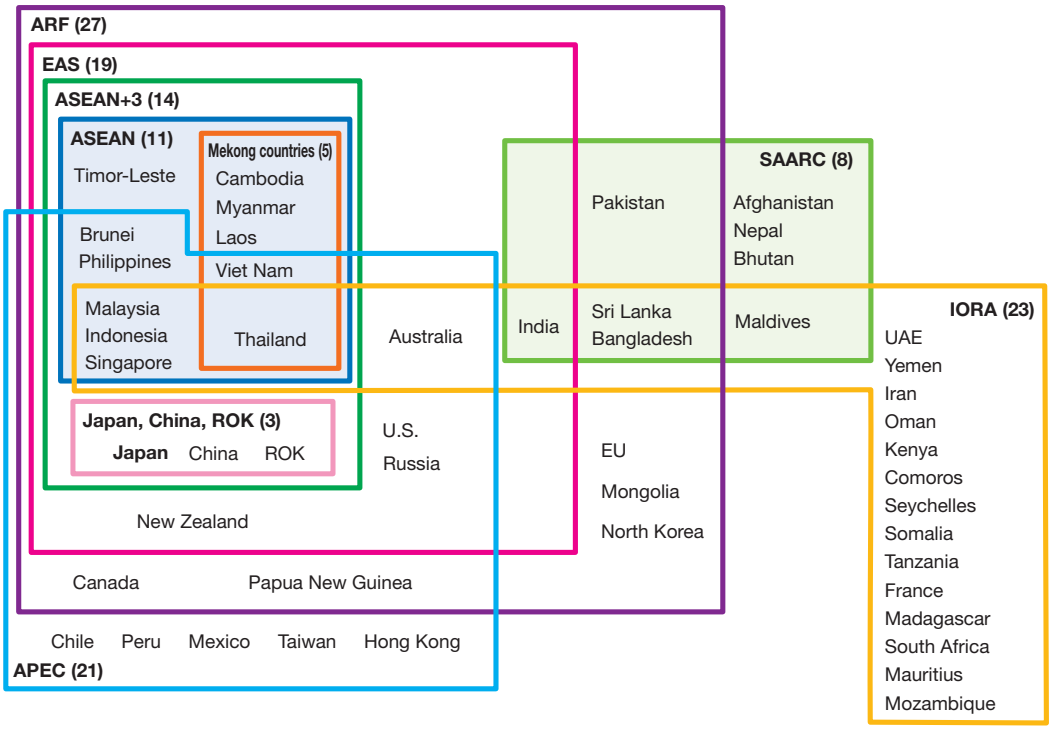
(9) South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC)

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 December 2025, SAARC has eight member states (India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan, the Maldives and Afghanistan) and nine observer countries and institutions including Japan, and has been cooperating as a relatively loose framework of regional cooperation, primarily in economic, social and cultural areas, through summit meetings and meetings of the Council at the ministerial level (Foreign Ministers' Meetings). However, no Summit Meeting has been held since 2014, and no Ministerial Meeting has been held since 2016. As part of youth exchanges with SAARC, Japan has invited a cumulative total of 8,956 people by the end of 2025.

(10) Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA)

IORA is a regional organization aimed mainly at promoting economic cooperation in the Indian Ocean Rim region, and Japan has been participating as a dialogue partner since 1999.

Major Frameworks of the Asia-Pacific Region



The numbers within ( ) indicate the number of participating countries, regions, or organizations

<Abbreviations>
ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations)
EAS (East Asia Summit)
ARF (ASEAN Regional Forum)
APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation)
SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation)
IORA (Indian Ocean Rim Association)

Column

Working Together with Southeast Asian Countries to Strengthen Disaster Resilience

Building a Resilient Region through Cooperation with the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management (AHA Centre)

Mission of Japan to ASEAN

More than 20 years have passed since the Sumatra Earthquake, which left deep scars across the region in December 2004. In response to the earthquake, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has worked on disaster risk reduction and disaster response measures as a region as a whole.

In 2005, the year following the earthquake, ASEAN formulated the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER), which serves as the foundation for policies on disaster prevention and emergency response in the region. The agreement provided for the establishment of the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management (AHA Centre), which today serves as the regional coordination hub for coordinating disaster response in the Southeast Asian region.

Since the start of its operations in 2011, the AHA Centre has expanded its role and has become an indispensable institution in advancing disaster response in the region. To strengthen its coordination function, Japan has provided robust support for the Centre's activities through the Japan-ASEAN Integration Fund (JAIF) from the time of its establishment to the present day. This support focuses on three major pillars: (a) disaster monitoring (the enhancement of an Emergency Operations Centre and ICT equipment), (b) advance preparedness and emergency response (the development of an emergency relief stockpiling and dispatch system, and the training of emergency response and assessment teams), and (c) human resource development in the disaster prevention field (capacity building for senior officials of national disaster management organizations). ASEAN countries have expressed deep appreciation and gratitude for these contributions by Japan every year at the ASEAN-Japan Ministerial Meeting on Disaster Management, the ASEAN-Japan Summit, and other occasions.

The long-standing Japan-ASEAN cooperation in disaster prevention yielded major results in the response to the earthquake that struck central Myanmar on March 28, 2025. The AHA Centre deployed rapidly to the affected area and began operations the following day. The Emergency Response and Assessment Team — composed of members from the 10 ASEAN countries who had been trained with Japan's support — played a vital role, including confirming on-the-ground needs through rapid needs and impact assessments of the disaster situation and interviews with affected communities, as well as facilitating the receipt of relief supplies and coordinating their transport. Just two days after the earthquake, relief supplies were promptly delivered to Myanmar through the emergency relief stockpiling and dispatch system that Japan had supported, and were subsequently delivered to affected communities. The words of an affected resident sheltering in temporary accommodation, who said that "receiving the family kit was truly a blessing from heaven for our family. As a housewife, I felt that every item in the kit was incredibly useful," demonstrate that this cooperation in the disaster prevention field is genuinely useful for those affected by disasters.

Such cooperation enhances resilience to disasters and also contributes to strengthening humanitarian supply chains and is therefore indispensable in pursuing stability and prosperity in the region. Going forward, Japan will continue to advance cooperation with ASEAN to build a more resilient and prosperous region.



Emergency relief supplies being transported to Myanmar (Photo: AHA Centre)



Activities of the ASEAN Emergency Response and Assessment Team in Myanmar (Photo: AHA Centre)

Japan's Assistance for the Earthquake Damage with the Epicenter in Myanmar

On March 28, a magnitude 7.7 earthquake occurred near Mandalay, Myanmar's second-largest city, located in the central part of the country, resulting in numerous casualties in Myanmar and Thailand. For Japan, a country prone to natural disasters, earthquake damage in Southeast Asia is not a distant concern, and Japan provided assistance closely attuned to the needs of the local people.

In Myanmar, where the humanitarian situation has continued to deteriorate since the coup d'état by the Myanmar military on February 1, 2021, this earthquake inflicted enormous damage on people's lives. The Government of Japan dispatched a Japan Disaster Relief (JDR) Medical Team to the affected areas, providing medical care to a cumulative total of 2,100 people through 20 days of activity. During this period, the JDR Self-Defense Force unit airlifted medical equipment and supplies, including pharmaceuticals and reagents necessary to continue humanitarian assistance activities, to the operational area. The JDR Medical Team reported on its activities on the ground as follows: "We of course delivered high-quality, attentive medical care to the disaster victims of Myanmar, but through our medical activities, we also conveyed the feelings of support from the Japanese people, who share the same experience of having been affected by disasters. Despite their suffering and constrained living conditions, the people of Myanmar expressed words of gratitude and provided gifts of food and other items, and our activities were truly supported by the local people." In addition, Japan distributed relief supplies (such as water and water purifiers) to disaster victims through United Nations agencies. Through Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects, Japan provided emergency relief supplies such as water tanks and tents to schools in disaster-affected areas, as well as implemented emergency grant aid totaling six million U.S. dollars (approximately 900 million yen).

In Thailand, the Thai government requested the dispatch of experts in the fields of road and building safety and earthquake countermeasures. Based on this request, the Government of Japan dispatched a team of experts in the road and building fields to Thailand on three separate occasions. In June, the Japan-Thailand Technical Cooperation Meeting on post-earthquake infrastructure safety inspections and other matters was held at the Ministry of Transport of Thailand.

Section 3 North America

1 Overview

<The Importance of Cooperation with the North American Region, Which Shares Fundamental Values and Principles>

Currently, with changes in the balance of power and the intensifying geopolitical competition, the free, open, and stable international order is wavering significantly. Moreover, with China's unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force or coercion in the East China Sea and the South China Sea, growing tensions over the Taiwan Strait, North Korea's nuclear and missile development, and the advancement of the military cooperation between Russia and North Korea and military cooperation between China and Russia, the security environment surrounding Japan is in the most severe and complex situation since the end of World War II.

In this context, the importance of solidarity with allies and like-minded countries, including the G7, that share values and principles, has been greatly increased. The United States (U.S.) is Japan's only ally. The strong Japan-U.S. Alliance is the linchpin of Japan's foreign and security policy, and the foundation of peace and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific region. It is also essential to have cooperation with Canada, a member of the G7 and Japan's important partner in the Indo-Pacific region that shares universal values. Cooperation with these countries, based on the relationships of trust that Japan has built over the years, is essential to maintaining peace and stability in the region and the international community.

<Foreign Policies of the U.S. and Canada>

In December 2025, the U.S., under President Donald J. Trump, released a new National Security Strategy, demonstrating its commitment to advancing "Peace through Strength," cooperating with allies and partners to deter conflict in the Indo-Pacific region, and reaffirming its commitment to a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)" — a common goal that has been confirmed with Japan. The U.S. has also been actively pursuing diplomacy aimed at resolving conflicts in various regions, including the Middle East and Ukraine, and Japan supports the U.S. in these diplomatic efforts to achieve peace in each of those regions.

Under Prime Minister Mark Carney, who took office in March 2025, Canada is simultaneously exploring the construction of a new economic and security relationship with the U.S. while also strengthening cooperative relationships with European and Indo-Pacific countries from the perspective of trade diversification. In 2025, as the G7 Presidency, Canada hosted the G7 Kananaskis Summit in June as well as G7 Foreign Ministers' Meetings in March and November, and led efforts on issues related to the Middle East and Ukraine.

<Japan's Diplomatic Relations with North America>

With the U.S. as Japan's only ally, the Japan-U.S. relationship is stronger and deeper than ever before, with multilayered cooperation in all areas, not just security and the economy.

Japan and the U.S. held a total of nine summit meetings (including six telephone calls) and six foreign ministers' meetings (including one telephone call) between January and the end of December 2025, maintaining communication at all levels and confirming the strengthening of Japan-U.S. relations and cooperation to realize FOIP.

In February, Prime Minister Ishiba visited the U.S. and held a Japan-U.S. Summit Meeting with President Trump, confirming that the two sides would work closely to realize FOIP and elevate the Japan-U.S.

Alliance to new heights. In October, President Trump visited Japan and held a Japan-U.S. Summit Meeting with Prime Minister Takaichi, at which the two leaders concurred to advance a broad range of security cooperation in order to further enhance the deterrence and response capabilities of the Japan-U.S. Alliance. The two leaders also signed a document reaffirming the swift and continued efforts by both countries regarding the agreement on tariffs between Japan and the U.S. ("Implementation of the Agreement — Towards a New Golden Age of the Japan-U.S. Alliance") and confirmed their intention to further strengthen the economic growth of both countries. Furthermore, the two leaders affirmed their commitment to work closely together to strongly advance FOIP.

In regard to Japan-Canada relations, three summit meetings (including one telephone call) and six foreign ministers' meetings (including one telephone call) were held between January and the end of December 2025. In those meetings, the two sides concurred on continuing to strengthen the Japan-Canada Strategic Partnership, and confirmed that they would steadily implement the "Japan-Canada Action Plan for contributing to a free and open Indo-Pacific region (FOIP)," announced between the two countries in 2022, and continue to cooperate between Japan and Canada toward the realization of FOIP. Indeed, cooperation in the fields of security and the rule of law based on that Action Plan has been steadily advancing, including the signing of the Japan-Canada Agreement on the Security of Information and cooperation in illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing surveillance operations. In addition, through the promotion of wide-ranging diplomacy including coordination through international frameworks such as the G7, for which Canada served as Presidency in 2025, the year saw Japan-Canada relations further strengthened.

2 The United States

(1) U.S. Domestic Situation

A Politics

On January 20, President Trump was inaugurated as the 47th President of the U.S., and the second Trump administration was launched. In his Inaugural Address, President Trump reaffirmed his "America First" stance and declared that "the golden age of America begins."

From the moment the administration was launched, President Trump has been putting into action the policies pledged during the presidential election under the slogan "Make America Great Again," including measures on immigration and border control, and an America First foreign policy.

(A) Domestic Situation in the U.S.

On January 20, upon assuming the presidency, President Trump signed 42 executive orders relating to matters including the downsizing of federal government agencies, personnel, and functions; the promotion of deregulation including the development of fossil fuels; immigration and border policies including a review of birthright citizenship; the cancelation of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) policies; energy; and the renaming of the Gulf of Mexico to the Gulf of America.

The 119th Congress was convened on January 3 following the results of the November 2024 congressional elections. Although Republicans hold a majority in both chambers, as the margins over the Democrats are narrow, preventing defections in floor votes was an important challenge for both the Republican and Democratic parties when seeking to act as a unified party.

By early July, both chambers of Congress passed the bill (commonly referred to as the "One Big Beautiful Bill") incorporating key Trump administration policy priorities, including the permanent extension of expiring provisions of the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (the so-called "Trump tax cuts"), an increase in the statutory debt ceiling, tax exemptions for tips and overtime pay, cuts to social security programs, and the elimination of clean energy support measures. President Trump subsequently signed the bill into law.

In mid-July, at the request of the Trump administration, congressional Republicans introduced the Rescissions Act of 2025, a budget rescission bill

comprising a total of 9 billion U.S. dollars in cuts to funding for the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and public broadcasting. After the bill was passed, in August, the Trump administration announced the impoundment — without legislative action — of 4.9 billion U.S. dollars in contributions to the United Nations (UN) and its affiliated organizations.

The Democratic Party pushed back against these moves by the Trump administration and congressional Republicans, and hardened its stance in negotiations over a continuing resolution. Republicans and Democrats failed to reach an agreement, and on September 30 the continuing resolution expired, resulting in a partial shutdown of the federal government. Subsequently, Senate Republican leadership and a group of moderate Democratic senators reached agreement on extending the continuing resolution until January 30 of the following year, rehiring more than 4,000 federal government employees who had been dismissed during the shutdown, and the payment of unpaid wages. In early November, a continuing resolution bill was passed in Congress with the support of those Democratic senators, bringing to an end the 43-day partial federal government shutdown — then the longest in U.S. history.

President Trump focused intensively on strengthening measures against illegal immigration and border control, as well as measures against fentanyl and other drugs, signing on his first day in office multiple executive orders related to immigration and border control, including a declaration of a national emergency at the southern border.

In June, the Trump administration introduced entry bans or restrictions for nationals of 19 countries across Africa, the Middle East, Asia, and Central America (in December, the scope of the entry bans and restrictions was expanded to cover 39 countries). In November, President Trump announced the permanent pause of immigration from "third world countries" and the termination of federal subsidies to non-U.S. citizens, among other measures.

In addition, the U.S. Department of State introduced stricter visa screening measures, including a review of applicants' social media accounts as part of the visa issuance process.

Also in June, the Trump administration deployed 4,000 National Guard troops to Los Angeles, California, in response to protest movements against the intensification of crackdowns on illegal immigrants. The State of California in turn filed suit, alleging that the deployment without the consent of the state's Governor was unlawful.

Citing the goal of improving the capability and effectiveness of the federal government, the Trump administration renamed and reorganized the United States Digital Service as the "Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) Service," with businessman Elon Musk taking on the leading role of the new organization.

As part of government efficiency efforts, the Trump administration undertook organizational restructuring and personnel reductions at agencies and departments overseeing in particular foreign assistance (USAID), administrative regulation (the Environmental Protection Agency, the Department of Energy, the Department of Labor, the National Labor Relations Board, and others), education (the Department of Education), and social welfare (the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Department of Health and Human Services, public broadcasting, and others) (USAID was closed in July). In May, Mr. Musk stepped down from DOGE, and in November it was reported that DOGE had ceased its functions and been disbanded.

President Trump's approval rating(1) peaked at approximately 50% immediately after his inauguration, with his disapproval rating overtaking his approval rating in March, and from July through the end of December his approval rating generally fluctuated between approximately 42% and 46%.

In November, gubernatorial elections were held in New Jersey and Virginia, and a mayoral election in New York City; Democratic candidates won all three races, though the contests also served as an occasion for renewed demonstration of the intraparty fault line between moderate and progressive factions within the Democratic Party.

(1) RealClearPolitics polling average

(B) U.S. Foreign Policy

The Trump administration pursued "Peace through Strength" and conducted a foreign policy that placed America First, making its own national interests the highest priority.

Immediately after the inauguration, the Trump administration announced its withdrawal from the Paris Agreement, the World Health Organization (WHO), and the UN Human Rights Council, followed in July by the announcement of its withdrawal from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), strongly signaling a shift away from the previous administration's foreign policy.

In order to strengthen immigration and drug measures, a priority of the administration, the Trump administration tightened controls at the southern border, and pressed certain countries including Canada, Mexico, and China to step up their measures by means including the imposition of additional tariffs.

In addition, President Trump's references to the annexation or acquisition of Greenland, and his statements that he would retake the Panama Canal, generated significant reactions in the international community.

Furthermore, the Trump administration energetically pursued diplomacy aimed at achieving cease-fires and bringing conflicts around the world to an end. While conducting diplomatic efforts in various regions including Ukraine and the Middle East, President Trump repeatedly stated that he had ended eight wars in eight months, emphasizing his own achievements.

On his first day in office, President Trump suspended foreign assistance for 90 days and signed an executive order to reevaluate and realign U.S. foreign aid with U.S. foreign policy. In March, Secretary of State Marco Rubio announced a plan to terminate approximately 80% of USAID's assistance contracts, and in April announced a plan to reorganize nearly all of USAID's functions into the Department of State. Subsequently, on July 1, the Secretary formally announced the termination of USAID's foreign assistance operations.

In April, the Department of State announced a plan to reorganize the department in order to advance the "America First" foreign policy. In May, Secretary of State Rubio assumed the role of National Security Advisor to the President concurrently with his role as Secretary of State, following the departure of the National Security Advisor Michael George Glen Waltz.

In September, President Trump delivered an address at the UN General Assembly, stating that the UN had failed to fulfill its role and had been creating problems such as climate change and illegal immigration rather than solving them.

In December, the Trump administration released the "National Security Strategy (NSS)," a document that governs and provides guidance for U.S. homeland defense, national defense, and foreign policy. The NSS sets out a commitment to advancing "Peace through Strength," cooperating with allies and partners to deter conflict in the Indo-Pacific region, and reaffirming FOIP — a common goal confirmed between Japan and the U.S. — and clearly articulates the security policy objectives of the Trump administration. Numerous high-level exchanges were conducted between Japan and the U.S., including at the summit and foreign ministers' levels.

Under the relationship of trust built between leaders and others through opportunities for high-level exchanges, the Japan-U.S. relationship has become stronger than ever before. The Japan-U.S. Alliance is the cornerstone of Japan's diplomacy and security, and the foundation for peace and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific region. Furthermore, Japan and the U.S. are working closely together to strongly promote FOIP.

B Economy

(A) Current Economic Situation

The real GDP of the U.S. continued to grow at 2.9% year-on-year for all of 2023 and 2.8% year-on-year for all of 2024. However, partly due to the effects of a last-minute rush of imports and inventory stockpiling driven by the move to avoid tariff increases, the real GDP contracted at an annualized rate of 0.6% year-on-year from January to March 2025, marking the first negative growth in approximately three years. Afterwards, from April to June, the growth turned positive at 3.8% year-on-year, supported by a decline in imports reflecting the reversal of the previous quarter's last-minute demand, among other factors.

Regarding the economic outlook, the impact of trade policy, including tariff measures, on prices and

consumption has been noted, and there is a possibility that the momentum of growth may weaken. It is necessary to pay attention to the downside risk due to the impact of continuing high interest rates and the impact of future policy trends, including trade policy. As for inflation, which drew the attention of the U.S. public, the increase rate of the consumer price index (CPI, year-on-year) fell below 3% in July 2024 for the first time in approximately three years, and temporarily declined to the low 2% range in 2025, although it has been gradually rising since April 2025. Regarding the target policy interest rate, the Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) had kept it at 5.25% to 5.50% for about a year since July 2023, but in September 2024, in response to the decline in the inflation rate, the FOMC lowered the target rate to between 4.75% and 5.00%, marking its first rate cut in about four and a half years. Subsequently, multiple additional rate cuts followed, bringing the target policy interest rate to between 3.75% and 4.00%. In terms of employment, the unemployment rate remained low at around 4% throughout the year, as it did in 2024, and the number of workers employed increased moderately.

(B) Major Economic Policies

Under the second Trump administration, as outlined by President Trump in his address to Congress in March 2025, economic policies have been pursued with a focus on tariff policies, industrial reshoring including investment attraction, deregulation, and tax cuts, among others. In particular, since taking office in January, the second Trump administration announced a series of trade policies centered on tariff measures, drawing considerable attention, as they would have a major impact on the global economy. On his first day in office, President Trump issued the presidential memorandum "America First Trade Policy," announcing a policy to establish a robust and reinvigorated trade policy that promotes investment and productivity, enhances U.S. industrial and technological advantages, defends economic and national security, and above all, benefits U.S. workers and others. In February, the Trump administration announced the imposition of additional tariffs under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA) on Canada, Mexico, and China, on the grounds that the extraordinary threat posed by illegal aliens and drugs, including fentanyl, constitutes a national emergency (these tariffs were imposed on China in the same month, and on Canada and Mexico in March). In addition, in April, it announced Reciprocal Tariff measures under IEEPA to reduce trade deficits and address other unfair and imbalanced aspects of trade. This resulted in a 10% tariff being imposed on nearly all countries, with additional individual high tariff rates (additional tariffs) applied to countries recording a trade surplus with the U.S. With regard to the additional tariffs, a suspension period was put in place, and after rate adjustments were made, they took effect in August. Subsequently, in April, September, and November, modifications were made to the scope of the Reciprocal Tariff, including the announcement of exclusions for certain agricultural products. Meanwhile, lawsuits alleging that the Reciprocal Tariff and others under IEEPA are unconstitutional or unlawful were filed. As of December 2025, the case is before the U.S. Supreme Court.

Furthermore, under Section 232 of the Trade Expansion Act of 1962, sector-specific tariffs have been imposed across a wide range of sectors, including steel and aluminum products and their derivatives, automobiles and automobile parts, semi-finished copper products and their derivatives, timber and its derivatives, and medium- and heavy-duty trucks and their parts (as of December 2025). In addition, investigations into semiconductors, pharmaceuticals, critical minerals, aircraft and aircraft parts, and other products are being conducted under the same provision to assess their impact on national security. The series of U.S. tariff measures has had a significant impact on the global economy and the multilateral free trade system, and many countries and regions, including Japan, engaged in negotiations with the U.S. for tariff reductions.

In addition to trade policy, economic policies aimed at industrial revitalization that encourage reshoring of production to the U.S. have also been promoted. In the resource sector, the Executive Order "Unleashing American Energy" was issued in January 2025, followed by "Immediate Measures to Increase American Mineral Production" in March, aimed at strengthening domestic production of energy and critical minerals to create jobs in the U.S., reduce dependence on foreign products, and strengthen domestic supply

chains, thereby furthering U.S. prosperity. In the shipbuilding sector, recognizing the decline in U.S. shipbuilding capacity falling behind China and others as a challenge, the Executive Order "Restoring America's Maritime Dominance" was issued as part of an economic policy based on the America First policy, with the objective of rebuilding the U.S. maritime industrial base and strengthening the workforce to ensure U.S. national and economic security. In the pharmaceutical sector, similarly from the perspective of strengthening domestic production capacity, the Executive Order "Regulatory Relief to Promote Domestic Production of Critical Medicines" was issued in May, while in the same month the Executive Order "Delivering Most-Favored-Nation Prescription Drug Pricing to American Patients" was also issued, calling on pharmaceutical manufacturers to lower the prices of pharmaceutical products in the U.S. In the AI sector, the "Winning the Race: America's AI Action Plan," organized around the pillars of accelerating AI innovation, building American AI infrastructure, and leading in international AI diplomacy and security, was released, and a concrete plan was developed to maintain and strengthen the global advantage of the U.S. in the AI sector.

Another major development in economic policy was the enactment of the budget reconciliation bill that President Trump had pressed Congress to pass in July, based on which measures including the permanent extension of expiring provisions of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017 (the so-called "Trump tax cuts"), tax exemptions for tips and overtime pay, cuts to social security programs, and the elimination of clean energy support measures were implemented.

(2) Japan-U.S. Political Relations

Numerous high-level exchanges were conducted between Japan and the U.S., including at the summit and foreign ministers' levels.

Under the relationship of trust built between leaders and others through opportunities for high-level exchanges, the Japan-U.S. relationship has become stronger than ever before. The Japan-U.S. Alliance is the cornerstone of Japan's diplomacy and security and is the foundation for peace and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific region. Furthermore, Japan and the U.S. are working closely together to strongly promote FOIP.



Japan-U.S. Summit Meeting (February 7, Washington, D.C., U.S.; Photo: Official Website of the Prime Minister's Office of Japan)

On January 7, Foreign Minister Iwaya held a meeting with Secretary of State Antony Blinken, who was visiting Japan. Foreign Minister Iwaya expressed his gratitude to Secretary Blinken for his contributions to the Japan-U.S. Alliance, and the two ministers concurred on continuing to work closely together to further uphold and bolster the Japan-U.S. relationship, which has become stronger than ever.

On January 9, the official state funeral of former President Jimmy Carter, who had passed away on December 29 of the previous year, was held in Washington, D.C. Former Prime Minister SUGA Yoshihide attended as a special envoy of the Prime Minister on behalf of Japan.

In addition, in January, a large-scale wildfire broke out in California, the U.S., causing devastating damage. On January 10, in response to the serious damage caused by the wildfire, Prime Minister Ishiba sent a condolence message to President Joseph R. Biden, Jr., conveying that "I offer my heartfelt condolences to those who have fallen victim to this tragedy, and pray for the swift recovery of those injured. Japan stands with the U.S. and its people at this difficult time." On January 15, Japan decided to provide a total of 2 million U.S. dollars of assistance through the American Red Cross as a relief measure for victims of the disaster.

On January 20, Foreign Minister Iwaya, visiting Washington, D.C., attended the Presidential Inauguration Ceremony at the invitation of the U.S. side, becoming the first Japanese foreign minister to attend the inauguration of a U.S. President. On January 21, Foreign Minister Iwaya held the first Japan-U.S. Foreign Ministers' Meeting with Secretary of State Rubio. Foreign Minister Iwaya congratulated

Secretary Rubio on his appointment, and the two ministers concurred to work together to continue elevating the Japan-U.S. Alliance to new heights and to realize FOIP. Furthermore, the two ministers concurred to maintain close partnership to further uphold and bolster Japan-U.S. relations, which have become stronger than ever.

On February 7, Prime Minister Ishiba, during his visit to Washington, D.C., held a Japan-U.S. Summit Meeting in person with President Trump for the first time. The two leaders shared views on the severe and complex security environment and concurred to work closely to realize FOIP and to elevate the Japan-U.S. Alliance to new heights. They also concurred to strengthen the deterrence and response capabilities of the Japan-U.S. Alliance. Prime Minister Ishiba reiterated Japan's unwavering commitment to fundamentally reinforcing its defense capabilities and President Trump welcomed such commitment. President Trump underscored the unwavering commitment by the U.S. to the defense of Japan, using its full range of capabilities, including nuclear. The two leaders once again reaffirmed that Article V of the Japan-U.S. Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security applies to the Senkaku Islands. The two leaders confirmed their commitment to the steady implementation of the realignment of U.S. Forces in Japan in accordance with the Okinawa Consolidation Plan, including the construction of the Futenma Replacement Facility at Henoko and the return of Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) Futenma. The two leaders exchanged views on regional situations such as issues related to China, and dealing with North Korea including on the nuclear and missile issues as well as the abductions issue. The two leaders concurred on the importance of further developing coordination among like-minded countries, including Japan-U.S.-Republic of Korea (ROK), Japan-Australia-India-U.S. (Quad), and Japan-U.S.-Philippines. They shared the intention to maintain close partnership to further uphold and bolster Japan-U.S. relations, which have become stronger than ever, and issued a joint statement. At the end of the meeting, Prime Minister Ishiba invited President Trump to make an official visit to Japan at an early date.



Prime Minister Ishiba offering flowers at the Japan-U.S. Iwo-To Reunion of Honor Ceremony (March 29, Iwo-To; Photo: Official Website of the Prime Minister's Office of Japan)

On March 13, Foreign Minister Iwaya, visiting Charlevoix, Canada to attend the G7 Foreign Ministers' Meeting, held a Japan-U.S. Foreign Ministers' Meeting with Secretary of State Rubio. The two ministers concurred to advance cooperation to further strengthen the deterrence and response capabilities of the Japan-U.S. Alliance based on the outcomes of the Japan-U.S. Summit Meeting in February. The two ministers also reaffirmed their commitment to the steady implementation of the realignment of U.S. Forces in Japan as concurred in the past summit meeting. They also reaffirmed that they would communicate closely to further strengthen Japan-U.S. economic relations. Regarding the additional tariff measures on steel and aluminum products, Foreign Minister Iwaya conveyed that it is regrettable that the imposition of additional tariffs has begun without Japan being excluded, despite Japan's claims that it be excluded from the measures. Foreign Minister Iwaya also lodged a claim that Japan should not be subject to tariff measures such as reciprocal tariffs and tariffs on automobiles.

On March 29, Prime Minister Ishiba visited Iwo-to to attend the Japan-U.S. Reunion of Honor Ceremony. The ceremony was attended on the Japanese side by approximately 130 participants, including government officials represented by Prime Minister Ishiba, members of the Diet, including AISAWA Ichiro, Member of the House of Representatives (President of Parliamentary League for Iwo-To) and SHINDO Yoshitaka, Member of the House of Representatives (Representative of Bereaved Families of the Iwo-To Association), and representatives of the Iwo-To Association, which consists of families of the war dead. From the U.S. side, approximately 160 people attended, including Pete Hegseth, Secretary of Defense, Joseph M. Young, Chargé d'Affaires ad interim of the U.S. Embassy in Japan, Eric

M. Smith, Commandant of the U.S. Marine Corps, Richard Mills, Chairman of the Iwo Jima Association of America, and David Bice, President of Iwo Jima Association of America, and members of the U.S. Congress. At the ceremony, Prime Minister Ishiba delivered an address to the war dead and their families from both Japan and the U.S. In his address, he renewed Japan's pledge for peace and expressed his determination to elevate the Japan-U.S. Alliance, which brings peace and prosperity to the world, to new heights.

Following the Japan-U.S. Iwo-To Reunion of Honor Ceremony, the Japanese attendees relocated to the Tenzan Memorial Monument for the Memorial Ceremony for the Japanese War Dead at the Battle of Iwo-To, and Prime Minister Ishiba attended the ceremony and delivered his memorial remarks. In addition, Prime Minister Ishiba visited the sites where the remains were collected.

On April 7, Prime Minister Ishiba held a telephone call with President Trump. Prime Minister Ishiba confirmed with President Trump that, building on the outcomes of the Japan-U.S. Summit Meeting in February, the two leaders would further develop the overall Japan-U.S. relations and cooperate with each other to realize FOIP. On the economy, Prime Minister Ishiba stated that Japan has been the world's largest investor in the U.S. for five consecutive years, expressed strong concerns that the tariff measures by the U.S. could weaken investment capacity among Japanese companies, and conveyed his view that the two countries should pursue ways to promote broader cooperation that benefits both Japan and the U.S. in a mutual manner, including the enhancement of investment, rather than imposing tariffs, and urged a reconsideration of the measures. The two leaders confirmed that they will continue to have candid and constructive discussions.

On May 23, Prime Minister Ishiba held a telephone call with President Trump. The two leaders broadly exchanged views on the Japan-U.S. Consultations on U.S. Tariff Measures, economic security cooperation, and diplomatic and security challenges. During the call, President Trump shared the outcomes of his recent visit to the Middle East, to which Prime Minister Ishiba expressed his appreciation for such diplomatic efforts by the U.S. Prime Minister Ishiba conveyed Japan's position on U.S. tariff measures, and stated that, with regard to Japan-U.S. Consultations on U.S. Tariff Measures, AKAZAWA Ryosei, Minister in charge of Economic Revitalization, was en route to Washington, D.C., and that he looked forward to productive consultations, on which President Trump concurred. Prime Minister Ishiba also stated that he was looking forward to an in-person meeting on the occasion of the G7 Kananaskis Summit, to which President Trump stated that he would also look forward to it.

On May 29, Prime Minister Ishiba held a telephone call with President Trump. Following their telephone talk on May 23, the two leaders exchanged views on ways to further advance Japan-U.S. cooperation in a wide range of fields, encompassing foreign affairs, security and the economy, and also exchanged views on Japan-U.S. Consultations on the U.S. Tariff Measures. During the discussion, Prime Minister Ishiba conveyed Japan's views on the U.S. tariff measures, and the two leaders concurred to have the ministers in charge further deepen their discussion on the issue.

On June 13, Prime Minister Ishiba held a telephone call with President Trump. Prime Minister



Japan-U.S. Summit Meeting at the G7 Kananaskis Summit (June 16, Kananaskis, Canada; Photo: Official Website of the Prime Minister's Office of Japan



Japan-U.S. Foreign Ministers' Meeting (July 1, Washington, D.C., U.S.)



Courtesy call on Prime Minister Ishiba by the U.S. Presidential Delegation led by Secretary of the Treasury Bessent (July 18, Tokyo; Photo: Official Website of the Prime Minister's Office of Japan)

Ishiba reiterated Japan's view on the U.S. tariff measures, taking into account the results of Japan-U.S. Consultations on the U.S. Tariff Measures conducted thus far. The two leaders concurred to accelerate the consultations between the ministers in charge in order to achieve a mutually beneficial agreement for both Japan and the U.S. The two leaders also exchanged views on the response to the ongoing Israeli attacks against Iran, and concurred that peace and stability in the Middle East are of paramount importance and that they would continue close communication.

On June 16, Prime Minister Ishiba, visiting Canada to attend the G7 Kananaskis Summit, held a meeting with President Trump. The two leaders concurred that both countries would further strengthen the Japan-U.S. Alliance to promote FOIP and to further contribute to the peace and prosperity of the world. The two leaders also had candid discussions on the series of tariff measures by the U.S. and concurred that they would instruct the ministers in charge to further advance their consultations.

On June 25, Foreign Minister Iwaya, visiting The Hague, the Netherlands, to attend events related to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Summit, held a Japan-U.S. Foreign Ministers' Meeting with Secretary of State Rubio. The two ministers exchanged views on the current situation in the Middle East. Foreign Minister Iwaya welcomed the announced cease-fire between Israel and Iran as a significant development and underscored the importance of its faithful implementation. The two ministers concurred on the necessity of further diplomatic efforts to achieve peace and stability in the Middle East, and affirmed their commitment to maintaining close communication. They also exchanged views on U.S. tariff measures, and concurred to support the consultations between the ministers in charge toward achieving a mutually beneficial agreement for both Japan and the U.S.

On July 1, Foreign Minister Iwaya, visiting Washington, D.C. to attend the Japan-Australia-India-U.S. Foreign Ministers' Meeting, held a Japan-U.S. Foreign Ministers' Meeting with Secretary of State Rubio. At the outset, Foreign Minister Iwaya stated that it is of the utmost importance for Japan and the U.S. to communicate closely with each other in the face of rapidly changing international circumstances, and the two ministers affirmed to elevate the Japan-U.S. Alliance to even greater heights. They also discussed the challenges facing the Indo-Pacific region and the roles to be played by Japan and the U.S. in the region, and concurred on the importance of steadily implementing concrete cooperation to realize FOIP. Furthermore, Foreign Minister Iwaya highly appreciated the U.S. initiative in hosting the Japan-Australia-India-U.S. Foreign Ministers' Meeting, and the two ministers affirmed that they would further advance cooperation with like-minded partners in the region, including the Japan-Australia-India-U.S., Japan-U.S.-ROK, and Japan-U.S.-Philippines. The two ministers also held discussions on further strengthening the deterrence and response capabilities of the Japan-U.S. Alliance, and confirmed that they would continue coordination toward convening a Japan-U.S. Security Consultative Committee (Japan-U.S. "2+2") meeting. With regard to U.S. tariff measures, they reconfirmed that they would support consultations between the ministers in charge toward achieving a mutually beneficial agreement for both Japan and the U.S. Finally, the two ministers exchanged views on regional affairs, confirming the importance of issues related to China and of peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait. They also reconfirmed their resolute commitment toward the complete denuclearization of North Korea in regard to the situation surrounding North Korea, including the nuclear and missile issues, and with regard to the immediate resolution of the abductions issue, Foreign Minister Iwaya asked for the continued cooperation of the U.S., and gained the support from Secretary of State Rubio.

From July 18 to 20, a U.S. Presidential Delegation led by Scott Bessent, Secretary of the Treasury, visited Japan, and on July 18 paid a courtesy call on Prime Minister Ishiba. Prime Minister Ishiba expressed his welcome for the visit of the U.S. Presidential Delegation to Japan, and stated his expectation that the U.S. National Day at EXPO 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan on July 19 would serve as an opportunity to showcase the strong Japan-U.S. Alliance and Japan-U.S. friendship. Prime Minister Ishiba also exchanged views with the U.S. Presidential Delegation on Japan-U.S. cooperation in a wide range of fields, conveying among other things: that the security of Ukraine, the Middle East, and Asia are interconnected, and that he wished to further strengthen Japan-U.S. cooperation; that Japan would make proactive efforts in securing its own peace and security and would continue to work on strengthening its defense capabilities; and that there are many areas in the economic and economic security fields in which Japan and the U.S. should enhance their cooperation.

The delegation attended U.S. National Day-related events held at Expo 2025, Osaka Kansai, Japan on July 19. From the Japanese side, Minister in charge of Economic Revitalization Akazawa attended the event and delivered a speech as a representative of the Government of Japan at the official ceremony.

Following the launch of the Takaichi Cabinet, on October 25, Prime Minister Takaichi, visiting Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia to attend the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)-related Summit Meetings, held her first telephone call with President Trump. At the outset, President Trump offered his congratulations to Prime Minister Takaichi on her assumption of office. Prime Minister Takaichi stated that strengthening the Japan-U.S. Alliance is a top priority of Japan's foreign and security policy, and the two leaders confirmed that they would cooperate to continue elevating the Japan-U.S. Alliance to new heights. Prime Minister Takaichi also stated that Japan is an indispensable partner for the U.S. in the Indo-Pacific, and expressed her intention to work together toward realizing FOIP. She further expressed her respect for President Trump's leadership in achieving the agreement in the Middle East during that month. Prime Minister Takaichi also asked for continued understanding and cooperation from the U.S. for the immediate resolution of the abductions issue. Prime Minister Takaichi stated that she looked forward to welcoming President Trump to Japan, and President Trump in turn expressed that he likewise looked forward to meeting Prime Minister Takaichi in person.

On October 28, Prime Minister Takaichi held a Japan-U.S. Summit Meeting and a signing ceremony and other events with President Trump, who was visiting Japan. Prime Minister Takaichi welcomed President Trump's visit to Japan, and expressed her respect for his



Japan-U.S. Summit Meeting (October 28, Tokyo; Photo: Official Website of the Prime Minister's Office of Japan)



Joint Statement Signing Ceremony (October 28, Tokyo; Photo: Official Website of the Prime Minister's Office of Japan)



Prime Minister Takaichi and President Trump shaking hands following the signing of the joint statement (October 28, Tokyo; Photo: Official Website of the Prime Minister's Office of Japan)




Meeting with families of the abductees and others (October 28, Tokyo; Photo: Official Website of the Prime Minister's Office of Japan)



Visit by Prime Minister Takaichi and President Trump to the U.S. aircraft carrier USS George Washington (October 28, Yokosuka; Photo: Official Website of the Prime Minister's Office of Japan)



First Japan-U.S. Foreign Ministers' Meeting since Foreign Minister Motegi's assumption of office (October 28, Tokyo)

past contributions to the development of the Japan-U.S. Alliance and for his leadership in the international community, including in the Middle East. Prime Minister Takaichi also stated that the Japan-U.S. Alliance is the foundation for peace and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific region, and that its further strengthening is a top priority in Japan's foreign and security policy, while emphasizing that Japan is also an indispensable partner for the U.S. in the Indo-Pacific region.

Prime Minister Takaichi further conveyed her determination to restore a strong Japanese diplomacy with the Japan-U.S. Alliance, now the greatest alliance in the world, as its cornerstone, and expressed her desire to create a new chapter in the history of the Japan-U.S. Alliance together, that will make both Japan and the U.S. stronger and more prosperous.

In response, President Trump expressed his warm congratulations for Prime Minister Takaichi on her appointment, and stated that Japan-U.S. relations would be stronger than ever before, and that Japan and the U.S. are allies at the strongest level. President Trump also emphasized that he would help Japan at any time when Japan needs it, and stated that he would have a fantastic relationship with Prime Minister Takaichi. The two leaders also affirmed their intention to jointly celebrate the 250 years of American independence next year, and further develop the friendship and people-to-people exchanges between Japan and the U.S.

The two leaders concurred to advance a broad range of security cooperation in order to further enhance the deterrence and response capabilities of the Japan-U.S. Alliance. Prime Minister Takaichi stated that she has consistently emphasized the necessity of fundamentally reinforcing defense capabilities amidst the most severe and complex security environment since the end of World War II, and has been taking actions immediately after assuming office, and expressed her commitment to continue working on fundamentally reinforcing Japan's defense capabilities and increasing the defense budget at Japan's own initiative. President Trump stated that he is aware that Japan is increasing defense capabilities very substantially.

The two leaders signed a document reaffirming the swift and continued efforts by both countries regarding the agreement on tariffs between Japan and the U.S. ("Implementation of the Agreement — Towards

a New Golden Age of the Japan-U.S. Alliance"), and confirmed their intention to further strengthen the economic growth of both Japan and the U.S. The two leaders also signed a document on critical minerals and rare earths ("Japan-U.S. Framework for Securing Supply of Critical Minerals and Rare Earths through Mining and Processing"), and concurred on further strengthening economic security initiatives in a wide range of fields, including critical technologies such as AI and shipbuilding, in addition to critical minerals and rare earths.

Prime Minister Takaichi expressed her determination to continue strongly promoting FOIP as a pillar of Japan's diplomacy and to update it to align with the times, after which the two leaders affirmed their commitment to work closely together to strongly advance FOIP. Under the vision, the two leaders also confirmed the importance of strengthening regional networks among like-minded partners, such as Japan-U.S.-ROK, Japan-U.S.-Philippines, and Japan-Australia-India-U.S.

The two leaders also exchanged views on efforts toward peace in various regions of the world, including the realization of cease-fire agreements between Cambodia and Thailand in July and in the Middle East in October, and Prime Minister Takaichi stated that Japan is a partner in the pursuit of peace alongside the U.S. The two leaders also exchanged views on the situation and various challenges facing the Indo-Pacific region, considering the upcoming diplomatic calendar. The two leaders also discussed the unprecedentedly severe and complex regional security environment, including the cooperation among China, North Korea, and Russia, as well as the intensification of their military activities. The two leaders exchanged views on issues concerning China, and confirmed their opposition to unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force or coercion and their intention to work closely together between Japan and the U.S. The two leaders reiterated the importance of peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait.

The two leaders shared their views on the situation regarding North Korea, and affirmed the need to address its nuclear and missile issues together and their resolute commitment to the complete denuclearization of North Korea.

Prime Minister Takaichi asked for continued understanding and cooperation from the U.S. for the immediate resolution of the abductions issue and gained full support from President Trump. Additionally, the two leaders met with the family members of the abductees.

Also on October 28, Prime Minister Takaichi visited, together with President Trump, the U.S. aircraft carrier "USS George Washington," which was docked at Yokosuka. The two leaders made remarks to encourage the members of the Self-Defense Forces (SDF) and the U.S. Forces in Japan. Prime Minister Takaichi stated her determination to ensure a Free and Open Indo-Pacific and to make it the foundation of peace and prosperity in the region, while elevating the Japan-U.S. Alliance, already the greatest alliance in the world, to even greater heights, together with President Trump.

On October 28, Foreign Minister Motegi held a Japan-U.S. Foreign Ministers' Meeting with Secretary of State Rubio, who was visiting Japan in conjunction with President Trump's visit, marking the first Japan-U.S. Foreign Ministers' Meeting since Foreign Minister Motegi's assumption of office. At the outset, Foreign Minister Motegi welcomed Secretary Rubio's visit to Japan and stated that he would like to work closely with Secretary Rubio in order to demonstrate to the world the strength of the Japan-U.S. Alliance, the greatest alliance in the world. Foreign Minister Motegi also expressed his appreciation to Secretary Rubio for meeting with the family members of the abductees. Secretary Rubio expressed his intention to further strengthen the Japan-U.S. Alliance, including the area of security and economy. The two ministers concurred on advancing concrete security cooperation to further strengthen Japan-U.S. Alliance deterrence and response capabilities. The two ministers also exchanged views on economic issues. Foreign Minister Motegi emphasized the importance of further advancing initiatives in the field of economic security in addition to implementing the Agreement between Japan and the U.S. Foreign Minister Motegi also expressed his firm support for U.S. diplomatic efforts around the world, such as in the Middle East, Ukraine, Cambodia, and Thailand, and the two ministers concurred to cooperate on issues related to China and their policies toward North Korea, including the nuclear and missile issues as well as the abductions issue. The two ministers

confirmed that they would further develop networks of like-minded countries, including Japan-U.S.-ROK, Japan-U.S.-Philippines, and Japan-Australia-India-U.S. to realize FOIP.

On November 25, Prime Minister Takaichi held a telephone call with President Trump. Prime Minister Takaichi expressed her gratitude to President Trump for the gift of his hand-written message to her on a newspaper reporting on President Trump's October visit to Japan, and conveyed her appreciation for U.S. efforts toward peace in Ukraine. The two leaders also exchanged views on strengthening the Japan-U.S. Alliance and the situation and various challenges facing the Indo-Pacific region. During the call, President Trump made an explanation on the latest situation of U.S.-China relations, including the U.S.-China summit meeting held that month. Furthermore, in response to President Trump's question, Prime Minister Takaichi explained the G20 Johannesburg Summit that had recently taken place. The two leaders affirmed that the two countries would continue working closely under the current international situation. President Trump told Prime Minister Takaichi that, as a close friend, he would be willing to receive calls from the Prime Minister any time.

On January 2, 2026, Prime Minister Takaichi held a telephone call with President Trump. Prime Minister Takaichi offered her congratulations on the 250th anniversary of the founding of the U.S. She also reiterated her respect for President Trump's diplomatic efforts to achieve peace around the world, including in Ukraine and the Middle East. The two leaders affirmed that they will make this momentous anniversary a year in which they carve out a new chapter in the history of the Japan-U.S. Alliance, and that they will further deepen the friendly relations between Japan and the U.S., as well as the broad-ranging Japan-U.S. cooperation, including in economy and security, and affirmed their commitment to steadfastly promoting cooperation among like-minded partners, including Japan-U.S.-ROK and FOIP. The two leaders also exchanged views mainly on the Indo-Pacific region and confirmed close cooperation between Japan and the U.S. under the current international situation. President Trump extended an invitation for Prime Minister Takaichi to visit the U.S., and the two leaders concurred to coordinate in detail to realize the visit to the U.S. in spring 2026. Furthermore, the two leaders confirmed that they would continue to communicate closely going forward.

(3) Japan-U.S. Economic Relations

Japan-U.S. economic relations, together with national security cooperation and people-to-people exchange, are one of the main elements underpinning the strong Japan-U.S. Alliance, and Japan and the U.S. are the closest partners in the economic field. For example, Japan has been the world's largest investor in the U.S. for six consecutive years in terms of outstanding direct investment in the U.S. (819.2 billion U.S. dollars in 2024), and helped to create approximately 970,000 jobs in 2022 (second place following the United Kingdom (UK)). 2025 was a year in which U.S. trade policy, including wide-ranging tariff measures, had a major impact on the economic relations between Japan and the U.S. Nonetheless, against the backdrop of the strong Japan-U.S. economic relationship, including the significant and long-standing contributions of Japanese companies, candid and constructive discussions were held at various levels, resulting in an agreement reached in July 2025 that is mutually beneficial to both Japan and the U.S., and a foundation was built for further strengthening Japan-U.S. cooperation in the fields including economic security. The following provides an overview of the developments.

At the first in-person meeting between Prime Minister Ishiba and President Trump held in Washington, D.C. on February 7, the two leaders affirmed that Japan is the world's largest investor in the U.S. and that the two countries are close partners in the economic field. Prime Minister Ishiba conveyed his willingness to cooperate together to elevate Japan's investment in the U.S. to an unprecedented amount of 1 trillion U.S. dollars, and President Trump strongly welcomed such investments by Japanese companies. The two leaders then concurred to elevate the Japan-U.S. partnership to an even higher level through improving the business environment and increasing bilateral investment and employment, strengthening each other's industries and leading the world in development in the field of technologies such as AI and leading-edge semiconductors, and strongly promoting efforts to harness the energy

of the growing market in the Indo-Pacific region. The two leaders also confirmed that they will cooperate to strengthen energy security between the two countries, including increasing exports of U.S. liquefied natural gas (LNG) to Japan, in a mutually beneficial manner.

With regard to U.S. tariff measures, in February, 25% sector-specific tariffs on steel and aluminum under Section 232 of the Trade Expansion Act of 1962, covering the entire world, were announced (subsequently raised to 50% in June). In March, 25% sector-specific tariffs on automobiles and automobile parts were similarly announced. Furthermore, on April 2, President Trump announced "Reciprocal Tariffs" under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA), with the rate applicable to Japan set at 24%. In response, on April 8, the Government of Japan established the Comprehensive Response Headquarters for U.S. Tariff Measures in the Cabinet, headed by Prime Minister Ishiba, to take comprehensive measures in response to U.S. tariff measures. At MOFA, the Headquarters for the Japan-U.S. Economic Consultation, headed by Foreign Minister Iwaya, was established on April 10 to address the situation.

Subsequently, Minister in charge of Economic Revitalization Akazawa was designated as the Minister responsible for Japan-U.S. consultations on U.S. tariff measures. From April through September, he visited the U.S. a total of ten times, and held consultations aimed at reducing tariffs based on the concept of "investment over tariffs." An agreement was ultimately reached between Japan and the U.S. on July 22. Under the agreement, the Reciprocal Tariff on imports from Japan would be set at 15% with "non-stacking" (in other words, products with existing tariff rates of 15% or above would not be subject to the Reciprocal Tariff, while products with existing tariff rates less than 15% would be subject to a total Reciprocal Tariff of 15%, including the existing rate). The tariff on automobiles and automobile parts from Japan would also be subject to 15% with "non-stacking" in the same manner. Furthermore, it was also agreed that, should sector-specific tariffs be imposed on Japanese pharmaceuticals and semiconductors in the future, Japan would not be treated less favorably than third countries and regions, including the EU, and that aircraft and aircraft parts originating in Japan would not be subject to any tariffs. At the same time, both countries agreed to work closely together to build resilient supply chains from which Japan and the U.S. can mutually benefit through investment by Japanese companies in the U.S., in order to promote the economic security and national security interests of both countries. Specifically, they confirmed that they would promote 550 billion U.S. dollars investment in the U.S. in sectors critical to economic security, including semiconductors, pharmaceuticals, and energy. Afterwards, on September 4, President Trump signed an Executive Order on measures to reduce tariffs on Japan pursuant to the agreement of July 22. On the same day, Minister in charge of Economic Revitalization Akazawa signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Secretary of Commerce Lutnick to confirm the common understanding between Japan and the U.S. regarding the aforementioned strategic investment initiative in the U.S. On the same day, Japan and the U.S. issued a joint statement reconfirming their commitments with respect to the Japan-U.S. agreement on July 22.

On October 28, Prime Minister Takaichi and President Trump, who was visiting Japan, signed a document reaffirming the swift and continued efforts by both countries regarding the agreement on tariffs between Japan and the U.S. ("Implementation of the Agreement — Towards a New Golden Age for the Japan-U.S. Alliance") and a document on critical minerals and rare earths ("Japan-U.S. Framework for Securing the Supply of Critical Minerals and Rare Earths through Mining and Processing"). The two leaders also concurred to further strengthen economic security initiatives in a wide range of fields, including critical technologies such as AI and shipbuilding. On this occasion, various exchanges of views were also held at the ministerial level. Foreign Minister Motegi held a Japan-U.S. Foreign Ministers' Meeting with Secretary of State Rubio, emphasizing the importance of further advancing initiatives in the field of economic security. Foreign Minister Motegi also exchanged views with Secretary of Commerce Lutnick on a wide range of fields, including cooperation between Japan and the U.S. to enhance economic security, and reaffirmed their commitment to further deepen collaboration at various levels to strengthen Japan-U.S. relations in the future.

Column

"The Roots of Japanese Baseball" — Horace Wilson —

Consulate General of Japan in Boston

Baseball is one of the most popular sports in Japan. The outstanding performances of Japanese players in Major League Baseball — the home of the sport — are reported on a daily basis in the United States (U.S.) as well, captivating audiences with excitement.

The individual credited with first introducing baseball to Japan is Horace Wilson, a native of the State of Maine in the U.S. Mr. Wilson came to Japan during the *Meiji* era as an "*oyatoi gaikokujin*" (foreign expert in *Meiji* Government employ) and taught English and mathematics at the former Kaisei School (predecessor of the University of Tokyo). It was alongside his regular classes that he introduced to his students the game of baseball, which had not yet reached Japan at the time. In recognition of these achievements, Mr. Wilson was inducted into Japan's Baseball Hall of Fame, located in Kōrakuen, Tokyo, in 2003, and a commemorative monument was erected at the former *Gakushi Kaikan* building. However, Mr. Wilson's contributions were entirely unknown not only in the U.S. at large, but even among the people of his home state of Maine.

On February 2, 2025, the Consulate General of Japan in Boston, in cooperation with Ryan Shaffer, President of the Japan-America Society of Washington DC and also a native resident of Maine, held a ceremony to commemorate Horace Wilson in Portland, Maine, to honor his achievements as a symbol of Japan-U.S. baseball exchange. The event was attended by YOSHIDA Masataka of the Boston Red Sox, Representative Ellie Sato, the first Japanese American member of the Maine State Legislature, and Mayor Mark Dion of Portland. Mr. Yoshida's visit to Mr. Wilson's approximately 200-year-old birthplace, and his meeting with Mr. Wilson's relatives who still reside there, were also covered by media outlets on both sides of the Pacific.

Furthermore, this event prompted a cooperative effort among individuals and organizations involved in Japan-related activities in Maine to establish a monument to Mr. Wilson in his home state. This initiative subsequently developed into the founding of the Horace Wilson Committee, and its members, including Representative Sato, are working vigorously toward this goal.

In July, to commemorate the baseball bonds between Japan and the U.S. forged by Mr. Wilson, "Japan Night" was held for the first time at a home game of the Portland Sea Dogs — an AA League Baseball team affiliated with the Boston Red Sox and based in Portland, Maine. Consul General Takahashi, who delivered remarks prior to the game, underscored in his speech the role that baseball has played as a bridge of friendship between Japan and the U.S., and extended his congratulations on the formation of the Committee, describing it as "a new chapter written into the history of Japan and the State of Maine."

The seeds sown by Mr. Wilson are on the verge of blossoming in his birthplace, serving as a bridge between the peoples of Japan and the U.S.



YOSHIDA Masataka of the Boston Red Sox with Abigail Balcomb, a descendant of Mr. Wilson, at Mr. Wilson's birthplace



Japan Night at the Portland Sea Dogs (Consul General Takahashi at far left)

Building close ties not only with the federal government but also with the unique individual states of the U.S. is expected to contribute to further deepening the multilayered and broad-based Japan-U.S. economic ties. In 2025, the Japan-U.S. Business Conference, which aims to promote mutual understanding through dialogue between Japanese and U.S. private sectors, as well as the Annual Joint Meeting of the Japan-Midwest U.S. Association and the Midwest U.S.-Japan Association, and the Annual Joint Meeting of the Japan-U.S. Southeast Association and the Southeast U.S./Japan Association — both of which aim to promote mutual exchanges between Japan and respective regions of the U.S. — were held in person in Japan. In addition, governors of the states of Maryland and Hawaii also visited Japan on separate occasions.

In order to strengthen the foundation of Japan-U.S. economic relations from the grassroots level, the Government of Japan is working as one, on efforts to promote American people's understanding of Japan. Since the launch of the Government Taskforce on Strengthening Japan-U.S. Ties at the Grass Roots in 2017, tailored relationship building efforts reflecting the characteristics of each region and their level of interest in Japan have been advanced with the cooperation of various ministries and agencies. These efforts include the "Grassroots Caravan," which highlights the contributions of Japanese companies to local economies. To date, for example, a webinar on hydrogen was held to promote further decarbonization efforts between Japan and the State of California. In addition, symposia, workshops, and networking events reflecting local industries and interests have been held in various locations across the U.S., including Arkansas, Nebraska, Kentucky, Maryland, Arizona, and Nevada, thereby advancing Japan-U.S. cooperation at the grassroots level.

3 Canada

(1) Canada's Domestic Situation

In Canada, in March 2025, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, who had served as Prime Minister for approximately nine years, stepped down, and Mark Carney, who won the ruling Liberal Party leadership election, assumed the office of Prime Minister. Although Prime Minister Carney also won the federal House of Commons election held at the end of April, securing 169 of the 343 seats up for election, the Liberal Party minority government continued. The Carney Cabinet upon taking office comprised 38 ministers (28 Cabinet ministers and 10 ministers of state), with 24 new Cabinet members (13 of whom were first-term members of Parliament), gender parity among Cabinet ministers (14 each), and ministers appointed from all 10 provinces. As a minority government, parliamentary cooperation with the various opposition parties on a case-by-case basis has continued. However, in November and December of that year, two Conservative members of Parliament crossed the floor to the Liberal Party, bringing the Liberal Party's seat count in the House of Commons to within one seat of a majority.



Japan-Canada Foreign Ministers' Meeting (March 13, Charlevoix, Canada)



Japan-Canada Summit Meeting (June 16, Kananaskis, Canada; Photo: Official Website of the Prime Minister's Office of Japan)



Japan-Canada Foreign Ministers' Meeting (June 25, The Hague, the Netherlands)



Japan-Canada Summit Meeting (November 1, Gyeongju, ROK; Photo: Official Website of the Prime Minister's Office of Japan)


Japan-Canada Foreign Ministers' Meeting (July 8, Tokyo)

On the economic front, according to Canada's federal budget plan released by the Department of Finance Canada in November 2025, real GDP growth in 2025 is expected to be 1.1% (1.5% in the previous year), the unemployment rate to be 7.0% (5.4% in the previous year), and the annual average of the Consumer Price Index (CPI) to be 2.1% (2.4% in the previous year). In addition, due to the negative impact of U.S. tariff measures and uncertainty over future trade rules, as well as proactive fiscal measures taken by the Government, a fiscal deficit of 78.3 billion Canadian dollars is projected for fiscal year 2025 (a deficit of 42.2 billion Canadian dollars was projected as of December of the previous year).

On the diplomatic front, as the G7 Presidency in 2025, Canada hosted the G7 Kananaskis Summit in June and G7 Foreign Ministers' Meetings in March and November, and led efforts on a wide range of matters including the situations in the Middle East and Ukraine. There have also been major developments in the traditionally stable U.S.-Canada relationship. As part of the series of tariff measures taken by the U.S. Government, Canada has been subject to 25% tariffs on all products on the grounds of the flow of illegal immigrants and fentanyl since March (raised to 35% in August). (goods compliant with the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) were excluded; energy and fertilizer are subject to 10%). Various sector-specific tariffs were also imposed, as with other countries. In response, the Government of Canada imposed counter-tariff measures on certain U.S. goods. Prime Minister Carney, who took office in March, sought to build a new economic and security relationship with the U.S. while also promoting stronger cooperation with European and Indo-Pacific countries from the perspective of trade diversification.

With regard to ASEAN countries, Canada has been strengthening its relationship based on the "Strategic Partnership" established in September 2023, including through Minister of Foreign Affairs Anita Anand's attendance at the 32nd ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) in July 2025, and Prime Minister Carney's attendance at the ASEAN-related Summit Meetings in October, and is accelerating negotiations toward the conclusion of a Canada-ASEAN Free Trade Agreement in the course of 2026. In September 2025, Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto visited Canada, and the Canada-Indonesia Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) was signed, which is the first such bilateral agreement between Canada and an ASEAN member country.

With regard to Canada-China relations, in 2024, the Government of Canada introduced surtaxes on Chinese electric vehicles (EVs) and steel and aluminum goods from China on the grounds of China's unfair trade practices, to which the Government of China responded in March 2025 by imposing additional tariffs on Canadian



Japan-Canada Foreign Ministers' Meeting (November 11, Niagara, Canada

canola, seafood, pork, and other products. Furthermore, from June onward, Canada imposed tariff-rate quotas on Chinese steel mill products and surtaxes on steel goods melted and poured in China and aluminum goods smelted and cast in China, with the exchange of additional tariff measures continuing. Amid this situation, following Minister of Foreign Affairs Mélanie Joly's visit to China in July 2024, Foreign Minister Anand visited China in October 2025, and on the occasion of the APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting in November, a Canada-China Leaders' Meeting was held between Prime Minister Carney and President Xi Jinping for the first time in approximately eight years. In January 2026, at the invitation of Premier of State Council Li Qiang, Prime Minister Carney visited China, the first visit by a Canadian Prime Minister in approximately eight years. At the Canada-China Leaders' Meeting with President Xi held on January 16, a leaders' joint statement on a "new Strategic Partnership" and seven bilateral cooperation documents and memoranda of understanding, including the "Canada-China Economic and Trade Cooperation Roadmap," were concluded, and a provisional arrangement on Canada-China trade was announced, including a significant reduction in tariffs on certain products imposed between Canada and China since 2024.

With regard to relations with the ROK, a Canada-ROK Leaders' Meeting was held on the occasion of the APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting in November, at which it was announced that agreement had been reached on the Canada-Republic of Korea Security and Defence Cooperation Partnership.

With regard to relations with India, while tensions had continued following the murder of a Sikh in Canada in 2023, a Canada-India Leaders' Meeting was held on the occasion of the G7 Kananaskis Summit in June. At the end of August, both countries announced the reposting of their respective High Commissioners to each other's countries, and in October, Foreign Minister Anand visited India.

With regard to the response to the situation in Ukraine, Canada has joined the Coalition of the Willing led by the UK and France, and is continuing its sanctions against Russia and its support for Ukraine, including through visits to Ukraine by Prime Minister Trudeau in February, just before his departure from office, and by Prime Minister Carney in August. Since February 2022, the Government of Canada has committed to a total of 22.0 billion Canadian dollars (approximately 2.515 trillion yen) in support, including 6.5 billion Canadian dollars in military assistance.

With regard to the response to the Israel-Palestine situation, at the UN General Assembly in September, Prime Minister Carney announced Canada's recognition of the State of Palestine. With new announcements of support including 40 million Canadian dollars in July, the Government of Canada has announced a total of 340 million Canadian dollars (approximately 38.8 billion yen) in humanitarian assistance to improve the humanitarian situation in Gaza.

(2) Japan-Canada Relations

From January through December 2025, three meetings were held between the leaders of Japan and Canada (including one telephone call), and six meetings were held between the foreign ministers (including one telephone call).

On March 13, Foreign Minister Iwaya, visiting Canada to attend the G7 Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Charlevoix, held a Japan-Canada Foreign Ministers' Meeting with Foreign Minister Joly. The two ministers affirmed the importance of cooperation among allies and like-minded countries, including the G7, and Foreign Minister Iwaya stated that Japan would provide full support for the success of Canada's G7 Presidency in 2025. The two ministers welcomed the agreement in principle on the Japan-Canada Agreement on the Security of Information.

On May 2, Prime Minister Ishiba held a telephone call with Prime Minister Carney. Prime Minister Ishiba

expressed his congratulations to Prime Minister Carney on the victory in Canada's federal election, and stated his wish to cooperate with Prime Minister Carney, who is also the G7 Summit chair in 2025, to address various challenges amidst the continuing severe international environment.

On May 29, Foreign Minister Iwaya held a telephone call with Foreign Minister Anand. Foreign Minister Iwaya extended his congratulations on Foreign Minister Anand's appointment as Minister of Foreign Affairs, and the two ministers expressed their hope to hold an in-person meeting at an early timing.

On June 16, Prime Minister Ishiba, visiting Canada to attend the G7 Kananaskis Summit, held a Japan-Canada Summit Meeting with Prime Minister Carney. Prime Minister Ishiba expressed his respect for Prime Minister Carney on his leadership for hosting the G7 Summit Meeting, and also expressed his sympathies to those affected by the wildfires in Canada. The two leaders concurred on fortifying Japan-Canada security cooperation by signing, at an early date, the Agreement on the Security of Information and the Agreement concerning Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology, which reached an agreement in principle in 2025, in addition to the ongoing cooperation based on the Agreement concerning Reciprocal Provision of Supplies and Services between the Self-Defense Forces of Japan and the Canadian Armed Forces, which is already in force. The two leaders also welcomed the progress made on LNG Canada and small modular reactor projects, and further discussed the possibility of cooperation between Japan and Canada in economic fields such as batteries and critical minerals.

On June 25, Foreign Minister Iwaya, who attended NATO Summit-related events, held a meeting with Foreign Minister Anand. Foreign Minister Iwaya welcomed Canada's commitment to the Indo-Pacific region, referring to Canada's initiatives to monitor illegal fishing activities in the region, as well as its monitoring and surveillance activities against illicit maritime activities including ship-to-ship transfers(2) involving North Korean-flagged vessels in waters surrounding Japan.

On July 8, Foreign Minister Iwaya held a Japan-Canada Foreign Ministers' Meeting and a Signing Ceremony for the Japan-Canada Agreement on the Security of Information with Foreign Minister Anand, who was visiting Japan. The two ministers welcomed the signing of the Agreement on the Security of Information, and shared the view to sign the Agreement concerning Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology and the Treaty on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters at an early date. The two ministers confirmed their continued collaboration between Japan and Canada, including within the G7, bearing in mind Canada's role as G7 Presidency in 2025.

On November 1, Prime Minister Takaichi, visiting Gyeongju, ROK to attend the APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting, held a Japan-Canada Summit Meeting with Prime Minister Carney. At the outset, Prime Minister Carney conveyed his congratulations on Prime Minister Takaichi's assumption of office, to which Prime Minister Takaichi expressed her gratitude and conveyed her sincere respect for Prime Minister Carney's leadership as G7 Chair in 2025. The two leaders reaffirmed their commitment to further strengthening cooperation for realizing FOIP, on the basis of the "Japan-Canada Action Plan for contributing to a free and open Indo-Pacific region." Prime Minister Takaichi noted that Canada is an extremely important partner, and the two leaders reaffirmed their intention to advance cooperation across a wide range of areas of security and economic fields, including energy security and food security. The two leaders concurred to work in close coordination on regional situations such as on their policies toward North Korea, including its nuclear and missile issues as well as the abductions issue.

On November 6, Foreign Minister Motegi held a telephone call with Foreign Minister Anand. Foreign Minister Anand extended her congratulations to Foreign Minister Motegi on his assumption of the position, to which Foreign Minister Motegi expressed his gratitude and conveyed his respect for Canada's leadership as G7 Presidency in 2025. The two ministers confirmed to strengthen cooperation, including collaboration at the future G7 Foreign Ministers' Meeting.

(2) In this context, "ship-to-ship transfers" refers to the transfers to or from North Korea-flagged vessels of any goods or items at sea, which UN Security Council Resolution 2375 (adopted in September 2017) prohibits UN member states from facilitating or engaging in.

On November 11, Foreign Minister Motegi, visiting Niagara, Canada to attend the G7 Foreign Ministers' Meeting, held a meeting with Foreign Minister Anand. Foreign Minister Motegi expressed his respect for Canada's leadership as G7 Presidency in 2025, and the two ministers concurred to cooperate closely, building on the "Japan-Canada Action Plan for contributing to a free and open Indo-Pacific region." The two ministers also reaffirmed their commitment to the early signing of the Agreement concerning Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology and the Treaty on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters, which have been agreed upon in-principle. Subsequently, the Agreement concerning Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology was signed in January 2026, and the Treaty on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters was signed in December 2025, between the two governments.

In the economic and trade fields, Japan cooperated with Canada in advancing discussions on issues such as accessions to the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) and the general review, with a view to maintaining and strengthening a free and fair economic order in the Indo-Pacific. Japan also worked together with Canada on reform of the World Trade Organization (WTO), including discussions in the Ottawa Group. In August, the second meeting of the Dialogue based on the Memorandum of Cooperation concerning Battery Supply Chains, which was signed in 2023, was held in Tokyo. At the meeting, the participants reviewed the progress of concrete action plans taken by the two countries since the previous dialogue with a view to building a global battery supply chain between Japan and Canada. They concurred to continue advancing further efforts regarding the exchange of information on policies of the two countries, measures to promote trade and investment, and research and development. In the energy field, in June, shipments commenced from the LNG Canada project in which Japanese companies are participating, and the supply of Canadian LNG to Asia, including Japan, began. Furthermore, in the small modular reactor (SMR) construction project being advanced by the Province of Ontario, Canada, an SMR developed with the involvement of Japanese companies was adopted. In the science and technology field, coordination is progressing based on the Memorandum of Cooperation on Industrial Science and Technology such as quantum and AI, signed in 2023.

Section 4 Latin America and the Caribbean

1 Overview

(1) Japan's Positioning of Latin America and the Caribbean

As the free and open international order based on the rule of law faces serious challenges, many countries in the Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) region place importance on values and principles such as freedom, democracy, the rule of law, and human rights. In recent years, strengthening cooperation with LAC countries that share these values and principles has become increasingly important for Japan. The LAC region, which has a population of approximately 660 million and a gross regional product of approximately 7.1 trillion U.S. dollars and continues to post positive economic growth, is an important market. The region is also rich in critical mineral resources, energy, and food resources, and is growing its international prominence from the perspective of strengthening supply chain resilience and economic security as well. On the other hand, in countries and regions where income inequality is severe, challenges persist, including the activities of criminal organizations such as drug cartels, a severe deterioration in public safety, irregular migration to North America, and the social integration of returning migrants, all of which also serve as impediments to further growth.

In the LAC region, there are the Nikkei (Japanese immigrants and their descendants) communities numbering approximately 3.1 million, or about 60% of the world's Nikkei population, who have fostered a traditional sense of affinity toward Japan in LAC countries through contributions to the local areas for more than a century. On the other hand, generations have transitioned over the 100 years since the Japanese migration began, and the challenge is how to maintain and deepen ties between Japan and the communities going forward, including among the younger generation. From this perspective, in addition to programs inviting members of the Nikkei community to Japan and dispatching Japanese students (exchanges with Nikkei of the same generation), MOFA has been implementing measures to strengthen cooperation with the Nikkei communities, including supporting the holding of events by the Nikkei community in various countries to promote network-building.

(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!!" (meaning "together")(1) since 2014. In 2024, Prime Minister Kishida gave a policy speech on the LAC region in Brazil entitled "Paving a Pathway to 'Human Dignity' with Latin America and the Caribbean," updating Japan's guideline for the first time in a decade. In the speech, he outlined the following three key directions: (a) Ensuring the free and open international order based on the rule of law, (b) Overcoming common challenges that humanity faces such as the environment and climate change, and (c) Pursuing prosperity that can be shared by all people in the world and does not come at others' expense. Taking into account changes in the international community and the issues it faces, he indicated Japan's resolve to work together with LAC countries to open a new path through dialogue. In addition, in the same year, Foreign Minister Kamikawa announced the Diplomacy Initiative toward LAC in Panama. The initiative pursues new forms of cooperation with LAC countries by integrating themes of growing importance,

(1) This is the guiding philosophy of Japan's foreign policy toward LAC, advocated by Prime Minister Abe in 2014. The three "Juntos" (Together) refer to "Develop Together," "Lead Together," and "Inspire Together."

such as the oceans and gender equality, as well as Japan's unique bond with the LAC region through the Nikkei community, into Japan's traditional diplomatic efforts. Under this guideline for LAC diplomacy and the initiative to implement it, Japan's diplomacy toward the LAC region deepened further in 2025.

In 2025, designated as the "Japan-Brazil Friendship and Exchange Year (the 130th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Japan and Brazil)," Japan hosted Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva as a State Guest in March, during which a summit meeting was held between Prime Minister Ishiba and President Lula, among other engagements. The year also coincided with the "Japan-SICA (Central American Integration System) Friendship Year," during which President César Bernardo Arévalo de León of Guatemala, President José Raúl Mulino Quintero of Panama, and Prime Minister John Briceño of Belize visited Japan. In addition, ministers from Costa Rica, Honduras, and the Dominican Republic also visited Japan, further deepening relations between Japan and Central America. On the occasion of the National Day ceremonies of the respective countries at Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, held from April through October, 11 heads of state or government and 16 ministerial-level dignitaries, including 13 foreign ministers, from the LAC region visited Japan, and meetings were held at various levels.

On the economic front, supply chain connections are being strengthened, including the continuing trend of increases in the number of Japanese companies operating in the LAC region, which reached 3,095 in 2024. Japan is working on promoting free trade together with LAC countries including through the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), in which Mexico, Peru, and Chile also participate. In November of that year, the process began for Costa Rica's accession to the CPTPP, and in November 2025, it was decided that the process for Uruguay's accession to the Agreement would be initiated.

In the field of development cooperation, for some areas of the LAC region that have achieved economic growth, South-South cooperation is being accelerated by countries that have already "graduated" or will "graduate" from the status of recipient countries on the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) List of ODA Recipients by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Japan is promoting triangular cooperation with these countries.

2 Regional Organizations

In addition to the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC),[(2)] the Organization of American States (OAS), and the Forum for East Asia-Latin America Cooperation (FEALAC), the following regional organizations in the LAC region conduct policy coordination on various issues.

(1) Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR)[(3)]

MERCOSUR comprises Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay, and Bolivia (Venezuela is currently suspended), and with a few exceptions, tariffs have been eliminated for all goods traded within the region. Regarding the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) negotiations, talks are ongoing with the Republic of Korea (ROK), Canada, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), among others. In January 2026, however, MERCOSUR signed an FTA with the European Union (EU).

In regard to relations with Japan, at a summit meeting between Prime Minister Ishiba and President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva of Brazil in March, the two leaders confirmed that the "Strategic Partnership Framework between Japan and MERCOSUR" would be launched at an early date, and that consultations toward deepening trade relations would be advanced under the Framework. In December, the launch of the Framework was announced at the MERCOSUR Summit, and in January 2026, the first meeting under the Framework was held.

(2) CELAC: Comunidad de Estados Latinoamericanos y Caribeños (Community of Latin American and Caribbean States)

(3) MERCOSUR: Mercado Común del Sur (Common Market of the South)

(2) Caribbean Community (CARICOM)[4]

CARICOM was founded by 14 Caribbean nations and 1 territory for economic integration and foreign policy coordination. It has a large presence in the international arena due to its 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 face 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.[5] Japan is also providing support to high-income level countries based on their development needs and economic capabilities.

(3) Central American Integration System (SICA)

SICA was established in 1992 with the aim of promoting the economic and social integration of the region and achieving peace, freedom, democracy, and development. Its eight member countries are El Salvador, Guatemala, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Nicaragua, Panama, Belize, and Honduras (Japan has been an external observer of SICA since 2010). In addition, since 1995, Japan has held policy consultations with SICA member countries through the Japan-Central America Forum for Dialogue and Cooperation. In May 2025, the 19th Forum was held in Costa Rica.

In 2025, Japan marked the 90th anniversary of the establishment of its diplomatic relations with five Central American countries (Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica). Taking this as an opportunity, Japan also launched the "Japan-SICA Friendship Year 2025" with all eight SICA member countries — adding Panama, the Dominican Republic, and Belize — and deepened exchanges with the Central American region across a wide range of fields. (See the Column on page 132)

(4) Pacific Alliance

The Pacific Alliance aims to promote free mobility of goods, services, and more within the region and to build a foundation for expansion into the Asia-Pacific region. It is composed of Chile, Colombia, Mexico, and Peru, with Singapore as an Associated State. Japan is an Observer State and places importance on cooperation with the group as it shares common values and principles. In December, under the "Juntos!! Japan-Latin America and the Caribbean exchange program," government officials from Pacific Alliance member countries were invited to Japan, where they paid a courtesy call on State Minister for Foreign Affairs HORII Iwao, among other activities.

3 LAC Countries

(1) Mexico

The administration of President Claudia Sheinbaum Pardo, which was inaugurated in October 2024, placed importance on domestic affairs such as combating corruption, correcting disparities, and improving security, continuing the approach of the previous administration. In June, judicial elections were held for all nine positions on the Supreme Court of Justice, among others.

In regard to relations with Japan, in August, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs ERI Arfiya visited Mexico, served as the Japanese co-chair of the 14th meeting of the Committee for the Improvement of the Business Environment, and held meetings with Undersecretary of Foreign Affairs María Teresa Mercado among others. In September, Foreign Minister Iwaya, who was visiting New York to attend the United Nations (UN) General Assembly, held a meeting with Secretary for Foreign Affairs Juan Ramon de la Fuente.

Regarding economic relations, Japanese companies have continued to expand into Mexico in the context of nearshoring (establishing supply sources close to consumer markets), reaching about 1,600 companies,

(4) CARICOM: Caribbean Community (Member States and Territory: Antigua and Barbuda, Guyana, Grenada, Jamaica, Suriname, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saint Lucia, Dominica, Trinidad and Tobago, Haiti, The Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Montserrat (British Overseas Territory))

(5) The three pillars of Japan's CARICOM policy: "Cooperation toward sustainable development, including overcoming vulnerabilities specific to small island states," "Expansion and deepening of exchanges and bonds of friendship," and "Cooperation in addressing challenges in the international arena"

the highest number in the LAC region. During her August visit to Mexico, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs Eri confirmed with Undersecretary for Foreign Trade Luis Rosendo Gutiérrez Romano the importance of regularly convening the Committee for the Improvement of the Business Environment, as well as their intention to cooperate toward further strengthening economic relations between Japan and Mexico.

With respect to relations with third countries, Mexico has traditionally placed importance on its relations with the United States (U.S.) and maintained a policy of coordination with LAC countries. Multiple summit telephone calls were held between Mexico and the U.S. In April, President Sheinbaum attended the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) Summit. President Sheinbaum was also invited to the G7 Kananaskis Summit in June, where she held summit meetings with Canada, the EU, India, and Germany. In August, she held a summit meeting with President Arévalo in Guatemala, and the two leaders concurred on cooperating in areas such as infrastructure development along the shared border.

(2) El Salvador

Against the backdrop of significant improvements in public security and other achievements, President Nayib Armando Bukele Ortez, who was re-elected with strong public support in 2024, has been focusing on economic measures, including the promotion of investment from Japan and other countries, as well as human resource development.

In regard to relations with Japan, as the year marked the 90th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations, various commemorative events were held in both countries. In Japan, exhibitions of works by Salvadoran artists and students commemorating the friendship between the two countries were held, among other activities. In San Salvador, the capital of El Salvador, projection mapping was carried out as part of the Japan Fest. These activities served to deepen exchanges between the two countries.

(3) Cuba

Cuba is facing an extremely severe economic situation, particularly in its key industry of tourism, and the lives of the Cuban people have become increasingly difficult due to large-scale power outages, water shortages, natural disasters, and other hardships.

In regard to relations with Japan, in May, the 17th Japan-Cuba Policy Dialogue was held in Havana, during which both countries confirmed the long-standing friendship between the two nations and exchanged views on cooperation in the international arena, among other topics. In July, Vice Prime Minister Eduardo Martinez visited Japan to participate in Cuba's National Day ceremony at Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, and the fourth Japan-Cuba Joint Public-Private Committee Meeting was held in Tokyo in the presence of the Vice Prime Minister.

(4) Guatemala

Guatemala has the largest population and economy in Central America. The administration of President César Bernardo Arévalo de León, which was inaugurated in 2024, worked on fighting corruption, poverty reduction, and correcting disparities.

In regard to relations with Japan, as the year marked the 90th anniversary of the establishment of their diplomatic relations, bilateral activities commenced with the holding of the first Japan-Guatemala Policy Consultation in January. In June, on the occasion of Guatemala's National Day ceremony at Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, President Arévalo de León and Minister of Foreign Affairs Carlos Ramiro Martínez visited Japan and held meetings with Prime Minister Ishiba and Foreign Minister Iwaya, respectively. At the summit meeting, the two leaders concurred on positioning Japan-Guatemala relations under a new "Strategic Partnership," and signed a Japan-Guatemala Joint Statement.

(5) Costa Rica

Under the administration of President Rodrigo Chaves, which was inaugurated in 2022, Costa Rica has maintained stable economic growth, with the export of medical devices experiencing rapid growth in recent years against the backdrop of the country's preeminent social welfare system and high level of education in Central America. In addition, in 2025, Costa Rica served as Chair of the OECD Ministerial Council Meeting.

In regard to relations with Japan, as the year marked the 90th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Worship Arnoldo André and Minister of


Japan-Costa Rica Foreign Ministers' Meeting (September 26, New York, U.S.)


Minister of the Presidency of the Dominican Republic Paliza pays a courtesy call on Chief Cabinet Secretary Hayashi (August 20, Tokyo)

Foreign Trade Manuel Tovar visited Japan in April, held a foreign ministers' meeting with Foreign Minister Iwaya, and signed a memorandum of understanding on the establishment of the Japan-Costa Rica Policy Consultation. In addition, a Japan-Costa Rica Foreign Ministers' Meeting was held on the occasion of the UN General Assembly High-Level Week in September.

(6) Dominican Republic

Under the second-term administration of President Luis Rodolfo Abinader Corona, which was inaugurated in 2024, the Dominican Republic demonstrated strong economic growth centered on its key industry of tourism. Meanwhile, the issue of illegal immigration from neighboring Haiti remains a major concern, and the government has called for engagement from the international community while strengthening domestic countermeasures.

In regard to relations with Japan, following a nightclub ceiling collapse incident in Santo Domingo in April, Foreign Minister Iwaya sent a message of condolence to Foreign Minister Roberto Álvarez. In addition, on the occasion of the Dominican Republic's National Day ceremony at Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai in August, Minister of the Presidency José Ignacio Paliza visited Japan and paid a courtesy call on Chief Cabinet Secretary HAYASHI Yoshimasa. An investment promotion seminar for Japanese companies was also held in Tokyo, among other activities.

(7) Nicaragua

A constitutional amendment in February introduced a co-presidency system, creating a two-person leadership structure of Co- President Daniel Ortega and Co-President Rosario Murillo Zambrana. Along with the introduction of the co-presidency system, the presidential term, which had previously been five years, was extended to six years.

In regard to relations with Japan, when a delegation led by the mayor of Kanra Town, Gunma Prefecture — which had served as a Host Town during the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games — visited Nicaragua in November, sports exchanges through karate and exchanges with local government bodies were conducted with the cooperation of the Embassy of Japan in Nicaragua.

(8) Haiti

In Haiti, since the assassination of the president in 2021, administrative and legislative functions have not been sufficiently operational, and armed groups (gangs) have expanded their influence, particularly in the capital region, causing security to deteriorate to an extreme degree. In response, in June 2024, at the request of the Government of Haiti, a Multinational Security Support (MSS) mission began operations based on a United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolution.


Japan-Haiti Summit Meeting (October 9, Tokyo; Photo: Official Website of the Prime Minister's Office of Japan)

Furthermore, in September 2025, the UNSC approved the transition of the mission to a Gang Suppression Force (GSF). Japan has also been providing assistance focused on the areas of security, governance, and humanitarian affairs with a view to stabilizing Haiti.

In October 2025, on the occasion of Haiti's National Day ceremony at Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, President of the Transitional Presidential Council (TPC) Anthony Franck Laurent Saint-Cyr visited Japan and held a summit meeting with Prime Minister Ishiba. At that meeting, President of the TPC Saint-Cyr expressed gratitude for Japan's long-standing bilateral assistance and efforts toward the stabilization of Haiti.

(9) Panama

Under the administration of President José Raúl Mulino Quintero, which was inaugurated in 2024, Panama worked on fiscal consolidation, economic revitalization, social security reform, and strengthening measures against irregular migration, among other priorities. On the diplomatic front, Panama engaged in close dialogue with the U.S., including by receiving visits from U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio and U.S. Secretary of War Pete Hegseth, while also working to strengthen relations with the EU and MERCOSUR. In the international arena, Panama has been serving as a non-permanent member of the UNSC since 2025 (term: 2025 to 2026).

In regard to relations with Japan, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs Eri visited Panama in July and paid a courtesy call on Foreign Minister Javier Martínez-Acha, among other activities. In September, President Mulino, Foreign Minister Martínez-Acha, and others visited Japan on the occasion of Panama's National Day ceremony at Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, and held meetings with Prime Minister Ishiba and Foreign Minister Iwaya, respectively, at which both countries concurred on further strengthening bilateral relations across a wide range of fields.

(10) Belize

The second-term administration of President John Antonio Briceño, which entered office following its victory in the general election held in March, has been working on raising the minimum wage, crime prevention, and improving access to education.

In regard to relations with Japan, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs Eri visited Belize in May and paid courtesy calls on Prime Minister Briceño and Foreign Minister Francis Fonseca. In August, Prime Minister Briceño visited Japan on the occasion of Belize's National Day ceremony at Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, and held a summit meeting with Prime Minister Ishiba, at which the two leaders concurred on developing bilateral relations across a wide range of fields, including economic cooperation and people-to-people exchanges.

(11) Honduras

President Iris Xiomara Castro Sarmiento, who took office in 2022 as the country's first female president, actively worked on healthcare, education, and infrastructure development. In the presidential election held in November, Nasry Asfura, the candidate of the National Party, won the election with the support of the public, having campaigned on pledges including regional development.

In regard to relations with Japan, as the year marked the 90th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations, Foreign Minister Eduardo Enrique Reina García visited Japan in April, and Foreign Minister Javier Efraín Bú Soto visited Japan in October to attend Honduras's National Day ceremony event at Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai. Each held a foreign ministers' meeting with Foreign Minister Iwaya and concurred on further strengthening of bilateral relations.



Japan-Honduras Foreign Ministers' Meeting (October 8, Tokyo)

(12) Argentina

President Javier Milei, who took office in December 2023, worked on fiscal austerity and deregulation with a view to economic and fiscal reform, which he

prioritizes as his top domestic policy issue. In the mid-term elections in October, the ruling party significantly increased its number of seats. However, difficulties in parliamentary management as a minority government have continued, and reducing the poverty rate, continuing deregulation, and achieving economic growth that the public can feel have been cited as ongoing challenges.

In regard to relations with Japan, when Vice Minister of Economy (Industry and Trade) Esteban Marzorati visited Japan in May, he paid a courtesy call on Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs Eri, and as important "strategic partners" sharing values and principles, the two concurred on strengthening bilateral relations, including through the Nikkei community and other channels, as well as on the strengthening of relations with MERCOSUR.

(13) Uruguay

The center-left administration of President Yamandú Orsi, which was inaugurated in March, has been focusing on improving public security — which had been cited as a challenge of the previous administration — and has maintained a relatively high approval rating. Uruguay ranks first in the LAC region in the Democracy Index.(6) In economic policy, the administration adheres to free trade principles and places importance on market expansion and liberalization. At the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) Commission meeting in November, it was decided that Uruguay's accession process to the CPTPP would commence.

In regard to relations with Japan, MATSUSHIMA Midori, a member of the House of Representatives, attended President Orsi's inauguration ceremony as Special Envoy, conveyed Japan's congratulations to the President, and at their meeting both sides concurred on further strengthening favorable bilateral relations. In October, Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs Valeria Csukasi visited Japan, and the fourth Japan-Uruguay Policy Consultation and the second Japan-Uruguay Joint Committee were held, during which discussions were conducted across a wide range of fields.

(14) Ecuador

In April, a presidential election runoff was held upon the expiration of the term inherited from former President Guillermo Lasso, and President Daniel Noboa Azín won by a large margin and was re-elected. Pledging a pro-U.S. stance, a liberal economic policy, and trade diversification, he has been pursuing fiscal austerity in cooperation with international organizations and others.

In regard to relations with Japan, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs Eri attended President Noboa's inauguration ceremony in May as Special Envoy and paid courtesy calls on President Noboa and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Human Mobility Gabriela Sommerfeld, among other activities. In July, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Human Mobility Sommerfeld visited Japan as a guest of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, held a foreign ministers' meeting with Foreign Minister Iwaya, and both sides confirmed their intention to further strengthen bilateral relations. In August, President Noboa visited Japan, held a summit meeting with Prime Minister Ishiba,



Japan-Ecuador Summit Meeting (August 28, Tokyo; Photo: Official Website of the Prime Minister's Office of Japan)



Japan-Ecuador Foreign Ministers' Meeting (July 23, Tokyo)

(6) Source: Economist Intelligence Unit's Democracy Index 2024

and confirmed the strengthening of bilateral cooperation across a wide range of fields.

(15) Colombia

The administration of President Gustavo Francisco Petro Urrego, which was inaugurated in August 2022, bills itself as Colombia's first left-wing government, a "government of change," but the administration's cohesion has weakened due to repeated cabinet reshuffles and other factors, and difficult parliamentary management has continued due to conflicts within the ruling coalition. In addition, while the administration has been continuing peace negotiations with armed groups in the country, including the National Liberation Army (ELN), no path toward comprehensive peace has been established.

In regard to relations with Japan, in January, Senator MATSUYAMA Masaji visited Colombia as Special Envoy of the Prime Minister, held a meeting with President Petro, delivered a personal letter from the Prime Minister, and confirmed the further strengthening of bilateral relations. Taking the opportunity of Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Foreign Minister Laura Camila Sarabia Torres visited Japan in April and held a foreign ministers' meeting with Foreign Minister Iwaya, during which views were exchanged on cooperation across a wide range of fields. In September, President Petro visited Japan, held a summit meeting with Prime Minister Ishiba, and confirmed the strengthening of bilateral cooperation in areas including the economy, next-generation energy, the Colombia peace process, and cooperation in the international arena.



Japan-Colombia Summit Meeting (September 4, Tokyo; Photo: Official Website of the Prime Minister's Office of Japan)



Japan-Chile Summit Meeting (May 11, Tokyo; Photo: Official Website of the Prime Minister's Office of Japan)

(16) Chile

The administration of President Gabriel Boric, which was inaugurated in March 2022, aims to reduce disparities and improve welfare, and is touting promotion of reform of social security policies, including pensions and the tax system. In December, a presidential election runoff was held upon the expiration of President Gabriel Boric Font's term. The election campaign focused on public security and immigration issues, and José Antonio Kast Rist, the candidate of the opposition Republican Party, who ran on a platform of hardline policies including the deportation of undocumented migrants and the construction of large-scale prisons, defeated Jeannette Jara, the ruling coalition's unified candidate (Communist Party), and won the election (scheduled to take office in March 2026).

In regard to relations with Japan, in May, President Boric visited Japan and held a summit meeting with Prime Minister Ishiba. The two leaders concurred on strengthening cooperation across a wide range of fields between the two countries, which are strategic partners sharing values, including in areas such as the economy, mining, disaster risk reduction, and space and astronomy. In addition, a foreign ministers' meeting was held between Foreign Minister Alberto Leo van Klaveren Strok, who visited Japan accompanying the President, and Foreign Minister Iwaya, and both parties concurred on further strengthening bilateral cooperation across a wide range of fields going forward.

(17) Paraguay

President Santiago Peña Palacios, who took office in August 2023, continues to uphold values and principles such as the rule of law and respect for human



Japan-Paraguay Summit Meeting (May 21, Tokyo; Photo: Official Website of the Prime Minister's Office of Japan)



Prime Minister Ishiba welcomes President Lula of Brazil (March 26, Tokyo; Photo: Official Website of the Prime Minister's Office of Japan)

rights. He promotes a free and open economic policy, focusing on attracting investment and job creation.

In regard to relations with Japan, in May, President Peña visited Japan and held a summit meeting with Prime Minister Ishiba. The two leaders witnessed the signing and exchange ceremonies for documents relating to the establishment of the Japan-Paraguay Policy Consultation and the short-stay visa exemption measure for holders of ordinary Paraguayan passports, positioned bilateral relations as a "strategic partnership," and announced that an agreement in principle had been reached on the Japan-Paraguay Investment Agreement. In addition, a foreign ministers' meeting was held between Foreign Minister Rubén Darío Ramírez Lezcano, who visited Japan accompanying the President, and Foreign Minister Iwaya, and both parties concurred on further strengthening bilateral relations.

(18) Brazil

The administration of President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva has been working on strengthening social security and tax reform while actively pursuing its foreign policy agenda. In addition, positioning environmental and climate change countermeasures as an important policy issue, it hosted the 30th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) (COP30) in Belém in November.

In regard to relations with Japan, as the year marked the 130th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Japan and Brazil and was designated as the "Japan-Brazil Friendship and Exchange Year," President Lula visited Japan in March as the first State Guest in the post-COVID-19 era. President Lula held a summit meeting with Prime Minister Ishiba, and the two leaders announced the "Strategic and Global Partnership Action Plan Japan-Brazil (2025-2030)," which sets out the actions the two countries will undertake over the next five years.

In addition, in terms of economic relations, dialogue aimed at strengthening economic ties has been active in both the public and private sectors, including the holding of the 13th Wise Group Meeting for Strategic Economic Partnership between Japan and Brazil in April and the 26th Japan-Brazil Business Council Plenary Meeting in September.

(19) Venezuela

In the presidential election held in July 2024, incumbent President Nicolas Maduro declared victory. However, the transparency of the electoral process, including the vote count, was questioned both domestically and internationally.

In January 2025, in response to the Venezuelan government proceeding with the presidential inauguration ceremony and President Maduro taking the oath of office without having fulfilled adequate accountability, Japan issued a Statement by the Press Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, strongly calling for the early and peaceful restoration of democracy in Venezuela through the broad participation of all relevant parties, and the resolution of the various issues involved. At the same time, Japan expressed concern that the deterioration of the current economic and social situation in Venezuela is having a serious impact on Venezuelan citizens who are in particularly vulnerable circumstances, and that the situation — including the outflow of displaced persons — is having a regional impact encompassing neighboring countries. Based on

the concept of human security,[7] Japan continues to provide assistance to Venezuelan citizens, including displaced persons, as well as to neighboring countries affected by the situation.

In January 2026, President Maduro and his spouse were detained through a U.S. military operation, and in the same month, Vice President Delcy Rodríguez assumed the role of Acting President. While the U.S. has indicated its intention to advance the democratization of Venezuela in three phases — "stabilization of the country," including management of oil revenues, "recovery," including equitable market access and the initiation of a reconciliation process, and "government transition" — the Rodríguez interim administration has indicated its willingness to cooperate with the U.S.

(20) Peru

In October, criticism of the administration's security measures and other policies intensified against the backdrop of a deteriorating security situation, and President Boluarte was impeached by Peru's Congress. President José Enrique Jerí Oré, who newly assumed office in accordance with constitutional provisions, has described his administration as a transitional and national reconciliation government, and has declared combating criminal organizations, revitalizing the economy, and holding free, fair, and transparent general elections as priority areas.

In regard to relations with Japan, in February, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs Eri visited Peru for purposes including follow-up to Prime Minister Ishiba's visit to Peru in November of the previous year, and held a meeting with Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs Peter Camino, among other activities. In August, President Boluarte visited Japan to attend the Peru National Day ceremony at Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, held a summit meeting with Prime Minister Ishiba, and the two leaders concurred on further deepening cooperation across a wide range of fields based on the roadmap for strengthening the bilateral strategic partnership. In addition, Foreign Minister Elmer Schialer, who visited Japan accompanying the President, held a foreign ministers' meeting with Foreign Minister Iwaya, and both foreign ministers confirmed their intention to continue promoting further cooperation going forward.



Japan-Peru Foreign Ministers' Meeting (August 8, Tokyo)

(21) Bolivia

In August, the first round of the presidential election was held, and in October, a runoff election was held in which candidate Rodrigo Paz Pereira of the Christian Democratic Party (PDC), described as centrist and center-right, won, bringing an end to a left-wing government that had continued for approximately 20 years. Immediately after his inauguration ceremony, President Paz announced the full restoration of diplomatic relations with the U.S. and emphasized an open-to-the-world foreign policy orientation.

The Government of Japan provided emergency relief supplies in response to flood damage caused by heavy rainfall occurring between March and April, in view of humanitarian considerations and the friendly relations between Japan and Bolivia. In April, Vice President David Choquehuanca Cespedes visited Japan to attend Bolivia's National Day ceremony at Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, and held a meeting with Chief Cabinet Secretary Hayashi and a meeting with the Japan-Bolivia Friendship Parliamentary League, among other activities. At the Bolivian presidential inauguration ceremony held in November, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Horii attended as Special Envoy, conveyed Japan's congratulations directly to President Paz, and the two concurred on working closely together to further advance bilateral relations.

(7) Human security is a concept that pursues freedom from fear and want, and the right of individuals to live happily and in dignity through their protection and empowerment.

Column

Japan-SICA Friendship Year 2025
— Partners Across the Pacific Ocean —

History between Japan and Central America

Japan has long fostered friendly and cooperative relations with the countries of the Central American region — which bridges North and South America, as well as the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans — across a broad range of fields, including politics, the economy, development cooperation, and culture. In 2025, Japan and the five Central American countries — El Salvador, Guatemala, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, and Honduras — marked the 90th anniversary of the establishment of their diplomatic relations in 1935. Japan and the member countries of the Central American Integration System (SICA),[1] comprising a total of eight countries including the aforementioned five along with the Dominican Republic, Panama, and Belize, designated this milestone year "Japan-SICA Friendship Year 2025," and deepened their friendly and cooperative relations through a variety of projects and activities.

Conducting "Expo Diplomacy" on the Occasion of the "Friendship Year"

Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan served as an excellent opportunity to deepen relations between Japan and Central American countries. Guatemala, Belize, the Dominican Republic, Panama, Honduras, and others participated in Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan, introducing their rich natural environments and diverse cultures and histories. Moreover, on the occasion of their respective National Days at the Expo and other opportunities, President César Bernardo Arévalo de León of Guatemala, President José Raúl Mulino Quintero of Panama, and Prime Minister John Antonio Briceño of Belize visited Japan, and ministers from Honduras, Costa Rica, and the Dominican Republic also visited Japan, deepening their respective countries' relations with Japan. The "Expo Diplomacy" carried out during the "Friendship Year" also played a significant role in promoting friendly relations between Japan and the Central American countries.



Japan-Guatemala Summit Meeting (June 10)



Japan-Belize Summit Meeting (August 4)



Japan-Panama Summit Meeting (September 5)

(All held in Tokyo; Photo: Official Website of the Prime Minister's Office of Japan)

Promotion of Policy Dialogue and Mutual Understanding

In addition to high-level dialogue through the exchange of dignitaries, policy dialogue also progressed. In May, Japan and SICA member countries held the 19th Japan-SICA Forum for "Dialogue and Cooperation" in San José, Costa Rica. At the forum, high appreciation and gratitude were expressed for Japan's support to date, and wide-ranging exchanges of views took place, including on shared perceptions of the international situation and cooperation on various challenges facing the international community.

Moreover, numerous commemorative events were held throughout the year, as part of the Friendship Year, promoting mutual understanding. In Central American countries, a wide range of public diplomacy and cultural projects were implemented, including concerts by Japanese artists, Japanese cultural festivals, *Awa Odori* dance performances, film screenings, and cultural lectures, as well as martial arts and sports exchange programs, port calls by the Japan Self-Defense Forces' training vessel squadron, and peace memorial events to learn about the experiences of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. In Japan as well, projects promoting friendly relations with Central American countries were carried out, such as a project highlighting connections with these countries through coffee.



Commemorative Concert "J-Pop *acústico* by Shihori" at the National Theatre of Costa Rica (February 21, San José, Costa Rica; Photo: National Theatre of Costa Rica)

1 SICA: *Sistema de la Integración Centroamericana*

Column

Japan-Brazil Friendship Exchange Year (the 130th Anniversary of the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between Japan and Brazil)



On November 5, 1895, Japan and Brazil concluded the Treaty of Friendship, Commerce and Navigation, thereby establishing diplomatic relations between the two countries. In 1908, Japanese emigration to Brazil began, and thereafter, Japanese immigrants and their descendants (Nikkei) formed the world's largest Nikkei community in Brazil. Today, approximately 2.7 million Japanese-Brazilians live in Brazil and 210,000 Brazilians reside in Japan. This special people-to-people exchange has served to solidify the bond between the two countries. Furthermore, since 2014, the two countries have been deepening their bilateral relations as Strategic and Global Partners, sharing values and principles such as freedom, democracy, and the rule of law. This partnership extends not only to politics, economy, and people-to-people exchange, but across a wide range of areas including public security, disaster risk reduction, criminal justice, the environment, and education.

The year 2025 marked the 130th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Japan and Brazil, which share deep historical ties. Designating the year as the "Japan-Brazil Friendship Exchange Year," the two countries concurred on promoting cooperation in various fields, including cultural, tourism, and sports exchanges, as well as support for Japanese language education as a foundation for such exchanges. In this milestone year, Japan welcomed President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva of Brazil as a State Guest in March. In addition, Her Imperial Highness Princess Kako of Akishino visited Brazil in June and interacted with locals across eight cities (São Paulo, Maringá, Rolândia, Londrina, Campo Grande, Brasília, Rio de Janeiro, and Foz do Iguaçu) over 11 days.



Her Imperial Highness Princess Kako of Akishino's visit to Brazil (June 9, Londrina, Brazil)

In addition, in commemoration of the "Japan-Brazil Friendship Exchange Year," more than 200 events were held in Japan and over 550 events were held in Brazil. In Japan, the Asakusa Samba Carnival Parade Contest, marking its 40th edition in 2025, was held as part of these commemorative events and drew approximately 470,000 participants. In Brazil, singer AIKAWA Nanase, appointed as "Goodwill Ambassador for the Japan-Brazil Friendship Exchange Year," participated in the 21st Londrina Festival and delivered a live performance that electrified the audience. Her song is used for "Matsuri Dance" (an original dance performed with J-POP hits and Japanese traditional drums) and is widely popular in Brazil.

The friendship cultivated through the "Japan-Brazil Friendship Exchange Year" is further solidifying the relationship of trust built over 130 years between the governments and peoples of the two countries, bridging geographical distance. It is expected that bilateral relations will continue to develop even further, with this relationship of trust as their foundation.



Appointment of AIKAWA Nanase as "Goodwill Ambassador for the Japan-Brazil Friendship Exchange Year" (May 26, Tokyo)



Diplomats from both countries participating in the 40th Asakusa Samba Carnival Parade Contest (August 30, Asakusa, Tokyo)

Section 5 Europe

1 Overview

<The Importance of Cooperation with Europe, Which Shares Values and Principles>

European countries, the European Union (EU), and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) are important partners for Japan, sharing values and principles such as freedom, democracy, the rule of law, and human rights. As Russia's aggression against Ukraine has continued for more than four years, threatening the existing international order and intensifying geopolitical competition, it is becoming increasingly clear that the security of the Euro-Atlantic and the Indo-Pacific is inseparable. In such circumstances, in order to respond to the challenges to the values and principles shared by Japan and Europe, and to uphold the free and open international order based on the rule of law, it is becoming ever more important to strengthen cooperation with European countries, the EU, and NATO. In addition, as the international coordination in addressing global issues such as climate change is required, the need for cooperation with the EU and European countries has become even greater.

European countries pursue common policies across a wide range of fields such as diplomacy and security, economy, and fiscal policy, through various frameworks including the EU. They also play an important role in formulating standards in the international community. The countries also shape international public opinion, drawing on their language, history, cultural and artistic activities, as well as their extensive media and think tank networks. Cooperation with Europe is also important for enhancing Japan's presence and ability to communicate in the international community.

<Russia's Aggression Against Ukraine and Europe>

In response to Russia's aggression against Ukraine, which began in February 2022, Japan has continued its support for Ukraine and sanctions against Russia in coordination with the G7 and the international community in order to achieve a just and lasting peace in Ukraine. Japan has demonstrated solidarity with Ukraine at various levels including the leaders' and ministerial levels, including through the Japan-Ukraine Summit Meeting in June and the hosting of the Ukraine Mine Action Conference in October, and has provided support in close cooperation with Ukraine.

In Europe, Russia's aggression against Ukraine has become one of the most important issues. The EU, NATO, and various countries have been united in strongly condemning Russia. They have imposed severe sanctions against Russia including financial sanctions, travel bans on individuals and entities, and restrictions on imports and exports, and are continuing their solidarity with and support for Ukraine.

For example, the EU has continued to provide economic assistance such as macro financial assistance, defense equipment support through the European Peace Facility,(1) and training of Ukrainian soldiers through the EU Military Assistance Mission in support of Ukraine (EUMAM Ukraine).(2) In June, the EU institutionalized a new financial assistance scheme providing Ukraine with a new loan facility utilizing the proceeds from frozen Russian assets, and at the Ukraine Recovery Conference held in July, announced a new reconstruction support package totaling 2.3

(1) European Peace Facility: System established in March 2021 to enable the EU to finance military or defense activities under the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy and to enhance the EU's capacity for conflict prevention, peacebuilding, and strengthening international security.

(2) EU Military Assistance Mission in support of Ukraine (EUMAM Ukraine): A military mission established by the EU in October 2022 to support Ukraine. It provides training to the Ukrainian military.

billion euros. Furthermore, at the European Council held in December, agreement was reached on providing 90 billion euros in loans, in light of Ukraine's funding needs in the first half of 2026, when liquidity is expected to be particularly tight. NATO has continued to coordinate the provision of training and equipment to Ukrainian military personnel through the NATO Security Assistance and Training for Ukraine (NSATU), and in February established the NATO-Ukraine Joint Analysis, Training and Education Centre (JATEC), promoting the collection and analysis of lessons learned (lessons from combat), the practical implementation of those lessons, and the strengthening of interoperability with NATO. At the NATO Summit in June, the Allies reaffirmed their enduring support for Ukraine, and in July a mechanism was established for the transfer of the United States (U.S.)-made military equipment to Ukraine via NATO. The United Kingdom (UK) and France led the establishment of a coalition of the willing on Ukraine, holding meetings at various levels including at the summit level. In March, the UK transferred the first tranche (752 million pounds) of 2.26 billion pounds in military aid to Ukraine. In December, it announced a contribution of 10 million pounds to the Ukraine Humanitarian Fund. Since the start of the aggression, total support has amounted to 21.8 billion pounds. France announced additional military support of approximately 2 billion euros in March and continues to demonstrate its commitment to providing assistance across all areas — military, humanitarian, and economic — for as long as necessary. On the occasion of President Volodymyr Zelenskyy of Ukraine's visit to France in November, France announced the signing of an agreement concerning Ukraine's purchase of French-made defense equipment. Italy co-hosted the Ukraine Recovery Conference in Rome in July with Ukraine, and Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni emphasized Italy's commitment to continued support, stating that total reconstruction funding commitments at the conference exceeded 10 billion euros.

<Multilayered, Tailored Diplomacy with Europe>

In Europe, the importance of values and principles such as freedom, democracy, the rule of law, and human rights, as well as respect for the rule of law and international law, is being increasingly recognized amidst the response to Russia's aggression against Ukraine. On the other hand, a tailored approach is required that takes into account the diversity of European countries and their respective circumstances. Japan supports a strong and united Europe and conducts multilayered and tailored diplomacy with European countries.

Throughout 2025, Prime Minister Ishiba and Prime Minister Takaichi held meetings with the leaders and officials of Iceland, Ireland, Armenia, Italy, Ukraine, the UK, Austria, the Netherlands, Croatia, Kosovo, Slovakia, Serbia, the Czech Republic, Germany, the Vatican, Hungary, Finland, France, Bulgaria, Portugal, Moldova, Montenegro, Latvia, Lithuania, and Luxembourg, thereby confirming close cooperation with European countries.

In July, Japan held the 30th Japan-EU Summit, during which both sides confirmed that they would deepen cooperation across a wide range of fields, including politics and security, defense, economic security, and strengthening competitiveness.

In April, Prime Minister Ishiba held a meeting with NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte, who visited Japan, and confirmed that Japan-NATO cooperation would be further strengthened. In June, Japan received an invitation to the NATO Summit for the fourth consecutive year, and Foreign Minister Iwaya attended the NATO Summit in The Hague, the Netherlands.

As for legal frameworks in the security field, the Japan-Italy Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (Japan-Italy ACSA) was signed with Italy in November 2024 and entered into force in September 2025. In addition, the Japan-Netherlands Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (Japan-Netherlands ACSA) was signed with the Netherlands in December of the same year.

Furthermore, Japan conducts public diplomacy activities including dispatch of experts, cooperation with European think tanks, and Japan's Friendship Ties Programs "MIRAI" which promote intellectual and people-to-people exchange by inviting young people from Europe to Japan. These activities are aimed to promote a better understanding of Japan and Asia and mutual understanding. Japan is also sharing information and exchanging views with European countries, organizations, and experts in a wide range of fields, including politics, security, economics, and business.

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 450 million. It is a strategic partner of Japan that works together to uphold and strengthen the free and open international order based on the rule of law, and to address the common challenges of the international community.

<Recent Developments of the EU>

Under the new leadership launched in December 2024, in 2025 the EU tackled the strengthening of European defense as its top priority. In March, the President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen announced the ReArm Europe Plan, which rests on three pillars: (1) an increase in defense spending through the relaxation of debt limits; (2) the Security Action for Europe (SAFE) instrument, which provides loans of approximately 150 billion euros to member states; and (3) the mobilization of private capital. Also in March, the EU published the White Paper for European Defence presenting solutions to build a strong defense industrial base, and stated that opportunities should be explored for defense industry cooperation with Indo-Pacific partners, including Japan. The situation in Ukraine remained one of the EU's top priorities; however, at the European Council meetings (EU Summit Meetings) in March and June, Hungary opposed the conclusions document on the situation in Ukraine, and the leaders of the 26 member states excluding Hungary published a document they supported, reflecting differences in positions among member states. The EU has provided humanitarian, financial, and military assistance to Ukraine totaling 177.5 billion euros (as of October 1, 2025). In 2025, under its new leadership, the EU held summit meetings with non-member states in quick succession; notably in May, it held the first-ever EU-UK Summit since the UK's withdrawal from the EU in 2020, confirming that both sides would work together to strengthen European security and defense.

<Japan-EU Relations>

Japan and the EU are strengthening cooperation under the Japan-EU Economic Partnership Agreement (Japan-EU EPA), which entered into force in 2019, and the Japan-EU Strategic Partnership Agreement (Japan-EU SPA), which formally entered into force in January 2025.

In July, Prime Minister Ishiba held the 30th Japan-EU Summit with the President of the European Council Costa and the President of the European Commission von der Leyen, who visited Japan. Japan and the EU concurred to steadily implement cooperation in the fields of cyber, defense industry, maritime security, space, and information, based on the Japan-EU Security and Defence Partnership announced in November 2024. Both sides also concurred to promote concrete cooperation across a wide range of fields including the launch of the "Japan-EU Competitiveness Alliance," economic security, industrial policy, innovation policy, and energy.

In April, the 2nd Japan-EU Foreign Ministerial Strategic Dialogue was held, during which Foreign Minister Iwaya and EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Kaja Kallas reaffirmed their shared recognition that the security of the Euro-Atlantic and the Indo-Pacific is inseparable. Foreign Minister Iwaya also stated that Japan highly commended the fact that the White Paper for European Defence explicitly referenced the strengthening of security and defense cooperation with Indo-Pacific partners, including Japan. Foreign Minister Iwaya held meetings with High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Kallas on the occasion of the Munich Security Conference and also on the occasion of the 30th Japan-EU Summit.

In November, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs ERI Arfiya attended the "4th EU Indo-Pacific Ministerial Forum" held in Brussels and stressed the importance of upholding and strengthening the free and open international order based on the rule of law, in the context that the security of the Euro-Atlantic and the Indo-Pacific is inseparable.

The EU is also an important economic partner of Japan. With an economic scale second only to that of the U.S., the EU ranks third among Japan's import partners, third among its export partners, and



30th Japan-EU Summit (July 23, Tokyo; Photo: Official Website of the Prime Minister's Office of Japan)



2nd Japan-EU Foreign Ministerial Strategic Dialogue (April 4, Brussels, Belgium)

first in terms of the balance of direct investment in Japan. Under the massive economic zone accounting for approximately 20% of global GDP that was created when the Japan-EU EPA entered into force in 2019, the ties between Japan and the EU have further strengthened. With regard to the Japan-EU EPA, six years have now passed since the agreement entered into force; in order to further develop Japan-EU trade, which has been on an upward trend, both sides have ensured the steady implementation and operation of the agreement across its various fields through specialized committees and working groups on trade in goods, technical barriers to trade, trade in services, investment, and electronic commerce, government procurement, trade and sustainable development, regulatory cooperation, and other areas. As another initiative to promote a broader strategic partnership with the EU, in May, Foreign Minister Iwaya, together with Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry MUTO Yoji and EU Commissioner for Trade and Economic Security, and Interinstitutional Relations and Transparency Maroš Šefčovič, held the 6th Japan-EU High-Level Economic



6th Japan-EU High-Level Economic Dialogue (May 8, Tokyo)

Dialogue, at which they confirmed the importance of cooperation in the field of economic security, cooperation for the resilience of supply chains, and Japan-EU cooperation in maintaining the rules-based multilateral free trade system centered on the World Trade Organization (WTO). Japan will continue to promote efforts toward the further development of Japan-EU economic relations, including the steady implementation of the joint statement and related documents of the Japan-EU Summit, the continued utilization of the Japan-EU EPA, and cooperation in the Japan-EU High-Level Economic Dialogue.

(2) United Kingdom

In May, local elections were held in England, in which Reform UK, the right-wing populist party led by leader Nigel Farage, won a significantly larger number of seats than the Conservative Party or the Labour Party. In June, the Starmer administration successively announced a National Security Strategy, an Industrial Strategy, and a Trade Strategy. The National Security Strategy announced a "NATO First" policy while designating the Indo-Pacific as the priority region following Europe and the Atlantic, and positioned Japan as a vitally important partner for security in the Indo-Pacific region and the world. In September, a cabinet reshuffle was carried out following the resignation of Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government Angela Rayner, who had been criticized for underpayment of stamp duty on a property purchase. Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs David Lammy was appointed as Deputy Prime Minister and Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice, and Yvette Cooper



Japan-UK Summit Meeting (January 31, 2026, Tokyo; Photo: Official Website of the Prime Minister's Office of Japan)

(former Secretary of State for the Home Department) was newly appointed as Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs.

There was an active dialogue between the governments of Japan and the UK at various levels, including the summit and foreign minister levels. Prime Minister Ishiba held a telephone meeting with Prime Minister Keir Starmer in April, and discussed a wide range of issues in broad and detailed terms, primarily in the economic field, taking into account the impact of U.S. tariff measures. Prime Minister Takaichi held a meeting with Prime Minister Starmer on the occasion of the G20 Johannesburg Summit in November.

In January 2026, Prime Minister Starmer visited Japan for the first time and held a meeting with Prime Minister Takaichi. The two leaders concurred that they would further strengthen cooperation in all fields as "Enhanced Global Strategic Partners," and issued a joint statement on the "Japan-UK Strategic Cyber Partnership."

In March, Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs Lammy and Secretary of State for Business and Trade Jonathan Reynolds visited Japan, and together with Foreign Minister Iwaya and Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry Muto, they held the first-ever Japan-UK Economic 2+2 Ministers' Meeting ("Economic 2+2"). Foreign Minister Iwaya held meetings with Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs Lammy on the occasion of Secretary Lammy's visit to Japan in March and during the G7 Foreign Ministers' Meeting in the same month. In addition, Foreign Minister Iwaya held a telephone meeting with Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs Cooper in September. Foreign Minister Motegi held a meeting with Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs Cooper on the occasion of the G7 Foreign Ministers' Meeting in November.

In the field of security, in June, Edgewing, a joint venture responsible for the airframe design and development of the Global Combat Air Programme (GCAP), a program being jointly developed by Japan, the UK, and Italy, was established in the UK. From August to September, the UK Carrier Strike Group (CSG25) led by the aircraft carrier *HMS Prince of Wales* called at Yokosuka and Tokyo, and numerous events including the Pacific Future Forum (PFF) were held aboard the vessels.

In the cultural field, on the occasion of the UK National Day at Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai in May, Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport Lisa Nandy visited Japan and the launch of the "Musubi" Initiative — a new UK initiative for promoting people-to-people exchanges between Japan and the UK — was announced. This initiative is expected to foster the next generation of leaders in Japan and the UK through scholarship support, sports and cultural exchanges, and the promotion of women's advancement in business. Foreign Minister Iwaya also released a video message welcoming the initiative.

(3) France

In December 2024, President Emmanuel Macron appointed François Bayrou, a partner in the governing coalition, as Prime Minister following the resignation of the Barnier Cabinet after a motion of no confidence was passed. Prime Minister Bayrou attempted major spending cuts and other measures, but was unable to obtain support in parliament, and on September 8, a vote of confidence in the cabinet was rejected in the French National Assembly. Consequently, Prime Minister Bayrou submitted his resignation, and the Bayrou Cabinet resigned en masse. On the following day, September 9, President Macron appointed Minister for the Armed Forces Sébastien Lecornu as the new Prime Minister, and on October 5, the Lecornu Cabinet was inaugurated. However, criticism of the cabinet appointments came from opposition parties and others, and with insufficient support,

Prime Minister Lecornu submitted his resignation to President Macron on the following day, October 6. Subsequently, President Macron reappointed Lecornu as Prime Minister on October 10, and following consultations with the governing and opposition parties, the Second Lecornu Cabinet was inaugurated on October 14. Although a motion of no confidence was submitted by opposition parties, Prime Minister Lecornu announced, among other measures, a temporary suspension of pension reform, and the motion of no confidence was rejected.

With respect to foreign affairs, France is committed to continuing support for Ukraine and strengthening sanctions against Russia in response to its aggression against Ukraine. President Macron is playing a leading role in mobilizing international support for Ukraine. In February, an emergency European summit on the security of Ukraine and Europe was held. In March, a summit on peace and security for Ukraine was also held in Paris, and France is holding meetings with the UK and others in what are known as the "Coalition of the Willing." In August, President Macron, together with President Zelenskyy of Ukraine and the leaders of other related European countries, visited Washington, D.C. (U.S.) and discussed the situation surrounding Ukraine with U.S. President Donald J. Trump.

With regard to the situation in the Middle East, France supports a two-state solution as the only resolution that can guarantee lasting peace in the region, including Gaza, and is making concrete contributions. Together with Saudi Arabia, France convened the High-Level International Conference for the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution from July 28 to 30, and issued the "New York Declaration."

With regard to Japan-France relations, Foreign Minister Iwaya and Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs Jean-Noël Barrot held foreign ministers' meetings on the occasion of the G20 Foreign Ministers' Meeting in February and the G7 Foreign Ministers' Meeting in March, respectively. In April, Prime Minister Ishiba held a summit telephone meeting with President Macron, and the two leaders discussed in broad and detailed terms regarding the economic field, including in light of the impact of U.S. tariff measures and China's retaliatory measures against them on the global economy and the multilateral trading system. In May, Foreign Minister Iwaya visited France and held a foreign ministers' meeting with Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs Barrot. At the meeting, the two ministers highly commended Japan-France cooperation in the security field in the Indo-Pacific region and welcomed the progress in cooperation for ensuring stable supply of rare earths and other critical minerals in the field of economic security. They concurred that Japan and France, as "Exceptional Partners" sharing values and principles, would work more closely together. The two ministers further confirmed that both countries would work together on preparations for the upcoming milestones, namely the 30th anniversary of the Maison de la culture du Japon à Paris in 2027, the 170th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Japan and France in 2028, and the 100th anniversary of the Maison du Japon of the Cité internationale universitaire de Paris in 2029. Foreign Minister Iwaya also paid a courtesy call on Prime Minister Bayrou. Foreign Minister Iwaya also held a telephone meeting with Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs Barrot in September. Foreign Minister Motegi held a meeting with Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs Barrot on the occasion of the G7 Foreign Ministers' Meeting in November. Prime Minister Takaichi exchanged views with President Macron on the occasion of the G20 Johannesburg Summit in November.



Japan-France Foreign Ministers' Meeting (November 12, Niagara, Canada)

Furthermore, the France Pavilion at Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai was visited by many people, and numerous government officials, local government representatives, and private sector representatives from France also attended, contributing to the strengthening of bilateral relations.

(4) Germany

In November 2024, the Scholz administration (Social Democratic Party (SPD)) saw the Free Democratic Party (FDP) withdraw from the government that month due to policy conflicts including over fiscal policy, resulting in a two-party minority administration composed of the SPD and the Green Party. In December of the same year, Chancellor Olaf Scholz submitted a motion of confidence in himself to the Bundestag (national parliament), which was rejected, and he proposed to President Frank-Walter Steinmeier that the Bundestag be dissolved to allow for an early federal election. Following consultations with the governing and opposition parties, the President dissolved the Bundestag on December 27, and a federal election was set to be held on February 23, 2025. As a result of the federal election, the opposition Christian Democratic Union of Germany and Christian Social Union in Bavaria (CDU/CSU) returned as the largest party, and following coalition negotiations with the Social Democratic Party (SPD), which fell back to third place, a coalition agreement was reached in April. On May 6, CDU leader Friedrich Merz was elected Chancellor in the Bundestag, and a coalition government of the CDU/CSU and SPD was inaugurated. In the same election, the far-right party Alternative for Germany (AfD), which advocates strict immigration policies and other measures, surged to become the second largest party.

Regarding foreign policy, Chancellor Merz has emphasized his determination to work closely with European countries and play an active role in the EU. With regard to the situation in Ukraine, Chancellor Merz visited Ukraine together with the leaders of the UK, France, and Poland shortly after taking office, and continues to actively promote support for Ukraine, including by providing the surface-to-air missile system "Patriot weapon system." Prior to the inauguration of the government, in March, an amendment to the Basic Law was enacted at the proposal of the CDU/CSU and SPD, making it possible to increase defense expenditure. At the NATO Summit in June, Germany announced its goal of meeting the core defense requirement of 3.5% of GDP by 2029, significantly front-loading the target agreed upon by the participating countries, thereby actively working to strengthen security in response to the current international situation. Germany also attaches importance to relations with like-minded countries including Japan in the Indo-Pacific region; in September, the "Meeting between Europe and Indo-Pacific Partners" was hosted by Foreign Minister Johann Wadephul in New York, U.S., and Foreign Minister Iwaya attended.



Japan-Germany Summit Meeting (November 23, Johannesburg, South Africa; Photo: Official Website of the Prime Minister's Office of Japan)

With regard to Japan-Germany relations, Germany is an important partner that shares common values and principles, and high-level exchanges continue to take place actively after the inauguration of the Merz administration as well. In June, a Japan-Germany Summit Meeting and a Japan-Germany Foreign Ministers' Meeting were held, and President Steinmeier visited Japan on the occasion of Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai and held a meeting with Prime Minister Ishiba. In August, Foreign Minister Wadephul visited Japan and held the 1st Japan-Germany Foreign Ministerial Strategic Dialogue with Foreign Minister Iwaya. In November, Prime Minister Takaichi, who visited South Africa to attend the G20 Johannesburg Summit, held the first-ever Japan-Germany Summit Meeting with Chancellor Merz. In the field of security, in September, Japan Air Self-Defense Force F-15 aircraft and others made their first stopover in Germany, further advancing the existing cooperation that has been promoted through the reciprocal dispatch of both countries' assets and the entry into force of the Japan-Germany Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (Japan-Germany ACSA). In the field of economic security as well, cooperation is deepening, including through the Second Meeting of the Japan-Germany Economic Security Consultations held in Tokyo in October 2025,

established by agreement between the leaders in July 2024. The Japanese-German Center Berlin, which serves as the foundation for Japan-Germany intellectual and people-to-people exchanges, celebrated its 40th anniversary in 2025, and in October, Foreign Minister Wadephul visited the Center and delivered a lecture; in December, a public discussion on Japan-Germany relations was held jointly with the Japanese-German Forum.

(5) Italy

The administration of Prime Minister Meloni has maintained a stable political base as a right-wing government, while continuing a cooperative policy with Europe and the U.S. on the diplomatic and economic fronts. In terms of domestic affairs, illegal immigration countermeasures and responses to the declining birthrate and aging population remain ongoing issues. While working to curb unauthorized immigration, the government also responded to domestic labor shortages by expanding the quota for legal entries from outside the EU.

With Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai also taking place in 2025, many dignitaries from Italy visited Japan, invigorating exchanges between the two countries. President Sergio Mattarella's official visit in March was the first visit to Japan by an Italian head of state in 16 years. At his meeting with Prime Minister Ishiba, the two leaders announced the "Japan-Italy Action Plan Fact Sheet," and confirmed that the two countries would further strengthen bilateral relations across a wide range of fields in anticipation of the 160th anniversary of the establishment of Japan-Italy diplomatic relations in 2026. In May, a summit telephone meeting was held between Prime Minister Ishiba and Prime Minister Meloni, at which the two leaders concurred on deepening cooperation in international fora including the G7 and further developing the favorable Japan-Italy relationship going forward. In November, Prime Minister Takaichi held a summit telephone meeting with Prime Minister Meloni. On the occasion of the 160th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations, in January 2026, Prime Minister Meloni visited Japan as a Working Visit guest. At the summit meeting, Prime Minister Takaichi and Prime Minister Meloni concurred on designating the bilateral relationship as



Japan-Italy Summit Meeting (January 16, 2026, Tokyo; Photo: Official Website of the Prime Minister's Office of Japan)

a "Special Strategic Partnership," aiming to take the relationship to an even higher level in order to further promote relations between the two countries across a wide range of fields.

Foreign Minister Iwaya and Minister of Foreign Affairs Antonio Tajani held a foreign ministers' meeting on the occasion of the G7 Foreign Ministers' Meeting in March, and confirmed that cooperation would be strengthened in a wide range of fields including security and the economy.

In the field of security, from March to April, the Italian Navy frigate ITS *Antonio Marceglia* called at Yokosuka and Osaka. In addition, the Japan-Italy Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (Japan-Italy ACSA), for which negotiations began in June 2024 and which was signed in Rome by Foreign Minister Iwaya and Minister of Defence Guido Crosetto in November of the same year, entered into force in September 2025 following deliberations in the Diet in Japan.

(6) Spain

Under the third Sánchez administration, the economy has performed strongly, recording economic growth that significantly exceeds the EU average (3.5% for Spain in 2024 compared to the EU average of 1.0%), and defense expenditure has been raised to 2% of GDP. Although 56% of Spain's power mix consists of renewable energy, a large-scale blackout that occurred in April brought to light technical challenges accompanying the expansion of renewable energy introduction, such as overvoltage.

With regard to Japan-Spain relations, the two countries are strengthening their cooperation under the Strategic Partnership announced by the leaders of the

two countries in 2018. In May, Minister of Industry and Tourism Jordi Hereu visited Japan to participate in Spain's National Day at Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, and Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food Luis Planas Puchades also visited Japan. In June, a delegation of the Spain-Japan Parliamentary Friendship Group in the Spanish Senate, led by First Vice President of the Senate Javier Maroto Aranzábal, visited Japan and paid courtesy calls on President of the Senate SEKIGUCHI Masakazu and Chief Cabinet Secretary HAYASHI Yoshimasa. In the same month, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs MATSUMOTO Hisashi, who attended on behalf of the Government of Japan the 4th International Conference on Financing for Development (FfD4), an international conference held in Seville to discuss development finance toward achieving the SDGs, held a meeting with State Secretary for Foreign and Global Affairs Diego Martínez Belío of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation. In September, Minister of Economy, Trade and Business Carlos Cuerpo Caballero visited Japan for the second consecutive year following July of the previous year, and held a meeting with Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry Muto, confirming that both sides would continue to cooperate toward strengthening economic relations between the two countries.

In April, the Japan-Spain Business Co-operation Committee was held in Tokyo for the first time in approximately two years, and in October, the 25th Japan-Spain Forum was held in Barcelona, promoting public-private cooperation in both Japan and Spain.

Defense cooperation and exchanges between the two countries are also steadily deepening and expanding. In July, the Spanish Navy frigate *Méndez Núñez*, participating in Operation HIGHMAST conducted by the UK-led Carrier Strike Group (CSG25), called at Yokosuka and Kure. In addition, on the occasion of the 9th Japan-Spain Vice-Minister-level Political Consultations held in Tokyo in November, both sides welcomed the conclusion of an agreement in principle on the Agreement concerning the Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology between Japan and Spain.

(7) Poland

Poland, as Ukraine's neighbor, has actively responded since the start of Russia's aggression against Ukraine, playing a major role as a hub of support to Ukraine. Poland has been accepting many Ukrainian evacuees, and Japan has been providing support to Poland in light of the increasing burden and vulnerability it faces.

With regard to Japan-Poland relations, 2025 saw frequent visits to Japan by Polish dignitaries. In February, Minister of Foreign Affairs Radosław Sikorski visited Japan and held a meeting with Foreign Minister Iwaya, and the signing ceremony for the "Action Plan for the Implementation of the Strategic Partnership Between the Government of Japan and the Government of the Republic of Poland for the years 2025-2029" was held. In April, Minister of National Education Barbara Nowacka visited Japan and exchanged views with Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology ABE Toshiko. In July, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Digital Affairs Krzysztof Gawkowski visited Japan and held meetings with Minister of Digital Transformation TAIRA Masaaki and Minister in charge of Economic Security KIUCHI Minoru. On October 1, on the occasion of Poland's National Day at Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Deputy Marshal of the Sejm Monika Wielichowska visited Japan.

(8) Ukraine

Based on the strong recognition that Russia's aggression against Ukraine, which began in February 2022, is an outrageous act that shakes the very foundations of the international order, Japan has consistently continued its support for Ukraine and sanctions against Russia. In 2025 as well, Japan has pursued efforts toward the realization of a just and lasting peace in Ukraine through coordination with other countries in international fora including the G7.

On February 24, marking the third year since the start of the aggression, Prime Minister Ishiba attended online the "International Summit on the Support of Ukraine," hosted by the Government of Ukraine in hybrid format, and stated that he hoped that diplomatic efforts by each country toward realizing peace would bring an end to the long years of combat and a breakthrough out of the difficult situation.

On April 3, on the occasion of the NATO Foreign Ministers' Meeting, Foreign Minister Iwaya held a meeting with Minister for Foreign Affairs Andrii Sybiha

and conveyed that it was important for Ukraine's diplomatic efforts to lead to the realization of a just and lasting peace, and that Japan would strongly urge Russia to respond positively, while coordinating with Ukraine and the G7.

On June 17, Prime Minister Ishiba, who was attending the G7 Kananaskis Summit, held his first in-person meeting with President Zelenskyy. Prime Minister Ishiba stated that Japan would continue to work closely with the international community and the G7 to support Ukraine's efforts toward achieving a just and lasting peace in Ukraine, and would continue its support for Ukraine. The two leaders concurred that they would continue to work closely together.

On July 10, State Minister for Foreign Affairs FUJII Hisayuki attended the "Ukraine Recovery Conference" co-hosted by the Government of Italy and the Government of Ukraine, and in his statement emphasized that Russia's aggression against Ukraine is not a distant European issue for Japan, but a matter that goes to the very nature of the international order. On the same day, July 10, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Fujii also attended the Ukraine Donor Platform Ministerial Meeting, where he described Japan's contributions to Ukraine and stated that Japan would continue to coordinate closely with the international community and fully support Ukraine's efforts.

On August 4, Deputy Prime Minister Taras Kachka and Foreign Minister Sybiha visited Japan to participate in Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai. On the same day, Foreign Minister Iwaya held a meeting with Foreign Minister Sybiha. Foreign Minister Iwaya underlined Japan's commitment to supporting Ukraine's efforts toward achieving a just and lasting peace in Ukraine as soon as possible, and the two ministers had a candid exchange of views on the latest situation surrounding Ukraine and international efforts, and concurred that they would continue to work closely together.

Prime Minister Ishiba participated in the "Virtual Leaders Meeting of the Coalition of the Willing on Ukraine" held on August 13, August 17, August 19, and September 4. At each meeting, Prime Minister Ishiba stated that the early realization of a full ceasefire and a just and lasting peace in Ukraine was the common goal of all countries, and that like-minded countries needed to unite in their response toward that end. He also stated that Japan, as part of its contribution, would continue its support for Ukraine in coordination with the international community, working closely with Ukraine, the U.S., and European partner countries.

On September 24, on the occasion of the UN General Assembly, the Fifth Summit of the Crimea Platform was hosted by the Government of Ukraine, and Foreign Minister Iwaya read out a message issued by Prime Minister Ishiba on behalf of Japan. The message conveyed that Japan supports the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine, including Crimea, and would reaffirm to the international community the principle that unilateral changes to the status quo by force is unacceptable. It also expressed Japan's determination to actively engage in discussions in order to draw a swift and positive response from Russia that leads to a just and lasting peace.

In order to accelerate Ukraine's mine action and raise the international momentum for recovery and reconstruction, Japan held the Ukraine Mine Action Conference (UMAC2025) in Tokyo on October 22 and 23. Foreign Minister Motegi attended the opening session on the 22nd and delivered a speech emphasizing that landmines are hindering Ukraine's recovery and reconstruction, and that strengthening countermeasures is Japan's responsibility in its support for Ukraine. At the conference, Foreign Minister Motegi also announced the "Ukraine Mine Action Support Initiative" as Japan's support package, expressing Japan's intention to continue providing various forms of support essential to the reconstruction process, including capacity-building and capacity enhancement support, socioeconomic revitalization, and contributions to the medical and welfare sectors, as well as Japan's intention to strengthen coordination with the international community and to work alongside Ukraine toward achieving more rapid, safe, and sustainable mine action. The outcome document announced at the closing session on the first day, under the conference theme "Acceleration toward Reconstruction," confirmed a shared understanding and future direction regarding key elements for mine action in Ukraine going forward under the three pillars of (1) People, (2) Technology, and (3) Nexus (a seamless integration from mine action to recovery and reconstruction), and reaffirmed the importance of close

coordination among relevant stakeholders, including experts and private sector companies, in addressing the challenges. Furthermore, on December 2, as a specific manifestation of cooperation under the "Ukraine Mine Action Support Initiative," the notes concerning the Grant Aid "The Programme for Emergency Response on Humanitarian Mine Action and UXO Clearance" were signed and exchanged between the Governments of Japan and Ukraine.

On October 22, Foreign Minister Motegi held a meeting with Minister of Economy, Environment and Agriculture of Ukraine Oleksii Sobolev, who visited Japan to attend the Ukraine Mine Action Conference, and expressed that Japan's position of "standing with Ukraine" is consistent and that Japan would continue to do its utmost toward the realization of a just and lasting peace in Ukraine, working closely with the international community and the G7.

On October 24, newly inaugurated Prime Minister Takaichi attended the "Virtual Leaders Meeting of the Coalition of the Willing on Ukraine," co-hosted by the Governments of the UK and France, and stated that Japan's position of "standing with Ukraine" remains unchanged, and that Japan would continue its support for Ukraine and to impose sanctions against Russia in coordination with the international community, toward the realization of an immediate cessation of hostilities and, ultimately, a just and lasting peace.

On November 5, Prime Minister Takaichi held her first summit telephone call with President Zelenskyy. She underlined that Japan's stance that "Japan stands with Ukraine" is unchanged, described the support Japan has provided to Ukraine to date, and stated that Japan would continue to implement support for Ukraine's recovery and reconstruction. She conveyed that Japan, mindful of the concern that the outcome of the war will affect the international order, would continue to strongly support Ukraine's efforts toward achieving a just and lasting peace in Ukraine as soon as possible, and the two leaders concurred that they would continue to work closely together.

Japan is also providing support toward Ukraine's recovery and reconstruction. On February 27, the notes concerning the Grant Aid "the Programme for Emergency Recovery (Phase 4)" were signed and exchanged. Through this cooperation, Japan is providing support in areas such as energy, also utilizing Japanese technology. Furthermore, on April 18, the letters concerning the yen loan "Extraordinary Revenue Acceleration (ERA) Loan for Ukraine" (loan limit: 471.9 billion yen), to be provided under the framework of the "Extraordinary Revenue Acceleration (ERA) Loan for Ukraine" agreed upon at the G7 Apulia Summit as budgetary support to the Government of Ukraine facing an economic crisis, were signed and exchanged. In December, Japan announced that it would provide approximately 6 billion U.S. dollars in total to address Ukraine's financial needs, which are expected to be particularly acute in the first half of 2026. Under this support, in the first half of fiscal year 2026, in addition to the already contributed 85 billion yen related to ERA loans, Japan will contribute a further 193.45 billion yen, and will provide 4.5 billion U.S. dollars in credit enhancement for World Bank loans to Ukraine.



Opening Session of Ukraine Mine Action Conference 2025 (October 22, Tokyo)



Prime Minister Takaichi's Participation in the "Coalition of the Willing Online Leaders' Meeting on Ukraine" (October 24, Tokyo; Photo: Official Website of the Prime Minister's Office of Japan)

3 Collaboration with Regional Institutions

(1) Cooperation with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)

NATO is an organization that aims to ensure the freedom and security of its member countries through political and military means, including collective defense, based on the North Atlantic Treaty. In addition to "deterrence and defense" of its member countries, NATO engages in "crisis prevention and management" beyond its borders, such as peacekeeping activities and counter-terrorism efforts, in response to crises that could pose direct security threats to its member countries, and "cooperative security" through collaboration with partner countries and institutions. In response to Russia's aggression against Ukraine, NATO has been focusing on support for Ukraine and the defense of Europe. At the NATO Summit in June 2025, NATO member states agreed on a target of investing 5% of GDP annually by 2035, comprising at least 3.5% of GDP for core defense requirements and up to 1.5% of GDP for defense- and security-related spending.

The NATO Strategic Concept adopted in 2022 sets out guidelines for strengthening dialogue and cooperation with the Indo-Pacific partners (IP4: Japan, Australia, New Zealand, and the Republic of Korea (ROK)), and cooperation between Japan and NATO has become even more important. Amid this backdrop, in order to further strengthen and develop Japan-NATO relations, in January 2025, the Mission of Japan to NATO was established as an independent mission, separate from the Embassy of Japan in Belgium.



Meeting between Prime Minister Ishiba and NATO Secretary General Rutte (April 9, Tokyo; Photo: Official Website of the Prime Minister's Office of Japan)

The IP4 was invited for the first time to the NATO Summit and Meeting of NATO Ministers of Foreign Affairs in 2022. Foreign Minister Iwaya attended the Meeting of NATO Ministers of Foreign Affairs in April 2025, marking the fourth consecutive year of attendance by Japan's Foreign Minister. In the same month, NATO Secretary General Rutte visited Japan as his first visit to the Indo-Pacific region since taking office, held a meeting with Prime Minister Ishiba, and issued a joint statement, confirming that the partnership between Japan and NATO is of strategic importance for both the Euro-Atlantic and the Indo-Pacific regions. At the NATO Summit in June, Foreign Minister Iwaya held a meeting with NATO Secretary General Rutte and concurred on working together to elevate Japan-NATO cooperation to even greater heights across various fields, including the launch of the Japan-NATO Dialogue on Defense Industrial Cooperation and Capabilities. At the meeting held concurrently between Secretary General Rutte and the IP4, the importance of expanding NATO's engagement with the Indo-Pacific and of concrete cooperation between NATO and the IP4 was confirmed. In September, Chair of the NATO Military Committee Admiral Giuseppe Cavo Dragone visited Japan and held meetings with Minister of Defense NAKATANI Gen and State Minister for Foreign Affairs Fujii. In October, Prime Minister Ishiba, and in December, Prime Minister Takaichi, each held telephone calls with Secretary General Rutte, confirming the importance of cooperation between Japan and NATO and between NATO and the IP4, and their continued commitment to working together on cross-regional security challenges.

(2) Cooperation with the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)

The OSCE is a regional security organization with 57 participating states across Europe, the Central Asia and

Caucasus region, and North America, and traces its origins to the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE), which was established during the Cold War. Through a comprehensive approach encompassing perspectives that are not only politico-military, but also economic and environmental, and human dimension, and humanitarian perspectives, it conducts conflict prevention, crisis management, and post-conflict recovery and reconstruction, and bridges differences between participating states and fosters trust by providing a forum for political dialogue on a wide range of security issues. The year 2025 marks the 50th anniversary of the adoption of the "Helsinki Final Act,"(3) and on various occasions, the key principles enshrined in that document, including sovereign equality, territorial integrity of states, and the peaceful settlement of disputes, as well as the importance of the OSCE's role, were reaffirmed.

Japan has cooperated with the OSCE since 1992 as its first Asian Partner for Co-operation. Japan provides support to Afghanistan and Central Asian countries to strengthen border controls to prevent terrorism and enhance the capabilities of customs officials, to strengthen the capacity to prevent human trafficking, and to strengthen the leadership capacity of women in conflicts in Ukraine and neighboring countries. Furthermore, the OSCE has been playing an important role in improving the situation in Ukraine even before Russia's aggression began in 2022. Japan has been providing financial support and dispatching experts to the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission (SMM) (experts were dispatched intermittently since August 2015, and dispatches ended in February 2022).

Japan has been attending the OSCE Ministerial Council every year. Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs SHIMADA Tomoaki participated in the OSCE Ministerial Council held in December 2025 in Vienna. At the Council, he stated that Japan will further strengthen cooperation with the OSCE, which addresses issues with a comprehensive approach. In addition, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs Shimada issued a joint statement regarding the strengthening of cooperation between the OSCE and Asian Partners on behalf of the five Asian Partners and 48 participating States.



Parliamentary Vice–Minister for Foreign Affairs Shimada attending the 32nd OSCE Ministerial Council (December 4 and 5, Vienna, Austria; Photo: OSCE/Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland)

(3) Cooperation with the Council of Europe (CoE)

The CoE is an international organization comprising 46 member states in Europe, which 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 since 1996, Japan has contributed to the CoE by providing expertise and supporting the holding of meetings. Japan also participates as an Associate Member in the Register of Damage Caused by the Aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine, a mechanism established to record damage caused by Russia's aggression against Ukraine. In addition, in November, Japan also made a policy statement at the World Forum for Democracy. Moreover, in February, Japan signed the Council of Europe Framework Convention on Artificial Intelligence and Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law, the first international legally binding instrument on AI.

(4) Cooperation through the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM)

ASEM was established in 1996 as the sole forum for deepening dialogue and cooperation between Asia and Europe. Its members currently comprise 51 countries and two institutions. It works through summit meetings, ministerial meetings including foreign ministers' meetings, seminars, and other activities focused on

(3) Helsinki Final Act: A document adopted at the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE, the predecessor of the OSCE) in 1975.

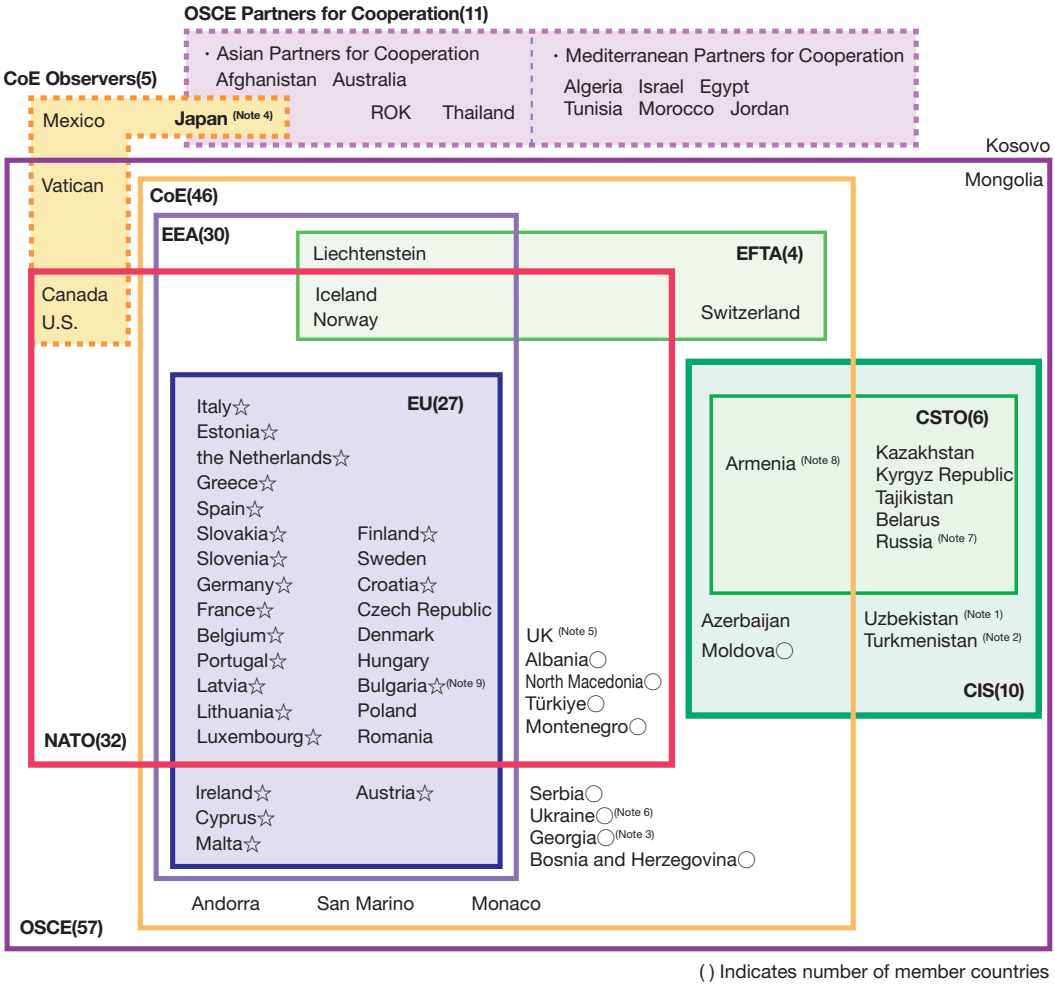
three pillars, namely (a) politics, (b) economy, and (c) society and culture.

The Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) is ASEM's only permanent institution. It is located in Singapore and is responsible for activities in the field of society and culture, one of the three pillars.

Japan has supported the ASEF with its project stockpiling medical personal protective equipment (PPE) and antiviral drugs to combat infectious diseases, and cooperated in the emergency transportation of stockpiled supplies to ASEM partners and the implementation of capacity building workshops for emergency response and public health network projects. As part of these efforts, in November, a panel discussion on "Climate Change and Public Health" was held in Singapore, and in December, a "High-level Meeting on Risk Communication for Public Health Emergencies" was held in Berlin. As part of ASEF's "Project for Strengthening Preparedness and Response to the COVID-19 and other Emerging Infectious Diseases" with financial contributions by Japan, Japan has supported the stockpiling initiative conducted by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) in several Asian countries (Bangladesh, Indonesia, Malaysia, Pakistan, and the Philippines), and has supported infectious disease countermeasures for Ukrainian displaced persons through the World Health Organization (WHO) for Ukraine and its neighboring countries that accept Ukrainian displaced persons (ASEM partner countries: Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, and Slovakia; non-ASEM partner country: Moldova).

Furthermore, in 2025, the Government of Japan contributed to ASEM's activities by inviting ASEF Executive Director Beata Stoczyńska to Japan in September, supporting the 6th ASEF Young Leaders Summit held on the sidelines of Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, implementing ASEF Classroom Network projects as a co-host, and through its financial contributions to the ASEF.

Major Frameworks of Europe



<Legend>
○: Candidate to be an EU member (9)
○: Euro member states (21)
__: Member states of the NATO Membership Action Plan (MAP) (1)
(Note 1) Uzbekistan ceased its membership in the CSTO in 2012.
(Note 2) Turkmenistan has been an associate member of the CIS since 2005.
(Note 3) Georgia notified the CIS of its decision to leave the organization in August 2008. It formally withdrew from the CIS in August 2009.
(Note 4) Japan is a partner country of NATO.
(Note 5) The UK withdrew from the EU on January 31, 2020.
(Note 6) Ukraine signed a presidential decree in April 2018 to withdraw from the CIS.
(Note 7) Russia was excluded from the CoE in March 2022
(Note 8) In February 2024, Armenia announced the suspension of its participation in the CSTO.
(Note 9) Bulgaria adopted the euro in January 2026.

<Abbreviations>
CoE (Council of Europe): (46)
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): (32)
OSCE (Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe): (57)

Other European Regions

[Nordic countries]

Iceland: In May, President Halla occasion of the Iceland National Day at Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, and held a meeting with Prime Minister Ishiba. At the meeting, both sides concurred that they would make further advances in bilateral relations and promote concrete cooperation in a wide range of fields, including security, the Arctic, economy, science and technology, and cultural and people-to-people exchanges, on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Japan and Iceland in 2026.

Sweden: In April, Foreign Minister Iwaya, who visited Belgium to attend the NATO Foreign Ministers' Meeting, held a foreign ministers' meeting with Foreign Minister Maria Malmer Stenergard. In October, Foreign Minister Iwaya held a further foreign ministers' meeting with Foreign Minister Stenergard, who visited Japan. At each meeting, the two ministers confirmed that they would further deepen cooperation in a wide range of fields, including nuclear energy, green transition, digital transformation, and life sciences, in addition to security cooperation.

Denmark: In April, Foreign Minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen, who visited Japan, paid a courtesy call on Chief Cabinet Secretary Hayashi, and both sides confirmed that they would further deepen cooperation in a wide range of fields, including clean energy and quantum science and technology. In addition, in September, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Fujii held a meeting with Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of the Faroe Islands Sirið Stenberg, who visited Japan, and exchanged views broadly on topics including Japan-Faroe Islands economic relations, concurring that they would continue to communicate closely with a view to further cooperation.

Norway: In 2025, Japan-Norway relations marked the 120th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations. In June, Foreign Minister Iwaya held a meeting with Foreign Minister Espen Barth Eide, who visited Japan to participate in the Norway National Day at Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai. From August to September, as part of the UK Carrier Strike Group (CSG25), the Norwegian Navy frigate *HNoMS Roald Amundsen* called at Yokosuka and Tokyo. This marked the first-ever call at a Japanese port by a Norwegian Navy vessel. On September 8, parliamentary general elections were held, in which left-wing forces including the Labour Party were victorious, and the left-wing administration led by Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Støre (Labour Party) continued from October onward.

Finland: In April, Foreign Minister Iwaya, who visited Belgium to attend the NATO Foreign Ministers' Meeting, held a foreign ministers' meeting with Foreign Minister Elina Valtonen and concurred that they would steadily build up cooperation in the fields of security, advanced science and technology, and other areas. In June, Prime Minister Ishiba held a meeting with President Alexander Stubb, who visited Japan to participate in Finland's National Day at Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, and announced the "Joint statement on Reinforced Cooperation in the Future between Japan and the Republic of Finland." Prime Minister Ishiba and President Stubb also held a summit meeting on the occasion of the UN General Assembly in September.

[Benelux countries]

The Netherlands: In 2025, Japan and the Netherlands marked the 425th anniversary of exchanges. In February, on the occasion of the Munich Security Conference, Foreign Minister Iwaya held a meeting with Foreign Minister Caspar Veldkamp and concurred that they would deepen defense cooperation to ensure security in the Indo-Pacific region. In April, Prime Minister Dick Schoof visited Japan and held summit talks and a meeting with Prime Minister Ishiba, during which they announced the "Japan-Netherlands Action Plan 2025 based on the Joint Statement on the Establishment of a Strategic Partnership for Sustainable Peace and Prosperity." In May, King Willem-Alexander visited Japan to participate in the official events of the Netherlands National Day at Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai. In June, the leading coalition party, the Party for Freedom (PVV), announced its withdrawal from the coalition, and Prime Minister Schoof declared the collapse of the cabinet, with the Schoof caretaker cabinet continuing to govern until a new administration was formed. In the same month, Foreign Minister Iwaya held a meeting with Prime Minister Schoof on the occasion of NATO Summit-related events, and both sides concurred that they would commence negotiations on an Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA). In August, the coalition party "New Social Contract (NSC)" announced its withdrawal from the coalition, and the party's cabinet ministers, including Foreign Minister Veldkamp, resigned. Subsequently, in September, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of Refugee and Migration David Van Weel was newly appointed. In the same month, Prime Minister Ishiba held a Japan-Netherlands Summit Meeting with Prime Minister Schoof on the occasion of the UN General Assembly. Also in September, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs implemented the Japan-Netherlands Peace Exchange Program, inviting six Dutch civilian nationals who had been interned by the Japanese military during World War II to Japan. In October, elections for the House of Representatives were held, and Democrats 66 (D66) became the largest party. Coalition negotiations are to be held going forward, and a new cabinet is scheduled to be inaugurated based on a coalition agreement. In December, the Japan-Netherlands Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (Japan-Netherlands ACSA) was signed in The Hague, the Netherlands.

Belgium: In April, on the occasion of the NATO Foreign Ministers' Meeting, Foreign Minister Iwaya held a meeting with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, European Affairs and Development Cooperation Maxime Prévot. Also in June, Her Royal Highness Princess Astrid and her husband His Royal Highness Prince Lorenz visited Japan and visited Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai. In September, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Employment, Economy and Agriculture David Clarinval, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, European Affairs and Development Cooperation Prévot, and Minister of Public Action and Modernization, in charge of Public Enterprises, the Civil Service, State Real Estate Management, Digital and Scientific Policy Vanessa Matz visited Japan and visited Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, as well as paid a courtesy call on Chief Cabinet Secretary Hayashi. Foreign Minister Iwaya also held a meeting with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, European Affairs and Development Cooperation Prévot.

Luxembourg: In April, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, Minister for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Affairs Xavier Bettel visited Japan, attended the opening ceremony of Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, paid a courtesy call on Chief Cabinet Secretary Hayashi, and held a foreign ministers' meeting with Foreign Minister Iwaya. Also in April, Prime Minister Luc Frieden visited Japan, held a summit meeting with Prime Minister Ishiba, and visited Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai. In the same month, a delegation led by Vice-President of the Chamber of Deputies Fernand Etgen visited Japan, paid a courtesy call on State Minister for Foreign Affairs Fujii, and visited Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai. From May to June, Grand Duke Henri, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, Minister of Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Affairs Bettel, and Minister of Defence, Minister for Mobility and Public Works, Minister for Gender Equality and Diversity Yuriko Backes visited Japan and Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai and Prime Minister Ishiba also held a meeting with Grand Duke Henri. On October 3, Grand Duke Henri abdicated in favor of Crown Prince Guillaume, and Grand Duke Guillaume acceded to the throne.

[Baltic countries]

Estonia: In March, the second Michal Administration, comprising the Estonian Reform Party and the Estonian 200 Party, was inaugurated following the dissolution of the coalition with the Social Democratic Party. In April, Foreign Minister Iwaya, who was visiting Belgium to attend the NATO Foreign Ministers' Meeting, held a meeting with Foreign Minister Margus Tsahkna.

Latvia: In May, a meeting was held between President Edgars Rinkēvičs, who visited Japan, and Prime Minister Ishiba, and the two leaders issued a joint statement designating the bilateral relationship as a Strategic Partnership. In September, a meeting was held between Foreign Minister Baiba Braže, who visited Japan, and Foreign Minister Iwaya.

Lithuania: In June, President Gitanas Nausėda visited Japan and held a meeting with Prime Minister Ishiba. In July, Prime Minister Gintautas Paluckas resigned, and in September, Prime Minister Inga Ruginienė took office, and a coalition government comprising the Social Democratic Party, the Dawn of Nemunas, and the Lithuanian Farmers and Greens Union was inaugurated. In October, Foreign Minister Kęstutis Budrys visited Japan to attend the Ukraine Mine Action Conference 2025 and held a foreign ministers' meeting with Foreign Minister Motegi.

Ireland: In July, Prime Minister Ishiba held a summit meeting with Prime Minister Micheál Martin, who visited Japan, and both sides concurred that they would promote concrete cooperation across a wide range of fields—including security encompassing the cyber domain, economy, agriculture, digital, and cultural and people-to-people exchanges—and further develop bilateral relations ahead of the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations in 2027. In the same month, the Irish Government formally opened "Ireland House Tokyo," a complex facility housing the Embassy, trade and tourism promotion agencies, and an event space.

San Marino: As the heads of state of San Marino, Captains Regent Denise Bronzetti and Italo Righi took office in April, and on the occasion of the San Marino National Day at Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai on May 3, both Captains Regent visited Japan.

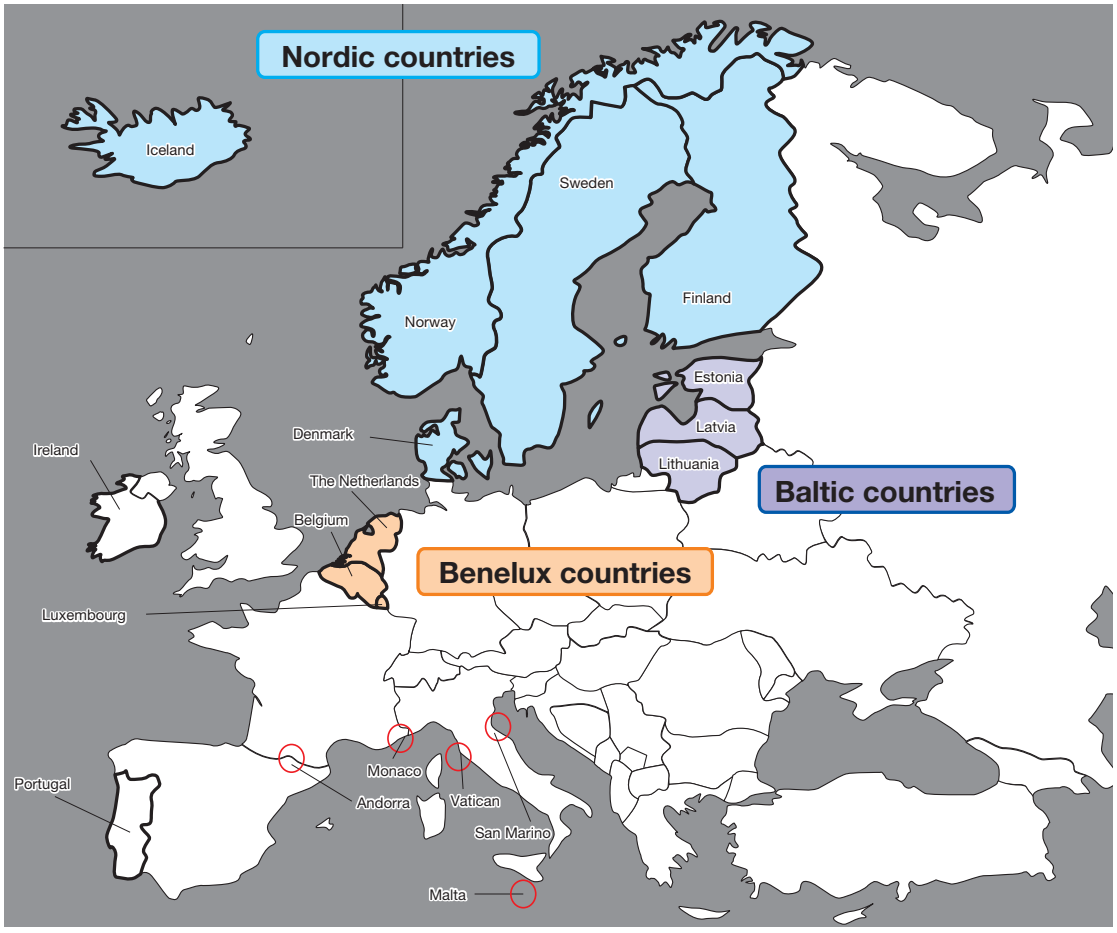
The Vatican: Pope Francis passed away on April 21, and Foreign Minister Iwaya attended the funeral Mass held at Vatican City on April 26 as the representative of the Government of Japan. Subsequently, as a result of the Conclave (papal election), Pope Leo XIV was elected as the 267th Pope on May 8, and the Solemn Ceremony of the Inauguration of the Pontificate for Pope Leo XIV was held at Vatican City on May 18, which former Prime Minister ASO Taro attended as Ambassador on Special Mission on behalf of the Government of Japan.

On the occasion of the Vatican's National Day at Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai on June 29, Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Secretary of State of the Holy See, visited Japan and held a Japan-Vatican Summit Meeting with Prime Minister Ishiba, the first such meeting since 2022.

Portugal: In March, the government resigned en masse after a motion of confidence in the Montenegro administration was rejected by parliament, and President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa dissolved parliament. In the general election for the Assembly of the Republic held in May, the Democratic Alliance (AD) led by the ruling Social Democratic Party (PSD) maintained its position as the largest party, though right-wing forces made significant gains. In June, PSD leader Luís Filipe Montenegro was reappointed as Prime Minister, and the second Montenegro Administration was inaugurated. On May 5, Minister of Culture Dalila Rodrigues attended the Portuguese National Day at Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai. In September, Prime Minister Montenegro visited Japan—the first visit by a Portuguese Prime Minister in 10 years. At the summit meeting with Prime Minister Ishiba, both sides concurred that they would further develop bilateral relations and issued a joint statement designating the bilateral relationship as a Strategic Partnership. In addition, Foreign Minister Paulo Rangel, who accompanied the Prime Minister, held a meeting with Foreign Minister Iwaya and confirmed that both sides would cooperate not only on bilateral relations but also on regional situations and various challenges facing the international community.

Malta: In 2025, Japan and Malta marked the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Japan and Malta. In July, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Tourism Ian Borg visited Japan for the official events of the Malta National Day at Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, paid a courtesy call on Chief Cabinet Secretary Hayashi, and held a meeting with State Minister for Foreign Affairs Fujii. Deputy Prime Minister Borg and State Minister for Foreign Affairs Fujii welcomed the exchange of notes concerning the introduction of the Working Holiday scheme between Japan and Malta. The scheme commenced on January 1, 2026.

Monaco: In June, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Fujii held a meeting with Interim Minister of State and the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation Isabelle Berro Amadei, who had visited Japan to participate in the Monaco National Day events at Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai together with Their Serene Highnesses Prince Albert II of Monaco and Princess Charlene.



[V4]

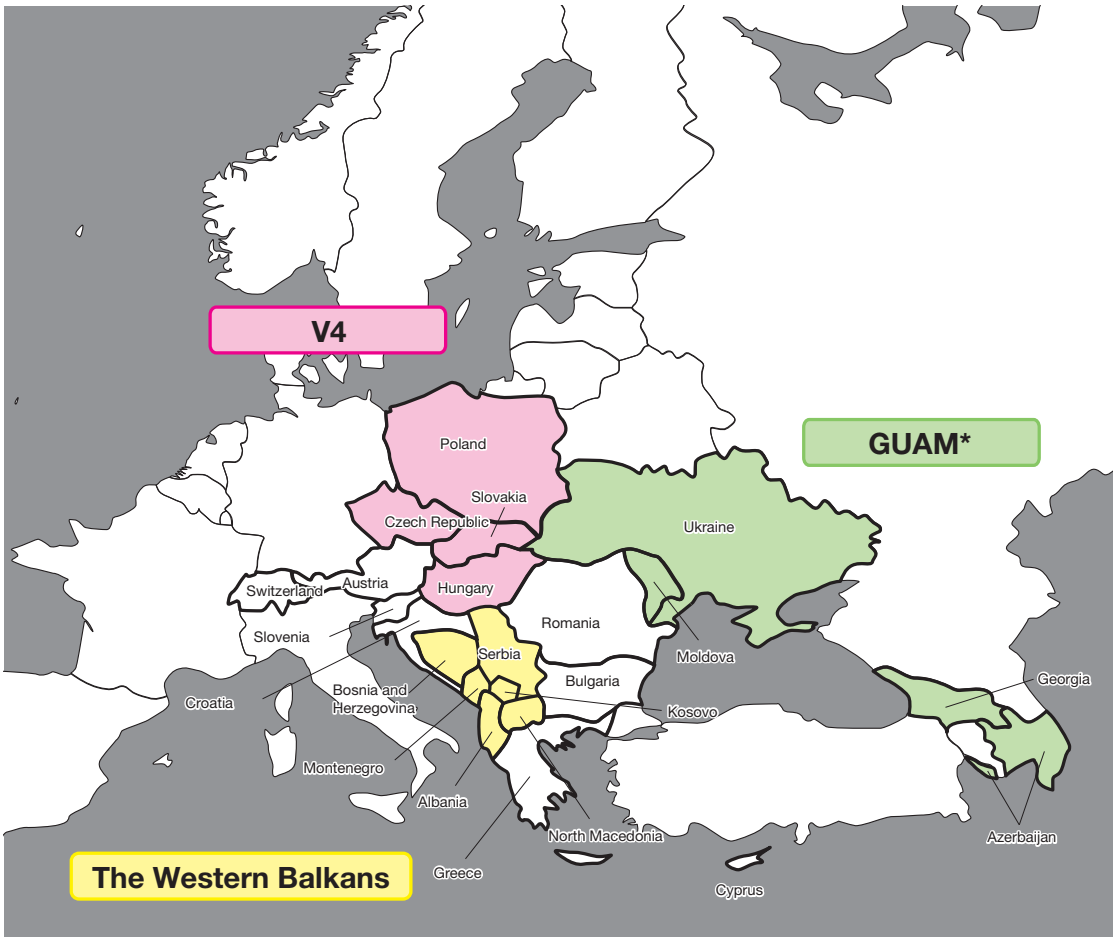
Bilateral relations between Japan and the V4 countries of Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Poland, and Hungary have a long history and are traditionally friendly. Given its geographical proximity to Ukraine, cooperation with the V4 is important for Japan as it continues to support Ukraine. Since the launch of the "V4 plus Japan" dialogue and cooperation framework in August 2003, Japan has been cooperating across a wide range of fields through this framework.

Slovakia: Speaker of the National Council Richard Raši, who visited Japan in September, held meetings with President of the Senate SEKIGUCHI Masakazu and Speaker of the House of Representatives NUKAGA Fukushiro. President Peter Pellegrini, who also visited Japan in September on the occasion of the Slovakia National Day at Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, held a meeting with Prime Minister Ishiba.

Czech Republic: In February, President of the Senate Miloš Vystrčil visited Japan at the invitation of the Senate and held informal meetings with President of the Senate Sekiguchi and others, as well as Speaker of the House of Representatives Nukaga, and held a meeting with Chief Cabinet Secretary Hayashi. In July, President Petr Pavel visited Japan to attend the Czech Republic National Day events at Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, and held a meeting with Prime Minister Ishiba. In addition, in October, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Jan Marian visited Japan to attend the Ukraine Mine Action Conference, and held a meeting with State Minister for Foreign Affairs KUNIMITSU Ayano.

Poland: * See 2 (7)

Hungary: President Tamás Sulyok, who visited Japan on the occasion of the Hungary National Day at Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai in May, held a meeting with Prime Minister Ishiba. In September, Foreign Minister Iwaya held a foreign ministers' meeting with Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade Péter Szijjártó, who visited Japan for the third consecutive year.



* GUAM: GUAM (acronym for Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, and Moldova) 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, and has held foreign minister-level and vice-minister-level meetings, as well as theme-based workshops with professionals and experts from GUAM countries, as part of invitation programs to Japan.

[The Western Balkans]

In the Western Balkans region, despite ongoing concerns about peace implementation and conflicts between ethnic groups, including the separatist actions by the Republika Srpska, one of the two entities that make up Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the stalled dialogue aimed at normalizing relations between Serbia and Kosovo, countries in the region have made overall progress toward stability and development as they undertake reforms aimed at joining the EU. In addition, under the "Western Balkans Cooperation Initiative"[(4)] which Japan has led since 2018, Japan has been promoting support for economic reforms of Western Balkan countries aiming for EU membership and reconciliation and cooperation among the region's various ethnic groups through the promotion of bilateral dialogues with each Western Balkan country as part of bilateral cooperation; development cooperation through Official Development Assistance (ODA); and programs that facilitate expansion by Japanese companies as well as sharing knowledge and inviting personnel to Japan to address common regional challenges as part of regional cooperation promotion and cooperation with third-party countries.

North Macedonia: In May, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade Timčo Mucunski visited Japan on the occasion of Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, and held a meeting with State Minister for Foreign Affairs Fujii.

Kosovo: In June, President Vjosa Osmani-Sadriu visited Japan on the occasion of Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, and held a meeting with Prime Minister Ishiba.

Serbia: In August, Foreign Minister Marko Đurić visited Japan and held a meeting with Foreign Minister Iwaya. In September, President Aleksandar Vučić visited Japan on the occasion of Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, and held a meeting with Prime Minister Ishiba. Furthermore, in the same month, an agreement in principle on the Japan-Serbia Investment Agreement was reached, and the agreement was signed in December.

Montenegro: In May, Prime Minister Milojko Spajić visited Japan on the occasion of Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, and held a meeting with Prime Minister Ishiba.

Cyprus: In August, Vice Speaker of the House of Representatives GEMBA Koichiro visited Cyprus and held meetings with President of the House of Representatives Annita Demetriou and Deputy Minister for European Affairs Marilena Raouna.

Greece: In October, on the occasion of the Ukraine Mine Action Conference, Secretary General for International Economic Affairs Dimitris Skalkos visited Japan and took the floor at the conference. In addition, in December, Minister of National Defense Nikos Dendias visited Japan and held meetings with Minister of Defense KOIZUMI Shinjiro and State Minister for Foreign Affairs Kunimitsu.

Croatia: In July, Minister of Foreign and European Affairs Gordan Grlić Radman visited Japan on the occasion of Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai and held a meeting with State Minister for Foreign Affairs Fujii; he also visited Japan again in October to attend the Ukraine Mine Action Conference and held a meeting with Foreign Minister Motegi. In September, Prime Minister Andrej Plenković visited Japan on the occasion of Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai and held a meeting with Prime Minister Ishiba.

Slovenia: In June, Foreign Minister Iwaya held a meeting with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign and European Affairs Tanja Fajon, who visited Japan. In addition, in October, on the occasion of the Ukraine Mine Action Conference, State Secretary at the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs Melita Gabrič, who visited Japan, held a meeting with State Minister for Foreign Affairs Kunimitsu.

Romania: In June, Speaker of the House of Representatives Nukaga and Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs IKUINA Akiko each held meetings with President of the Senate Mircea Abrudean, who visited Japan to participate in the Romania National Day events at Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai.

Bulgaria: In April, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Innovation and Growth Tomislav Donchev visited Japan and attended the opening ceremony of Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai. In addition, in May, Prime Minister Ishiba held a meeting with President Rumen Radev, who visited Japan to participate in the Bulgaria National Day events at Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, and signed the "Joint Statement on Establishment of the Strategic Partnership between Japan and the Republic of Bulgaria," upgrading bilateral relations to a new "Strategic Partnership."

Austria: Following the National Council elections in September 2024, and after multiple rounds of coalition negotiations, a three-party coalition government comprising the Austrian People's Party (center-right), the Social Democratic Party (center-left), and NEOS (liberal) was inaugurated in March 2025. With regard to Japan-Austria relations, in May, President Alexander Van der Bellen visited Japan and, through his meeting with Prime Minister Ishiba, the occasion served to reaffirm the over-150-year friendship between the two countries. In October, the 27th Meeting of Japan-Austria Committee for Issues of the Future was held in Himeji City, Hyogo Prefecture, at which experts from both countries engaged in candid exchanges of information and views on the role of Artificial Intelligence and next-generation energy in regional revitalization. In December, the "Agreement between Japan and the Republic of Austria on Social Security" entered into force, and it is expected to further promote people-to-people and economic exchanges between the two countries.

Switzerland: People-to-people exchanges among dignitaries were invigorated through Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai. In April, President of the National Council (lower house) Maja Riniker visited Japan, and in August, President of the Council of States (upper house) Andrea Caroni visited Japan, promoting inter-parliamentary exchanges with both houses of the Diet. Furthermore, in April, on the occasion of Switzerland's National Day at Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Head of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs Ignazio Cassis visited Japan, and through a foreign ministers' meeting, both sides concurred that they would strengthen multifaceted development of bilateral relations, including in the field of science and technology, as well as cooperation in international fora including on the situation in Ukraine.

Moldova: In September, Prime Minister Ishiba held a meeting with Prime Minister Dorin Recean, who visited Japan to participate in the Moldova National Day at Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, expressed that the protection of Moldova's democracy is more important than ever and that Japan would support Moldova's development to the greatest extent possible, and the two leaders concurred that the democratic conduct of elections in Moldova was important for regional and international stability.

(4) In January 2018, Prime Minister Abe became the first Japanese prime minister to visit Serbia, where he announced the "Western Balkans Cooperation Initiative" to advance cooperation with the Western Balkan countries (Albania, North Macedonia, Kosovo, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Montenegro) on their path to join the EU, and promoted cooperation with the entire Western Balkan region in areas such as youth exchanges and economic exchanges.

Column

The First Conclave in 12 Years and the Inauguration of Pope Leo XIV

Embassy of Japan to the Holy See

Pope Francis, who had been hospitalized in Rome with pneumonia, was discharged in March. On April 20, Easter Sunday, he appeared publicly to bestow his blessing upon the faithful at the Mass celebrating the Resurrection of Christ; however, on the morning of the following day, April 21, his condition suddenly deteriorated and he passed away.

Although the Vatican City State is known as the world's smallest state by area, the funeral held in St. Peter's Square on April 26 drew more than 160 delegations from around the world, including 65 heads of state such as President Donald J. Trump of the United States (U.S.), His Majesty King Felipe VI of Spain — a Catholic nation — President Javier Milei of Argentina — the Pope's country of origin — President Sergio Mattarella of Italy, and President Volodymyr Zelenskyy of Ukraine. As Japan's representative, Foreign Minister Iwaya attended the funeral and conducted condolence diplomacy with, among others, President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva of Brazil, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Antonio Tajani of Italy, Secretary-General António Guterres of the United Nations, and President Ursula von der Leyen of the European Commission.

Beginning on May 7, a conclave, the papal election to select a new Pope, was held in the Sistine Chapel for the first time in 12 years. On the following day, May 8, Cardinal Robert Francis Prevost (Prefect of the Dicastery for Bishops) was elected as the first Pope of U.S. origin, taking the name Pope Leo XIV.



Pope Leo XIV, elected as the new Pope in the conclave (May 9, the Vatican; Photo: ©Vatican Media)

On May 18, the Solemn Ceremony of the Inauguration of the Pontificate for His Holiness Pope Leo XIV was held in St. Peter's Square, attended by more than 140 delegations, including 32 heads of state. From Japan, former Prime Minister ASO Taro (Member of the House of Representatives) attended as Ambassador on Special Mission and had an audience with the new Pope Leo XIV, conveying Japan's congratulations directly. He also held informal talks with President Mattarella of Italy, Vice President J.D. Vance of the U.S., Chancellor Friedrich Merz of Germany, Prime Minister Mark Carney of Canada, and others. Through the series of Vatican ceremonies surrounding the passing of the late Pope and the inauguration of the new Pope, Japan was able to demonstrate its presence.



Ambassador on Special Mission Aso conveying Japan's congratulations to Pope Leo XIV (May 18, the Vatican)

In this way, the papal transition drew representatives from nations around the world to converge on the Vatican, captured the attention of the approximately 1.4 billion Catholics worldwide and the global media, and served as a renewed reminder that the Vatican is a state whose presence in the world extends far beyond its status as the world's smallest nation.

Pope Leo XIV has indicated his intention to carry on the foreign policy of his predecessor, Pope Francis, who was regarded as a reformist. At the same time, he demonstrates a disposition attentive to the traditions of the Catholic Church and regards its unity as an important mission.

Grounded in Catholic doctrine upholding the sanctity of human life and respect for human rights, the Vatican advocates positions such as opposition to abortion, the death penalty, and the humane treatment of migrants. The Holy See also calls for peace wherever there is conflict and takes an active role in developing AI ethics, and in supporting developing countries, particularly those in Africa — areas where its thinking aligns in part with Japan's foreign policy. Japan will work together with the Holy See under the new leadership of Pope Leo XIV to contribute to peace and stability in the international community.

Section 6 Russia and Belarus, Central Asia and the Caucasus

1 Overview

While Russia's aggression against Ukraine, which began in February 2022, continued in 2025, various developments were observed following the inauguration of the new Trump administration in the United States (U.S.) As the U.S. pursued its mediation efforts, direct negotiations between Russia and Ukraine were held for the first time in approximately three years. There were also exchanges at various levels between the U.S. and Russia, including at the summit and foreign ministers' level. In August, an in-person U.S.-Russia Summit Meeting was held in Alaska, U.S. for the first time in approximately four years. Yet no concrete breakthrough toward a resolution of the situation was achieved.

With its relations with Europe remaining extremely limited, Russia continued seeking to further strengthen its ties with China, North Korea, and the developing and emerging countries known as the Global South, including India. Of particular note are the facts that Russia invited President Xi Jinping as its guest of honor to the ceremony for the 80th Anniversary of the Victory over Nazi Germany, and also invited a large number of leaders from Global South countries and others; that Russia further advanced its cooperation with North Korea, including military cooperation; and that President Vladimir Putin of Russia visited India for the first time in four years. Russia, together with China, has emphasized the building of a multipolar world order.

Belarus has maintained a posture of cooperation with Russia, including references to the deployment of Russian tactical nuclear weapons and the new intermediate-range ballistic missile "Oreshnik" in Belarus. In terms of relations with the U.S., changes were also observed. Belarusian President Aleksandr Lukashenko and U.S. President Donald J. Trump held their first telephone call in August, and the U.S. partially lifted its sanctions against Belarus.

Regarding Central Asian and Caucasus countries, while they have close historical and economic ties with Russia, they have maintained a neutral stance toward Russia's aggression against Ukraine (excluding Georgia, which has expressed support for Ukraine). Meanwhile, they are also struggling to cope with the impact on transportation routes for energy and other trade items and remittances from migrant workers in Russia.

Amid this situation, the international community is paying close attention to the Central Asian and Caucasus countries. In 2025, amid summit meetings held by the European Union (EU), Italy, China, Russia, and the U.S. with the Central Asian countries, Japan held the Summit of the "Central Asia plus Japan" Dialogue (CA+JAD) — a cooperation framework with the Central Asian countries — in Tokyo in December, for the first time at the leaders' level.

Regarding the Caucasus region, positive developments were seen, including the signing in August by the leaders of Azerbaijan and Armenia of a joint declaration toward a peace agreement to end a conflict spanning more than 30 years, witnessed by President Trump of the U.S. With regard to Georgia, the Georgian government announced in November 2024 that it would not begin the EU accession process until the end of 2028, and tensions with the EU have continued.

2 Russia and Belarus

(1) Situation in Russia

A Internal Situation in Russia

As Russia's aggression against Ukraine (which Russia calls the "special military operation," hereinafter referred to as the "operation") has surpassed three years, President Putin's approval rating has continued to remain at a high level, and various measures related to the "operation" have been observed.

As part of efforts to secure personnel for the aggression against Ukraine, the recruitment of contract soldiers has continued, and a decision has been made to shift regular conscription — previously conducted twice a year in spring and autumn — to a year-round basis in order to streamline conscription-related procedures. In addition, a law was enacted allowing for the special call-up of certain citizens for the defense of domestic facilities during peacetime.

In the nationwide local elections held in September, a large number of "operation" participants were fielded as candidates, particularly at the municipal level. In particular, more than 800 "operation" participants fielded by the ruling party "United Russia" were elected, which was more than double the number from the previous year.

Furthermore, the Russian government's restrictions on freedom of speech and the press have continued. In September, a federal law entered into force that, among other measures, imposes fines for searching for "extremist content." In addition, since August, certain functions of foreign-made messaging applications that have been widely used within Russia have been restricted, while the use of the Russian-made messenger app "MAX" has been promoted.

B Russian Foreign Policy

Following the inauguration of U.S. President Trump, who had expressed his eagerness to mediate a ceasefire in Ukraine, direct discussions between Russia and Ukraine — the first since 2022 — took place in Istanbul, Türkiye in May. (Bilateral talks were subsequently held in Istanbul again in June and July.) Although exchanges of prisoners of war and human remains took place, the gap in positions on peace could not be bridged.

In terms of relations with the U.S., with which high-level dialogue had been almost cut off since the start of Russia's aggression against Ukraine, numerous exchanges at various levels — including at the summit and foreign ministers' level — were held after the inauguration of the Trump administration. In August, the U.S.-Russia Summit Meeting was held in Alaska, U.S., but Russia has since repeatedly reiterated its longstanding position that the "root causes" must be eliminated to resolve the situation in Ukraine, and no concrete breakthrough toward a resolution of the situation was achieved. In October, the U.S. introduced additional sanctions against two major Russian oil companies as the first direct sanctions against Russia by the second Trump administration.

In September, President Putin stated that Russia was prepared to comply with the quantitative limits of the Treaty between the U.S. and the Russian Federation on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms (New START Treaty) for one additional year beyond the deadline of February 2026, but no official response from the U.S. side toward the extension of the Treaty was observed. The New START Treaty reached its expiration date and expired. Furthermore, in October, Russia announced the successful testing of the nuclear-powered cruise missile "Burevestnik" and the nuclear-powered unmanned underwater drone weapon "Poseidon," and in November, announced plans to deploy the new intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) "Sarmat" in 2026.

In terms of relations with European countries, the EU has been strengthening its sanctions against Russia, including by lowering the price cap under the oil price cap system,(1) stepping up its response to the "Shadow

(1) A measure that prohibits services related to the maritime transportation, etc., of Russian crude oil and oil products that exceed a certain price, while the provision of such services is not subject to prohibition if the price is at or below a certain level.

Fleet,"[2] and banning the import of Russian liquefied natural gas (LNG) from January 2027 onwards. In 2025, relevant countries have announced that airspace violations by Russian military aircraft and by drones suspected of Russian involvement occurred in multiple North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) member countries.

Russia continues seeking to further strengthen its ties with China, North Korea, and Global South countries including India. Furthermore, President Putin has repeatedly emphasized the importance of multilateral frameworks such as BRICS[3] and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) in the international community.

In May, Russia held a military parade commemorating the 80th anniversary of the Victory over Nazi Germany, with the participation of many foreign leaders including those from Africa and Latin America. President Xi Jinping attended as the guest of honor. The joint leaders' statement issued following the China-Russia summit contained many passages asserting the historical contributions of both countries on the occasion of the 80th anniversary of the end of World War II. From late August through September, President Putin visited China, held a China-Russia summit meeting, and attended the "Ceremony Commemorating the 80th Anniversary of the Victory of the Chinese People's War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression and the World Anti-Fascist War," where President Putin, President Xi, and President Kim Jong Un of North Korea were seen standing side by side.

On the military front, the Chinese and Russian navies conducted the joint exercise "Maritime Cooperation — 2025" in the Sea of Japan from August 1 to 5, after which Chinese and Russian naval vessels conducted joint navigation in the Sea of Japan and the Pacific Ocean. On December 9, Chinese and Russian bombers conducted joint flights over the East China Sea and the Pacific Ocean. The strengthening of China-Russia military cooperation must continue to be closely monitored with serious concern from the perspective of Japan's security.

Regarding relations with North Korea, in late April, both Russia and North Korea publicly announced that North Korean soldiers had participated in combat in Russia's Kursk Oblast, into which Ukraine had been advancing since August 2024. In addition, North Korea has been providing Russia with ballistic missiles and ammunition, and there are also deep concerns that there may be nuclear-and missile-related technology transferred from Russia to North Korea in return. High-level meetings have continued as well. At the summit level, following the Russia-North Korea summit telephone call in August, a summit meeting was held in Beijing, China in September, at which President Putin stated that relations between the two "countries" had come to take on a dimension of alliance.

Regarding relations with India, President Putin of Russia visited India in December for the first time in four years.

C Russian Economy

Since the start of the aggression against Ukraine, Russia's defense spending has accounted for a large share of the federal budget. In the federal budget for 2026, there was none of the significant expansion of defense spending that had been seen for the previous three consecutive years. For the first time since the aggression against Ukraine, the nominal amount of defense spending fell below the previous year's level. However, it still accounts for approximately 30% of the overall budget, placing strain on the federal budget. The fiscal deficit has also been expanding, and the government plans tax increases such as raising the value-added tax (VAT) rate from 20% to 22% in 2026, citing defense and security needs.

Some slowdown is also observed in domestic economic growth. With regard to the real GDP growth

(2) The "Shadow Fleet" refers to vessels engaged in illicit operations for the purpose of evading sanctions, safety and environmental regulations, and insurance costs, or for other illegal activities (IMO Resolution A.1192(33), para. 1, December 2023).

(3) BRICS: A term referring to a group consisting of countries such as Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa, and other countries. At the inaugural foreign ministers' meeting in 2006 and the inaugural summit meeting in 2009, the original four countries — Brazil, Russia, India, and China — participated. South Africa joined in 2011, giving the grouping its current name, BRICS. In 2024, Egypt, Ethiopia, the United Arab Emirates, and Iran joined as Member Countries, followed by Indonesia in 2025. At the summit meeting in October 2024, a new category of "BRICS Partner Countries" was introduced, and it was announced that Belarus, Bolivia, Kazakhstan, Cuba, Malaysia, Thailand, Uganda, Uzbekistan, and Nigeria joined as Partner Countries from January 2025, with Viet Nam's accession as a Partner Country announced in June of the same year.

rate, which had exceeded 4% in 2024, Russia's Ministry of Economic Development revised its forecast for 2025 downward in September from 2.5% to 1% year-on-year. In addition, amid frequent Ukrainian drone attacks on oil refineries and seasonal increases in demand, concerns arose about shortages of gasoline and diesel, and the government implemented countermeasures such as a full ban on gasoline exports and the extension of trading restrictions.

Sanctions have significantly reduced energy exports to Europe, but Russia's friendly countries including China continue to import Russian energy. In August, U.S. President Trump imposed additional 25% tariffs (so-called "secondary tariffs") on India, citing its imports of oil from Russia, and in October, the U.S. introduced sanctions against two major Russian oil companies — the first direct sanctions against Russia by the Trump administration. As Western countries strengthen export controls, Russia continues to pursue sanctions evasion measures, including advancing import substitution and continuing circumvention imports through friendly countries.

Domestic labor shortages and restrictions on access to Western advanced components could affect the growth of the Russian economy in the medium- to -long term.

(2) Japan-Russia Relations

A Overview

Russia's aggression against Ukraine, which began in February 2022, continues to have a serious impact on Japan-Russia relations. In order to achieve a just and lasting peace in Ukraine as soon as possible, Japan, in cooperation with the international community including the G7, has been taking measures such as imposing severe sanctions against Russia. At the same time, there remain a host of pending issues that Japan and Russia must resolve as neighboring countries, and Japan has been appropriately responding to these from the perspective of what is in Japan's national interest. It will continue to be necessary to appropriately communicate with the Russian side.

With regard to fisheries, even after Russia's aggression against Ukraine, the Government of Japan has been holding discussions with Russia to maintain and secure Japan's interests related to fishing activities. In 2025, fishing operations were conducted under the "Agreement between the Government of Japan and the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on Mutual Relations in the Field of Fisheries off the coast of Both Countries" and the "Agreement between the Government of Japan and the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics concerning cooperation in the fields of fisheries," as well as fishing operations based on the Kaigara Island Kelp Agreement, a private agreement. On the other hand, regarding the Framework Agreement Concerning Operations in the Waters Around the Four Northern Islands, despite repeated urging from the Japanese side, Russia has not concurred to the holding of inter-governmental consultations based on the agreement, and operations under the agreement have not been resumed.

Regarding security issues, following the intrusions into Japan's territorial airspace three times by a Russian military aircraft over Japanese territorial waters north of Rebun Island in Hokkaido in September 2024, the Government of Japan lodged a very severe protest with the Russian government and urged that it investigate the cause and prevent a recurrence of such intrusions. Japan has also conveyed serious concerns to the Russian government about the continued joint operations between the Chinese and Russian militaries around Japan.

On the subject of cultural and people-to-people exchanges, Japan is conducting projects within an appropriate scope that includes accepting Russian students by the Japanese Government (Monbukagakusho: MEXT Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports) Scholarship and providing Japanese language education in Russia based on the belief that it is important to maintain contact with Russian civil society, especially the younger generation, and to provide Russian citizens with opportunities to gain international perspectives.

The Japan Centers have been in operation for more than 30 years, and amid major changes in the situation within Russia and surrounding Japan-Russia relations, the Government of Japan decided in August 2025 to terminate their operations and close them, based on a comprehensive judgment that they had sufficiently fulfilled their historic role. It should be noted that, in making the decision to close the Centers, the unilateral decision by the Russian government in January of the

same year to terminate the application of the memoranda between the Japanese and Russian governments concerning the Japan Centers was also an important factor in the consideration.

B The Northern Territories Issue and Negotiations on a Peace Treaty

The greatest concern between Japan and Russia is the Northern Territories issue. The Northern Territories are islands over which Japan has sovereignty. The islands are an inherent territory of Japan but are currently illegally occupied by Russia. The Northern Territories issue is yet to be resolved even after 80 years have passed since the end of World War II, and the Government of Japan has firmly worked on the negotiations under the policy of concluding a peace treaty through the resolution of the issue of the attribution of the Four Northern Islands.(4)

However, in March 2022, the Government of Russia, considering the measures taken by Japan in relation to Russia's aggression against Ukraine, announced measures such as discontinuing negotiations on a peace treaty, suspending Free Visits and the Four-Island exchange program, and withdrawing from the dialogue on joint economic activities on the Four Northern Islands. In September, the Government of Russia also announced a government decree suspending the validity of the agreement on Free Visits and the Four-Island exchange program.

The current situation is entirely the result of Russia's aggression against Ukraine, and Russia's attempt to shift responsibility to Japan is extremely unjust and absolutely unacceptable, and the government has lodged a strong protest against the Russian side.

Although Japan-Russia relations are in a difficult situation due to Russia's aggression against Ukraine, it remains the policy of the Government of Japan to conclude a peace treaty through the resolution of the issue of the attribution of the Four Northern Islands.

In addition, the Four-Island exchange program,(5) Free Visits, and Visits to Graves in the Northern Territories have not been conducted since 2020 due to the impact of COVID-19 and the deterioration of Japan-Russia relations following Russia's aggression against Ukraine. Resuming the Four-Island exchange program, Free Visits, and Visits to Graves in the Northern Territories is one of the highest priorities in Japan-Russia relations. In light of the earnest wishes of the elderly former residents of the islands, the resumption of Visits to Graves in the Northern Territories is an eminently humanitarian matter, and the Government of Japan will continue to strongly urge the Russian side to resume these programs, with particular emphasis on Visits to Graves in the Northern Territories.

Japan has also lodged protests against Russia over Russia's moves to build up its military forces in the Four Northern Islands and surrounding waters, including military exercises, stating that these moves are contrary to Japan's position concerning these islands and unacceptable.

C Japan-Russia Economic Relations

Since Russia's aggression against Ukraine, Japan has continued its policy of suspending, for the time being, government projects related to economic cooperation with Russia while imposing severe sanctions against the country.

Against this backdrop, trade between Japan and Russia contracted significantly compared to before the start of the aggression. Japan-Russia trade from January through December 2025 amounted to approximately 1,195.1 billion Japanese yen, a decrease of 50.5% from the same period in 2021, before the start of the aggression (Japan-Russia trade during the same period was approximately 2,413.9 billion Japanese yen). Of this, exports from Russia to Japan fell 46.6% (especially in coal), and exports from Japan to Russia fell by 57.5% during the same period in 2021 (all sources: Trade Statistics, Ministry of Finance).

With regard to sanctions against Russia, Japan, in cooperation with the international community including the G7, has maintained and strengthened severe sanctions against Russia in order to demonstrate that outrageous acts that shake the very foundations of

(4) 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

(5) Refers to Visits to Graves in the Northern Territories, Free Visits, and exchange visits/receptions to the Four Northern Islands (including receiving patients and expert exchanges).

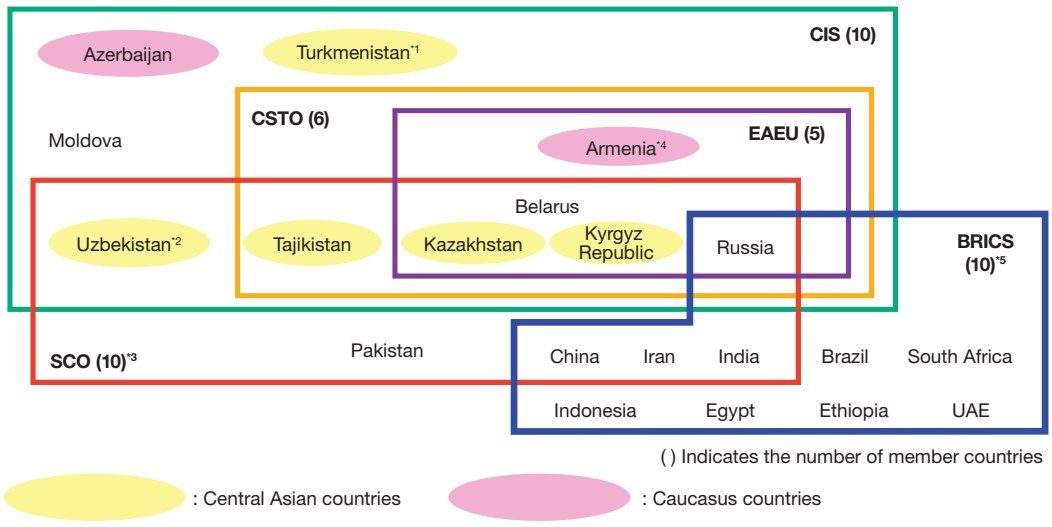
(4)

the international order come with a high price. These include sanctions against individuals and organizations in Russia and occupied territories, including Russian government and military officials. They also include sanctions in the financial sector, including the freezing of bank assets and measures prohibiting imports and exports, among others. Japan and like-minded countries, such as those in the G7, introduced a price cap system for Russian crude oil in December 2022 and for Russian oil products in February 2023, with the aim of stabilizing international oil prices while reducing Russia's energy revenues. Furthermore, based on a recognition of the importance of ensuring the effectiveness of sanctions, since December 2023, the Government of Japan has also been introducing sanctions measures against entities in third countries suspected of involvement in the circumvention or evasion of sanctions.

In 2025 as well, Japan maintained its basic policy of continuing sanctions against Russia, and introduced additional sanctions in January and September. These measures include additional sanctions against entities in third countries suspected of involvement in the circumvention or evasion of sanctions, as well as against individuals and entities involved in Russia-North Korea cooperation in support of Russia's aggression against Ukraine. In September, Japan, in step with like-minded countries, lowered the price cap under the price cap system for Russian crude oil.

Regarding the energy sector, the Government of Japan intends to phase out its dependence on Russian energy, including coal and oil, and will take this step in a manner that minimizes adverse effects on Japanese people's lives and business activities. However, the government policy remains focused on maintaining Japan's interests in the "Sakhalin 1" and "Sakhalin 2" oil and natural gas development projects in Russia, as these projects are important to Japan's energy security from the perspective of ensuring a stable supply over the medium- to long -term.

Major Frameworks involving Russia, Central Asia, and Caucasus countries



<Note>
*1 Turkmenistan has been an associate member of the CIS since 2005.
*2 Uzbekistan ceased its membership in the CSTO in 2012.
*3 Iran officially joined the SCO in 2023.
*4 Armenia has announced that it will freeze its participation in the CSTO in 2024.
*5 Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan became "Partner Countries" of BRICS from January 2025.

<Abbreviations>
CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States) (10)
CSTO (Collective Security Treaty Organization) (6)
EAEU (Eurasian Economic Union) (5)
SCO (Shanghai Cooperation Organization) (10)

(3) Situation in Belarus

Although Belarus did not take part in Russia's aggression against Ukraine, it supported Russian military operations through the use of its territory at the beginning of the aggression. In response to this, Western countries strengthened sanctions against Belarus, while Japan also implemented sanctions against Belarus.

In internal politics, President Lukashenko won his seventh term in the presidential election held in January. In the election, candidates with anti-government positions were not allowed to run, and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) election observer mission could not be dispatched; European countries pointed out problems such as the lack of democratic procedures.

In foreign policy, President Lukashenko keeps close relationship with Russia, frequently meeting with Russian President Putin. Moves to restrain Western countries have also been observed, such as the joint military exercise "Zapad 2025" with Russia in September, during which Belarus announced that operational training with Russian tactical nuclear weapons and the new intermediate-range ballistic missile "Oreshnik" had been conducted.

Moves to strengthen relations with countries and regions close to Russia were also observed, including two visits to China by President Lukashenko in 2025 and a visit to Belarus by Foreign Minister Choe Son-hui of North Korea. Meanwhile, there were some changes in the Belarus-U.S. relationship. President Lukashenko held his first telephone call with U.S. President Trump in August. As a result of negotiations with the U.S., the Belarusian government released many foreign detainees, including Japanese nationals, on multiple occasions, and the U.S. also partially lifted its sanctions against Belarus.

Attempts of illegal border crossings from Belarus into neighboring countries by irregular migrants from Middle Eastern and African countries, which began in 2021, have continued, although the scale has decreased. In addition, in October, Lithuania temporarily sealed its border with Belarus, following several incidents of airport closures caused by balloons flying in from the Belarusian side.

3 Central Asian and Caucasus countries

(1) Overview

Central Asian and Caucasus countries are situated in a location of geopolitical importance that connects East Asia, South Asia, the Middle East, Europe, and Russia, and have abundant energy and mineral resources such as oil, natural gas, uranium, and rare metals. The stability of the entire region, including Central Asia and the Caucasus countries, has also been of great importance in addressing key issues the international community is facing, such as the fight against terrorism and drug problems.

In the wake of Russia's aggression against Ukraine, Central Asian and Caucasus countries that have close historical and economic ties with Russia have each been forced to take a cautious approach. Central Asian and Caucasus countries have been absent from or abstained from voting on UN General Assembly resolutions related to the aggression against Ukraine, with the exception of Georgia, which has expressed support for Ukraine, and many of these countries have avoided making their positions clear externally. Meanwhile, Japan and the five Central Asian countries have concurred, seizing various opportunities including the framework of the "Central Asia plus Japan" Dialogue, on the importance of upholding the Charter of the UN and other international laws, which includes respecting the independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity of all countries and peacefully settling disputes.

Japan and the Central Asian and Caucasus countries have traditionally maintained friendly relations. Following the independence of these countries upon the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Japan was among the first to establish diplomatic relations, and continues its efforts to strengthen bilateral relations with Central Asian and Caucasus countries through high-level dialogues, economic cooperation, and other means.

In addition, in light of the current international situation, the importance of the "Trans-Caspian International Transport Route," a transportation route linking Central Asia and Europe, is attracting

increasing attention from Central Asian and Caucasus countries as well as Western countries. Japan is also focusing on enhancing connectivity within the region, and from Central Asia to the world and promoting economic cooperation, including facilitating logistics by speeding up customs clearance.

In recent years, there has also been a growing movement among Central Asian countries and neighboring countries to promote regional cooperation. In 2025, there were a number of meetings attended by the leaders of Central Asian countries, including a Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) summit meeting (August), a Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) summit meeting (October), and a Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) summit meeting (November). In addition, between the Kyrgyz Republic and Tajikistan, a treaty on the border was signed in March, representing the fruition of years of negotiations through constructive dialogue between the two governments on their border, which had remained undelimited since the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Between Armenia and Azerbaijan, in August, the leaders of the two countries signed a joint declaration toward a peace agreement to end a conflict spanning more than 30 years, witnessed by President Trump of the U.S. In response, Japan issued a Foreign Minister's Statement welcoming the signing of the declaration, and expressed high appreciation for the mediation efforts by the U.S., including by President Trump, as well as expectation that the signing of the document would lead to the achievement of peace and ultimately a final resolution of the conflict between the two countries, bringing lasting peace and prosperity to the Caucasus region. Georgia regards EU and NATO membership as foreign policy priorities. While the European Council granted Georgia the status of an EU candidate country in December 2023, Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze announced in November 2024 that Georgia would not begin the EU accession process until the end of 2028. This prompted citizens supporting EU accession to launch large-scale protest activities, which led to clashes with security forces and many arrests and injuries. Japan issued a Press Secretary's Statement expressing concerns over the situation and urging the Georgian government to exercise restraint to avoid a further deterioration of the situation and expressing Japan's hope that the Georgian government would take a constructive approach that would gain the understanding of its people and that the situation would calm down as soon as possible. It should be noted that problems exist regarding South Ossetia and Abkhazia, and Georgia has severed diplomatic relations with Russia.

(2) Central Asian Countries

The countries of Central Asia are partners of Japan in maintaining and strengthening a free and open international order, and Japan is promoting diplomacy aimed at contributing to peace and stability in Central Asia.

Japan launched the framework of the "Central Asia plus Japan" Dialogue (CA+JAD) in 2004, based on the recognition that interregional cooperation is indispensable for the development of Central Asia. With Japan playing a catalytic role, the framework promotes intraregional cooperation with the Central Asian countries as the main actors. Japan and the Central Asian countries have promoted cooperation in various fields including politics, economy, and people-to-people exchanges, through up to ten Foreign Ministers' Meetings including online meetings, Senior Officials Meetings (SOM), and business dialogues by government officials, expert meetings on topics such as drug control and border management, and tourism, as well as the Tokyo Dialogue (an open symposium by experts) on topics such as connectivity with Central Asia and the Caucasus. In addition, in February 2025, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan invited law enforcement officials from the five Central Asian countries to Japan and held the "Central Asian Counter Terrorism Workshop: Building Cooperation and Coordination to Promote the Rule of Law," confirming cooperation in international counter-terrorism measures.

In recent years, the international community has shown increasing interest in strengthening relations with the Central Asian countries, and with the U.S., the EU, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC),[6]

(6) GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council): Established in 1981 by Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Bahrain, Oman, Qatar, and Kuwait. Its purpose is to promote coordination, integration, and cooperation among participating countries in all fields, including defense and the economy.

China, Russia, India, Germany, and Italy holding summit meetings with the Central Asian countries, Japan held the Summit of the "Central Asia plus Japan" Dialogue (CA+JAD) for the first time in December 2025. (See the Column on page 165) At the summit the leaders of the six countries adopted a Joint Declaration (Tokyo Declaration) where the "CA+JAD Tokyo Initiative" for a mutually beneficial relationship to support the industrial upgrading and diversification of Central Asia have been launched and "Green and Resilience," "Connectivity," and "Human Resource Development" are announced as the three priority areas of cooperation. Prior to the summit, from January through February, Special Advisor to the Prime Minister NAGASHIMA Akihisa visited the five Central Asian countries as Special Envoy of the Prime Minister, and exchanged views on cooperation toward the Summit of the "Central Asia plus Japan" Dialogue and bilateral relations through meetings with the foreign ministers and other officials of each country, and courtesy calls to the Presidents of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. In addition, in August, Foreign Minister Iwaya visited Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, and concurred to hold the Summit of the "Central Asia plus Japan" Dialogue at an early date. Japan will continue to strengthen its relations with Central Asia through high-level dialogues and other means. Regarding relations with Uzbekistan, in August, Head of the Department of Creative Economy and Tourism of the Presidential Administration Gayane Umelova visited Japan on the occasion of Uzbekistan's National Day at the Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan. Furthermore, in the same month, Foreign Minister Iwaya of Japan visited Uzbekistan, held the first-ever Japan-Uzbekistan Foreign Ministers' Strategic Dialogue with Foreign Minister Bakhtiyor Saidov, and paid a courtesy call on President Shavkat Mirziyoyev and others. At the Foreign Ministers' Strategic Dialogue, the two sides discussed cooperation toward the early holding of the Summit of the "Central Asia plus Japan" Dialogue and bilateral relations, and after the meeting, the Joint Communiqué of the First Foreign Ministers' Strategic Dialogue was signed by the two foreign ministers, and letters were signed and exchanged regarding the Grant Aid project "Project for Human Resource Development Scholarship" and the "Project for Promoting Economic Activities in Surkhandarya Region through Supporting Self-reliance of Vulnerable People including Afghan People." In December, a summit meeting was held between President Mirziyoyev, who visited Japan to attend the Summit of the "Central Asia plus Japan" Dialogue, and Prime Minister Takaichi, resulting in the announcement of a "Joint Statement on Expanded Strategic Partnership for future generations." Prior to the Dialogue Summit, the Exchange of Notes regarding the Yen Loan "Livestock Promotion and Animal Health Enhancement Project" was signed and exchanged.

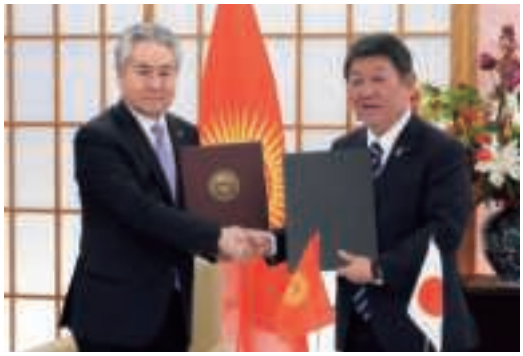


Courtesy call by Foreign Minister Iwaya on President Mirziyoyev of Uzbekistan (August 27, Tashkent, Uzbekistan)

Regarding relations with Kazakhstan, in March, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Murat Nurtleu visited Japan as a guest of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, held a meeting with Foreign Minister Iwaya, and paid courtesy calls on Prime Minister Ishiba and Chief Cabinet Secretary HAYASHI Yoshimasa. In addition, Minister of Trade and Integration Arman Shakkaliyev visited Japan on the occasion of Kazakhstan's National Day at the Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan in August. Furthermore, in the same month, Foreign Minister Iwaya of Japan visited Kazakhstan, paid a courtesy call on President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev and others, and held a Foreign Ministers' Meeting with Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Murat Nurtleu, at which the two foreign ministers signed and exchanged the notes on grant aid for "the Economic and Social Development Programme" (support for nuclear test victims: provision of medical equipment). In December, a summit meeting was held between President Tokayev, who visited Japan to attend the Summit of the "Central Asia plus Japan" Dialogue, and Prime Minister Takaichi, and as an outcome, the "Joint Statement between the Republic of Kazakhstan



Courtesy call by Foreign Minister Iwaya on President Tokayev of Kazakhstan (August 25, Astana, Kazakhstan)



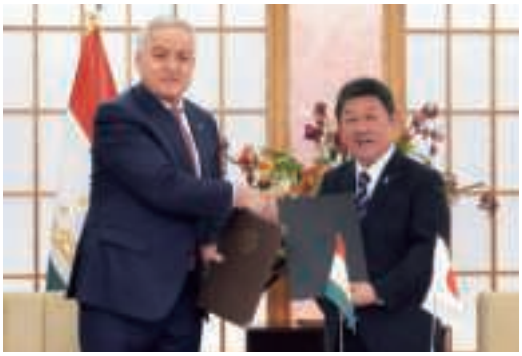
Japan-Kyrgyz Foreign Ministers' Meeting (December 19, Tokyo)

and Japan on Further Synergy of the Future-Oriented Expanded Strategic Partnership" was announced, and the two sides agreed to begin consultations toward the conclusion of an aviation agreement.

Regarding relations with the Kyrgyz Republic, Deputy Chairman of the Cabinet Edil Baisalov visited Japan on the occasion of the Kyrgyz Republic's National Day at the Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan in June. In December, a summit meeting was held between President Sadyr Zhaparov, who visited Japan to attend the Summit of the "Central Asia plus Japan" Dialogue, and Prime Minister Takaichi, and as an outcome, the "Joint Statement on Further Development of Relations between Japan and the Kyrgyz Republic to Co-create Mutually Beneficial Cooperation" was announced. In addition, a meeting was held between Minister of Foreign Affairs Jeenbek Kulubayev, who accompanied the President, and Foreign Minister Motegi, and on this occasion, the "Cooperation Program between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic for 2026–2027" and the Japan-Kyrgyz Republic Tax Agreement were signed.

Regarding relations with Tajikistan, in May, State Minister for Foreign Affairs FUJII Hisayuki attended the "High-Level International Conference on Glaciers' Preservation" held in Dushanbe as a representative of the Government of Japan, and held meetings with Foreign Minister Sirojiddin Muhriddin and other government officials, exchanging views on bilateral relations and other matters. First Deputy Prime Minister Hokim Kholiqzoda visited Japan on the occasion of Tajikistan's National Day at the Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan in June. In addition, in the same month, the 3rd Meeting of the Japan-Tajikistan Intergovernmental Commission for Economic, Technological and Scientific Cooperation was held in Tokyo. In December, a summit meeting was held between President Emomali Rahmon, who visited Japan to attend the Summit of the "Central Asia plus Japan" Dialogue, and Prime Minister Takaichi, and as an outcome, the "Joint Statement between Japan and the Republic of Tajikistan on Further Development of Relations to Co-create Mutually Beneficial Cooperation" was announced. In addition, a Foreign Ministers' Meeting was held between Minister Sirojiddin Muhriddin, who accompanied the President, and Foreign Minister Motegi, and on this occasion, the "Cooperation Program between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Tajikistan for 2026–2028" and the Japan-Tajikistan Investment Agreement were signed.

Regarding relations with Turkmenistan, in April, on the occasion of the Turkmenistan National Day — the first National Day Event of Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan — President of Turkmenistan Serdar Berdimuhamedov visited Japan and held a summit meeting with Prime Minister Ishiba, confirming that the two countries would work closely together toward deepening their bilateral relationship as a mutually beneficial partner based on friendship and mutual trust, with a joint press release issued as an outcome of the meeting. In November, the Japan-Turkmenistan Tax Convention entered into force. In December, President Berdimuhamedov, who visited Japan again to attend the Summit of the "Central Asia plus Japan" Dialogue, held a summit meeting with Prime Minister Takaichi, and a joint press release was issued as an outcome of the meeting.



Japan-Tajikistan Foreign Ministers' Meeting (December 19, Tokyo)



Japan-Turkmenistan Summit Meeting (December 20, Tokyo; Photo: Official Website of the Prime Minister's Office of Japan)

(3) Caucasus Countries

The Caucasus region has 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 announced the Caucasus Initiative in 2018, which is comprised of two pillars: (a) assistance for human resources development for state building (human resources development) and (b) assistance for paving the way to "Appealing Caucasus" (infrastructure development and business environment improvement), and develops its diplomacy in line with this initiative.

Regarding relations with Azerbaijan, Assistant to the President Anar Alakbarov visited Japan on the occasion of Azerbaijan's National Day at the Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan in June. Assistant to the President Alakbarov met with Minister for the World Expo 2025 ITO Yoshitaka and Special Advisor to the Prime Minister Nagashima, and they had discussions aimed at further strengthening bilateral relations.

Regarding relations with Armenia, Prime Minister Ishiba held a summit meeting with Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, who visited Japan on the occasion of Armenia's National Day at the Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan in September, welcoming the signing of the joint declaration toward a peace agreement between Armenia and Azerbaijan, and expressing expectations for the achievement of peace. In addition, in December, the Japan-Armenia Tax Convention entered into force.

Regarding relations with Georgia, in December, Commissioner of the Japan Sports Agency KAWAI Junichi received a courtesy call from Minister of Sports Shalva Gogoladze, and exchanged views on bilateral cooperation on sports.

Column

Summit of the "Central Asia plus Japan" Dialogue

On December 20, the first-ever Summit of the "Central Asia plus Japan" Dialogue (CA+JAD) was held in Tokyo. The meeting was chaired by Prime Minister Takaichi, and attended by President of Kazakhstan, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, President of the Kyrgyz Republic, Sadyr Zhaparov, President of Tajikistan, Emomali Rahmon, President of Turkmenistan, Serdar Berdimuhamedov and President of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev.



CA+JAD logo ©MORI Kaoru

Twenty-one years have passed since Japan pioneered the establishment of CA+JAD in 2004 as a dialogue mechanism with the Central Asian countries, ahead of other nations. At this Summit Meeting, discussions were held on the importance and potential of the Central Asian region and on cooperation with Japan, against the backdrop of changes in the international situation within and surrounding the region during this period. Prime Minister Takaichi highlighted the importance and potential of the Central Asian region, including (a) its geopolitical significance as a junction between Europe and Asia, (b) its importance in economic security due to its energy and mineral resources, and (c) its potential with high economic growth and population increase. Building on these points, Prime Minister Takaichi declared, on the occasion of this Summit Meeting, the launch of the "CA+JAD Tokyo Initiative" to support the industrial advancement and diversification of the five Central Asian countries and strengthen the mutually beneficial relationship between Japan and Central Asia. Specifically, Prime Minister Takaichi announced that Japan would promote mutually beneficial projects centered on the three priority areas of cooperation newly identified on this occasion: (a) Green and Resilience (examples: cooperation on energy transition, disaster risk reduction, and climate change measures; strengthening of critical minerals supply chains); (b) Connectivity (examples: Enhancing Connectivity through Support for the Further Development of the "Trans-Caspian International Transport Route"; Launch of the "Japan-Central Asia AI Cooperation Partnership"); and (c) Human resource development (examples: continuation of the Project for Human Resource Development Scholarship (JDS) and others; cooperation in the health and medical fields).



Group photo at the Summit of the "Central Asia plus Japan" Dialogue (December 20, Tokyo; Photo: Official Website of the Prime Minister's Office of Japan)


CA+JAD image character life-size panel ©MORI Kaoru

The leaders of the Central Asian countries expressed gratitude for Japan's cooperation and support in the three priority cooperation areas, and showed their willingness to form mutually beneficial projects between Japan and Central Asia.

At the conclusion of the meeting, the Tokyo Declaration of the Summit of the "Central Asia plus Japan" Dialogue (Tokyo Declaration) was adopted. In addition, more than 150 documents were signed and presented by both the public and private sectors.

It is expected that Japan's relations with Central Asia will be further strengthened through the Summit Meeting as well as the bilateral summit meetings held separately with each of the five Central Asian countries.

Section 7 The Middle East and North Africa

1 Overview

The Middle East and North Africa (hereinafter "the Middle East") is located at 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 is a market with high potential, as the diversification of economy and decarbonization are being advanced, especially in the Gulf countries, against a backdrop of a significant population growth rate.

Meanwhile, the region has gone through various conflicts and disputes throughout its history, and still faces a number of destabilizing factors and challenges. In particular, regarding the situation surrounding Gaza, following the terror attacks by Hamas and others against Israel in October 2023, the United States (U.S.), Qatar, and Egypt have made mediation efforts in order to achieve a cease-fire and the release of hostages. Diplomatic efforts have also been made at the United Nations (UN) for adopting multiple ceasefire resolutions. Japan engaged in repeated diplomatic efforts, based on its relations with the countries in the region and as a member of the G7 and, until 2024, as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), and then, in close cooperation with the countries concerned in order to improve the humanitarian situation and de-escalate the situation as soon as possible.

In 2025, tensions in the Middle East region intensified. In particular, in June, Israel carried out large-scale military strikes against Iranian nuclear-related facilities and other targets, and Iran in turn launched missile and drone attacks against Israel in retaliation, resulting in a continued exchange of attacks between Israel and Iran, and rising tensions throughout the region rapidly. Foreign Minister Iwaya continued diplomatic efforts toward regional stabilization, including by expressing grave concern over the exchange of attacks and the severe damage caused, and by calling on both sides to avoid any further escalation of the situation, in telephone calls with Foreign Minister Seyyed Abbas Araghchi of Iran and Foreign Minister Gideon Sa'ar of Israel, among others. Subsequently, the U.S. carried out strikes on Iranian nuclear facilities, and on the 24th, the U.S. announced a ceasefire agreement between Israel and Iran. The Government of Japan welcomed the announcement of this ceasefire agreement and expressed its expectation for the steady and faithful implementation of the agreement.

With regard to the situation in Gaza, although a ceasefire agreement entered into force in January 2025, attacks by Israel resumed in March. In October, progress was made, including the realization of a ceasefire and the release of hostages, as an agreement was reached between the parties based on the Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict put forward by President Trump of the U.S. Foreign Minister Iwaya welcomed the conclusion of the agreement under the leadership of President Trump and expressed Japan's respect for the tireless efforts of mediating countries such as the U.S., Qatar, Egypt, and Türkiye. Furthermore, a statement was released urging all parties concerned to implement the agreement and to comply with international law, including international humanitarian law, with a view to improving the humanitarian situation and realizing a two-state solution.

With regard to Iran's nuclear issue, citing Iran's significant non-performance of its commitments under

the 2015 nuclear agreement (JCPOA),[1] the so-called "snapback" was triggered at the UN Security Council in September, resulting in the reimposition of sanctions against Iran. In connection, in the same month, Foreign Minister Iwaya held a meeting with Foreign Minister Araghchi of Iran and called for the early resumption of talks between the U.S. and Iran on the nuclear issue and the immediate resumption of full cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). In December, Foreign Minister Motegi held a telephone call with Foreign Minister Araghchi and emphasized once again the importance of continuing diplomatic efforts toward the resolution of Iran's nuclear issue through dialogue.

In the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden, attacks by the Houthis (an armed group in Yemen) on commercial vessels severely disrupted international supply chains. Japan has played a role in ensuring the rights and freedom of navigation, working in close coordination with the international community.

In the West Bank, restrictions on economic activity and people's movement have exacerbated already poor socio-economic conditions, while Israel's continuing settlement activities and settler violence have expanded, creating friction between settlers and residents. In Syria, the administration established under President Ahmad al-Sharaa has been advancing dialogue toward an inclusive political settlement and national reconciliation, while sporadic clashes between various religious and tribal communities within the country continue to occur. Furthermore, Israel's occupation of the Golan Heights continues. In Afghanistan, there are continued concerns about the deteriorating and serious humanitarian situation, including damage caused by earthquakes that struck in September and November.

The situation in the Middle East is directly tied to Japan's peace and prosperity. Therefore, it is extremely important for Japan to promote peace and stability in the Middle East, and to maintain and develop good relations with countries in the region. From this perspective, Japan in recent years has been striving to strengthen its ties with Middle Eastern countries in a wide range of fields that include the economy, politics, security, culture, and people-to-people exchanges. Through opportunities such as high-level visits to Japan from various countries on the occasion of Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan, the Ninth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD 9) held in August, and summit-level and foreign-minister-level meetings held on the occasion of the Japan-Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)[2] Foreign Ministers' Meeting in September, Japan strengthened bilateral relations with individual countries and exchanged views on the increasingly tense situation in the Middle East.

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. After the inauguration of the Biden administration in the U.S. in 2021, there were momentary signs that indicated the resumption of cooperation between the parties, and there were some positive developments such as high-level contacts. However, at the end of December 2022, a coalition government that included a far-right party was formed in Israel, and since then, violent acts and clashes have occurred intermittently in Israel and Palestine, including in Jerusalem, resulting in numerous casualties.

On October 7, Hamas and other Palestinian militants launched thousands of rockets at Israel from the Gaza Strip, and a large number of fighters breached Israeli checkpoints and borders, killing and kidnapping Israel Defense Forces (IDF) soldiers as well as civilians, including foreign nationals. At least 1,200 Israelis were killed and more than 5,500 wounded. In addition,

(1) JCPOA (Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action): A plan that imposes constraints on Iran's nuclear activities while ensuring they remain peaceful, and that sets out in detail the procedures for lifting previously imposed sanctions.

(2) GCC: Gulf Cooperation Council. Established in 1981 by Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Bahrain, Oman, Qatar, and Kuwait. Its purpose is to promote coordination, integration, and cooperation among participating countries in all fields, such as defense and the economy.

more than 250 people, including foreign nationals, were taken into the Gaza Strip and held hostage. In response, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu declared a "state of war" and the IDF launched large-scale air strikes on the Gaza Strip, followed by a ground operation.

According to Gaza health authorities, as of the end of December 2025, more than 71,266 people had been killed and more than 171,222 injured in the Gaza Strip, and approximately 1.9 million Gaza residents had been displaced.

As the fighting dragged on, the U.S., Egypt, and Qatar played leading roles in mediation efforts to reach a cease-fire and hostage release agreement between Israel and Hamas. In this context, in January 2025, an agreement on the release of hostages and a ceasefire was reached between the parties. Following the agreement, some hostages were released and humanitarian assistance was expanded; however, from March onward, Israeli forces resumed military operations, which further expanded to cover the entire Gaza Strip. Following the announcement by U.S. President Trump of his "Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict" at the end of September, an agreement on a ceasefire and hostage release was reached between Israel and Hamas in October. In November, UN Security Council resolution 2803, which endorsed the "Comprehensive Plan" and called on all parties to implement it, was adopted. International efforts are underway toward the stabilization, recovery, and reconstruction of Gaza.

In the West Bank, a severe situation continues, including the expansion of Israeli settlements and a sharp increase in acts of violence by settlers, the conduct of security operations by Israel, deterioration of the socioeconomic situation due to movement restrictions, and financial difficulties facing the Palestinian Authority.

As a notable development in the Middle East peace process, continuing from 2024, the number of countries recognizing a Palestinian state increased in 2025 as well, mainly among European nations. French President Emmanuel Macron, working in cooperation with Saudi Arabia, convened the "High-Level International Conference for the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestinian and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution," leading the movement toward recognition of a Palestinian state. Countries including France, the United Kingdom (UK), Canada, and Australia recognized a Palestinian state.

B The Government of Japan's Efforts

In its efforts to realize a two-state solution where Israel and Palestine can coexist peacefully, Japan, in coordination with the international community, has actively contributed through the three pillars: political dialogue with stakeholders, confidence building among parties concerned, and assistance to the Palestinians.

As a distinctive Japanese initiative, Japan has been promoting the "Corridor for Peace and Prosperity" initiative, aimed 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 2025, 18 Palestinian private enterprises are operating at the Jericho Agro-Industrial Park (JAIP) project, the initiative's flagship project creating approximately 285 jobs. In addition, Japan is mobilizing resources and economic development knowledge of East Asian countries to support Palestinian state-building through the Conference on the Cooperation among East Asian Countries for Palestinian Development (CEAPAD). On July 11, in order to discuss the assistance needs arising from the situation in Gaza, Foreign Minister Iwaya co-chaired the fourth ministerial meeting of CEAPAD in Malaysia, together with Minister of Foreign Affairs of Malaysia Dato' Seri Utama Haji Mohamad bin Haji Hasan, and Minister of Planning and International Cooperation of Palestine Estephan Salameh, and the Co-Chairs' Joint Statement and the Action Plan were adopted as the outcomes. In November, a working-level online meeting was held as a follow-up to the ministerial meeting, at which the formal membership of the Philippines was welcomed. Since October 2023, Japan has provided humanitarian and recovery assistance totaling approximately 410 million U.S. dollars to the Palestinians.

Since October 7, 2023, Japan has consistently and unequivocally condemned the terror attacks by Hamas and others, and called on all parties concerned to achieve a cease-fire and the release of hostages, comply with international law, including international humanitarian law, improve the humanitarian situation, and calm the situation at the earliest opportunity. Japan has also made proactive diplomatic efforts by vigorously

Special Feature

Fourth Ministerial Meeting of the Conference on Cooperation among East Asian Countries for Palestinian Development (CEAPAD)

On July 11, Japan co-hosted with Malaysia and Palestine the fourth ministerial meeting of the Conference on Cooperation among East Asian Countries for Palestinian Development (CEAPAD)[1] in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. CEAPAD is a regional cooperation framework launched by Japan in 2013 as one of Japan's unique initiatives to support Palestinian state-building efforts by drawing on resources, knowledge, and experiences of economic development of East Asian countries.

In the wake of the terror attacks carried out by Hamas and other Palestinian militant groups on October 7, 2023, the situation in Gaza deteriorated rapidly. Recognizing that the humanitarian assistance needs of the people of Gaza, who find themselves in a critical humanitarian situation, as well as the enormous early-recovery and reconstruction needs, are challenges that can only be addressed through the concerted efforts of the entire international community, Japan has worked to revitalize this framework and has played a role as a regional leader. Japan held multiple working-level online meetings, receiving briefings from the Palestinian Authority (PA) and international organizations, including the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), on the situation on the ground, assistance needs, and plans for recovery and reconstruction, while engaging in repeated discussions that also encompassed medium- to long-term challenges such as PA reforms and fiscal issues. Subsequently, following the agreement reached at the Japan-Malaysia Summit Meeting in January to advance cooperation on assistance to Palestine, and with the cooperation of Malaysia, it was decided to hold the ministerial meeting.

The fourth ministerial meeting, convened in this manner, was attended by a record-high 10 ministerial-level participants from 13 countries and regions and two international organizations, including the co-chairs: Foreign Minister Iwaya, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Malaysia Dato' Seri Utama Haji Mohamad bin Haji Hasan, and Minister of Planning and International Cooperation of Palestine Estephan Anton Salameh. Each participating country expressed its intention for future support to Palestine based on its respective strengths, and the participants confirmed that they would continue to strengthen coordination and promote cooperation through CEAPAD in areas including humanitarian aid, recovery and reconstruction assistance, and PA reforms support. As results of the meeting, in addition to a Co-Chairs' Joint Statement, the participants adopted the CEAPAD IV Kuala Lumpur Action Plan, which outlines the needs of Palestine and the areas of assistance where each participant can leverage their strengths, and which will serve as a guide for future assistance within the CEAPAD framework.

In October, a ceasefire and hostage release agreement between the parties was reached in Gaza based on United States President Donald J. Trump's "Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict," and the international community began in earnest to move toward the reconstruction of Gaza. In light of these developments, in November, a working-level online meeting of CEAPAD was held, at which participants confirmed that countries would continue to collaborate and cooperate in support of humanitarian assistance to Gaza, early recovery and reconstruction support for Gaza, Palestine's economic development, and state-building and PA reforms, and that they would actively engage in regional and international initiatives concerning the implementation of a two-state solution through the CEAPAD framework.

As part of efforts toward the implementation of the "Comprehensive Plan" and a future "two-state solution," Japan will continue to work to expand the circle of support for Palestine through CEAPAD and to strengthen coordination.



Foreign Minister Iwaya serving as co-chair at the fourth Ministerial Meeting of CEAPAD (left) and a scene from the meeting (right) (July 11, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia)

1 CEAPAD: The circle of cooperation within CEAPAD is expanding: Laos and Cambodia became official members in 2024, and the Philippines in 2025, while Timor-Leste participated for the first time as an observer at the fourth Ministerial Meeting. As of the end of December 2025, membership stands at 11 countries and regions and three international organizations.

holding meetings and telephone calls with counterparts from concerned countries and regions at leaders' and foreign- ministers' levels. When agreements were reached between the parties in January and October 2025, Foreign Minister Iwaya released statements welcoming the conclusion of the agreements and calling for their sincere and steady implementation. On the occasion of the adoption of UN Security Council resolution 2803, Foreign Minister Motegi released a statement welcoming the adoption of the resolution.

Furthermore, in November, Foreign Minister Motegi newly appointed OKUBO Takeshi as Ambassador in charge of Gaza Rebuilding Assistance, in order to address matters including support for Palestinian state-building centered on Gaza reconstruction and human contributions to the provisional governance mechanism for Gaza.

(2) Israel

The current government was formed in December 2022 as a coalition led by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's Likud Party with participation from far-right parties. In October 2023, a national unity government was formed that included the main opposition parties following terror attacks by Hamas and others. In relations with Japan, numerous high-level and candid exchanges took place. In May, Minister of Foreign Affairs Sa'ar of Israel, visited Japan, the first visit by an Israeli foreign minister in 15 years, to attend the National Day ceremony of Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan, and held a meeting with Foreign Minister Iwaya. In August, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs MATSUMOTO Hisashi visited Israel and held meetings with Foreign Minister Sa'ar and Knesset Speaker Amir Ohana. Furthermore, Foreign Minister Iwaya held three foreign ministers' telephone talks following the foreign ministers' meeting in May. In January 2026, Foreign Minister Motegi visited Israel, where he held talks with Foreign Minister Sa'ar and paid courtesy calls on Prime Minister Netanyahu and President Isaac Herzog. Foreign Minister Motegi urged Israel to take appropriate measures regarding the robust implementation of the "Comprehensive Plan," the protection of civilians and ensuring the humanitarian assistance in Gaza. He also conveyed that settlement activities in the West Bank are in violation of international law, that Japan is seriously concerned that the expansion of settlements and the increase in settler violence are further destabilizing the regional situation, and that Japan attaches great importance to a two-state solution.

(3) Palestine

Based on the 1993 Oslo Accords and other agreements, the Palestinian Authority (PA) began self-rule in the West Bank and Gaza Strip from 1995. Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas assumed office as president after the presidential elections held in 2005. Following this, relations between the Fatah led by the president and Hamas deteriorated, and Hamas seized control of the Gaza Strip by military force. In 2017, an agreement in principle was reached through Egyptian mediation to transfer authority in Gaza to the PA. In 2022, through Algerian mediation, the Algiers Declaration, a reconciliation document between Palestinian factions, was signed. In July 2024, representatives of 14 Palestinian factions, including Fatah and Hamas, gathered in Beijing, China for reconciliation talks and issued the Beijing Declaration. However, a state of division between the West Bank and Gaza continues to persist.

Regarding Japan-Palestine relations, in June, Palestinian Minister of National Economy Mohammed Al-Amour visited Japan to participate in the National Day ceremony of Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan, and held a meeting with Foreign Minister Iwaya. In August, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs Matsumoto visited Palestine and held meetings with President Abbas and others. In January 2026, Foreign Minister Motegi visited Palestine, where he held talks with Prime Minister Mohammad Mustafa and paid a courtesy call on Vice President Hussein al-Sheikh. Foreign Minister Motegi explained Japan's consistent support for a two-state solution and Japan's position on support for Gaza reconstruction and Palestinian state-building, and expressed Japan's deep concern over the deteriorating situation in the West Bank and expectations for steady progress in PA reforms. The two sides concurred on launching the "Japan-Palestine High-Level Political Dialogue" in order to continue cooperating for peace and stability in the Middle East region.

(4) Afghanistan

Located at the nexus of the Middle East, Central Asia and South Asia, Afghanistan is a geopolitically important country that has historically been a crossroads of various religions, cultures, and ethnic groups.

In Afghanistan, the Taliban seized control of the capital, Kabul, in August 2021, and announced formation of a "transitional government" the following month, but there are still concerns about a lack of ethnic and religious inclusiveness, as well as ongoing significant restrictions on the rights of women and girls, including access to education and employment. The so-called "vice and virtue law," based on their own interpretation of Islam, which severely restricts the conduct of the people, continues to be applied, and the international community has expressed serious concerns.

Also, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has reported that production of poppy, a raw material for narcotic drugs that has historically been widely cultivated in the country, has declined significantly, partly due to the Taliban's control of poppy production after 2022. The challenge is whether poppy farmers can be led to move away from illegal drug cultivation and toward legitimate alternative livelihoods.

Although security has improved, sporadic terrorist attacks by groups affiliated with the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) (Khorasan Province) have occurred in various places, and in October, a large-scale armed clash occurred near the border with Pakistan, resulting in casualties, which has become one of the factors destabilizing the regional situation. Against this backdrop, Japan continues direct engagement with the Taliban and calls on them to promote the social and political participation of all Afghan citizens, including women and social minorities, the elimination of restrictions, and the building of constructive relations with the international community, to prevent Afghanistan from becoming once again a hotbed of terrorism and isolation from the international community. Japan has also actively contributed to discussions on the international stage.

According to a UN announcement, approximately half of the country's population needs humanitarian assistance, and Japan has continued to provide humanitarian assistance and support for basic human needs (minimum requirements for a basic human life) through international organizations even after the Taliban took control of Kabul.

In September, an earthquake struck eastern Afghanistan, causing large-scale damage including the deaths of more than 2,000 people. In response, Japan released a statement by Foreign Minister Iwaya and provided emergency relief goods through the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), as well as an Emergency Grant through international organizations in the fields of food, health and medical care, and water and sanitation. In November, another earthquake struck northern Afghanistan, prompting Japan to release a message of condolence from Foreign Minister Motegi and provide emergency relief goods through JICA.

(5) Iran

Iran is a major Shiite regional power with a population of approximately 92 million that boasts abundant natural resources. Japan has developed a traditionally friendly relationship with Iran for more than 90 years.

On June 13, Israel carried out attacks against Iranian nuclear-related facilities and other targets, and on June 21, the U.S. announced that it carried out strikes on three nuclear-related facilities in Iran: Fordo, Natanz, and Isfahan.

Japan has consistently expressed serious concern over Iran's nuclear issue based on the position that Iran's development of nuclear weapons must never be allowed for the sake of maintaining the international nuclear non-proliferation regime, and has been making diplomatic efforts to resolve the issue in coordination with the U.S. and others. From this perspective, in the context of the exchange of attacks between Israel and Iran, Japan expressed through statements by the Foreign Minister and other means its strong hope that the path to dialogue would be reopened by efforts toward a resolution of Iran's nuclear issue through dialogue, and urged both Iran and Israel to exercise maximum restraint. Japan also provided support for the evacuation of Japanese nationals in Iran by land routes, from the perspective of protecting its nationals residing in Iran.

Regarding the nuclear issue, following the U.S.'s withdrawal from the Iran nuclear agreement (Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA)) in 2018, Iran has taken countermeasures to gradually suspend

its commitments under the nuclear agreement since July 2019. The Pezeshkian administration, which took office in 2024, has shown eagerness to engage in dialogue with Europe and the U.S., and indirect talks between the U.S. and Iran were held multiple times from April 2025 onward. However, these talks were subsequently suspended due to the impact of the attacks on Iran's nuclear-related facilities by Israel and the U.S. in June. Furthermore, in July, Iran announced the enforcement of the law to suspend cooperation with the IAEA, and as of the end of 2025, inspections of nuclear facilities affected by the attacks had not resumed. In August, UK, France, and Germany — participants in the JCPOA — notified the UNSC of Iran's "significant non-performance" of the JCPOA pursuant to UNSC Resolution 2231 of 2015, resulting in the reimposition in September of the sanctions against Iran that had been lifted under that resolution.

Japan has consistently maintained its position that Iran's development of nuclear weapons must never be allowed. Japan also considers that the ultimate resolution of Iran's nuclear issue can only be achieved through dialogue, and that, to this end, in addition to reaching agreement through consultations between Iran and the relevant countries, the continued involvement of the IAEA is essential. From this perspective, Japan has emphasized the importance of the early resumption of talks between the U.S. and Iran, and strongly urges Iran to properly implement the re-applied UNSC resolutions and, in accordance with its obligations under the relevant safeguards agreements, to immediately resume full cooperation with the IAEA. Furthermore, regarding the reimposition of UNSC sanctions against Iran, Japan duly implemented its domestic measures based on the relevant UNSC resolutions without delay in September.

Japan is an ally of the U.S. while also maintaining good relations with Iran for many years. In May, the Japan-Iran Vice-Ministerial Consultation was held. In response to Israel's attacks against Iran in June, two telephone calls were held between Foreign Minister Iwaya and Foreign Minister Araghchi of Iran in the same month. In September, Foreign Minister Iwaya held an in-person meeting with Foreign Minister Araghchi for the first time while visiting New York, U.S.

Furthermore, in December, Foreign Minister Motegi held a telephone call with Foreign Minister Araghchi,



Japan-Iran Foreign Ministers' Meeting (September 23, New York, U.S.)

and the two ministers concurred on continuing close dialogue between Japan and Iran at various levels toward peace and stability in the region. In this way, Japan has been making its own diplomatic efforts to ease tensions and stabilize the situation in the Middle East by directly communicating its concerns to Iran on various issues at every opportunity, while continuing multilayered dialogues with Iran at various levels.

In February 2026, U.S.-Iran talks resumed, however, on February 28, Israel and the U.S. carried out attacks against Iran, resulting in the deaths of Iranian leaders including Supreme Leader Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei and senior commanders of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, among others. Iran subsequently launched retaliatory strikes against Israel and neighboring countries. In response, Japan has been working in close coordination with relevant countries to gather information, and continues to make every effort to ensure the safety of Japanese nationals throughout the region, including in countries neighboring Iran, and to monitor the situation of maritime and air traffic and provide information to relevant parties. Furthermore, based on Japan's consistent position that Iran's development of nuclear weapons must never be allowed, Japan has communicated externally its strong call on Iran to cease actions that destabilize the region, including attacks on neighboring countries, and to pursue a diplomatic resolution. Japan's position is clearly set out in the Foreign Minister's statement of March 1. Japan also condemns Iran's actions, given that Iran's attacks have extended to civilian facilities, including energy facilities in neighboring countries, as well as diplomatic facilities, resulting in civilian casualties; that Iran has made reference to the closure of the

Strait of Hormuz; and that civilian vessels have in fact been attacked in the Strait of Hormuz and surrounding waters. Immediately after the outbreak of the situation, Foreign Minister Motegi held meetings with relevant countries, including Gulf countries such as the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Iraq, Oman, Qatar, Kuwait, and Jordan, conveying Japan's aforementioned position and requesting cooperation in ensuring the safety of Japanese nationals and confirmed that they would maintain close communication in response to the situation and work together in a coordinated manner. Foreign Minister Motegi also clearly conveyed Japan's position to the parties concerned, including Israel and Iran, requested their cooperation in ensuring the safety of Japanese nationals, and urged them to seek an early calming of the situation, expressing Japan's strong hope for this outcome.

The peace and stability of the Middle East region, including energy security, and maintaining the international nuclear non-proliferation regime are of utmost importance to Japan. Japan will continue to make all necessary diplomatic efforts, in coordination with the international community, to bring about an early settlement of the situation.

(6) Türkiye

Türkiye is an important regional power in various respects, including its geopolitical significance. As a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), Türkiye plays a significant role in regional security while proactively pursuing multifaceted diplomacy with Europe and the U.S., Russia, and countries in the Middle East, Asia, and Africa. Türkiye has traditionally maintained a close friendship with Japan, as epitomized by episodes such as the Ertuğrul Frigate incident in 1890.

President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has exerted strong leadership for more than 20 years since becoming Prime Minister in 2003 and President in 2014, driving Türkiye's growth to a significant degree. In February 2023 a major earthquake struck southeastern Türkiye, killing more than 50,000 people. In addition, with inflation putting pressure on the lives of citizens, President Erdoğan was re-elected in the presidential election in May that year. In the subsequent local election in March 2024, President Erdoğan's Justice and Development Party (AKP) suffered its first defeat to the opposition since its founding.

On the diplomatic front, while focusing on Europe and the U.S., Türkiye has pursued a multifaceted diplomatic policy that strengthens relations not only with neighboring countries but also with South and Central America and Africa. Regarding the situation in Gaza, Türkiye has proactively provided humanitarian assistance to Gaza residents from the outset, and on the occasion of the conclusion of the Gaza ceasefire agreement mediated by U.S. President Trump in October, Türkiye contributed to the conclusion of the agreement, making use of its unique position of having channels of communication with Hamas.

In terms of Japan-Türkiye relations, in February, Turkish Grand National Assembly Speaker Numan Kurtulmuş visited Japan at the invitation of the House of Representatives, and in April, Minister of Trade Ömer Bolat visited Japan to participate in the National Day event of Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan. In August, Minister of Defense NAKATANI Gen visited Türkiye, among other exchanges, realizing active high-level visits continuing from the previous year.

Furthermore, as was the case during the Great East Japan Earthquake and the major earthquake in southeastern Türkiye in 2023, both countries, being earthquake-prone nations, support each other by leveraging their respective strengths and experiences. From the perspective of sharing knowledge on disaster preparedness, both countries have also undertaken efforts such as holding the Japan-Türkiye Disaster Preparedness Seminar.

(7) Iraq

After the Iraq War in 2003, Iraq enacted a new constitution in 2005, and a government formed through democratic elections is in charge of running the country.

On the domestic political front, a state of confusion continued and a cabinet was unable to be formed for a while after the election for the Iraqi Council of Representatives in 2021. However, since the Al-Sudani administration was formed in October 2022, stable governance has been maintained and domestic security has improved. In October 2024, the parliamentary election for the Kurdistan Region was held for the first time in six years, and in November, a national census

was conducted for the first time in 37 years since 1987. Furthermore, in November 2025, the election for the Iraqi Council of Representatives was held in a generally peaceful manner, and thus, Japan released a statement by the Press Secretary (Ministry of Foreign Affairs) welcoming this development. Meanwhile, the recent situations in neighboring countries, including the Israel and Palestine, Iran, and Syria, continue to affect the domestic situations in Iraq.

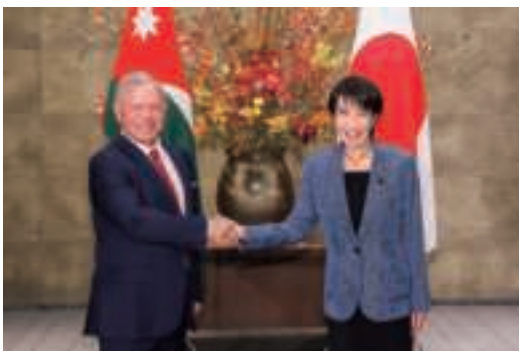
On the diplomatic front, Iraq is located between the regional powers of Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Türkiye, and is seeking to strengthen relations with neighboring countries and pursue a balanced diplomacy.

Since 2003, Japan has consistently provided support to Iraq.

(8) Jordan

The situation in Jordan remains relatively stable compared to other parts of the persistently turbulent Middle East region. Jordan has, under the leadership of King Abdullah II, played a vital role in promoting the peace and stability of the region, such as with countermeasures against extremists, its acceptance of a large number of Syrian and Palestinian refugees, and active involvement in peace, and is highly regarded internationally as an "anchor of peace and stability." Jordan and Japan have longstanding friendly ties, and their bilateral relationship was elevated to a strategic partnership in 2018, maintaining a consistently close relationship.

The year 2024 marked the 70th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Japan and Jordan and was commemorated with events held at various levels, involving both public and private sectors of both countries. In 2025, at the foreign ministerial level, Foreign Minister Iwaya held meetings with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates Ayman Safadi in February and May, and confirmed bilateral cooperation in addressing the Gaza humanitarian crisis toward the realization of a two-state solution and the establishment of long-term peace and stability in the region.



Japan-Jordan Leaders' Working Dinner (November 11, Tokyo; Photo: Official Website of the Prime Minister's Office of Japan)

In May, Crown Prince Al Hussein bin Abdullah II visited Japan on the occasion of the National Day of Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan, and held a meeting with Prime Minister Ishiba, which served as an opportunity symbolizing the excellent relations between the two countries. Furthermore, Prime Minister Takaichi held a summit meeting with King Abdullah II, who visited Japan in November, and the two sides concurred on further strengthening cooperation in the fields of security and the economy under the strategic partnership and deepening bilateral relations going forward. In terms of security, high-level exchanges were actively conducted, including the visits to Jordan by Defense Minister Nakatani in August, General Uchikura Chief of Staff, Japan Joint Staff, in November, and Commander of the Ground Component Command Kobayashi in December, and the cooperative relationship between the two countries in the field of defense has become even closer.

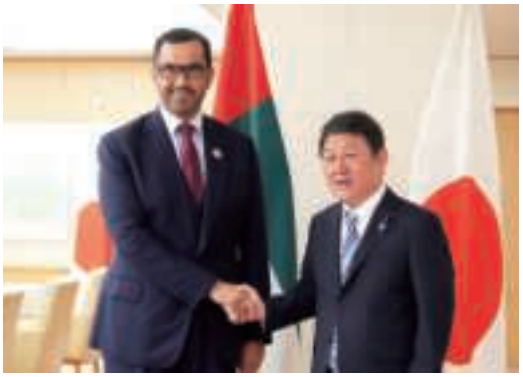
(9) The Gulf States and Yemen

In recent years, the Gulf States have been working on socioeconomic reforms with decarbonization and industrial diversification as key issues. The Gulf States are important partners for Japan from the perspective of energy security and other factors. In addition, Japan is promoting cooperation in a wide range of areas through frameworks such as "Japan-Saudi Vision 2030" with Saudi Arabia and the "Comprehensive Strategic Partnership Initiative (CSPI)" with the United Arab Emirates (UAE), based on the view that these reforms will contribute to the long-term stability and prosperity of the Middle East. Furthermore, the negotiations for the Japan-Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA), which had been suspended since 2009, the have resumed and discussions continue to be advanced.

Saudi Arabia plays a leading role in the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and is

an important energy security partner, supplying about 40% of Japan's crude oil imports. It is also the only Arab member of the G20 and is the leader of the Arab Islamic world, home to two of Islam's holiest sites. Amid continued tensions in the Middle East, Saudi Arabia continues to play an important role in stabilizing the region. Furthermore, under "Saudi Vision 2030," the country is promoting new initiatives in various fields with the aim of comprehensive socioeconomic reforms. In 2025, Japan and Saudi Arabia marked the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations, and various commemorative events were held. At the closing ceremony of Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan, a handover ceremony was held to Saudi Arabia, which will host the Expo 2030 Riyadh. In February, Minister of Foreign Affairs Faisal bin Farhan Al-Saud visited Japan and held the Second Japan-Saudi Arabia Foreign Ministers' Strategic Dialogue with Foreign Minister Iwaya. In April, Foreign Minister Iwaya visited Saudi Arabia and held talks with Foreign Minister Faisal, and in September, a telephone call was also held between these two foreign ministers. In this way, active high-level visits and meetings were held between Japan and Saudi Arabia, and the two sides confirmed the strengthening of their strategic partnership and further advancing cooperation in various fields under the framework of Japan-Saudi Vision 2030, as well as coordination in the international arena toward the stabilization of the region and the international community.

The UAE is also an important partner in terms of energy security, supplying approximately 40% of Japan's crude oil imports. Under the framework of the Japan-UAE Comprehensive Strategic Partnership Initiative (CSPI), Japan is further promoting cooperation in diverse fields. In April, Minister of Industry and Advanced Technology and Special Envoy to Japan Sultan Al Jaber visited Japan, paid courtesy calls on Prime Minister Ishiba and Chief Cabinet Secretary HAYASHI Yoshimasa, and held the Second Ministerial Level Meeting of the CSPI with Foreign Minister Iwaya. Furthermore, in December, Foreign Minister Motegi held talks with Minister of Industry and Advanced Technology and Special Envoy to Japan Jaber, who was visiting Japan, and the two sides concurred on further strengthening coordination between the two countries.



Meeting between Foreign Minister Motegi and Minister of Industry and Advanced Technology and Special Envoy to Japan Sultan Al Jaber of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) (December 17, Tokyo)

Furthermore, Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan saw a number of high-level visits from ruling families and cabinet ministers, including Vice President, Prime Minister, and Ruler of Dubai Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum and Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi Sheikh Khaled bin Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan.

In the economic field, the launch of negotiations for the Japan-UAE Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) was announced at the summit level in September 2024, and the negotiations have been advancing vigorously. Following the third round of negotiations in Tokyo in June, the fourth and fifth rounds via online format in August and November respectively, the sixth round was held in Dubai in December, and the seventh round was held in Tokyo in January 2026.

In terms of culture, the Japanese-Language Proficiency Test (JLPT) took place for the first time in the UAE in December. To promote people-to-people exchanges, in June, the period of stay without a visa was extended from 30 days to 90 days for holders of ordinary passports from the UAE.

Qatar is one of the world's largest natural gas producers and has been further raising its international profile by continuously mediating negotiations, leveraging its unique channels of communication with Iran, the Taliban, Hamas, and others, including the peace negotiations between the U.S. and the Taliban, the negotiations over the exchange of detainees between the U.S. and Iran, and the negotiations for the cease-fire and the release of hostages between Israel and Hamas.

In September, Israel carried out an attack targeting Hamas leaders in Qatar, heightening regional tensions. Japan released a statement by the Foreign Minister



State Minister for Foreign Affairs Miyaji attending the 8th Indian Ocean Conference 2025 (February 17, Muscat, Oman)

strongly condemning this attack as it threatens Qatar's sovereignty and security and, consequently, jeopardizes regional stability, and expressing solidarity with Qatar.

With Qatar, through high-level dialogues, including a meeting in September between Foreign Minister Iwaya and Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Sultan bin Saad Al-Muraikhi, as well as the Third Japan-Qatar Foreign Ministers' Strategic Dialogue held with Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani during Foreign Minister Motegi's visit to Qatar in January 2026, the two countries confirmed the further promotion of their cooperative relationship in a wide range of fields based on their Strategic Partnership.

Oman has continued to mediate, leveraging its unique channels with Iran and the Houthis, including negotiations for the normalization of diplomatic relations between Saudi Arabia and Iran, negotiations between Saudi Arabia and the Houthis, and negotiations and indirect consultations for the exchange of detainees between the U.S. and Iran. In February, State Minister for Foreign Affairs MIYAJI Takuma spoke at the Indian Ocean Conference held in the capital city of Muscat. The Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF) made a port call in Oman and conducted an exercise. As a result, cooperation and exchanges between the two countries progressed across a wide range of fields, including maritime security. In April, the 8th Japan-Oman Foreign Policy Dialogues were held, and in September, Foreign Minister Iwaya, who was visiting Kuwait to attend the Japan-GCC Foreign Ministers' Meeting and other events, held talks with Foreign Minister Sayyid Badr bin Hamad Al Busaidi, among other instances of close high-level dialogue.

Kuwait is a strong partner with Japan, supplying approximately 6.8% of its crude oil imports, and in 2025, active high-level visits were carried out.

In May, Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khalid Al-Hamad Al-Sabah visited Japan and held meetings with Prime Minister Ishiba and others, on which occasion the bilateral relationship was elevated to a "Comprehensive Strategic Partnership" and further strengthened. Crown Prince Al-Sabah also visited Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan.

In August, the Fifth Japan-Kuwait Foreign Ministry Policy Consultations were held, where active discussions were exchanged on bilateral cooperation in a wide range of areas including politics, the economy, energy, and culture, on the strengthening of exchanges between the two countries, and on cooperation in the international arena. Furthermore, from late August to early September, Foreign Minister Iwaya visited Kuwait to attend the Second Japan-GCC Foreign Ministers' Meeting, paid courtesy calls on Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmed Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled, held a Japan-Kuwait Foreign Ministers' Meeting, and exchanged views on cooperation in various fields.

In addition, in September, Prime Minister Ishiba, who was visiting New York, U.S. to attend the 80th Session of the UN General Assembly, held a meeting with Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled and reaffirmed the close relationship between the two countries.

Bahrain is home to the U.S. Naval Forces Central Command, the U.S. Fifth Fleet, making it an important partner for Japan in terms of ensuring the safety of Japanese-related ships in the Middle East and stabilizing the region.

In September 2025, Foreign Minister Iwaya, who was visiting Kuwait to attend the Japan-GCC Foreign Ministers' Meeting and other events, held an informal meeting with Foreign Minister Abdullatif bin Rashid Al-Zayani. In the same month, Foreign Minister Zayani visited Japan, paid a courtesy call on Chief Cabinet Secretary Hayashi, and held the First Japan-Bahrain Foreign Ministers' Strategic Dialogue with Foreign Minister Iwaya, reaffirming the close bilateral relationship in a wide range of areas beyond energy, including politics and security, the environment, information and communications technology, and space.

Also in the same month, Crown Prince and Prime Minister Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa visited Japan to attend Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan, and held meetings with Prime Minister Ishiba and Foreign Minister Iwaya respectively. The two sides concurred on elevating the bilateral relationship to a Strategic Partnership, and confirmed expanding cooperation in diverse fields between the two countries.

Stability in Yemen is important not only for the peace and stability in the Middle East as a whole, but also from the perspective of securing sea lanes, which are directly related to Japan's energy security. Japan has been providing assistance to Yemen, which has been described as "one of the world's worst humanitarian crises" due to the protracted conflict, in coordination with international organizations and others since 2015.

In Yemen, clashes continued between the internationally recognized Government of Yemen and Arab Coalition forces on one hand, and the Houthis on the other, but a nationwide cease-fire was agreed in April 2022, and the lull has continued even after that cease-fire expired in October of the same year.

Meanwhile, in response to the situation in Gaza, in November 2023, the Houthis began launching missile and drone attacks against Israel as well as attacks on vessels navigating the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden. Japan has resolutely condemned the actions of the Houthis, called for restraint from acts that obstruct the free and safe navigation of vessels, and has been working in coordination with relevant countries toward the early release of relevant vessels and crew members and the stabilization of the surrounding waters. In January 2025, the crew members of the MV Galaxy Leader, a vessel operated by a Japanese company that had been detained by the Houthis since November 2023, were released.



Meeting between Prime Minister Ishiba and Crown Prince and Prime Minister HRH Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa of Bahrain (September 19, Tokyo; Photo: Official Website of the Prime Minister's Office of Japan)

Following the conclusion of the Gaza cease-fire agreement in October 2025, the Houthis ceased their attacks on vessels navigating the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden. However, concerns about the safety of navigation continue, posing obstacles to smooth logistics and energy supply. The Yemen Maritime Security Partnership (YMSP), which was launched in September, is an international framework aimed at enhancing the capacity of Yemen's Coast Guard toward the restoration of stability in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden, and Japan has participated in this framework.

(10) Syria

A Developments in the Situation

After a prolonged crisis that began in 2011, as Israeli attacks on Hezbollah, the pro-Iranian militia group in Lebanon, expanded from September 2024 onward, attacks within Syria also increased, and the situation in Syria under the Assad regime continued to deteriorate.

Against this backdrop, anti-government forces centered on Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) announced that they had seized the northern city of Aleppo at the end of November 2024, and seized the capital, Damascus, on December 8. When President Bashar al-Assad fled into exile in Russia, the establishment of a "transitional administration" was declared in Damascus on the 10th. Türkiye, Arab countries, and Western nations welcomed the establishment of the transitional administration and began engaging with it in succession.

After President Al-Sharaa was appointed at the end of February 2025, the transitional administration advanced the political process domestically, including by holding a national dialogue at the end of February, promulgating a constitutional declaration in March, and establishing a transitional government with a five-year term and appointing cabinet ministers at the end of that month. Furthermore, in October, People's Assembly elections were held with the aim of re-establishing a legislative body. On the diplomatic front, Syria has been pursuing active diplomacy toward rejoining the international community and rebuilding its economy. President Al-Sharaa addressed the UN General Assembly in September — the first time a Syrian head of state had done so in 58 years — and in November,

he became the first Syrian head of state since Syria's independence in 1946 to visit the White House, where he held talks with President Trump.

In terms of security, in June, a suicide bombing by ISIL occurred at a church in Damascus, and conflicts with domestic minority communities have continued, including a large-scale clash between Alawites and government forces in the coastal area in March, as well as a large-scale battle in July when Syrian government forces and Israeli forces intervened in a clash between Bedouin tribal groups and Druze. In the northeast, exchanges of fire with the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) continue, but the Syrian government has indicated its stance of continuing consultations aimed at integrating the SDF into the government forces.

The humanitarian situation continues to be severe, and in 2025, the scale of people in need of humanitarian assistance is estimated at 16.5 million, representing 67% of the population. While internally and externally displaced persons have been voluntarily returning to their places of origin since the collapse of the former regime, the social and economic infrastructure has been destroyed by the Syria crisis that has continued for more than 10 years, and the need for assistance remains high in terms of facilitating the acceptance of returnees.

B The Government of Japan's Efforts

Japan appreciates the efforts of the Syrian transitional government, established in March, to engage in dialogue toward an inclusive political settlement and national reconciliation on various domestic issues. Japan calls on all parties to play a constructive role so that a peaceful and stable transition is realized in Syria, and will support a peaceful and stable transition by the Syrian government and people in coordination with the international community.

In line with this policy, at the end of May, Japan announced the partial lifting of measures such as asset freezes that had been imposed on the former Assad regime. In addition, Japan has provided more than 3.5 billion U.S. dollars in humanitarian assistance to Syria and neighboring countries since 2012, and based on the view that it is necessary to improve the lives of the Syrian people who have been worn down by years of crisis, Japan will continue to provide support for reconstruction and improvement of the humanitarian situation, leveraging Japan's unique knowledge and experience in areas such as human resource development, mine clearance, and infrastructure development.

(11) Lebanon

In Lebanon, a presidential vacancy had continued following the end of former President Michel Aoun's term at the end of October 2022, due to conflicts among political forces and other reasons. Administrative and financial reforms have also been significantly delayed, with problems including the dysfunction of public services and high inflation. Affected by the deteriorating situation in Gaza from October 2023 onward, exchanges of fire erupted between the Israeli military and Hezbollah in the south, which borders Israel, and displaced persons numbering approximately one million were generated within the country. On November 26, 2024, Israel and Lebanon agreed to a cease-fire. Japan welcomed this agreement and has called on all parties to fully implement the cease-fire agreement; however, Israeli military air strikes have continued mainly in southern Lebanon even now, and the situation remains unstable.

In January 2025, Joseph Aoun, Commander of the Army, was newly elected as the 14th President of Lebanon, resolving the presidential vacancy that had lasted for more than two years. In February, the Salam cabinet was inaugurated, marking a step toward stability and development for the country. In early August, the cabinet adopted a policy of limiting the possession of weapons to official security agencies and military organizations, and a policy of ending the presence of non-governmental armed forces throughout Lebanon. Furthermore, in late August, a UN Security Council resolution was adopted providing for the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) to have its operational mandate extended to the end of 2026, after which a reduction and withdrawal of forces would proceed. In accordance with these policies, it will be necessary going forward to advance the strengthening of the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) and the disarmament of domestic forces, including Hezbollah, in a stable and parallel manner.

Japan has provided support to Lebanon totaling approximately 290 million U.S. dollars since 2012, and will continue to provide support toward the improvement of the humanitarian situation.

Column

70 Years of Bonds, a Future Woven at the Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan — The 70th Anniversary of the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between Japan and Saudi Arabia —

On September 23, Saudi Arabia's National Day was celebrated at Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan. It had a special meaning as it coincided with both the 95th anniversary of the founding of Saudi Arabia and the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Japan and Saudi Arabia. Since the establishment of diplomatic relations, the two countries have been important partners in the field of energy. Furthermore, recently in Saudi Arabia, interest in Japan has particularly been growing, driven by anime, manga, games, and other such cultural products. At the venue where the National Day event took place, the spotlight was placed on cultural and people-to-people exchanges between the two countries, and the harmony woven by the performances on stage served as a highlight of the friendship and trust that the two countries have built over 70 years.

At 2:00 p.m., with the national flags of Japan and Saudi Arabia raised and the national anthems of both countries performed, the National Day event opened. Following remarks by Khalid bin Abdulaziz Al-Falih, Minister of Investment, expressing hopes for deepening relations toward the next generation and his respect for Japanese culture, a rhythmic performance of the Alardah — Saudi Arabia's UNESCO-listed intangible cultural heritage sword dance — and drumming was presented; this was followed by a performance weaving beautiful melodies on the Japanese flute (*nohkan*) and the traditional Saudi Arabian reed flute (*ney*). The moment when the cultures of both countries resonated together on a single stage captivated many spectators.

In the projection mapping work "Tales of Water," a Japanese cellist and a Saudi Arabian singer performed together, bringing to life the story of a pearl diver of the Arabian Gulf coast. The rich timbre of the cello, the singer's soaring voice, and vivid visuals merged into one. "Tales of Water" reminded audiences anew that, even between countries with different histories and ways of life, there are many things in common within nature and the rhythms of daily existence.

At the concert after sunset, Japanese popular singer LiSA and a young Saudi Arabian artist performed together, and the voices united in song became a symbol of exchanges that transcend culture and generations.

The bilateral cultural harmony at Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan left a deep impression on many people's hearts, and in particular "Tales of Water" was highly acclaimed for its artistry and immersive experience — including winning the Silver Award in the "Presentation" category of the World Expolympics at Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan.

Furthermore, the commemorative cultural event marking the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Japan and Saudi Arabia, held at Tokyo Midtown Hibiya in December, drew many Japanese visitors who had traveled from all over Japan.

Saudi Arabia was originally established as a unified state in 1932. Now, coinciding with the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations, the National Day at Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan reflected Saudi Arabia as it is today and made a major contribution to promoting mutual understanding and exchanges with the country. By a further remarkable coincidence, it has been decided that the 2030 World Exposition will be held in Riyadh, the capital of Saudi Arabia, as if receiving the baton from Japan. It is hoped that this connection will serve as an opportunity for many Japanese people to visit Expo 2030 Riyadh, thereby further deepening mutual understanding between Japan and Saudi Arabia and leading to the promotion of exchanges for the next generation.



National Day Official Ceremony — Cultural Performance: Saudi Tarouk (September 23, Osaka; Photo: Japan Association for the 2025 World Exposition ©Expo 2025)



National Day Official Ceremony — Cultural Performance: Saudi Traditional Dance, the Alardah (September 23, Osaka; Photo: Japan Association for the 2025 World Exposition ©Expo 2025)

3 The Situation in North Africa

(1) Egypt

Located at the geopolitical crossroads of the Middle East, Africa, and Europe, Egypt is a major regional power in the Middle East and North Africa with a population of over 114.5 million. Under the stable governance of President Abdul Fattah El-Sisi, elections for the upper house were held in August and for the lower house in November. Affected by the deteriorating situation in Gaza from October 2023 onward, the decrease in revenue from Suez Canal transit fees and tourism-related income has had a significant impact on the Egyptian economy; however, real economic growth has remained positive due to economic reforms pursued by the Egyptian government, including the liberalization of foreign exchange.

In terms of high-level visits between the two countries, Minister of Investment and Foreign Trade Hassan El-Khatib attended the National Day of Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan in July. In August, Prime Minister Mostafa Madbouly visited Japan for the first time to attend TICAD 9, and at his meeting with Prime Minister Ishiba, the two sides exchanged views on bilateral relations and regional and international affairs and confirmed close coordination. In addition, ministerial-level visits to Japan continued, including by the Minister of Education and Technical Education and the Minister of Tourism and Antiquities. In addition, Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology ABE Toshiko visited Egypt in May, and in November, the official opening ceremony of the Grand Egyptian Museum (GEM) — which Japan has supported through construction and operation, artifact restoration and exhibition, and other means — was held with great fanfare, attended by guests from 79 countries and organizations. State Minister for Foreign Affairs KUNIMITSU Ayano attended on behalf of the Government of Japan as Special Envoy of Prime Minister Takaichi.

Regarding the situation in Gaza, Egypt has continued to lead and coordinate humanitarian assistance and mediation efforts between Israel and Hamas, and has played an important role in regional stability by leading discussions toward de-escalation of the situation. On October 9, mediation efforts involving Egypt, the U.S., Qatar, and Türkiye bore fruit, resulting in the conclusion of the "Sharm el-Sheikh Agreement for Ending the Gaza War." On October 13, President El-Sisi and U.S. President Trump co-chaired the Sharm el-Sheikh Peace Summit, which was attended by heads of state and government from Western countries, Arab nations, and Asian countries, among others. The Multinational Force and Observers (MFO) stationed in the Sinai Peninsula continues to carry out its important mission of monitoring the cease-fire between Egypt and Israel and promoting dialogue and confidence building between the two countries. Japan continues to support the MFO through both financial support and the dispatch of staff officers, and will continue to contribute to peace and stability in the region. In August, senior vice-minister of Cabinet Office TSUJI Kiyoto inspected the MFO South Camp, and in November, MFO Director General Elizabeth L. Dibble visited Japan.

(2) Libya

Libya is an energy powerhouse boasting the greatest oil reserves in Africa. However, after the collapse of the Qadhafi regime in 2011, the country remains unstable with political powers competing between the east and the west of the country. In April 2019, Field Marshal Khalifa Haftar, commander of the eastern "Libyan National Army (LNA)," ordered an advance on Tripoli, leading to armed clashes. Since the two sides signed a permanent cease-fire agreement in October 2020, incidents of armed clashes between the eastern and western forces have significantly decreased, and the economy has been revitalizing. In August 2025, Hanna Tetteh, the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for Libya, announced a roadmap for holding national elections; however, there remain numerous challenges to achieving political unification through the holding of national elections.

Since Japan reopened its embassy office in Tripoli, the country's capital, in January 2024, high-level visits between Japan and Libya have been reinvigorated. In January 2025, Vice President of the Presidential Council Abdullah Allafi visited Japan, continuing

from the previous year, and held meetings with Chief Cabinet Secretary Hayashi and Foreign Minister Iwaya, concurring on advancing bilateral relations and promoting cooperation in areas contributing to peace for the stability of Libya. In August, Vice President Allafi again visited Japan to attend TICAD 9 and held talks with Prime Minister Ishiba. A Foreign Ministers' Meeting was also held between Acting Foreign Minister El-Taher El-Baour, who visited Japan at the same time, and Foreign Minister Iwaya, and the two sides shared their views on further promoting cooperation in the fields of human resource development and peacebuilding.

(3) Maghreb Countries (Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco)

The Maghreb region continues to hold strategic importance in northern Africa due to its geographical advantage of being located at the junction of Europe, the Middle East, and Africa and its abundant young labor force. On the other hand, the region continues to face the challenge of overcoming economic and social instability caused by increasing poverty, regional disparities, high unemployment rates, and inflation. In addition, there are concerns about the security and safety implications of the transit and settlement of weapons and illegal immigrants and refugees from Libya and the Sahel region.

In Tunisia, Head of Government Sarra Zaafrani Zenzri was appointed in March. On the economic front, there are trends such as an increase in foreign exchange reserves due to the recovery of agricultural production and tourism revenue, and an increase in foreign direct investment in the manufacturing, services, and renewable energy sectors. At the same time, steadily advancing structural reforms has become an urgent priority in order to address ongoing challenges such as a trade deficit, fiscal deficit, persistently high unemployment, and sluggish growth. In relations with Japan, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs Matsumoto visited Tunisia in May, and Minister of Economy and Planning Samir Abdelhafidh attended the National Day of Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan in August. Furthermore, Head of Government Zaafrani participated in TICAD 9, and at the summit meeting, the two sides concurred in further strengthening their bilateral relations, including Japan's continuation of cooperation in addressing Tunisia's water shortage.

In Algeria, Prime Minister Sifi Ghrieb was appointed in September. Algeria's economy has a structure dependent on hydrocarbon exports backed by oil and natural gas reserves that are among the largest in Africa. In recent times, Algeria's natural gas exports have been attracting renewed attention in light of growing global energy demand and the trend toward diversification of energy supply sources, particularly in Europe, in response to Russia's aggression against Ukraine. Simultaneously, a review of economic policies aimed at economic diversification is also underway, including the development of industries in non-hydrocarbon sectors and the attraction of foreign investment. In relations with Japan, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs Matsumoto visited Algeria in May and held the First Meeting of the Japan-Algeria Intergovernmental Joint Economic Committee, and former Prime Minister Nadir Larbaoui visited Japan



Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs Matsumoto meeting with Minister of Foreign Affairs, Migration, and Tunisians Abroad Mohamed Ali Nafti of Tunisia (May 5, Tunis, Tunisia)



Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs ONISHI Yohei receiving a courtesy call from the delegation of the Algerian Startup Expedition Program (ASEP) (November 27, Tokyo)

for Algeria's National Day Event of Expo in July. At TICAD 9 in August, Minister of Knowledge Economy, Start-ups and Micro-Enterprises Noureddine Ouadah participated and, through a meeting with State Minister for Foreign Affairs FUJII Hisayuki, the two sides concurred on advancing cooperation in a wide range of areas, including the field of start-ups. In November, a delegation of the Algerian Startup Expedition Program (ASEP) visited Japan for the first time, and in addition to meetings with Japanese companies and government officials, paid a courtesy call on Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs ONISHI Yohei.

In Morocco, the second Akhannouch cabinet has continued governing, focusing on policy challenges such as water resources, climate change, and renewable energy. Infrastructure development in preparation for hosting the 2030 FIFA World Cup is also accelerating. Regarding the Western Sahara issue,(3) in October, UN Security Council resolution 2797 on the renewal of the mandate of the UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) was adopted, stating that genuine autonomy under Moroccan sovereignty could constitute a most feasible solution. In relations with Japan, Minister of Investment, Convergence and Evaluation of Public Policies Karim Zidane visited Japan in October and held meetings with State Minister for Foreign Affairs Kunimitsu and others, exchanging views toward deepening the economic relationship between the two countries.



State Minister for Foreign Affairs Kunimitsu meeting with Minister Delegate to the Head of Government in charge of Investment, Convergence and the Evaluation of Public Policies Karim Zidane of Morocco (October 30, Tokyo)

(3) The dispute between Morocco and the "Polisario Front," a national liberation movement, over sovereignty in the Western Sahara region.

Column

Grand Opening of the Grand Egyptian Museum

On November 1, the Grand Egyptian Museum (GEM) finally celebrated its grand opening. GEM is the largest museum in the world dedicated to a single civilization. The opening ceremony was attended by official delegations from 79 countries. From Japan, Her Imperial Highness Princess Akiko of Mikasa attended the ceremony, and State Minister for Foreign Affairs KUNIMITSU Ayano (Member of the House of Representatives) attended as a Special Envoy of the Prime Minister of Japan.

The Government of Egypt positioned the opening ceremony as a major national event and showcased the museum's inaugural moment to the world through a solemn and spectacular presentation. In his speech, which served as the highlight of the ceremony, President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi, made special mention of Japan as the only country referred to by name, expressing gratitude by stating, "We must also acknowledge the substantial support rendered by our friendly nation, Japan, whose support was instrumental to this colossal civilizational project." A video of a Japanese orchestra performance, recorded at Senso-ji Temple in Tokyo, was also screened at the ceremony.

The cooperation between Japan and Egypt toward the construction of GEM dates back more than 20 years, to Prime Minister Koizumi's visit to Egypt in 2003. During this visit, an agreement was reached on Japan's support for the construction of the museum, and since construction began in 2006, both countries have overcome numerous challenges to finally reach the GEM's grand opening.

Japan's cooperation has spanned a wide range of areas, including the provision of yen loans for the museum's construction; the preservation and restoration of collections and exhibits, beginning with those related to Tutankhamun; technical cooperation on exhibition methods and museum operations; and the restoration of "King Khufu's Second Solar Boat," which is to be displayed in the annex of GEM. Furthermore, Japanese private companies have also been involved in the project, with Japanese-made equipment used in the glass covering the museum's exterior and exhibits, among other components.



All guests attending the opening ceremony of GEM, with the colossal statue of Ramses II (November 1, Giza, Egypt)

Thanks in part to this cooperation, GEM has incorporated numerous features that Japanese visitors can enjoy. The exhibits in the flagship Tutankhamun Gallery are accompanied by explanations in Japanese, and Khufu's Boats Museum is also expected to feature Japanese-language explanations of the cooperation that has taken place thus far. Moreover, from the first day of public opening, a Japanese-language audio guide has been made available alongside Arabic and English guides, allowing visitors to hear Japanese-language commentary on many of the exhibits.



Signage inside GEM displayed with Japanese language

Japan will continue to support sharing with the international community the expertise in artifact preservation and restoration accumulated at GEM, as well as museum operations following the grand opening.

GEM, a new symbol of the friendly relations between Japan and Egypt, will serve as a bridge between Egypt and the world that transcends the bilateral relationship, and will contribute to Egypt's socioeconomic development.

Section 8 Africa

1 Overview

Africa, home to approximately 1.5 billion people(1) across 54 countries, is a young, dynamic region brimming with energy and potential, and is expected to account for one-quarter of the world's population by 2050. Endowed with abundant mineral resources and high economic growth rates, Africa is of growing importance to Japan, both for strengthening economic security and securing resilient value chains. At the same time, the continent is attracting increasing global attention as a promising destination for investment with significant opportunities.

In addition, Africa lies at the heart of the so-called "Global South," and, driven by its recent economic growth and ongoing effort toward political and economic integration led by the African Union (AU), is playing an increasingly prominent role in the international community. Strengthening cooperation with African countries is also of critical importance for advancing Japan's foreign policy priorities in the international community, including the promotion of responsible global governance.(2)

On the other hand, some parts of Africa continue to face threats to peace and stability from conflict, terrorism, and political instability, while the continent also confronts serious development challenges including poverty and hunger. These challenges facing Africa have the potential to become global challenges as well, underscoring the need for urgent action.

In 2025, multiple regions across Africa continued to experience political and security instability. From late January onward, attacks by armed groups intensified in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and those groups took effective control of major cities in the region. In Madagascar, located in the Indian Ocean off the southeastern coast of Africa, protest activities centered around young people erupted from late September onward, with demands escalating to calls for the resignation of the president and a change of government. Following the president's evacuation from the country, a military commander assumed the role of interim president. In Guinea-Bissau, located at the westernmost tip of Africa, presidential elections were held in November; however, on the day before the scheduled announcement of the provisional results, several persons including the incumbent President Umaro Sissoco Embaló, who had stood as a candidate in those elections, were detained by the military, resulting in a coup d'état with the Chief of Staff of the Guinea-Bissau Army assuming the role of interim president. Furthermore, in Benin, situated along the Gulf of Guinea in west-central Africa, a coup attempt by part of the military occurred in December. In the Sahel region,(3) the terrorist threat has continued following military seizures of power in Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger since 2020.

In 2025, presidential elections were held in Gabon, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea-Bissau, the Central African Republic, Guinea, Malawi, Seychelles, and Tanzania.

In April, Foreign Minister Iwaya visited Senegal and exchanged views with the President, Prime Minister, and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Senegal. On this occasion, Foreign Minister Iwaya also visited the

(1) As of July 2023 ("World Population Prospects, 2024," Population Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations)

(2) Global governance: Efforts to provide predictability, stability, and order in dealing with interstate issues (the totality of institutions, policies, norms, procedures, and initiatives) in the international community, which lacks a higher level of governing bodies, unlike the domestic system.

(3) The Sahel refers to a wide area located south of the Sahara Desert. Although there is no strict definition, it generally refers to the region including Mauritania, Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso and Chad.

Japan-Senegal Vocational Training Center, established in 1984 with Japan's support, and also met and exchanged views with representatives of Japanese companies in the country. The Ninth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD 9), held in Yokohama in August, was attended by 49 African countries, including 33 heads of state, as well as the co-organizers (the United Nations (UN), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Bank, and the African Union Commission (AUC)), international organizations, private companies, Diet members, and members of civil societies, among others. Under the theme of "Co-create innovative solutions with Africa," lively discussions were held across three areas: "Economy," "Society," and "Peace and Stability." (See the Opening Special Feature on page 8.) In particular, the discussions highlighted three cross-cutting priorities: "private-sector-led sustainable growth" "youth and women," and "regional integration and connectivity within and beyond the region." The outcomes of the three days of discussions were compiled into the "TICAD 9 Yokohama Declaration," the summit declaration, which was subsequently adopted.

Under the first pillar of "Economy," Japan introduced its initiatives related to the promotion of sustainable, private-sector-led growth, the strengthening of regional integration and connectivity within and beyond the region, and the diversification of economies through the strengthening of industrial ecosystems. Participants, including African countries and international organizations, pointed to the following as necessary for achieving economic growth that harnesses Africa's potential: industrial development including the utilization of mineral resources, economic diversification, good governance including the development of legal systems, the strengthening of intra-regional trade and value chains through infrastructure development and the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), digitalization, investment in people through education and human resource development, debt issues, appropriate financing, and improving energy access. Participants also expressed expectations for further investment by Japanese companies in Africa and the strengthening of partnerships.

Under the second pillar of "Society," Japan introduced its initiatives in the areas of education and human resource development, health, the environment, and disaster risk reduction, aimed at building — together with Africa — a society that leaves no one behind. In the discussions among participants, including African countries and international organizations, it was noted that investment in people, such as improved access to quality education and vocational training, as well as initiatives in empowerment of youth and women, strengthening of health systems, water and sanitation, climate change countermeasures, and disaster risk reduction are indispensable, and expectations for further cooperation from Japan were expressed.

Regarding the third pillar of "Peace and Stability," Japan introduced its initiatives in this area, underscoring that "Peace and Stability" is the foundation for sustainable economic growth and an inclusive society. Participants, including African countries and international organizations, emphasized that peace and stability are an indispensable prerequisite for development and prosperity, and pointed to the need for African-led solutions, the strengthening of Africa's institutions and initiatives, the enhancement of the roles of youth and women, the prevention of conflicts and addressing of their root causes, and the importance of reforming the United Nations Security Council, while expressing expectations for further strengthening of cooperation.

2 African Union (AU)

The African Union (AU) is one of the world's largest regional institutions, with 55 African member states, and has set as its goal an even greater degree of political and economic integration in Africa.

In February, utilizing the opportunity of the Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the AU, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs ERI Arfiya visited Ethiopia and held meetings and discussions with Chief Executive Officer Nardos Bekele-Thomas of the African Union Development Agency-New Partnership for Africa's Development (AUDA-NEPAD), Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ghana Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa,

Minister of International Relations of Botswana Phenyo Butale, and other African ministers.

At TICAD 9 held in Yokohama in August, a large number of representatives from the African Union Commission (AUC) — the AU's secretariat and a co-organizer of TICAD — participated, including AUC Chairperson Mahmoud Ali Youssouf, Deputy Chairperson Selma Malika Haddadi, and Commissioners for relevant portfolios. AUC Chairperson Youssouf held a meeting with Prime Minister Ishiba.

3 East Africa

(1) Uganda

Under President Yoweri Museveni's long-serving administration, Uganda has maintained economic growth owing to its stable domestic politics. The country hosts close to 2 million refugees from neighboring countries, the largest number in Africa, and is contributing to stability in the "Horn of Africa"(4) region by, among other things, providing the largest troop contingent among the contributing countries to the African Union Support and Stabilization Mission in Somalia (AUSSOM).

In May, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs Eri visited Uganda and paid courtesy calls on President Museveni and Prime Minister Robinah Nabbanja, and held talks with State Minister for Foreign Affairs (International Relations) Henry Oryem Okello. At TICAD 9 in August, Vice President Jessica Rose Epel Alupo paid a courtesy call on Prime Minister Ishiba. Prime Minister Nabbanja visited Japan to attend the Uganda National Day ceremony at Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan, in October, and held talks with Chief Cabinet Secretary HAYASHI Yoshimasa. Through these meetings, the two countries confirmed the further development of their good bilateral relations and their cooperation in the international arena.

(2) Ethiopia

With the second largest population in Africa (130 million), Ethiopia has great economic potential and is implementing macroeconomic reforms, including currency liberalization and fiscal reforms. Three years have passed since the end of the conflict in the northern part of the country, and road improvements in the capital of Addis Ababa are progressing. Sporadic fighting continues in parts of the Amhara region and elsewhere, and domestic stabilization remains a challenge. Through meetings such as the Japan-Ethiopia Policy Consultations between State Minister of Foreign Affairs Arga Moach Mesganu and Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs Eri in February, and a meeting between State Minister of Foreign Affairs Hadera Abera, who visited Japan to attend TICAD 9 in August, and State Minister for Foreign Affairs FUJII Hisayuki, the two countries shared the view to further develop bilateral relations in a wide range of areas.

(3) Eritrea

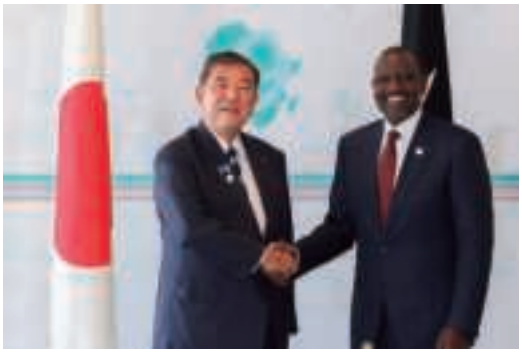
Eritrea is a country located on the international strait connecting the Indian Ocean, the Suez Canal, and Europe. Its territorial waters are a crossroads in terms of security, with many Japanese-related ships passing through them. Given the importance of Eritrea's role in the peace and stability of the Horn of Africa region, the Embassy in Eritrea was established in January.

(4) Kenya

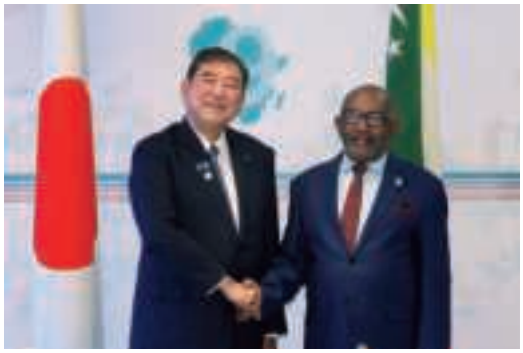
Kenya is an important like-minded country for Japan that shares fundamental values and principles such as the "rule of law." It is also the economic hub of the East Africa region and one of the leading hubs for Japanese companies in Africa.

In January, the Public and Private Joint Mission for Promoting Trade and Investment in Africa, headed by State Minister for Foreign Affairs Fujii, visited Kenya, and wide-ranging discussions were held with government officials and business representatives from both countries toward promoting economic exchanges between the two countries. In June, Cabinet Secretary

(4) The "Horn of Africa" refers to the region in the northeastern part of the African continent that protrudes in the shape of a horn toward the Indian Ocean and the Red Sea. It encompasses the countries of Ethiopia, Eritrea, Djibouti, Somalia, and Kenya.



Japan-Kenya Summit Meeting (August 20, Yokohama; Photo: Official Website of the Prime Minister's Office of Japan)



Japan-Comoros Summit Meeting (August 21, Yokohama; Photo: Official Website of the Prime Minister's Office of Japan)

for Investments, Trade and Industry Lee Maiyani Kinyanjui visited Japan to attend the Kenya National Day ceremony at Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan. In August, President William Ruto visited Japan to attend TICAD 9, and at the summit meeting with Prime Minister Ishiba, the two countries shared the view to further strengthen bilateral relations and cooperation in the international arena, and confirmed that they would work together to address regional and international challenges including the situation in Africa and reform of the United Nations Security Council.

(5) Union of Comoros

Comoros is a partner that supports a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)" as a maritime nation like Japan. Under President Assoumani Azali, the country has set the goal of becoming an emerging nation by 2030 under the "2030 Comoros Emerging Plan," and is promoting the development of infrastructure such as ports and the blue economy(5) through sustainable fishing practices.

In August, Minister of Economy, Industry, Investment and Economic Integration Hassani Mohamed Moustoifa visited Japan to attend the Comoros National Day ceremony at Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan. Additionally, at TICAD 9, a summit meeting was held between Prime Minister Ishiba and President Azali.

(6) Djibouti

Djibouti is located at a strategic juncture facing a major trade route connecting Europe and Asia and is an important partner for realizing FOIP. Since 2009, the Japan Self-Defense Forces (SDF) have been engaged in anti-piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden and off the coast of Somalia. The SDF base established in Djibouti in 2011 is also used for the protection and transportation of Japanese nationals abroad.

In May, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs Eri visited Djibouti and held talks with Prime Minister Abdoulkader Kamil Mohamed and others. In June, President of the National Assembly Dileita Mohamed Dileita visited Japan and held talks with Foreign Minister Iwaya. Furthermore, at TICAD 9 in August, a foreign ministers' meeting was held between Foreign Minister Iwaya and Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Abdoulkader Houssein Omar. Through these meetings, the two countries shared the view to further develop their good bilateral relations. In addition, in October, Minister of Commerce and Tourism Mohamed Warsama Direh visited Japan to attend the Djibouti National Day ceremony at Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan.

(7) Sudan

In Sudan, the armed conflict between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) has continued since April 2023, causing a serious humanitarian crisis. Japan has been providing humanitarian assistance to improve the humanitarian situation in Sudan and neighboring countries. In September, Minister of Industry and Trade Mahasin Ali Yaqoub visited Japan to attend the Sudan National Day ceremony at Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan, and called

(5) A concept for promoting sustainable economic growth through the utilization of marine resources and other means.

on Japanese companies to invest in Sudan during its reconstruction phase.

(8) Seychelles

Seychelles has one of the largest economic zones in the Indian Ocean and is an important partner for realizing FOIP. Furthermore, 2026 marks the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Japan and Seychelles.

In March, Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF) minesweepers made a friendly port call in Seychelles, as in the previous year, and the two countries conducted friendly drills. Minister for Foreign Affairs and Tourism Louis Sylvestre Radegonde participated in TICAD 9 in August, and a meeting was held with Foreign Minister Iwaya. Furthermore, in September, Principal Minister and Minister for Fisheries and the Blue Economy Jean-François Ferrari visited Japan on the occasion of the Seychelles National Day ceremony at Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan. In October, presidential and National Assembly elections were held, resulting in the inauguration of President Patrick Herminie.

(9) Somalia

Peacebuilding and nation-building efforts are continuing in Somalia under President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, who took office in May 2022, and Japan is supporting the efforts of the Somali government.

In June, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Hamza Adan Haadoow, who visited Japan, paid a courtesy call on State Minister for Foreign Affairs Fujii, and Japan and Somalia — which serves as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council from 2025 to 2026 — shared the view to work in close coordination in the UN arena, including the Security Council. At TICAD 9 in August, Foreign Minister Iwaya held talks with Minister of Planning, Investment and Economic Development Mohamud Abdirahman Sheikh Farah, and the two countries confirmed that they would work together to address regional and international challenges. Furthermore, in October, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Isaak Mohamud Mursal visited Japan to attend the Somalia National Day ceremony at Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan.

(10) Tanzania

Tanzania is located at a strategic juncture connecting eastern and southern Africa and continues to experience economic growth. In May, Prime Minister Majaliwa Kassim Majaliwa visited Japan on the occasion of the Tanzania National Day ceremony at Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan, and held a summit meeting with Prime Minister Ishiba. Through the meeting, the two sides discussed bilateral cooperation and confirmed that they would continue to work closely together in the international arena. At TICAD 9 in August, a foreign ministers' meeting was held between Foreign Minister Iwaya and Minister of Foreign Affairs and East African Cooperation Mahmoud Thabit Kombo. Presidential elections were held at the end of October, and President Samia Suluhu Hassan was re-elected. Upon the presidential election, unrest causing casualties occurred in various parts of Tanzania, including Dar es Salaam.

(11) Burundi

Burundi is a landlocked country located in the central part of the African continent. Since the 1970s, Japan has been providing development cooperation to the country, including improvements to basic social services in areas such as maternal and child health and agriculture. In June, Minister of Commerce, Transport, Industry and Tourism Marie Chantal Nijimbere visited Japan to attend the Burundi National Day ceremony at Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan. At TICAD 9 in August, Prime Minister Ishiba and President Évariste Ndayishimiye held a summit meeting, and the two countries confirmed that they would continue to cooperate toward the further development of their good bilateral relations.

(12) Madagascar

Madagascar is an island country in the Indian Ocean located off the southeastern coast of Africa that supports FOIP and is also an important supplier of mineral resources. At TICAD 9 in August, Prime Minister Ishiba and Prime Minister Christian Ntsay held a summit meeting, and the two sides shared the view to work together toward the realization of FOIP. From late September, protests over power outages and water shortages escalated, resulting in President Andry Rajoelina fleeing the country. In October, Colonel

Michael Randrianirina was inaugurated as President for Reconstruction.

(13) South Sudan

South Sudan had been in turmoil since clashes that broke out in December 2013, but the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS) was signed in September 2018. From March 2025 onward, tensions between the parties escalated, and First Vice President Riek Machar was placed under house arrest. Japan has been providing support for the country's peace and stability through development cooperation via the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and support for UN Peacekeeping Operations (PKO). At the foreign ministers' meeting between Foreign Minister Iwaya and Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Monday Semaya Kenneth Kumba, who visited Japan to attend TICAD 9 in August, Foreign Minister Iwaya expressed Japan's expectation that fair and transparent elections would be held in South Sudan.

(14) Mauritius

Mauritius is an important country for realizing FOIP, which shares values and principles with Japan. In May, the Agreement between the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Government of the Republic of Mauritius concerning the Chagos Archipelago including Diego Garcia was signed. Under the agreement, Mauritius's sovereignty over the Chagos Islands as a whole is recognized, and both countries are proceeding with ratification procedures (as of the end of 2025). In July, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade Dhananjay Ramful visited Japan on the occasion of the Mauritius National Day at Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan, and held talks with Foreign Minister Iwaya. At TICAD 9 in August, Prime Minister Navinchandra Ramgoolam participated and held a meeting with Prime Minister Ishiba. In that same month, the Embassy of Mauritius in Japan was established.

(15) Rwanda

Under President Paul Kagame, Rwanda continues its efforts toward becoming an upper-middle-income country by 2035. In June, a peace agreement was signed with the Democratic Republic of the Congo through mediation efforts by the United States (U.S.), Qatar, and the AU, aimed at achieving lasting stability in the Great Lakes region. In July, Minister of Trade and Industry Prudence Sebahizi visited Japan to attend the Rwanda National Day ceremony at Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan. In August, a foreign ministers' meeting was held between Foreign Minister Iwaya and Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Olivier Nduhungirehe, who visited Japan to attend TICAD 9.

4 Southern Africa

(1) Angola

Angola has a stable political foundation and plays an important role in regional peace and stability. Angola served as the AU chair in 2025, and at TICAD 9 in August, President João Manuel Gonçalves Lourenço served as co-chair alongside Prime Minister Ishiba, and a summit meeting was held between them.

In February, Foreign Minister Iwaya and Minister of External Relations Téte António held talks on the occasion of the G20 Foreign Ministers' Meeting held in South Africa. In July, Minister of State for Social Affairs Maria do Rosário Bragança visited Japan to participate in the Angola National Day ceremony at Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan. On Japan's side, in July, Member of the House of Representatives YAMAGIWA Daishiro, as Special Envoy of Prime Minister Ishiba, paid a courtesy call on President Lourenço, requesting Angola's cooperation as co-chair of TICAD 9. Furthermore, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs ONISHI Yohei attended the ceremony marking the 50th anniversary of Angola's independence in November and paid a courtesy call on President Lourenço, delivering a personal letter from the Prime Minister Takaichi.

(2) Eswatini

Eswatini is a country in which the monarch is actively involved in governance under King Mswati III, and it is the only country in Africa that has diplomatic relations with Taiwan. In June, Prime Minister Russell Dlamini visited Japan to attend the Eswatini National Day ceremony at Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan, and held a summit meeting with Prime Minister Ishiba. At TICAD 9 in August, King Mswati III and Queen Inkhosikati LaMatsebula visited Japan, and Prime Minister Ishiba and His Majesty King Mswati III held a summit meeting, at which the two leaders shared the view to further strengthen bilateral relations.

(3) Zambia

Japan and Zambia, which has abundant mineral resources such as copper, celebrated the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations in 2024, and President Hakainde Hichilema visited Japan in February 2025 and held talks with Prime Minister Ishiba. In July, Minister of Tourism Rodney Sikumba visited Japan to attend the Zambia National Day ceremony at Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan, and in August, Vice President Mutale Nalumango visited Japan to attend TICAD 9 and paid a courtesy call on Prime Minister Ishiba. Japanese companies have an interest in investing in Zambia, and building on the Japan-Zambia Investment Agreement signed in February, through active high-level exchanges, the two countries confirmed the strengthening of bilateral relations and the deepening of cooperation in the international arena.

(4) Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe is a key hub in Southern Africa for transportation, distribution, and power transmission, and is a landlocked country with abundant mineral resources and fertile land. Japan and Zimbabwe celebrated the 45th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations in 2025. In July, President Emmerson Mnangagwa visited Japan to attend the Zimbabwe National Day ceremony at Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan, and also attended TICAD 9 in August and held a summit meeting with Prime Minister Ishiba. At that meeting, the two leaders shared the view to strengthen bilateral relations and cooperate in the international arena. In September, Speaker of the National Assembly Jacob Mudenda visited Japan and held talks with the Speaker/President of both Houses of the Diet and with members of the Japan-Africa Union (AU) Parliamentary Friendship League, discussing the invigoration of inter-parliamentary exchanges.

(5) Namibia

Vice President Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah, the leader of the ruling South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO), who won the presidential election in November 2024, was inaugurated on March 21 as the country's first female president. Member of the House of Representatives SUZUKI Takako attended the presidential inauguration ceremony and the 35th Independence Anniversary ceremony held on the same day as Ambassador on Special Mission, and paid a courtesy call on the President. In August, Prime Minister Elijah Ngurare, who visited Japan to attend TICAD 9, held talks with Prime Minister Ishiba, and the two leaders shared the view on promoting investment in mineral and energy resources and green hydrogen, cooperation in human resources support, and the further development of bilateral relations.

(6) Botswana

Botswana is a stable democracy in Southern Africa that has grown on the strength of its diamond resources; however, with declining diamond prices, economic diversification has become the country's most important challenge (as of the end of 2025). At TICAD 9 in August, Vice President and Minister of Finance Ndaba Gaolathe paid a courtesy call on Prime Minister Ishiba, and Minister of International Relations Butale



Japan-Botswana Foreign Ministers' Meeting (November 26, Tokyo)

and Foreign Minister Iwaya held a foreign ministers' meeting. In November, Vice President and Minister of Finance Gaolathe made a return visit to Japan through a ministerial-level invitation and held a meeting with Foreign Minister Motegi, and the two countries concurred on accelerating cooperation toward further strengthening bilateral relations.

(7) Malawi

Japan has built long-standing friendly relations with Malawi, which shares the same values and principles, and in June, Minister of Trade and Industry Vitumbiko Mumba visited Japan to attend the Malawi National Day ceremony at Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan. At TICAD 9 in August, Foreign Minister Iwaya and Minister for Foreign Affairs Nancy Tembo held talks, and the two countries shared the view to further develop bilateral relations through the promotion of friendly relations via the dispatch of JICA Overseas Cooperation Volunteers — of which Japan boasts the world's highest cumulative number dispatched — and through the strengthening of economic relations. In September, a presidential election was held and former President Peter Mutharika was elected.

(8) South Africa

South Africa served as the first African chair of the G20, beginning in December 2024. At the G20 Foreign Ministers' Meeting in February, Foreign Minister Iwaya held talks with Minister of International Relations and Cooperation Ronald Lamola and confirmed the strengthening of bilateral relations and cooperation in the international arena. In March, Deputy President Paul Mashatile visited Japan through a ministerial-level invitation by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and paid a courtesy call on Prime Minister Ishiba, as well as holding talks with Chief Cabinet Secretary Hayashi. In August, President Cyril Ramaphosa visited Japan to attend TICAD 9 and held a summit meeting with Prime Minister Ishiba. In November, Prime Minister Takaichi attended the G20 Leaders' Summit and held a summit meeting with President Ramaphosa, and the two leaders shared the view to continue close cooperation going forward, building on the outcomes of TICAD 9 and the G20 Summit.

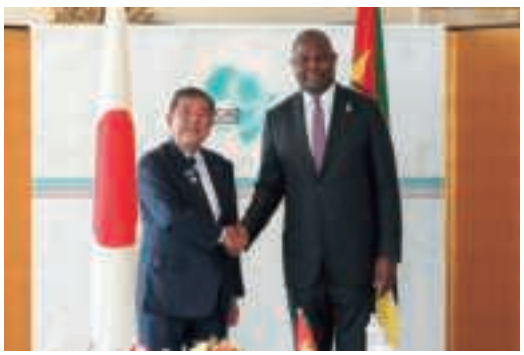


Japan-South Africa Summit Meeting (November 28, Johannesburg, South Africa; Photo: Official Website of the Prime Minister's Office of Japan)

(9) Mozambique

Mozambique has abundant natural resources such as natural gas, coal, and graphite, and is at a strategic juncture facing FOIP from the west as the gateway to Southeast Africa. Due to the continuing attacks by armed groups in the north of the country, a liquefied natural gas (LNG) development project in which Japanese companies have been participating has been suspended since 2021, and the Government of Japan has continued to provide various forms of support to improve security.

In June, Prime Minister Maria Benvinda Levy visited Japan to attend the Mozambique National Day ceremony at Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan, and held talks with Chief Cabinet Secretary Hayashi. At TICAD 9 in August, President Daniel Chapo visited Japan and held a summit meeting with Prime Minister Ishiba, and the two leaders shared the view to continue cooperation in strengthening bilateral relations and in the development of the Nacala Corridor.



Japan-Mozambique Summit Meeting (August 22, Yokohama; Photo: Official Website of the Prime Minister's Office of Japan)

(10) Lesotho

Lesotho is a landlocked country with most of its land mass being mountainous. It has abundant water resources, and exports water to neighboring countries. Japan has also built cooperative relations in various fields, including providing support for the country's small hydroelectric power generation facilities. In July, King Letsie III and Queen Masenate visited Japan to attend the Lesotho National Day ceremony at Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan. Furthermore, at TICAD 9 in August, Prime Minister Sam Matekane made his first visit to Japan and held a summit meeting with Prime Minister Ishiba, and the two leaders shared the view to further strengthen bilateral relations.

5 Central Africa

(1) Gabon

A presidential election was held in April, and Brice Clotaire Oligui Nguema, who had been serving as interim president, won with over 90% of the vote. Senator EJIMA Kiyoshi attended the Presidential Inauguration Ceremony held in May as Special Envoy of the Prime Minister. In July, on the occasion of Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan, Vice President Hugues Alexandre Barro Chambrier visited Japan and held talks with Foreign Minister Iwaya. At TICAD 9 in August, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation Regis Onanga Mamadou Ndiaye attended and held a meeting with Foreign Minister Iwaya.

(2) Cameroon

In the presidential election held in October, incumbent President Paul Biya was re-elected. The government continues to work toward resolving issues in the north, where Boko Haram and other armed groups are active, as well as issues in the English-speaking regions, where armed separatists operate.

In June, State Minister for Foreign Affairs MIYAJI Takuma visited Cameroon and held meetings with Minister of State, Secretary General of the Presidency Ferdinand Ngoh Ngoh, Prime Minister Joseph Dion Ngute, and Minister Delegate to the Minister of External Relations in charge of Relations with the Commonwealth Félix Mbayu. At TICAD 9 in August, Prime Minister Ngute and Minister of External Relations Lejeune Mbella Mbella attended and held meetings with Prime Minister Ishiba and Foreign Minister Iwaya, respectively. Furthermore, in September, Minister of Trade Luc Magloire Mbarga Atangana visited Japan on the occasion of Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan, making for a year of active high-level exchanges.

(3) Democratic Republic of the Congo

Japan is promoting cooperation on socio-economic development of the country, including infrastructure support in areas such as transportation and electricity.

From late January, the activities of armed groups intensified in the eastern region, causing the situation to deteriorate, with armed groups taking effective control in North Kivu and South Kivu provinces. Large numbers of internally displaced persons were created, and the human rights and humanitarian situation worsened further. Large-scale demonstrations by citizens dissatisfied with the situation also occurred in the capital of Kinshasa, with some rioting and looting. The UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) is deployed in the eastern region. Japan is providing assistance through the reestablishment, dissemination, and entrenchment of the "local policing model."

In June, on the occasion of Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan, and in August, to attend TICAD 9 in Yokohama, Prime Minister Judith Suminwa Tuluka visited Japan on both occasions and held talks with Prime Minister Ishiba.

(4) Republic of Congo

The Republic of Congo is home to the vast Congo Basin and is actively working to address climate change issues, including forest conservation.

As food security measures are an urgent issue, Japan continues to provide food aid to the country through the UN World Food Programme (WFP). In August, Japan signed a technical cooperation agreement with the country. At TICAD 9 in August, Minister of International Cooperation and Promotion

of Public-Private Partnership Denis-Christel Sassou N'guesso attended and held talks with Foreign Minister Iwaya.

(5) Sao Tome and Principe

Sao Tome and Principe has a rich natural environment and is focusing on environmental fields such as ecotourism. The Government of Japan continues to provide food aid.

At TICAD 9 in August, Prime Minister Américo Ramos attended and held talks with Prime Minister Ishiba. Furthermore, in September, Minister of Environment, Youth and Sustainable Tourism Nilda Borges da Mata visited Japan on the occasion of Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan.

(6) Equatorial Guinea

Equatorial Guinea remains under the long-running administration of President Obiang Nguema Mbasogo. In July, on the occasion of Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan, Vice President Teodoro Nguema Obiang Mangue visited Japan and held talks with Chief Cabinet Secretary Hayashi. Furthermore, at TICAD 9 in August, Prime Minister Manuel Osa Nsue Nsua attended and held talks with Prime Minister Ishiba.

(7) Chad

Chad held the country's first-ever Senate elections in February. In April, on the occasion of Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan, President of the Economic, Social, Cultural and Environmental Council Ahmat Mbodou Mahamat visited Japan. At TICAD 9 in August, Secretary General of the Presidency and Minister of State Mahamat Ahmad Alhabo attended and held talks with Foreign Minister Iwaya. Japan continues to provide food aid and support for host communities (host areas) facing an increasing burden due to the acceptance of refugees and displaced persons from neighboring countries, including Sudanese refugees.

(8) Central African Republic

There are numerous anti-government armed groups in the Central African Republic, where the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) is deployed. Although the security and humanitarian situation is improving, there remain a large number of internally displaced persons.

In July, on the occasion of Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan, Minister in charge of Trade and Industry Thierry Patrick Akoloza visited Japan. Furthermore, at TICAD 9 in August, President Faustin Archange Touadéra attended and held talks with Prime Minister Ishiba.

Furthermore, in August, Japan signed and exchanged notes regarding grant aid "Food Assistance Programme (WFP partnership)." Presidential, National Assembly, and local elections were held in December, and incumbent President Touadéra was re-elected.

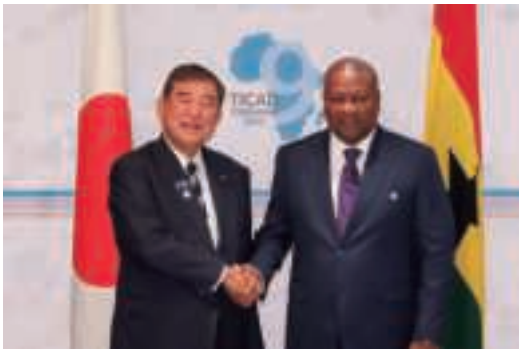
6 West Africa

(1) Ghana

In January, the second Mahama administration was inaugurated, and on January 7, Member of the House of Representatives TANAKA Ryosei attended the inauguration ceremony of President John Mahama as Special Envoy of the Prime Minister Ishiba. The administration has identified the restoration of economic and fiscal conditions as its top priority. In July, it announced the "24-Hour Economy and Export Promotion Development Programme," which aims to increase productivity in agriculture and manufacturing, improve the entire value chain, and establish an export-led economy, and is now promoting it.

President Mahama attended TICAD 9 in August and held talks with Prime Minister Ishiba. Minister for Foreign Affairs Ablakwa, who accompanied the President, also held talks with Foreign Minister Iwaya. In September, Minister of Trade, Industry and Agribusiness Elizabeth Ofosu-Adjare visited Japan on the occasion of Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan.

Japan continues to support Ghana in a wide range of areas, including infectious disease control through the Noguchi Memorial Institute for Medical Research.



Japan-Ghana Summit Meeting (August 20, Yokohama; Photo: Official Website of the Prime Minister's Office of Japan)

(2) Cabo Verde

Cabo Verde has a well-established democracy with high political stability.

In February, on the occasion of the AU Summit held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs and Co-operation Miryan Djamila Sena Vieira held talks with Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs Eri. Furthermore, Prime Minister José Ulisses Correia e Silva attended TICAD 9 in August and held talks with Prime Minister Ishiba. In October, on the occasion of Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan, Minister of the Sea Jorge Santos visited Japan.

(3) The Gambia

The Gambia is working to strengthen the rule of law and improve its debt situation. Agriculture, the main industry, is fragile, and Japan provides support through agriculture and public-private partnerships.

In August, Minister of Commerce Baboucarr Ousmaila Joof visited Japan on the occasion of Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan. Additionally, Vice President Muhammad B. S. Jallow attended TICAD 9 and paid a courtesy call on Prime Minister Ishiba.

(4) Guinea

The transition to civilian rule is underway under the transitional government established in September 2021.

In January, Minister of Planning and International Cooperation Ismaël Nabé visited Japan and held talks with State Minister for Foreign Affairs Fujii. In June, on the occasion of Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan, Prime Minister Amadou Oury Bah of the Transitional Government visited Japan and held talks with Chief Cabinet Secretary Hayashi. In June, Japan signed and exchanged notes regarding grant aid for food aid, and in July regarding grant aid for the provision of firefighting equipment. In August, at TICAD 9, Minister of Planning and International Cooperation Nabé, who visited Japan, held talks with Foreign Minister Iwaya. In September, a new constitution approved by referendum was promulgated, and in the presidential election held in December, Interim President Mamady Doumbouya, who had held real power since September 2021, was elected.

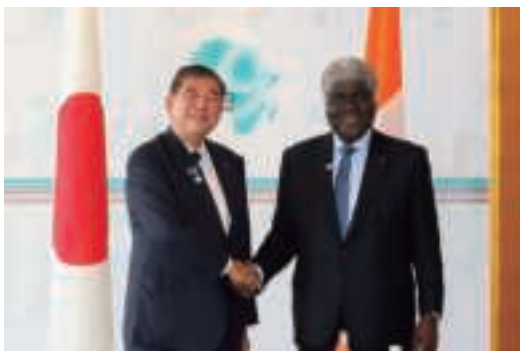
(5) Guinea-Bissau

In May, on the occasion of Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan, President Umaro Sissoco Embaló visited Japan and held talks with Prime Minister Ishiba. Furthermore, at TICAD 9 in August, Minister of Economy, Planning and Regional Integration Soares Sambú attended and held talks with Foreign Minister Iwaya. Presidential elections were held in November. However, on the day before the scheduled announcement of the provisional results, President Embaló, who had stood as a candidate in those elections, and others were detained by the military, and a coup d'état occurred in which the Army Chief of Staff assumed the role of interim president.

(6) Côte d'Ivoire

Economic relations with Côte d'Ivoire, which is achieving consistently high economic growth, have strengthened. In January, the Quality Infrastructure Conference (QIC) between Japan and Côte d'Ivoire was held in Abidjan, with private companies from both countries also participating.

In June, Minister of Commerce and Industry Souleymane Diarrassouba participated in the Côte



Japan-Côte d'Ivoire Summit Meeting (August 22, Yokohama; Photo: Official Website of the Prime Minister's Office of Japan)

d'Ivoire National Day ceremony at Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan. In August, Prime Minister Robert Beugré Mambe, Minister of Economy, Planning and Development Nialé Kaba, Minister of Foreign Affairs, African Integration and Ivorians Abroad Kacou Houadja Léon Adom, Minister of Communication and Government Spokesperson Amadou Coulibaly, and Minister of Digital Transition and Digitalization Ibrahim Kalil Konaté participated in TICAD 9. On this occasion, Prime Minister Mambé held talks with Prime Minister Ishiba, and Minister for Foreign Affairs Adom held talks with Foreign Minister Iwaya. In October, presidential elections were held and President Alassane Ouattara was re-elected for a fourth consecutive term.

(7) Sierra Leone

President Julius Maada Bio, who was re-elected in 2023, is working on decentralization, regional development, reducing dependence on food imports, and improving infrastructure under the "2024-2030 National Development Plan."

In June, Sierra Leone assumed the chairmanship of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). In September, Japan signed and exchanged notes regarding grant aid for food aid with the country. At TICAD 9 in August, Chief Minister David Moinina Sengeh attended and held talks with Foreign Minister Iwaya.

(8) Senegal

In March, Minister of the Armed Forces Birame Diop visited Japan and held talks with Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs MATSUMOTO Hisashi.

In April, Foreign Minister Iwaya visited Senegal and paid courtesy calls on President Bassirou Diomaye Faye and Prime Minister Ousmane Sonko, and held talks with Minister for African Integration and Foreign Affairs Yassine Fall. On this occasion, Foreign Minister Iwaya also visited the Senegal-Japan Vocational and Technical Training Center (CFPT-SJ), which has been supported by Japan since its establishment in 1984, and exchanged views with representatives of Japanese companies in the country.

At TICAD 9 in August, President Faye, Minister for African Integration and Foreign Affairs Fall, Minister of Industry and Trade Serigne Guèye Diop,



Japan-Senegal Summit Meeting (August 20, Yokohama; Photo: Official Website of the Prime Minister's Office of Japan)

and Minister of Economy, Planning and Cooperation Abdourahmane Sarr participated. On this occasion, President Faye held talks with Prime Minister Ishiba. President Faye and his delegation also participated in the Senegal National Day ceremony at Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan.

In October, Japan signed and exchanged notes regarding two grant aid projects with the country: the construction of a branch of the Senegal Vocational Training Center and the provision of agricultural equipment.

(9) Togo

Following a constitutional amendment in May of the previous year, the appointment of the President of the Council of Ministers and the election of the President by a joint session of both chambers of parliament were carried out in May. As a result, former President Faure Gnassingbé was inaugurated as the inaugural President of the Council of Ministers, and Jean-Lucien Savi de Tové was inaugurated as President.

At TICAD 9 in August, President of the Council of Ministers Gnassingbé and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Cooperation, African Integration and Togolese Abroad Robert Dussey participated. On this occasion, President of the Council of Ministers Gnassingbé held a summit meeting with Prime Minister Ishiba.

Furthermore, in August, the Togo National Day ceremony was held at Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan, and Minister of Commerce, Crafts and Local Consumption Rose Kayi Mivedor-Sambiani participated. In October, Japan signed and exchanged notes regarding grant aid for the provision of police vehicles and other equipment for security measures.

(10) Nigeria

President Bola Tinubu, who took office in May 2023, has identified domestic economic development as a priority policy and is actively pushing forward with economic and fiscal reform measures.

In March, polypropylene production commenced at the Dangote Refinery, Africa's largest refinery. Furthermore, in late May, Moody's, a private credit rating agency based in the U.S., upgraded Nigeria's credit rating, and the Nigerian economy is on a recovery trajectory, moving toward a resolution of the foreign currency shortage and stabilization of the value of the local currency.

President Tinubu attended TICAD 9 in August, and Minister of Foreign Affairs Yusuf Maitama Tuggar, who accompanied the President, held talks with Foreign Minister Iwaya. At these talks, the two countries shared the view to deepen cooperation in economic areas and on global challenges.

Furthermore, the two countries shared the view to launch a Co-creation for Common Agenda Initiative for Nigeria entitled "Solution of social challenges and building economic resilience by supporting startups," and Japan is promoting efforts for Nigeria's industrial development.

(11) Niger

Following the military seizure of power in July 2023, efforts toward a return to civilian rule have been closely watched. In March, the country promulgated a Charter of Reconstruction aimed at national restoration, with the objectives of strengthening judicial independence and adopting a new constitution.

Japan, while calling for efforts toward the early restoration of constitutional order in Niger, continues to provide support through international organizations to improve the humanitarian situation.

(12) Burkina Faso

Following the military takeovers of power in January 2022 and September of that year, a transitional government was established and is working toward a transition to civilian rule. The security situation has seriously deteriorated, with frequent terrorist attacks and assaults occurring in rural areas, resulting in a large number of internally displaced persons.

To contribute to addressing the food crisis caused by the rapid increase in internally displaced persons and other factors, Japan signed and exchanged notes in August regarding grant assistance for food aid.

(13) Benin

As terrorist groups in the Sahel region move south, enhancing security measures in northern Benin has become an urgent priority. Moreover, a coup attempt by part of the military occurred in December.

Japan is deepening bilateral relations with Benin through infrastructure development, industrial promotion, and improving living conditions for the population. Japan has also decided to provide yen loans — the first in approximately 30 years — in order to improve Benin's investment environment, among other purposes.

In June, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Miyaji visited the country and paid courtesy calls on Vice President Mariam Chabi Talata, Minister of Foreign Affairs Olushegun Adjadi Bakari, and Minister of Economy and Finance Romuald Wadagni. He also exchanged views separately with former Japanese government scholarship students, former JICA trainees, and Japanese residents. At TICAD 9 in August, Vice President Chabi Talata attended and held talks with Prime Minister Ishiba. Moreover, Minister of Tourism, Culture and the Arts Jean-Michel Abimbola participated in the Benin National Day ceremony at Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan.

(14) Mali

Following the military takeovers of power in August 2020 and May 2021, a transitional government was established and is working toward a transition to civilian rule. Even after the withdrawal of the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), terrorism, attacks, and clashes have occurred frequently, particularly in the north and east, and the security and humanitarian situation has worsened.

Japan is providing cooperation in areas such as education and food security, as well as security and health, in order to support Mali's peace, stability, and sustainable growth.

(15) Liberia

Liberia is embarking on the establishment of tribunals to resolve war crimes and corruption from its civil war in order to establish the rule of law. In January, it also formulated a five-year plan centered on infrastructure and health, which are priority areas for development.

President Joseph Boakai attended TICAD 9 in August and held talks with Prime Minister Ishiba. The two leaders discussed development cooperation and the strengthening of economic relations. In the same month, Minister for Foreign Affairs Sara Beysolow Nyanti participated in Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan.

(16) Mauritania

Although Mauritania is located in the Sahel region, where political and security conditions are becoming unstable, no terrorist incidents have occurred since 2011, and it continues to maintain stable governance. The country is rich in resources such as fishery products, iron ore, gold, and natural gas, and from 2025, the liquefaction and export of natural gas extracted from large-scale gas fields have commenced.

In April, Minister of Economy and Finance Sid'Ahmed Ould Bouh visited Japan and held talks with Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs Matsumoto. In May, former Finance Minister Sidi Ould Tah of Mauritania was elected as the new President at the presidential election of the African Development Bank (AfDB). Furthermore, in August, President Mohamed Ould Cheikh El Ghazouani visited Japan to attend TICAD 9 and held talks with Prime Minister Ishiba.

Column

Celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between Japan and Cabo Verde

Cabo Verde — An Island Nation in the Atlantic Ocean —

Cabo Verde is a small island state composed of 10 islands in the Atlantic Ocean. The archipelago comprises islands of distinctive character: Santiago Island, where the capital of Praia is located; Sal Island, with its beautiful beaches that draw many tourists from Europe; São Vicente Island, a hub of fisheries and culture and the birthplace of Cesária Évora, Cabo Verde's most celebrated singer; and Fogo Island, home to a frequently active volcano.

With an area of approximately 4,033 square kilometers — roughly the same size as Shiga Prefecture — and a population of 500,000, Cabo Verde is a small country but one that enjoys considerable diversity. Ethnically, approximately 70% of the population is of mixed European (Portuguese) and African descent, with the remainder being of African descent. The official language is Portuguese, and 80% of the population is Christian.

In recent years, Cabo Verde has flourished as a tourist destination. In 2023, the number of annual visitors exceeded one million, the highest figure ever recorded.

Relations between Japan and Cabo Verde

Since gaining independence from Portugal in July 1975, Japan and Cabo Verde have built strong bilateral relations. In 2025, the two countries marked the dual milestones of the 50th anniversary of Cabo Verde's independence and the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Japan and Cabo Verde.



Japanese culture event held in Cabo Verde (March, Mindelo, Cabo Verde)

In this commemorative year, a number of initiatives were carried out to further deepen exchanges between the two countries. In March, the Embassy of Japan in Senegal, which holds concurrent accreditation for Cabo Verde, co-hosted an event on Japanese culture with the Government of Cabo Verde. The event featured a joint performance by *Kanju Taiko* drummers invited from Hachijojima and Aogashima alongside traditional Cabo Verdean drummers, promoting mutual understanding and cultural exchange between the two countries. In August, Prime Minister José Ulisses Correia e Silva visited Japan to attend TICAD 9, held in Yokohama. On that occasion, he held a bilateral meeting with Prime Minister Ishiba, where the two sides concurred to continue to work closely together toward further deepening the bilateral relationship. Furthermore, in October, Minister of the Sea Jorge Santos visited Japan to attend the National Day of Cabo Verde at Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan.

Japan has provided a wide range of assistance to Cabo Verde, including food aid and support for the fisheries sector through grant aid, assistance in the water supply and electricity sectors through yen loans, and technical cooperation across various fields. Most recently, in December, Japan decided to extend grant aid of 150 million Japanese yen for food assistance. Furthermore, a Japanese company has signed a contract with the National Water and Sanitation Agency of Cabo Verde and is advancing the construction of a seawater desalination plant and water transmission pipelines on Santiago Island. These initiatives are also helping to strengthen Japan-Cabo Verde relations at the private sector level.



Japan-Cabo Verde Summit Meeting held on the occasion of TICAD 9 (August 21, Yokohama; Photo: Official Website of the Prime Minister's Office of Japan)

Cabo Verde is a distant country, requiring some 30 hours by air from Japan. Even so, Mindelo, its second largest city, has served as a way port for Japanese tuna fishing vessels for more than 50 years, a relationship that predates the country's independence. Approximately 40 tuna fishing vessels operating in the Atlantic Ocean call at the port each year, where frozen tuna is transshipped onto vessels bound for Japan. In this way, Cabo Verde plays an unsung role in supporting Japanese dining tables.

Japan will continue to further strengthen its relations with Cabo Verde, a maritime nation surrounded by seas just like Japan, and one that upholds shared universal values such as democracy.

Chapter 3

Japan's Foreign Policy to Promote National and Global Interests

Section 1	Efforts for Peace and Stability of Japan and the International Community	200
Section 2	Japan's International Cooperation (Development Cooperation and Response to Global Issues)	268
Section 3	Economic Diplomacy	294
Section 4	Efforts to Promote Understanding and Trust in Japan	323



Section 1 Efforts for Peace and Stability of Japan and the International Community

1 National Security Initiatives

(1) Security Environment Surrounding Japan

Today, Japan's security environment is as severe and complex as it has ever been since the end of World War II. Military build-up, including nuclear and missile capabilities, is advancing rapidly around Japan. Further reinforcement of military capabilities and acceleration of military activities are becoming more prominent, and unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force are occurring more frequently than ever before. A historic shift in the power balance and geopolitical competition are intensifying particularly in the Indo Pacific region, with some countries in the international community attempting to change the existing international order based on their own historical views and values. Russia's aggression against Ukraine, which began in February 2022, is also ongoing. 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 the existing international order, thereby leading to situations of unjustifiable infringement of principles such as freedom of navigation and freedom of overflight.

Under these circumstances, grey zone situations over territories and cross-border cyberattacks on critical civilian infrastructures are occurring. Furthermore, information warfare in the cognitive domain through information manipulation, including the spread of disinformation, etc., is constantly taking place. As the boundary between contingency and peacetime has become increasingly blurred, the scope of security has expanded to include those fields previously considered non-military such as economic, technological and others, and thus the boundary between military and non-military fields has become blurred. In addition, addressing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles, as well as international terrorism, continues to pose serious challenges to the international community. In light of these developments, it is now necessary to strengthen efforts related to security policies across diverse sectors.

In the new "National Security Strategy" decided at the National Security Council and by cabinet decision in December 2022, while a wide range of security measures were set forth (fundamental reinforcement of defense capabilities, including possession of counterstrike capabilities; reinforcement of comprehensive defense architecture; consideration of revisions to systems including the Three Principles on Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology and its Implementation Guidelines; development of systems for the introduction and implementation of Active Cyber Defense; significant reinforcement of maritime security capabilities and expansion of systems; promotion of economic security policies, among others), diplomatic capability was established first among the main elements of comprehensive national power for Japan's national security. Based on this Strategy, Japan will continue to develop a strong diplomacy, to prevent crises before they occur, and to proactively create a peaceful and stable international environment.

Furthermore, as also noted in the "National Security Strategy," the transfer of defense equipment and technology overseas serves as a key policy instrument to create a desirable security environment for Japan, and to provide assistance to countries that are subject to aggression in violation of international law. From this perspective, the Three Principles on Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology and its Implementation Guidelines were partially revised in December 2023, and the Implementation Guidelines underwent further partial revision in March 2024, in order to enable the transfer of defense equipment and technology across a

wide range of fields, and at the same time, to conduct more strict examinations on transfers. Regarding the Global Combat Air Programme (GCAP), a joint development program for next-generation fighter aircraft by Japan, the United Kingdom (UK), and Italy, the three countries signed the Convention on the Establishment of the "Global Combat Air Programme – GCAP International Government Organisation (GIGO)" in December 2023 to establish an international organization for the management and operation of the Programme, and the Convention entered into force in December 2024.

Furthermore, Official Security Assistance (OSA) was established in 2023, providing equipment and supplies as well as assistance for infrastructure development to the armed forces and related organizations of like-minded countries. The number of partner countries have been expanded, with a primary focus on the Indo-Pacific region, and Japan has decided to provide assistance to 10 countries by the end of 2025.

Regarding cybersecurity, while intelligence collection and analysis capabilities have been strengthened, the Cyber Response Capability Strengthening Act and Necessary Arrangement of Relevant Acts, which enable the introduction of Active Cyber Defense, were enacted and promulgated in May 2025. Based on these laws, the public and private sectors will work together to detect and respond to cyberattacks more promptly and effectively, and it will become possible to implement remote access and neutralization measures to prevent serious harm from cyberattacks.

(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 peaceful, stable, and prosperous 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 based on the principle of international cooperation. To achieve these objectives, the "Legislation for Peace and Security," a domestic legislation, took effect in March 2016.

After the enforcement of the legislation, Japan has been engaged in various forms of cooperation with the U.S. and other relevant countries. The Japan-U.S. Alliance is stronger than it has ever been, and Japan is contributing further to peace and stability in the region and the international community. For example, from 2017 to the end of 2024, Japan escorted the U.S. Forces and other troops a total of 150 times on occasions such as joint exercises, intelligence and surveillance operations, including ballistic missile warnings. In addition, Japan has also expanded and enhanced activities relating to cooperation on international peace and cooperation, such as UN Peacekeeping Operations (PKO).

Since the enforcement of the Legislation for Peace and Security, cooperation has been deepening not only with the U.S. but with various countries. Going forward, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) will also make efforts to maintain and develop diplomatic relations that contribute to the further advancement of mutual cooperation with each country, in order to secure the lives and peaceful livelihood of the people of Japan.

(3) Territorial Integrity

Maintaining territorial integrity is a fundamental responsibility of the Government. Japan's policy to resolutely protect its land, sea, and air space 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 territorial integrity among the international community, making use of the contacts and knowledge of its 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 complex at an ever more rapid pace, it is indispensable to strengthen the Japan-U.S. Security Arrangements and to enhance the deterrence and response capabilities 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. Japan and the U.S. are further enhancing their deterrence and response capabilities under the Guidelines for Japan-U.S. Defense Cooperation ("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 missile defense, cyberspace, space and information security. While advancing these efforts, Japan and the U.S. have concurrently 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 personnel in Okinawa to Guam and other locations in order to mitigate the impact on local communities, including Okinawa.

(2) Japan-U.S. Security and Defense Cooperation in Various Fields

A An Overview of Japan-U.S. Security and Defense Cooperation

The Guidelines for Japan-U.S. Defense Cooperation, which were formulated in 2015, reviewed and updated the general framework and policy direction of Japan-U.S. defense cooperation. Through the Alliance Coordination Mechanism (ACM) and other efforts established under these Guidelines, Japan and the U.S. have been sharing information closely, establishing a common understanding of the situation, and engaging in "seamless" responses and efforts from peacetime to contingencies.

In February, Prime Minister Ishiba visited Washington, D.C. and held a Japan-U.S. Summit Meeting with President Donald J. Trump. The two leaders concurred to strengthen the deterrence and response capabilities of the Japan-U.S. Alliance and to work closely to address strategic challenges in the region that both countries are facing. Prime Minister Ishiba also expressed Japan's unwavering commitment to fundamentally strengthen Japan's defense capabilities, which President Trump welcomed. Furthermore, President Trump underscored the unwavering commitment by the U.S. to the defense of Japan, using its full range of capabilities including nuclear. The two leaders reaffirmed that Article V of the Japan-U.S. Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security applies to the Senkaku Islands.

In October, Prime Minister Takaichi held a Japan-U.S. Summit Meeting with President Trump, who was visiting Japan. The two leaders concurred to advance a broad range of security cooperation in order to further enhance the deterrence and response capabilities of the Japan-U.S. Alliance. Prime Minister Takaichi stated that she has consistently emphasized the necessity of fundamentally reinforcing defense capabilities amidst the most severe and complex security environment since the end of World War II, and that she has taken actions immediately after assuming office, and expressed her commitment to continue working on fundamentally reinforcing Japan's defense capabilities and increasing defense spending as its own initiative. President Trump stated that he knows that Japan is increasing defense capabilities very substantially. On the same day, Foreign Minister Motegi held a Japan-U.S. Foreign Ministers' Meeting with Secretary of State Marco Rubio. The two foreign ministers concurred that they would advance concrete security cooperation to further strengthen Japan-U.S. Alliance deterrence and response capabilities.

In 2025, Japan continued to engage in personnel exchanges with senior U.S. defense officials, including successive visits to Japan by Admiral William J. Houston, Director of Naval Nuclear Propulsion Program, in January; General Eric M. Smith, Commandant of the U.S. Marine Corps, in March; Secretary Pete Hegseth in March and October; General Randall Reed, Commander of the U.S. Transportation Command and Lieutenant General Joshua Rudd, Deputy Commander of the U.S.

Indo-Pacific Command, in June; Secretary of the Air Force Troy E. Meink in July; Admiral Samuel Paparo, Commander of the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, in September; Secretary of the Army Daniel P. Driscoll in October; and Admiral Daryl Caudle, Chief of Naval Operations, in November.

Discussions on extended deterrence(1) through the Japan-U.S. Extended Deterrence Dialogue (EDD) continue to be held. The EDD was established in 2010, and as a part of Japan-U.S. security and defense cooperation, it provides an opportunity for the two governments to discuss regional security, Alliance defense posture, nuclear and missile defense policy, and arms control issues, to engage in an in-depth exchange of views on means to sustain and strengthen extended deterrence, which is at the core of the Japan-U.S. Alliance and to deepen mutual understanding on alliance deterrence. The two governments held the Japan-U.S. Extended Deterrence Dialogue (EDD) at Barksdale Air Force Base in Shreveport, Louisiana in June.

B Missile Defense

Japan has been making steady efforts to develop and engage in the production of the Ballistic Missile Defense (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. Japan is also advancing its efforts to effectively counter new airborne threats, including hypersonic weapons, and at the Japan-U.S. Summit Meeting in August 2023, announced the decision to initiate the joint development of the Glide Phase Interceptor (GPI). In May of the same year, Japan and the U.S. signed the Project Arrangement for the cooperative development of GPI. In the Japan-U.S. Joint Leaders' Statement issued in April 2024, the two countries reviewed their approach to the sharing of information to counter missile threats, including announcing their "vision to cooperate on a networked air defense architecture among the U.S., Japan, and Australia."

C Cyberspace

At the Japan-U.S. Summit Meeting in February, the two leaders expressed their intent to expand bilateral security cooperation in cyberspace by leveraging new technologies such as artificial intelligence and secure and resilient cloud services to deepen information sharing. Subsequently, in June, the two countries held The 10th Japan-U.S. Cyber Dialogue. At this Cyber Dialogue, based on the necessity for whole of government efforts by both Japan and the U.S., participants had discussions on a wide range of issues regarding Japan-U.S. cooperation on cyber, including domestic cyber policies, bilateral cyber cooperation, international and regional cooperation and capacity building, and countering malicious cyber activities.

Japan and the U.S. engage in discussions, through frameworks such as the Japan-U.S. Cyber Dialogue, on bilateral cooperation across a wide range of areas. Furthermore, the two sides are continuing to cooperate on matters related to cyberspace, including promoting bilateral policy coordination, strengthening systems and capabilities, and exchanging incident information, while taking into consideration Japan's cybersecurity strategy and the cyber policies of the U.S.

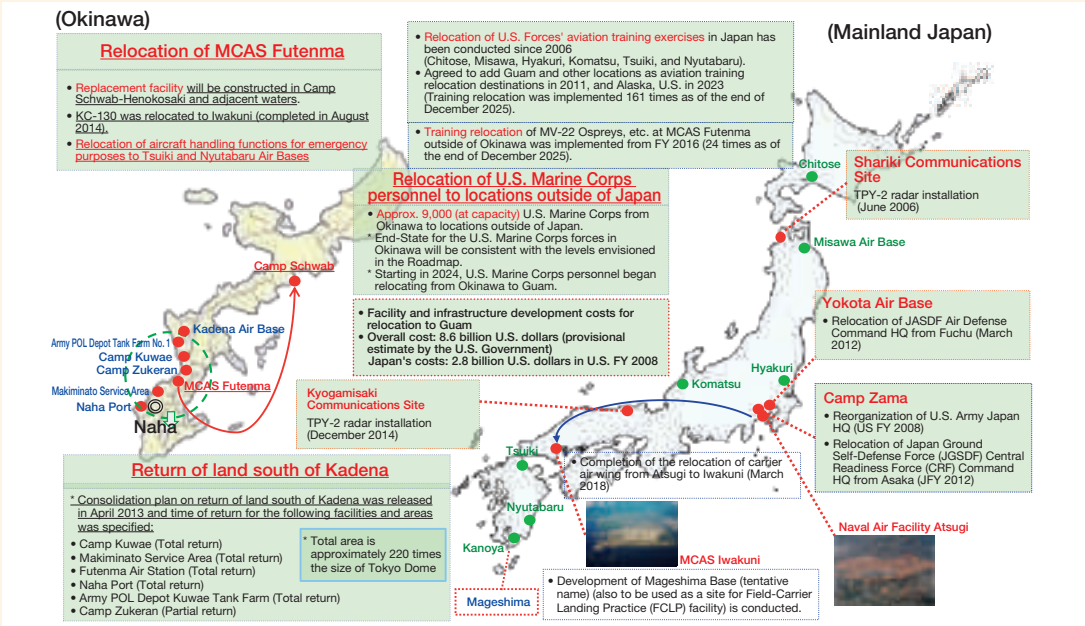
D Space

At the Japan-U.S. Security Consultative Committee (Japan-U.S. "2+2") convened in January 2023, Japan and the U.S. committed to deepening cooperation on space capabilities, and considered that attacks to, from, or within space, present a clear challenge to the security of the Alliance, and affirmed such attacks, in certain circumstances, could lead to the invocation of Article V of the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty. Japan and the U.S. are continuing to advance space cooperation in the field of security, including through mutual exchanges of information in the field of Space Domain Awareness and others, cooperation on hosted payloads (mission instruments loaded onto other entities' satellites), and cooperation on a satellite constellation(2) for

(1) Providing deterrence that a country possesses to its allies and partners. Japan possesses its own deterrence while also receiving extended deterrence from its ally, the U.S.

(2) Satellite constellation: A system in which a large number of small artificial satellites are deployed in coordinated orbits and operated in an integrated manner.

Realignment of USFJ – 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 relocation of MCAS Futenma.

the detection and tracking of hypersonic glide vehicles (HGV) and other threats.

E Information Security

Information security plays a crucial role in advancing cooperation within the context of the Alliance. Both countries continue to hold discussions designed to enhance their cooperation regarding information security.

(3) Realignment of U.S. Forces in Japan

While advancing the efforts described above, the Government of Japan will continue to make every effort to mitigate the impact on local communities, including Okinawa, and to maintain the stable presence of U.S. Forces in Japan, by steadily implementing the realignment of U.S. Forces in Japan, including the relocation of MCAS Futenma to Henoko.

In the Joint Statement of the Japan-U.S. "2+2" issued in July 2024, the two sides reiterated their firm commitment to the steady implementation of such realignment of U.S. Forces in Japan. This Statement emphasized the importance of optimizing Alliance force posture to address increasing security challenges in the region and be better postured to meet these challenges in the future. Regarding the relocation of Marine Corps personnel from Okinawa to Guam, it was confirmed in the Statement that the relocation would begin in 2024, and the commencement of relocation was officially announced on December 14, 2024.

In particular, with regard to the return of lands in Okinawa, in addition to the return of a major portion of the Northern Training Area (NTA, approximately 4,000 hectares) in December 2017, the return of lands has been moving forward based on the April 2013 "Consolidation Plan for Facilities and Areas in Okinawa" ("Okinawa Consolidation Plan"). The return of all areas indicated as "Immediate Return" under the Okinawa Consolidation Plan was achieved with the return of a portion of the Facilities and Engineering Compound in Camp Zukeran in March 2020. In May 2022, which marked the 50th anniversary of the reversion of Okinawa to Japan, Japan and the U.S. concurred to enable the public use of the Lower Plaza Housing Area of Camp Zukeran as a greenspace, ahead of its return to Japan, and the start of general use commenced in March 2024. Moreover, at the former site of the Camp Zukeran West Futenma

Housing Area, which was returned in 2015, development of the "Okinawa Health and Medical Hub" progressed as a model case for future utilization of former base sites. In January 2025, the University of the Ryukyus Hospital relocated and opened, and in April, the Faculty of Medicine of the University of the Ryukyus was relocated and commenced operations. In addition, at the Japan-U.S. Summit Meeting in February, the two leaders confirmed their commitment to the steady implementation of the realignment of U.S. Forces in Japan in accordance with the Okinawa Consolidation Plan, including the construction of the Futenma Replacement Facility at Henoko and the return of Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) Futenma.

(4) Host Nation Support (HNS)

With a view to ensuring the effective operations of U.S. Forces in Japan amidst the growing severity of the security situation surrounding Japan, Japan bears a part of costs, such as the costs of Facility Improvement Programs (FIP), within the scope provided for under the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA). In addition, Japan has also borne the labor costs for U.S. Forces working in Japan, utilities costs, and training relocation costs, by concluding the Special Measures Agreements (SMAs) which set out special measures relating to the SOFA. Under the New SMA signed on January 7, 2022, and entered into force on April 1, it was decided that Japan will also bear the expenditures related to the procurement of training equipment and materials which will contribute, not only to the readiness of U.S. Forces in Japan but also to the enhancement of the interoperability between the Japan Self-Defense Forces (SDF) and the U.S. Forces. Based on the SOFA and the New SMA, the Government of Japan will bear the HNS costs from FY2022 to FY2026. In consultations on the New SMAs, as both parties concurred that the costs borne by Japan should be used to build a foundation upon which the Japan-U.S. Alliance will be further strengthened, the Japanese side decided to refer to this budget by a Japanese phrase that points to its goal of enhancing Alliance readiness and resiliency. During the effective period of the new SMAs (April 1, 2022 to March 31, 2027), the annual average budget for HNS is approximately 211 billion Japanese yen.

(5) Various Issues Related to the Presence of the U.S. Forces in Japan

To ensure the smooth and effective operation of the Japan-U.S. security arrangements and the stable stationing of U.S. Forces in Japan as the linchpin of these arrangements, it is important to mitigate the impact of U.S. Forces' activities on local residents living in the vicinity and to gain their understanding and support regarding the stationing of U.S. Forces. The Government of Japan, taking into consideration the requests from local communities, has been making utmost efforts in areas such as preventing incidents and accidents involving U.S. Forces personnel, abating the noise of U.S. Forces' aircraft, and dealing with environmental issues at U.S. Forces' facilities and areas. U.S. Forces in Japan have been steadily implementing the countermeasures against recurrence of incidents and accidents announced in July 2024. At the Japan-U.S. "2+2" convened in July of the same year, Japan and the U.S. emphasized the importance of continued bilateral coordination to ensure the sharing of information in a timely manner, and in the spirit of alliance cooperation, positively evaluated efforts to be implemented by the U.S. Forces in Japan to prevent unacceptable incidents and behavior. In matters related to the environment, ministers discussed enhancing bilateral environmental cooperation, including on per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) issues.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) is implementing various initiatives, including exchanges between U.S. Forces personnel and residents living near U.S. Forces` facilities and areas in Japan. Since FY2020, MOFA and the U.S. Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) have been implementing Student Educational Exchange and Dialogue (SEED) projects at the U.S. Forces` facilities and areas in Japan. These projects are aimed at deepening mutual understanding through cultural and educational exchanges among Japanese and American junior and senior high school students, and have been conducted continuously at U.S. Forces' facilities and schools in various parts of Japan, with the cooperation of local governments in the vicinity and U.S. Forces in Japan. In addition, in Okinawa where there is a concentration of U.S. Forces' facilities and areas, the "TOFU: Think

Column

Japan-U.S. Exchange Student Ambassadors

Approximately 170 high school and university students from Okinawa have participated to date in the "TOFU: Think of Okinawa's Future in the United States" program, through which participants visit Tokyo, Washington, D.C., and New York and deepen mutual understanding between Japan and the U.S. through exchanges of opinions with key government officials and other activities. In 2025, in order to further enhance the TOFU community, four "Japan-U.S. Exchange Student Ambassadors" were appointed from among the participants. This column introduces the voices of these "Student Ambassadors."



Students participating in the TOFU program (March, Washington, D.C., U.S.)

YASUNAGA Keiichi

Through the TOFU program, I had dialogues with experts on Japan-U.S. relations and came to understand the diverse perspectives on Okinawa and the U.S. military base issue, in particular, realizing that the matter is too complex to be treated in terms of simple pros and cons. Visiting Japanese and U.S. government institutions and experiencing the front lines of diplomacy firsthand was a powerful inspiration. Learning from diplomats the importance of understanding culture and history gave rise to my dream of contributing to the international community as a diplomat in the future. After returning from the U.S., I have been participating in base visits and student exchanges as a "Japan-U.S. Exchange Student Ambassador," appreciating the value of cooperation that transcends borders. TOFU not only taught me the importance of confronting Japan's challenges and forming my own opinions, but also opened the door for me to the new world of diplomacy.

EDA Hiro

The reason I joined the TOFU program was that I was strongly drawn to the philosophy expressed in the program's name, "Think of Okinawa's Future in the United States." I felt the need to engage with Okinawa — the region closest to me — also from an outside perspective. Through the program, I had the precious opportunity to visit government institutions that I would not normally have access to, to engage in dialogue with experts on base-related issues and diplomatic challenges whom I would not ordinarily meet, and to directly ask the questions that had been on my mind. Furthermore, deepening discussions while encountering the perspectives of fellow participants from diverse backgrounds was a significant learning experience. After returning to Japan, we discussed what we ourselves could do in Okinawa and put our ideas into concrete action. Through this experience, I came to realize that dialogue and collaboration grounded in an understanding of the background form the very foundation of mutual understanding.

OKUMA Mitsuki

Having grown up in an environment where U.S. military bases occupy 80% of my town, I joined the TOFU program out of a desire to directly understand the realities of Japan-U.S. relations and to contribute to the future of Okinawa. As I listened to officials from both Japanese and U.S. government institutions speak about the Japan-U.S. Alliance and the current situation in Okinawa, I learned the importance of viewing matters from a global perspective and came to appreciate the significant role that "people-to-people exchanges" play in diplomacy. I was further inspired by interactions with my fellow participants, visits to local schools, and encounters with people from Okinawa who are active in various fields. In order to translate the lessons learned through training in Japan and abroad into the next steps for thinking about Okinawa's future, I will cherish the connections built through this program and continue to consider what I can do going forward.

SHO Rumi

"Why can't I go beyond the fence?" That was the first question that came to my mind back in kindergarten. It was then that I learned that Japan had lost the war to the U.S. and that, as a result, large military bases had been built in Okinawa. Until I traveled to the U.S. through the TOFU program, I had thought of the U.S. as strong and invincible. However, when I visited the Arlington National Cemetery and saw the vast grounds filled with the graves of fallen soldiers, I realized that even the victorious nation had countless war dead, and that while I had learned about my own country's war dead, I had never before stopped to think about the sacrifice of the U.S. Thanks to this program, which offers the fresh perspective of "thinking about Okinawa's future in the United States," I learned that in any matter, one must never neglect the perspectives and realities of the other side.

Column

Thirty Years of "Yokosuka Community Patrol"

In Yokosuka City, Kanagawa Prefecture, home to U.S. Fleet Activities, Yokosuka, of the U.S. Forces in Japan, community patrols have been conducted in the central downtown area for more than 30 years since 1994. This activity has steadily expanded its circle of participants, now involving not only local neighborhood associations but also a wide range of stakeholders. This column introduces the voice of UEDA Shigeru, Chairman of the Odaki Neighborhood Association (territorial juridical person), who has led the activity.

UEDA Shigeru, Chairman, Odaki Neighborhood Association, Yokosuka City

Our local community is adjacent to U.S. Fleet Activities, Yokosuka.

In 1994, three local neighborhood associations joined forces and decided to launch night patrols as part of efforts to build a safer, more secure, and more comfortable community, with patrols held on the third Friday of every month. The main focus of the activity was greeting passers-by with words such as "Good evening, please take care." At the outset, participation was limited to about 10 to 15 people, but we agreed that, since we were greeting people, no one should join after drinking alcohol.

In 2005, we decided to incorporate cleanup activities into the patrols. We were concerned that there might be complaints, but once we began, everyone cooperated wholeheartedly.

Around that same time, we received an offer that the U.S. Navy and the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force wished to participate as volunteers. Greater participation means greater momentum for the activity. The number of participants has grown to include the U.S. Navy, the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force, the Yokosuka Police Station, Yokosuka City, Kanagawa Prefecture, the South Kanto Defense Bureau, the citizen volunteer group Guardian Angels, local neighborhood associations, etc, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with each patrol now drawing more than 50 participants.

At first, passers-by were surprised to see us, but they gradually came to call out to us with words like "Thank you, keep up the good work." Through our monthly activities, various groups have become friends close enough to put their arms around each other's shoulders, and we continue to enjoy the activities together with smiles. Greeting people and cleaning up are very straightforward activities. After the activity, it is deeply rewarding to see that the once-littered streets have been transformed into clean ones.

In the past, the then-Deputy Commander of U.S. Fleet Activities, Yokosuka participated every single time for a full year without missing a single occasion, leading the cleanup activities from the front. He was the one who collected the largest amount during the sorting work at each patrol. When he started conducting cleanup activities around the base during his lunch breaks as well, his staff began to join him as a group. When we heard the news of his departure from Yokosuka, we spontaneously agreed to "hold a farewell party," and each of us gathered with a gift in hand. I still remember his words: "I had a truly wonderful time engaging in activities with all of you over the past year," and "I am a citizen of Yokosuka."



Group photo of members who participated in Yokosuka patrol

Through this activity, I have come to know many friends. I am convinced that nurturing relationships with friends whose faces we know contributes to the peace and safety of our community. In August 2025, members of the Royal Navy and the Royal Norwegian Navy, part of the United Kingdom's Carrier Strike Group that called at the Port of Yokosuka, also joined our activity. It was the first time that European personnel had taken part. I find it heartening that bonds of trust are steadily expanding in this way, with Yokosuka as the stage. I am convinced that it is important to carry this activity forward into the next 30 years.

of Okinawa's Future in the United States" program has been implemented since FY2017 to provide an opportunity for high school and university students from Okinawa to witness 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 between the two countries. The program served as an opportunity for participants to cultivate an international perspective through visits to Tokyo, Washington, D.C., and New York, exchanges of opinions with key government officials, and tours of government facilities. Furthermore, at a post-visit debriefing session held in Okinawa Prefecture in April, four "Japan-U.S. Exchange Student Ambassadors" who will promote further Japan-U.S. exchange were appointed, and efforts have been made to expand the effects of the program through follow-up activities and other measures. (See the Column on page 206.)

(6) The United Nations Forces and U.S. Forces in Japan

Coincident with the start of the Korean War in June 1950, the UN forces were established in July of the same year based on the recommendation of UN Security Council resolution 83 in June. Following the cease-fire agreement concluded in July 1953, the United Nations Command (UNC) Headquarters was relocated to Seoul (South Korea) in July 1957, and UNC-Rear (UNC-R) was established in Japan. Established at Yokota Air Base, UNC-R currently has four military staff members including a stationed commander, as well as military attachés from nine countries who are stationed at embassies in Tokyo as liaison officers for the UN forces. Based on Article 5 of the Agreement Regarding the Status of the United Nations Forces in Japan, the UN forces in Japan may use the U.S. Forces' facilities and areas in Japan to the minimum extent required to provide support for military logistics for the UN forces. (Note that the status of U.S. forces that form a part of the UN forces is governed by the relevant agreements implemented pursuant to the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty.) At present, the UN forces in Japan are 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; MCAS Futenma and White Beach Area. In May, General Xavier T. Brunson (Commander, United Nations Command/Combined Forces Command/United States Forces Korea) paid a courtesy call on Foreign Minister Iwaya. Foreign Minister Iwaya expressed that he highly values the role of the United Nations Command (UNC) and the U.S. Forces in the ROK amidst an increasingly severe security environment in the region, and that he appreciates the activities of the UNC-Rear, which supports efforts by the UN Forces, including the surveillance and monitoring activities by the UNC Sending States against illicit ship-to-ship transfers(3), and further stated that the Japan-U.S. Alliance and the U.S.-ROK Alliance, and their strategic coordination, are indispensable for peace and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific region, and that Japan looks forward to continuously enhancing the relationship with the UNC.

3 Global Security

(1) Regional Security

In the international community, a historical shift in the power balance, particularly in the Indo-Pacific region, is occurring. In light of the numerous security challenges confronting this region, there is a need for Japan to cooperate with its ally and like-minded countries and others. In particular, it is more important than ever to further strengthen the deterrence and response capabilities of the Japan-U.S. Alliance. There is also a need for Japan to fundamentally reinforce its own defense capabilities. At the same time, by actively strengthening bilateral and multilateral security cooperation with each country, Japan has been making efforts to realize a desirable regional security environment for Japan.

(3) In this context, "ship-to-ship transfers" refers to the transfers to or from North Korea-flagged vessels of any goods or items at sea, which UN Security Council Resolution 2375 (adopted in September 2017) prohibits UN member states from facilitating or engaging in.

Japan and Australia concurred, at the leaders' and foreign ministerial levels, to elevate the "Special Strategic Partnership" between the two countries to even greater heights, and to continue to play a leading role in realizing a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)" as the central pillar of coordination among like-minded countries. At the 12th Japan-Australia Foreign and Defence Ministerial Consultations ("2+2") convened in September, Japan and Australia concurred, in line with the "Japan-Australia Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation"(4) issued in 2022, on further developing cooperation to strengthen collective deterrence, and, while sharing strategic assessments, on enhancing discussions between their foreign and defense authorities on possible contingencies that may affect their sovereignty and regional security interests. Operational cooperation and joint exercises are expanding under the Japan-Australia Reciprocal Access Agreement (RAA) that entered into force in 2023, with over 40 activities having taken place under the RAA, including Exercise TALISMAN SABRE 2025 and Exercise ORIENT SHIELD, while defense equipment and technology cooperation is also deepening, including the selection of the Japanese upgraded Mogami-class frigate as Australia's next general-purpose frigate. With regard to illicit maritime activities, including ship-to-ship transfers(5), with North Korea-flagged vessels prohibited by the relevant UN Security Council Resolution, the destroyer HMAS *Sydney* conducted monitoring and surveillance operations from mid- to late May, while aircraft conducted monitoring and surveillance activities from late March to mid-April and from early to mid-October.

Japan and New Zealand have concurred on strengthening the "Strategic Cooperative Partnership" across many fields including security. In December, concrete initiatives to deepen security cooperation have advanced, including the signing in Tokyo of an Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA) and an Agreement on the Security of Information. With regard to illicit maritime activities, including ship-to-ship transfers, Royal New Zealand Navy sustainment vessel HMNZS *AOTEAROA* conducted monitoring and surveillance activities from early to mid-November, while aircraft conducted monitoring and surveillance activities from late April to late May and from early to late November.

Japan and India have concurred, at the leaders' and foreign ministerial levels, to further diversify and deepen bilateral relations across a wide range of fields including security, in order to further develop the "Japan-India Special Strategic and Global Partnership." In August, Prime Minister Ishiba held a summit meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who was visiting Japan, during which the two leaders concurred on revising the "Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation between Japan and India" announced in 2008, and on supporting the early realization of the transfer of "Unified Complex Radio Antenna (UNICORN)" to the Indian Navy. In addition, in order to strengthen coordination between the two countries including the building of resilient supply chains for critical materials, Japan and India launched the "Japan-India Economic Security Initiative." The two leaders reaffirmed their commitment to fulfilling greater responsibilities jointly between Japan and India toward the common goal of achieving peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific region and in the international community at large.

With the Republic of Korea (ROK), Japan and the ROK have affirmed that they will continue strategic communication on security area to respond in coordination amid the increasingly severe strategic environment. Based on the recognition that Japan-ROK relations are important in the current strategic environment, they agreed that Japan and the ROK, as well as Japan, the U.S., and the ROK, will continue to work closely together on matters, including responding to North Korea, taking advantage of various international conferences and other opportunities, and holding talks between leaders, foreign ministers, defense ministers, and heads of the national security agencies. In addition, Japan is advancing further trilateral cooperation to address regional security issues, including through Freedom Edge, the multi-domain joint exercise among Japan, the U.S., and the ROK conducted for the third time in September 2025 (following June and November

(4) A document that sets out the direction for the next 10 years of Japan-Australia security cooperation, signed at the Japan-Australia Leaders' Meeting in October 2022.

(5) In this context, "ship-to-ship transfers" refers to the transfers to or from North Korea-flagged vessels of any goods or items at sea, which UN Security Council Resolution 2375 (adopted in September 2017) prohibits UN member states from facilitating or engaging in.

2024), and other trilateral joint exercises (January, March, April, June, and July 2025). Furthermore, the Japan-U.S.-ROK Trilateral Diplomacy Working Group for Foreign Ministry Cooperation on North Korea's Cyber Threats was held in December 2023, March and September 2024, and August 2025, during which the three countries reaffirmed their commitment to continue to work closely together, including in the cyber domain.

In relation to the UK, which is Japan's "enhanced global strategic partner," defense cooperation is advancing with the application of the Japan-UK Reciprocal Access Agreement (RAA) that entered into force in October 2023. In August, the UK's Carrier Strike Group 25 (CSG25), with the aircraft carrier *HMS Prince of Wales* as its flagship, made a port call in Japan. On that occasion, based on a request from the UK Armed Forces, Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force escort vessels provided asset protection to *HMS Prince of Wales* and other vessels — the first time such protection had ever been extended to the UK Armed Forces. In September, Japan Air Self-Defense Force F-15 fighter aircraft and others made their first-ever visit to the UK, further advancing cooperation through mutual asset deployments by both countries. With regard to illicit maritime activities, including ship-to-ship transfers, the patrol vessel *HMS Spey* conducted monitoring and surveillance activities in early June, and the frigate *HMS Richmond* — a vessel that formed part of CSG25 — conducted monitoring and surveillance operations from early to mid-September. In June, EdgeWing, a joint venture company responsible for the airframe design and development of the Global Combat Air Programme (GCAP) being jointly developed by Japan, the UK, and Italy, was established in the UK.

With France, which is Japan's "Exceptional Partnership" partner, the track record of the Japan-France Foreign and Defence Ministers' Meeting ("2+2"), the Japan-France Cyber Dialogue, port calls by frigates, and joint exercises continues to accumulate. At the Japan-France Foreign Ministers' Meeting held in Paris in May, the two foreign ministers highly valued Japan-France security cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region and concurred on continuing to work closely together. At the Japan-France Foreign Ministers' Meeting held in November, they reconfirmed cooperation as "Exceptional Partners" sharing values and principles. Furthermore, at the Japan-France leaders' exchange of views held in the same month, based on the recognition that the security of Euro-Atlantic and the Indo-Pacific is inseparable, the two leaders concurred that Japan and France, as "Exceptional Partners" sharing values and principles, will continue to cooperate closely across all areas including security, economy, economic security, and space. In addition, with regard to illicit maritime activities including ship-to-ship transfers, French Armed Forces vessels conducted monitoring and surveillance activities in mid-February and late October, and aircraft conducted monitoring and surveillance operations from mid-October to mid-November.

With Germany, the Japan-Germany Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA) entered into force in July 2024, and in the same year, asset deployments and joint exercises took place between the two countries. In September 2025, Japan Air Self-Defense Force F-15 fighter aircraft and others made their first-ever visit to Germany, further advancing cooperation through asset deployments. Both Japan and Germany welcomed these advances in cooperation, and through the Japan-Germany Summit Meeting on the occasion of the G7 Kananaskis Summit in June, the meeting between Prime Minister Ishiba and President Frank-Walter Steinmeier in the same month, the 1st Japan-Germany Foreign Ministerial Strategic Dialogue in August, and the Japan-Germany Summit Meeting on the occasion of the G20 Johannesburg Summit in November, Japan and Germany concurred on further strengthening cooperation in the field of security.

With Italy, defense cooperation has advanced based on the "Japan-Italy Action Plan" announced between the leaders on the occasion of the G7 Apulia Summit in June 2024. With regard to illicit maritime activities including ship-to-ship transfers, Italian Navy frigate *Antonio Marceglia*, which made a port call in Japan from March to April, conducted monitoring and surveillance activities in late April. In September, the Japan-Italy Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA), which had been signed between Foreign Minister Iwaya and Minister of Defense Guido Crosetto in November 2024, entered into force.

The stability and prosperity of Southeast Asia, which is located at the geopolitical nexus of the Indian Ocean and the Pacific and is becoming a "growth center" of the world, is also of extreme importance to the peace and prosperity of the Indo-Pacific region and the international community as a whole. With the Philippines, the Japan-Philippines Reciprocal Access Agreement (RAA) entered into force in September, and was immediately applied in October to the bilateral HA/DR exercise "Doshin-Bayanihan" conducted in the Philippines and to the transport of relief supplies by Japan Air Self-Defense Force aircraft in response to the earthquake on Cebu Island. Furthermore, in January 2026, an Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA) was signed. Regarding Southeast Asian countries, in addition to continuing support for enhancing maritime security capabilities of coast guard authorities — including from the perspective of ensuring the rule of law at sea — Japan is also strengthening cooperation through Official Security Assistance (OSA). Japan has already realized the delivery of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) and rescue boats to Malaysia, and has also decided to provide high-speed patrol boats to Indonesia and RHIBs (rigid-hulled inflatable boats) to the Philippines. Japan is also expanding the number of partner countries in FY2025.

Canada, an important "strategic partner" in the Indo-Pacific region, announced in June its achievement of the defense expenditure target of 2% of GDP ahead of schedule — brought forward from 2032 to within FY2025. Canada also announced an additional defense expenditure of 9.3 billion Canadian dollars and increased its FY2025-26 defense-related budget to 62.7 billion Canadian dollars. Thereafter, Prime Minister of Canada Mark Carney, attending the NATO Summit held in The Hague in the same month, announced a plan to reach 5% of GDP in defense expenditure by FY2035. In Japan-Canada relations, security cooperation is steadily advancing based on the "Japan-Canada Action Plan for contributing to a Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) region" announced between the two countries in 2022. For example, the Japan-Canada Agreement on the Security of Information, on which Japan and Canada had been conducting negotiations, was announced to have reached agreement in principle at the Japan-Canada Foreign Ministers' Meeting in March 2025, was signed between Foreign Minister Anita Anand, who visited Japan in July, and Foreign Minister Iwaya, and entered into force in January 2026. Furthermore, regarding the Japan-Canada Agreement concerning the Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology, agreement in principle was announced at the Japan-Canada Summit Meeting in June, and the Agreement was signed in January 2026, among other advances in deepening security cooperation between Japan and Canada. In September 2025, Japan Air Self-Defense Force F-15 fighter aircraft and others paid their first-ever visit to Canada, and, with regard to illicit maritime activities including ship-to-ship transfers, the Canadian Armed Forces dispatched naval vessels and aircraft to conduct monitoring and surveillance activities, advancing mutual cooperation between the defense authorities of Japan and Canada.

In relation to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), in April, NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte paid his first visit to Japan since taking office and held talks with Prime Minister Ishiba, during which a joint statement was issued reaffirming the strategic importance of the Japan-NATO partnership to both the Euro-Atlantic and the Indo-Pacific regions. Foreign Minister Iwaya attended the Meeting of NATO Ministers of Foreign Affairs held in the same month, making it the fourth consecutive year that Japan's foreign minister has attended. At the NATO Summit in June, Foreign Minister Iwaya held a meeting with Secretary General Rutte and concurred on working together to elevate the Japan-NATO cooperation to a new height in various fields, including the launch of the Japan-NATO Dialogue on Defense Industrial Cooperation and Capability . Furthermore, at the meeting between Secretary General Rutte and Indo-Pacific Partners (IP4: Japan, Australia, New Zealand, and the ROK) held on the occasion of the same Summit, the participants confirmed NATO's further engagement in the Indo-Pacific and the importance of concrete cooperation between NATO and the Indo-Pacific partners. At the telephone meeting between Prime Minister Takaichi and Secretary General Rutte in December, the two concurred on working together to elevate cooperation to a new level through concrete forms of cooperation.

The 1st Japan-EU Foreign Ministerial Strategic Dialogue was convened in November 2024, during which the Japan-EU Security and Defence Partnership was released, making Japan the first country in the Indo-Pacific region to announce the Partnership with the EU. In April 2025, the 2nd Japan-EU Foreign Ministerial Strategic Dialogue was convened, at which Foreign Minister Iwaya and High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Kaja Kallas reaffirmed their shared recognition that the security of the Euro-Atlantic and the Indo-Pacific is inseparable, and concurred on strengthening concrete cooperation and dialogue in areas such as the defence industry, maritime security, cyber, space, and responses to hybrid threats.

There are various issues of concern in relation to China, such as its intrusion into Japan's territorial waters around the Senkaku Islands, an inherent territory of Japan, by vessels belonging to the China Coast Guard, the extensive and rapid enhancement of its military power without sufficient transparency, and increasing activities by its military in the waters and air spaces surrounding Japan. Japan will continue to make use of opportunities at high-level dialogues, including summit meetings and foreign ministers' meetings, to firmly maintain and assert its position and strongly call for responsible actions by China. As China's military trends are a matter of serious concern for 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, as well as to take more concrete actions to contribute to the security environment and to the region, including Japan. The Maritime and Aerial Communication Mechanism between the defense authorities of Japan and China that commenced operation in 2018 is aimed at promoting mutual understanding and mutual trust, and at avoiding unexpected collisions, and a hotline under this Mechanism commenced operation in May 2023.

Peace and stability in the Middle East region are 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 own efforts toward ensuring peace and stability in the Middle East and the safety of Japan-related vessels, the Government of Japan made a Cabinet decision in December 2019 on utilization of vessels and aircraft of the SDF to (a) make further diplomatic efforts toward easing tensions and stabilizing the situation in the Middle East, (b) take thorough measures for ensuring safety of navigation including robust information sharing with relevant stakeholders, and (c) strengthen its information gathering system. Japan has continued to conduct information gathering activities using SDF vessels and aircraft in the waters of the Middle East since January 2020. Furthermore, Japan signed a Memorandum of Cooperation on cybersecurity with Jordan in November 2025. In addition, in May 2023, Japan signed the Agreement concerning the Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology with the United Arab Emirates (UAE), the first such agreement concluded between Japan and a country of the Middle East. This Agreement entered into force in January 2025.

In addition to the above, Japan has actively participated in and contributed to multilateral frameworks in the region, in particular the East Asia Summit (EAS), the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), and the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting-Plus (ADMM-Plus), which are regional cooperative frameworks in which ASEAN plays a central role, in order to strengthen security cooperation in the region. The ARF is a framework in which various entities participate, including North Korea and the EU, with the aim of improving the security environment of the Asia-Pacific region by promoting confidence-building and preventive diplomacy through dialogues and cooperation. In July, the 32nd ARF Ministerial Meeting was held, and the participants exchanged views mainly on regional and international affairs, including the East China Sea and South China Sea, Taiwan, North Korea, and Myanmar. Japan also actively contributes to the forum including through serving as a co-chair of all the Inter-Sessional Meetings (ISM) on Maritime Security, Non-Proliferation and Disarmament, Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Crime, Disaster Relief, and Cybersecurity.

Furthermore, in addition to government-to-government dialogues (track 1), Japan utilizes frameworks where participants from both public and private sectors exchange opinions and explain their security policies (track 1.5), as well as other means, as part of its efforts to promote other countries' understanding of Japan's security policies, and to facilitate cooperation and confidence-building in the region.

(2) Cyber

Today, cross-border cyberspace has become an indispensable social infrastructure for conducting all activities in countries around the world, and its importance and public nature are growing due to its role as a public space that all citizens are engaged in. On the other hand, amid the growing competition among nations and other entities that reflects recent geopolitical tensions, cyberattacks have been used constantly to disable or destroy critical infrastructures, interfere in foreign elections, demand ransoms, and steal sensitive information, even in the form of state-sponsored cyberattacks.

Based on this recognition, MOFA is engaged in various diplomatic efforts to realize a free, fair, and secure cyberspace: promoting the rule of law, taking measures to deter attacks, providing capacity building support to like-minded countries, and leveraging cyber consultations and other forms of dialogue with relevant countries and organizations for information exchange and policy coordination related to these efforts.

As an initiative to promote the rule of law, through discussions at the UN that have spanned about a quarter of a century, all UN Member States have confirmed the application of existing international law to cyberspace and, in 2015, adopted the UN norms of responsible state behavior in cyberspace,(6) which set out 11 items. While these norms are not legally binding under international law, they have been adopted by consensus among the UN Member States and provide the basis for rule-making in cyberspace. Therefore, it is important for each country to implement these norms concretely, and to build up state practices. Based on this perspective, Japan participated actively in the relevant discussions in the Open-ended Working Group (OEWG), in which all UN Member States participate, for the term from 2021 to 2025. At the final session held in July 2025, the application of international law, including the UN Charter, to cyberspace was reaffirmed, and the final report — including the future mechanism following the conclusion of the OEWG — was adopted by consensus. In December, a UN General Assembly resolution endorsing this report was adopted by consensus. It is also important for each country to clarify their basic positions on how existing international law applies to cyberspace. Japan made its position public in 2021,(7) and has been emphasizing the importance of clarifying basic positions through various venues.

As an initiative to deter attacks, Japan has carried out "public attribution," which is to publicly condemn or express concerns about groups conducting cyberattacks. In January 2025, Japan issued the Japan-U.S.-ROK Joint Statement on Cryptocurrency Thefts by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Public-Private Collaboration, and in August, Japan joined — as one of 13 national authorities including Japan and the U.S. — in co-signing and releasing an international advisory prepared by the U.S. that technically describes the attack methods of the cyberattack group commonly known as "Salt Typhoon," working with allies and like-minded countries to advance such efforts.

In view of the borderless nature of cyberspace, enhancing the capacity of other countries and regions contributes to the security environment for the world as a whole, including Japan, and based on this thinking that doing so contributes to protecting the security of the world as a whole including Japan, relevant ministries and agencies, including MOFA, are engaged in capacity building support with a focus on ASEAN, which is a cornerstone for realizing a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)" based on the rule of law, including through initiatives via international organizations. Specifically, Japan conducts training at the ASEAN-Japan Cybersecurity Capacity Building Centre (AJCCBC), provides training programs and

(6) At the UN Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on Cybersecurity in 2015, a report setting out 11 items on non-binding, voluntary norms for responsible state behavior was adapted.

(7) See the MOFA's website for Japan's position:
https://warp.ndl.go.jp/web/20240702061609/https://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/page3e_001114.html

(7)

equipment through relevant ministries and agencies, implements the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) Country/Knowledge Co-Creation Program (KCCP), contributes to the Cybersecurity Multi-Donor Trust Fund through the World Bank, and co-organizes the "JP-US-EU Industrial Control Systems Cybersecurity Week for the Indo-Pacific Region" jointly with the U.S. and European governments through the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) and the Industrial Cyber Security Center of Excellence (ICSCoE) under the Information-technology Promotion Agency, Japan (IPA), among other initiatives.

Leveraging cyber consultations and other forms of dialogue with relevant countries and organizations is of utmost importance in advancing these initiatives in cyberspace. Japan is promoting international cooperation through cyber consultations and dialogues with many countries and regions, and in 2025, held intergovernmental consultations in frameworks including Japan-U.S., Japan-Australia, Japan-U.S.-ROK, and Japan-Brazil. Under the Quad Cybersecurity Partnership announced at the Japan-Australia-India-U.S. (Quad) Leaders' Meeting in May 2022, the four countries are cooperating on cybersecurity for critical infrastructure and capacity building support in the Indo-Pacific region, among other efforts. In addition, Japan also participates actively in discussions within the International Counter Ransomware Initiative, a multilateral framework for combating the rapidly growing threat of ransomware,[(8)] as well as the Pall Mall Process, which is a framework led by the UK and France to tackle the proliferation and irresponsible use of commercial cyber intrusion capabilities.

Through these diplomatic efforts, Japan will continue to contribute to the realization of a free, fair and secure cyberspace.

(3) Maintaining and Developing the International Maritime Order

Japan is a maritime nation surrounded by the sea on all four sides, blessed with long coastlines and a vast exclusive economic zone (EEZ), which has achieved economic growth through maritime trade and development of marine resources. "Free and Open Seas," which are upheld by maritime order based on the rule of law 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. Based on this stance, drawing on the Fourth Basic Plan on Ocean Policy formulated in April 2023 and the Ocean Development Strategy formulated in April 2024, the Government of Japan has stood united in promoting efforts to maintain and develop the international maritime order, in addition to securing Japan's national interests in its territorial waters and other areas. In cooperation with its ally and like-minded countries, Japan is advancing efforts to realize FOIP and, in particular, working to strengthen maritime order in the Indo-Pacific region where important sea lanes are located.

A Basic Stance

There is an increasing number of cases, particularly in Asia, of tension arising from friction between countries over issues surrounding the seas. In this context, at the Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA) convened in March 2023, Prime Minister Kishida reaffirmed the importance of the "Three Principles of the Rule of Law at Sea," which Prime Minister Abe set out in 2014, in his introduction to the new plan for FOIP. Based on these principles, Japan has been cooperating with other countries to work toward maintaining and developing the international maritime order. (See Chapter 2, Section 1, page 24.) In particular, Japan has been reaffirming the importance of the maritime order with its ally and like-minded countries at every level, and at the G7 Foreign Ministers' Meeting held in Charlevoix, Canada in March 2025, the "G7 Foreign Ministers' Declaration on Maritime Security and Prosperity" was issued.

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 the maritime order governed by the rule of law. Japan regards the maritime

(8) Cyberattacks carried out for ransom purposes.

order with the Convention at its 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 Meeting 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), page 255.)

C Response to Challenges to Japan's Sovereignty and Maritime Rights and Interests (Situation Surrounding the East China Sea: See Chapter 2, Section 2, 2(1) B(D), page 45.)

In the East China Sea, the number of days China Coast Guard vessels navigating in the contiguous zone around the Senkaku Islands reached a record high of 357 days in 2025, and in March the number of hours of intrusion into the territorial sea reached a record of 92 hours and 8 minutes. In addition, incidents in which China Coast Guard vessels that intruded into the territorial sea and approached Japanese fishing boats have occurred repeatedly, and, as evident when in May an incident occurred in which a helicopter carried by a China Coast Guard vessel violated Japanese airspace, the situation remains severe. The Chinese military is also becoming increasingly active and expanding their operations, both quantitatively and qualitatively, in the waters of and the air above the East China Sea, and China has been continuing with unilateral resource development in areas where the EEZ and the continental shelf have not yet been delimited. Additionally, in recent years, Japan has found research projects being frequently conducted by China in the EEZ surrounding Japan, such as the East China Sea, without Japan's consent.

Given China's continued and strengthened 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 and continue to respond in a firm but calm manner with a determination to resolutely defend Japan's territory as well as territorial sea and airspace. At the same time, it will promote cooperation with the relevant countries including the U.S. in order to achieve peace and stability in the East China Sea.

At the ASEAN Japan Summit Meeting in October, Prime Minister Takaichi stated that in the East China Sea, activities that infringe upon Japan's sovereignty as well as provocative military activities continue and are intensifying.

D Response to Challenges to Maritime Order in the South China Sea (See Chapter 2, Section 2, 7(2), page 92.)

In the South China Sea, China has been continuing and intensifying unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force or coercion, which run counter to the rule of law and openness, as well as actions that increase regional tensions, based on expansive maritime claims without legal basis. These include further militarization of disputed features, and coercive and intimidating actions against coastal states and others by using its armed forces, coast guards and maritime militia. In particular, since 2023, collisions between Chinese vessels and coastal state vessels and use of water cannons by Chinese vessels have frequently occurred. In 2025, incidents involving Scarborough Shoal, Sabina Shoal, and Thitu Island resulted in damage to Philippine vessels including fishing vessels, as well as injuries to multiple crew members. Furthermore, in September, China unilaterally designated a "nature reserve" around Scarborough Shoal and declared the enhancement of its supervision and law enforcement capacity against "all illegal activities" in the vicinity, attempting to legitimize its actions in the South China Sea.

Issues regarding the South China Sea are directly related to the peace and stability of the region and constitute a legitimate concern of the international community as a whole, not only for the parties to the dispute. The peace and stability of the South China Sea, which is an important sea lane, as well as the upholding of the rule of law at sea, are important for Japan, which relies heavily on maritime transport for much of its resources and energy. From this perspective, Japan has strongly opposed any unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force or coercion and any actions that increase tensions in the South China Sea, and has consistently emphasized the importance of all the concerned parties related to the South China Sea to work toward peaceful

Uotsuri Island (Ishigaki City, Okinawa Prefecture)



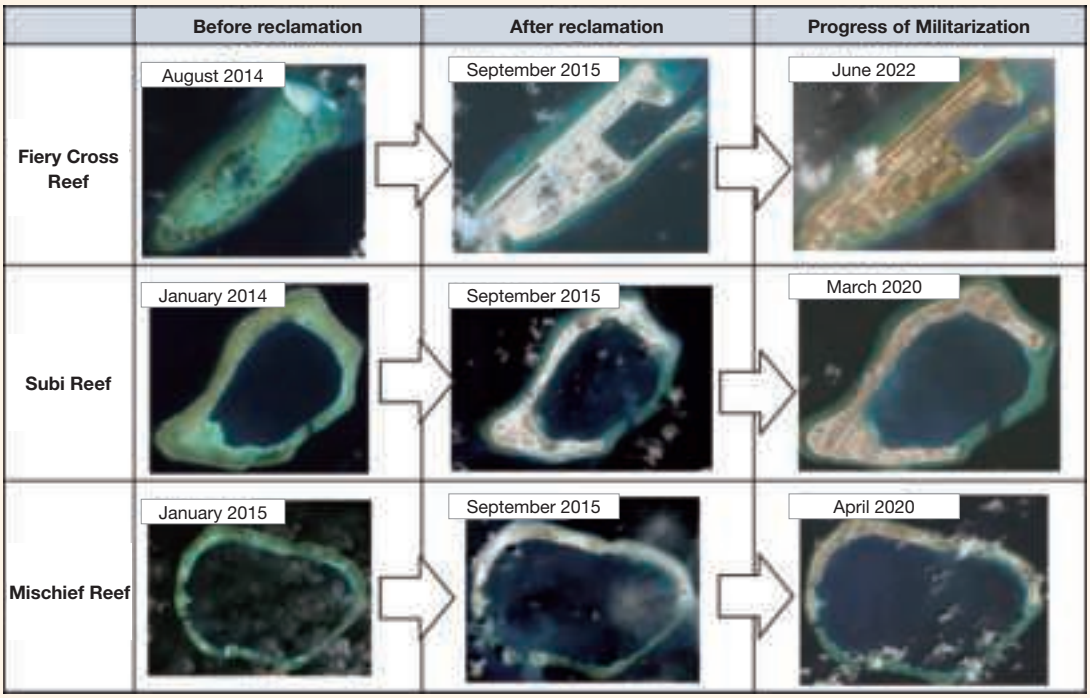
Photo: Office of Policy Planning and Coordination on Territory and Sovereignty, Cabinet Secretariat

settlement of disputes based on international law, as reflected in UNCLOS. Japan has also repeatedly pointed out that the Arbitral Tribunal's award as to the disputes between the Philippines and China regarding the South China Sea is final and legally binding on the parties to the dispute, that China's assertions in the South China Sea are not based on relevant provisions of UNCLOS, and the importance of adherence to freedom of navigation in and overflight above the South China Sea.

In July, which marked nine years since the issuance of the Arbitral Tribunal's award as to the disputes between the Philippines and China regarding the South China Sea, Japan issued a statement by the Foreign Minister reiterating its strong hope that the parties to the dispute, as States Parties to UNCLOS, comply with the Arbitral Tribunal's award and that this will lead to the peaceful settlement of disputes in the South China Sea. In September, at the High-Level Week of the UN General Assembly, under the initiative of the Philippines as host and with Japan and other countries as co-hosts, the Foreign Ministers' Meeting: "Reinforcing Maritime Cooperation to Achieve a Secure and Stable Maritime Domain" was held with the participation of many foreign ministers from like-minded countries. At the meeting, Foreign Minister Iwaya stated that compliance with international law, in particular UNCLOS — which sets out the universal and unified legal framework governing all activities in the oceans and the seas — is of critical importance for maintaining maritime order, and that Japan will continue to cooperate with the international community toward ensuring maritime safety and stability in order to uphold the free and open international order based on the rule of law. At the ASEAN-Japan Summit Meeting in October, Prime Minister Takaichi expressed serious concern about the continuing and intensifying militarization and coercive activities in the South China Sea, and emphasized that unjust claims of maritime interests and maritime activities that are not based on UNCLOS are unacceptable. At the East Asia Summit (EAS) in October, Foreign Minister Motegi also expressed serious concerns over intensification of dangerous and coercive activities that heighten regional tensions in the South China Sea, and strongly hoped that Japan, from the perspective of supporting the full enforcement of the rule of law at sea, including freedom of navigation and overflight, that the parties to the disputes will comply with the Arbitral Tribunal's award and that the disputes will be settled peacefully.

Japan will continue to work with the international community, such as ASEAN member states, and the

China's Reclamation and Militarization of Disputed Features



Source: CSIS/AMTI (http://amti.csis.org/island-tracker/)

U.S. to uphold and strengthen a free and open maritime order based on the rule of law. (For the international community's responses to issues surrounding the South China Sea, see 7, "Regional and Inter-Regional Cooperation," (2) South China Sea Issues, in Section 2, page 92.)

E Measures against Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships

Japan actively contributes to ensuring freedom of navigation and overflight and the safe maritime traffic through efforts to combat piracy and armed robbery against ships in Asia and Africa, as well as close partnership and cooperation with other countries.

(A) Measures to Address Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia

In 2006, the Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia (ReCAAP) entered into force under Japan's leadership, and through the Information Sharing Centre (ReCAAP-ISC) established in Singapore, has been conducting information sharing on incidents of piracy and armed robbery against ships in the Straits of Malacca and Singapore and other regions, as well as cooperation to support capacity building. To date, Japan has been supporting the activities of ReCAAP-ISC by dispatching the Executive Directors (expiration of term in March 2022) and Assistant Directors and making financial contributions. According to the International Maritime Bureau (IMB) of the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC), while the number of cases of piracy and armed robbery against ships in the seas of Southeast Asia was 67 in 2023, and 70 in 2024, and 80 in 2025, the occurrence of serious incidents, including kidnappings and assaults, has been suppressed in recent years as a result of activities by ReCAAP-ISC and the contributions of the contracting parties.

(B) Measures to Address Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships Off the Coast of Somalia and in the Gulf of Aden

According to IMB, the number of cases of piracy and armed robbery against ships off the coast of Somalia and in the Gulf of Aden, which are important sea lanes linking Asia and Europe, has remained relatively low compared to the peak of 237 cases in 2011, as a result of sustained efforts by the international community. However, the situation remains precarious, with 8 cases of piracy in 2024 and 5 cases in 2025. Going forward, there is a need for cooperation with the international community to ensure that the number of piracy cases does not reverse into an increasing trend again.

Since 2009, Japan has been conducting counter-piracy operations by deploying Maritime Self-Defense Force destroyers (with coast guard officers on board) and P-3C patrol aircraft off the coast of Somalia and in the Gulf of Aden, which have helped to stabilize the situation in these waters. Japan has also been making multilayered efforts such as support for enhancing the maritime law enforcement capabilities of neighboring countries such as Somalia and Djibouti, and ensuring the stability of Somalian society.

(C) Measures to Address Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in the Gulf of Guinea

According to IMB, the number of cases of piracy and armed robbery against ships in the Gulf of Guinea was 22 in 2023, 18 in 2024, and 21 in 2025, and the Gulf of Guinea continues to be one of the sea areas with the largest number of serious incidents in the world, including cases with multiple casualties. Strengthening the maritime law enforcement capabilities of coastal states remains a key issue. To that end, Japan provides capacity building assistance to coastal states through training programs conducted by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), and JICA, and works with the international community through participation in meetings of the "G7++ Group of Friends of the Gulf of Guinea," among other efforts.

F International Cooperation on Capacity Building Assistance

Amid advancing globalization, the impact of technological innovation on the global security environment, rapid changes in the military balance, including China's growing militarization, and greater cross-border threats, no single country can protect its peace and security on its own. This is particularly true in the maritime field. Therefore, Japan is advancing efforts to strengthen its defense capabilities and maritime law enforcement capabilities, while providing capacity building assistance to various countries to support their maritime security and maritime law enforcement capabilities as well as engaging in international cooperation on Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) with the aim of maintaining and developing international maritime order, in collaboration and cooperation with allied and like-minded countries.

Japan has been utilizing Official Development Assistance (ODA) in these cooperative efforts. At the IISS Shangri-la Dialogue in 2022, Prime Minister Kishida stated that Japan will make use of technical cooperation, training, and other means conducive to strengthening the maritime law enforcement capabilities of at least 20 countries to promote efforts to train at least 800 maritime security personnel and strengthen their human resources network over a three-year period until 2025, including through sharing Japan's knowledge and experience on advanced technologies, such as satellites, artificial intelligence (AI) and unmanned aerial vehicles, with other countries. Additionally, he pledged to provide at least approximately 2 billion U.S. dollars in assistance, such as the provision of maritime security equipment including patrol vessels and development of maritime transportation infrastructure, to Indo-Pacific countries. He also stated that Japan will strengthen support to Indo-Pacific countries, utilizing Japan-Australia-India-U.S. (Quad) and international organizations and so forth. In 2025, Japan commenced the technical cooperation project "Project for Enhancement of Maritime Safety and Security Capability of Philippine Coast Guard," aimed at improving capabilities in operation and maintenance of vessels and criminal investigation. Through the Maritime Law Enforcement Capacity Building Project implemented under the Global Maritime

Crime Programme (GMCP) of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Japan also supports the development and implementation of training courses and workshops on combating maritime crime for countries in the Indo-Pacific and West Africa.

To provide capacity building support to coast guard agencies 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 foreign coast guard agencies with capacity building (including through the GMCP framework). The Japan Coast Guard also trains personnel of coast guard agencies of other countries through domestic training, including through the "Maritime Safety and Security Policy Program," and conducts training on board Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF) vessels for young naval officers of ASEAN member states and other countries. Furthermore, Japan provided capacity building assistance in areas such as vessel maintenance and underwater medicine to the militaries of countries in the Indo-Pacific region.

Official Security Assistance (OSA), established in 2023, positions maritime security as one of its priority areas, with a view to strengthening security and deterrence capabilities of like-minded countries by providing equipment and supplies as well as assistance for infrastructure development to the armed forces and related organizations of those countries, particularly Indo-Pacific countries. In FY2025, Japan decided to provide Malaysia with a diving support vessel, Sri Lanka and Tonga with unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), among other items.

G Coordination among Coast Guard Agencies

Japan is also strengthening coordination among coast guard agencies through international organizations and multilateral frameworks. In May, the Japan Coast Guard, as part of Japan-U.S.-ROK cooperative efforts, dispatched personnel to a joint seminar and tabletop exercise on search and rescue conducted by the coast guard agencies of Japan, the U.S., and the ROK, thereby strengthening coordination among the three countries' coast guard agencies and jointly providing capacity building support to ASEAN coast guard authority officials on a Japan-U.S.-ROK basis. In June of the same year, as part of Japan-U.S.-Philippines cooperative efforts, the first-ever Japan-U.S.-Philippines joint search and rescue exercise in Japan was conducted in Kagoshima Prefecture. Furthermore, in the same month, as part of Japan-Australia-India-U.S. (Quad) efforts, the coast guard agencies of the four countries conducted the first "Ship Observer Mission" with the aim of sharing knowledge and promoting confidence-building among members of the coast guards of the Quad countries, with Japan Coast Guard officers boarding a U.S. Coast Guard cutter together with officials of the Australian and Indian coast guard agencies. In terms of MDA efforts, Japan is also coordinating with allied and like-minded countries, such as by cooperating on the Indo-Pacific Partnership for Maritime Domain Awareness (IPMDA), an initiative implemented by Japan-Australia-India-U.S. (Quad), and sharing MDA information with various countries based on memorandums of cooperation.

(4) Outer Space

In June 2023, Japan revised its Basic Plan on Space Policy for the first time in three years and formulated a Space Security Initiative. The Space Security Initiative sets out specific challenges and policies in the field of space security, incorporates measures to be taken for space security during the next decade, and covers efforts to maintain the stable use of and free access to outer space together with Japan's allied and like-minded countries.

In recent years, outer space has become more congested due to the diversification of use and an increasing number of countries using space. In addition, the increase of space debris poses a growing risk to the sustainable and stable use of outer space. In order to respond to this situation, Japan has been engaging in measures to address space debris, initiatives such as strengthening Space Situational Awareness (SSA) and mission assurance for space systems, as well as working on international rule-making and international space cooperation.

A Realization of the Rule of Law in Outer Space

Based on the belief that outer space must remain a domain free of nuclear weapons, in 2024 Japan, the U.S., and Argentina jointly submitted a draft United Nations General Assembly resolution emphasizing, among other things, the importance of compliance with international law obligations including the Outer Space Treaty, and calling on member states not to develop nuclear weapons or any other kinds of weapons of mass destruction intended for placement in outer space. The draft resolution was adopted with an overwhelming majority of 167 member states.

The Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS), a permanent committee established under the UN General Assembly, plays an important role in international rule-making related to civil space activities. At the COPUOS Committee convened from June to July, Minister of State for Science and Technology Policy and Space Policy, KIUCHI Minoru, proactively communicated Japan's public and private sector efforts in the space domain to the international community, including Japan's initiatives on space debris.

COPUOS has, apart from the Committee which engages in comprehensive discussions, the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, which conducts reviews on issues related to space activities from scientific and technical aspects, and the Legal Subcommittee, which discusses legal matters arising from space activities.

At the session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee convened in February, active discussions were held on the long-term sustainability of outer space activities, in addition to discussions on individual themes, such as space debris and remote sensing.

At the session of the Legal Subcommittee convened in May, discussions were held on Space Traffic Management (STM) and space resources, which have been attracting more attention in recent years. In particular, intensive discussions were held at the Working Group on Space Resources, established under the Legal Subcommittee since 2021, on a draft set of recommended principles for space resource activities.

Regarding the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space (PAROS), based on a decision of the UN General Assembly in 2024, an "Open-Ended Working Group on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space in All Its Aspects" was established and held active discussions among participating countries, including Japan, in Geneva, Switzerland, in April and July 2025. This working group is scheduled to continue its discussions until 2028.

In addition, with a view to contributing to the rule of law in outer space, Japan announced in 2021 that it would cooperate with the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA) on its "Space Law for New Space Actors" project and has since been offering support to emerging space-faring nations in the Asia Pacific region for the development and implementation of domestic space-related laws. Japan has been continuously providing legal capacity building support with a focus on the authorization, licensing, and continuing supervision of space activities. Japan, together with the UNOOSA, held workshops for Thailand in January and for Viet Nam in November respectively, on the legal frameworks for the supervision and authorization of space activities and the safety of space activities, inviting domestic and international experts.

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., Japan has maintained a strong partnership in the civil, security, and commercial space domains, and space cooperation was incorporated into the United States-Japan Joint Leaders' Statement in February and the "Memorandum of Cooperation Regarding the Technology Prosperity Deal Between the Government of Japan and the Government of the United States of America" signed in October (between Minister of State for Science and Technology Policy, ONODA Kimi, and the Director of the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP), Michael Kratsios). Furthermore, the "3rd Meeting of the Japan-India Space Dialogue," the first in four years, was held in Tokyo in April, and the "6th Meeting of the Japan-EU Space Policy Dialogue," the first in two years, was held in Tokyo in May. In addition to an exchange of information on the space policies of each side, wide-ranging exchanges of views took place on topics including security cooperation and inter-agency cooperation.

With regard to multilateral initiatives, the 31st Asia-Pacific Regional Space Agency Forum (APRSAF-31) was held in Cebu, Philippines, in November, co-organized together with the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT), the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA), and the Philippine Space Agency (PhilSA). At this Forum, discussions were held regarding regional revitalization through the practical applications of space ecosystems.

C International Space Exploration and the International Space Station (ISS)

The progress of space exploration and application for peaceful purposes is a common benefit for all humankind, and is also of diplomatic significance.

In 2019, Japan decided to participate in the Artemis Program, a U.S.-led international space exploration program. In 2020, with the Artemis mission in mind, 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. Thereafter, more countries have signed the Artemis Accords, and the number of signatories increased to 59 countries as of the end of October 2025.

Furthermore, in 2023, the Governments of Japan and the U.S. signed the Framework Agreement between Japan and the United States of America for Cooperation in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, which is a new legal framework to further facilitate Japan-U.S. space cooperation, represented by the exploration and use of outer space and this Agreement entered into force in June. In an Implementing Arrangement prepared under this Framework Agreement and signed in April 2024 states that Japan will provide and maintain the operation of the Pressurized Rover on the lunar surface, while the U.S. will provide astronaut two flight opportunities on the lunar surface to Japanese astronauts in future Artemis missions. In April 2025, an Implementing Arrangement on the Nancy Grace Roman Space Telescope Mission was signed, and in December an Implementing Arrangement on cooperation related to the Hayabusa2 Extended Mission was signed, and multiple Implementing Arrangements have been signed or are under consideration regarding various Japan-U.S. space cooperation projects across a range of fields.

Japan has been providing human resource development programs (robot programming, physics and plant experiments, etc.) to the Asia Pacific region through the Kibo-ABC Initiative established under the APRSAF, utilizing the Japanese Experiment Module "Kibo" on the ISS to support capacity building in the space field. Japan also provides emerging space-faring nations with the opportunity to deploy nano-satellites through the KiboCUBE program(9), a collaborative framework implemented with the UNOOSA. In 2025, the program marked its 10th anniversary since launch. This program is the first UN-promoted initiative to have reached space, and to date eight rounds of open calls have been issued, with satellites from five organizations deployed using "Kibo." Currently, the Central American Integration System (SICA) and Tanzania and Côte d'Ivoire (both countries jointly) are developing satellites for deployment. Mexico's satellite is in orbit and will be deployed soon.

D Addressing Global Issues through the Utilization of Space Technology

Amidst rising expectations of space technology's potential in resolving global issues in recent years, Japan has been promoting international cooperation based on the utilization of its internationally superior space technologies, and contributing toward the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

For example, Japan 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 a wide range of uses, including rainfall situation monitoring, disaster management, and agriculture, in 163 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

(9) A program that provides selected organizations with the opportunity to deploy nano-satellites from the ISS/Japanese Experiment Module – Kibo, with the aim of contributing to improving space-related technologies in emerging space-faring nations.

Asia-Pacific region. To date, this project has responded to more than 540 emergency requests from 37 countries and regions. Japan also holds workshops for those who are involved in disaster readiness and response, and contributes to capacity building in the utilization of satellite data during disasters in Asian countries. In response to the magnitude 6.9 Cebu Island earthquake (Philippines) that occurred on September 30, JAXA conducted emergency observations of the damaged areas using the Advanced Land Observing Satellite-2 "DAICHI-2" (ALOS-2) and provided satellite data, for which a letter of appreciation was sent by the Philippine Foreign Minister to the Japanese Ambassador to the Philippines.

The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), also in coordination with JAXA, hosted 9 officials from space-related agencies of 7 countries in Japan in August and conducted training to enhance their ability to utilize space technology in ways that contribute to the SDGs. In addition, in the technical cooperation projects on improving capacity related to the utilization of space-related technologies in Paraguay and Rwanda, which commenced in FY2023, multiple rounds of training in Japan were conducted with the support of Japan's academia, industry, and government in the space sector. Furthermore, at the 9th Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD 9) in August, JICA co-organized a thematic event titled "Space Technologies for Boosting Transformation of Africa " with JAXA and cross U (a general incorporated association). The main objectives of this event were to explore the challenges and potential of space technologies and related technologies and to explore pathways to accelerate Africa's development, and it included keynote speeches and panel discussions by senior officials of space agencies of Kenya, Senegal, Ghana, and Egypt as well as the African Space Agency, representatives of Japanese space-related companies, and members of the JICA International Intellectual Circulation Program for Space Development Steering Committee.

(5) Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding

The international community is still experiencing regional and domestic conflicts as a result of various factors including differences in race, religion, and history, or due to the impact of poverty and disparity. In recent years, the protracted nature of these conflicts has particularly become a challenging problem. For this reason, in addition to peacekeeping efforts including the dispatchment of UN Peacekeeping Operations (PKO), peacebuilding efforts laying the foundation for development have become important for preventing conflicts, realizing post-conflict nation-building and sustaining peace.

In recent years, an integrated approach has become critical due to the concerns of the impact of the emerging risks such as climate change and infectious diseases triggering instability. In the time of complex and diverse challenges faced by the international community, strengthening peacekeeping and peacebuilding has become increasingly important. This is clearly incorporated into the "New Agenda for Peace" and the outcome document of the Summit of the Future entitled "Pact for the Future," adopted at the UN General Assembly in September 2024.

A On-the-Ground Initiatives

(A) UN Peacekeeping Operations (UN PKO)

As of December 31, 2025, 11 UN PKO missions are on active duty, primarily in the Middle East and Africa, to handle a wide range of duties that include monitoring cease-fires, promoting political processes, and protecting civilians. About 68,000 military, police, and civilian personnel have been deployed to these missions. Against the backdrop of an increasingly complex environment surrounding UN PKO, including growing threats associated with the use of new technologies, as well as the shortage of PKO budgets, active discussions are being held on the future of Peacekeeping.

In addition to PKO missions, the UN has also established Special Political Missions (SPMs) mainly consisting of civilian personnel. SPMs fulfill diverse roles including the peaceful settlement of disputes, post-conflict peacebuilding, and conflict prevention.

Based on the Act on Cooperation with UN Peacekeeping Operations and Other Operations (PKO Act), Japan has dispatched more than 12,700 personnel to a total of 29 missions since 1992, including UN PKO missions. Most recently, since 2011, Japanese staff officers have been dispatched to the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), while engineering units

have been deployed there from 2012. The engineering units carried out infrastructure improvement, water supply activities for displaced persons, and other activities, and concluded their activities in May 2017. At UNMISS Headquarters, the two Self-Defense Forces (SDF) officers, including the post of Deputy Chief of Staff additionally dispatched in May 2024, completed their terms and returned home, and as of December 31, 2025, four SDF officers are on active duty, contributing to peace and stability in the country. Additionally, since 2019, Japan has been conducting activities contributing to peace and stability in the Middle East by dispatching SDF officers to the Headquarters for the Multinational Force and Observers (MFO) stationed on the Sinai Peninsula in Egypt, where four SDF officers are on active duty as of December 31, 2025. Leveraging its own strengths, Japan will continue to contribute proactively in the field of international peace cooperation by means such as enhancing capacity building support and dispatching units and individuals.

(B) Cooperation through Official Development Assistance (ODA) and Other Means for Peacebuilding

In addressing conflicts and humanitarian crises, peacebuilding and preventing the recurrence of conflict even in peacetime, in addition to humanitarian assistance and development cooperation, are important toward the realization of an inclusive society. With the number of refugees and displaced persons around the world exceeding 100 million people for the first time in 2022, there is a greater need than before to address the root causes of crises through assistance for self-reliant development by building resilient nations and stabilizing societies from a medium- to long-term perspective. Japan clearly set out the "Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus (HDP Nexus)"(10) approach in its Development Cooperation Charter revised in June 2023. At the Second Global Refugee Forum (GRF) held in December 2023, Japan expressed its resolve to play a leadership role in advancing this approach while cooperating with the international community to address the unprecedented humanitarian crisis, including support for peacebuilding.

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. As for Palestine, in addition to an increase in the refugee population, it is also facing serious deterioration of the living environment, including the deteriorating refugee camp infrastructure as well as unemployment and poverty. Japan worked on improving the living environment of refugees through the implementation of the Camp Improvement Project (CIP) at refugee camps in Palestine, as well as by providing support to educational facilities, and contributed to the stabilization and improvement of the people's welfare based on human security.(11)

b Africa

Japan held the 9th Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD 9) in Yokohama in August, under the theme "Co-creation of Innovative Solutions," and held discussions on peace and stability as one of the important areas. The "TICAD 9 Yokohama Declaration" adopted to summarize the outcomes of the discussions expressed the need to promote cooperation within the framework of the HDP Nexus, a commitment to advancing the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda, and a determination to cooperate toward achieving UN Security Council reform. It also reaffirmed the importance of promoting human security, the importance of good governance, democracy, and the rule of law, and a commitment to the realization of a world without nuclear weapons, among other matters.

For example, Japan made a contribution of 500,000 U.S. dollars to the African Union (AU) Commission and provided support to Burkina Faso, Niger, Mali, Tanzania, and Malawi for the promotion of women's

(10) Humanitarian, Development, and Peace Nexus: An approach, whereby, in parallel with humanitarian assistance, development cooperation is provided to support the self-reliance of refugees and reduce the burden on host countries, and peace efforts are promoted to resolve and prevent conflicts that are the root causes.

(11) Human security refers to the concept of advancing nation- and society-building so that every individual can be free from fear and want and live with dignity and happiness.

participation in peacebuilding and political negotiations, with the aim of accelerating the realization of the WPS Agenda among AU member states.

In addition, Japan has been providing criminal justice training to countries in the Sahel region since 2014, and has been supporting the stabilization of the region through strengthening the capabilities of investigative and judicial agencies. Japan also provides security equipment and capacity building support to law enforcement agencies in African countries to address the frequent terrorist attacks and transnational crimes, as well as advancing demining support. In connection with TICAD 9, in cooperation with various mine action organizations including the UN Mine Action Service (UNMAS) and the Cambodian Mine Action Centre (CMAC), Japan announced the establishment of an "Africa Mine Action Platform" with a view to further promoting efforts related to mine action in Africa.

Furthermore, in the "Horn of Africa" region, the Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa works to secure humanitarian access and promote a cease-fire. Japan also contributes to the peace and stability of this region by providing support in elections, support for DDR (Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration) of ex-combatants in Ethiopia, and humanitarian assistance, among other efforts. Furthermore, Japan, in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), has disbursed a total of 66 million U.S. dollars between 2008 and 2025 to Peacekeeping Training Centers located in 14 African countries, contributing to strengthening Africa's capacity for peacekeeping activities.

B Initiatives at the United Nations

Against the backdrop of the growing awareness within the international community of the need for peacebuilding efforts, the UN Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) was established based on UN Security Council resolution 1645 and a General Assembly resolution of 2005, as an advisory body to the UN Security Council and General Assembly, with the aim of providing consistent advice on assistance, from conflict resolution to recovery, reintegration and reconstruction. In addition to conducting discussions on the approach to peacebuilding in countries and regions, the PBC also engages in discussions on themes such as Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) and Youth, Peace and Security (YPS). In recent years, there have been increasing opportunities for the PBC to fulfill its advisory function to the UN Security Council and General Assembly.

Japan has consistently served as a member of the PBC's Organizational Committee since its establishment. It has been advocating the importance of investments in institution building and people, recognizing the need to adopt the HDP Nexus approach, in order to realize resilient and sustainable peace. In 2025, Japan served as the Vice-Chair of the PBC, leading discussions particularly on strengthening cooperation with the Asian Development Bank in peacebuilding efforts, and also contributing to strengthening cooperation between the PBC and the UN General Assembly by serving as an informal coordinator between the two bodies.

Japan has contributed a total of 71.33 million U.S. dollars to the UN Peacebuilding Fund (PBF)[12] as of December 31, 2025, and thereby actively supports the execution of projects implemented by UN agencies in Africa and other regions as a major donor country.

C Human Resource Development

(A) The Program for Global Human Resource Development for Peacebuilding and Development

Human resource development for highly skilled civilian experts with expertise presents a challenge in the field of post-conflict peacebuilding. Japan has been implementing a human resource development program in order to cultivate people who can play a leading role in the field. As of the end of 2025, more than 1,000 people have been trained. The participants who complete the program go 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 different countries. A survey on the current status of Japanese participants who completed the entry-level training course (Primary Course) for junior human resources found that more than half serve in international organizations (as regular staff,

(12) A fund established in October 2006 to provide support to various regions, including Africa, for stopping the recurrence of regional conflicts and civil wars after they have ended as well as preventing conflicts. Specifically, the fund supports peace processes and political dialogue, economic revitalization, institution building for nations, and the participation by women and youth in nation-building, among other initiatives.

as well as Junior Professional Officers (JPO), UN Volunteers, and consultants). Hence, this program also contributes significantly to the career development of Japanese nationals, as well as the enhancement of their presence in international organizations in the fields of peacebuilding and development. In 2025, the Primary Course and a training course for mid-career professionals with experience in the fields of peacebuilding and development (Mid-Career Course) were conducted. (See the Column on page 226.)

(B) Training of Peacekeeping Personnel of Various Countries

Japan has been supporting peacekeepers from various countries participating in UN PKO to enhance their capabilities. Since 2015, in conjunction with cooperative efforts among the UN, supporting member states, and troop contributing countries, Japan has contributed financially to the Triangular Partnership Programme (TPP), a framework for innovative cooperation aimed at addressing the urgent need to improve the capabilities of PKO personnel by providing necessary training and equipment. Japan has also dispatched SDF personnel and other individuals as instructors. To date, Japan has conducted training on the operation of heavy engineering equipment for 366 personnel from 10 African countries that expressed intentions to dispatch engineering units to UN PKO. In 2018, the TPP was extended to include Asia and the surrounding regions, and Japan conducted training in Viet Nam and Indonesia. Since October 2019, Japan has also started a lifesaving training program in the medical field, where the shortage of appropriately trained personnel in UN PKO has become a serious problem, while support for the introduction of telemedicine into UN PKO missions was launched in 2021. A total of 420 SDF personnel and other individuals have contributed to the training programs by serving as instructors in these fields. Japan decided in 2023 to contribute approximately 8.5 million U.S. dollars to expand the TPP and conduct training for personnel dispatched for peace support activities led by the African Union (AU), and it began training AU mission personnel in 2024. In addition, also in 2024, in Cambodia, Japan conducted cross-sectoral training in partnership with the ROK and Australia. Other than TPP, Japan dispatches instructors and other personnel, as well as providing financial assistance, to Peacekeeping Training Centers in Asia and Africa.

(6) Initiatives to Combat Security Threats

Ensuring public security and protecting the lives of the people are the premise of various socioeconomic activities and the basic responsibilities of a country. To cope effectively with security threats such as international terrorism and organized crime, which are becoming increasingly complex and severe in tandem with social changes including the advancement of science and technology and in particular the proliferation of various emerging technologies, it is vital for the international community to cooperate as a whole.

A Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism

In recent years, as people grow increasingly reliant on information and communication technology, it has become easier to spread information on extremist ideology online and to disseminate harmful content that could incite terrorism and other damaging acts. There is a prominent trend of misuse of the Internet, social media, and emerging technologies such as AI by terrorist organizations for financing, recruitment, and propaganda activities. There has also been growing incidence of indiscriminate terrorist attacks using simple, low-cost weapons such as drones on soft targets where large crowds gather and security measures are limited, and some are of the view that terrorism is becoming more lethal. To counter such acts of terrorism, there is a need to cut off the flow of terrorist financing. Alongside international cooperation, it is also important for the public and private sectors to work together.

As a part of Japan's efforts to counter international terrorism and violent extremism, Japan contributes to projects by international organizations including the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), and has been continuously supporting capacity building for law enforcement organizations in Southeast Asian countries and beyond. Japan has also participated actively in relevant meetings and discussions held by the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF), an international counter-terrorism

Column

Peacebuilding on the Ground through Governance and Electoral Assistance — The Gambia —

LEUNG Emi, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) The Gambia Country Office

I am LEUNG Emi, a program associate in the Primary Course of The Program for Global Human Resource Development for Peacebuilding and Development, commissioned by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan. I am currently working as a Governance Officer (United Nations Volunteer) at the UNDP The Gambia Country Office.

The Gambia is the smallest country on the African continent, located in the West African region. Known as the "Smiling Coast of Africa," it is a country full of warm-hearted people. At the same time, almost 10 years after the end of a 22-year regime, the country's democratic transition remains a work in progress, facing challenges such as the stagnation of democratic reforms and political polarization. Strengthening approaches to both institutions and society is therefore indispensable for building sustainable peace. In the Governance Unit to which I belong, we are implementing projects aimed at establishing more inclusive and democratic governance, including strengthening the rule of law, Security Sector Reform (SSR), and support for the Truth, Reconciliation and Reparations Commission (TRRC).



Group photo taken during the implementation of the electoral assistance project training in the capital, Banjul (the author is second from the left in the front row)

I am in charge of managing electoral assistance projects, and in cooperation with the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) of The Gambia, I support the establishment and capacity building of its Legal Department and its Gender and Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) Department, toward the 2026 presidential election and the parliamentary and local elections scheduled for the following year. As of November 2025, approximately 562 local residents (including 325 women and 113 PwDs) had participated in the "Strengthening Inclusive and Participatory Elections" training conducted in 10 regions across the country, where lively discussions took place on topics such as the electoral system and gender equality in political participation. Seeing participants from diverse backgrounds share their views and challenges, I realized firsthand that inclusive political participation is directly linked to peacebuilding.

In addition, as I am also in a position to provide cross-cutting support for projects implemented by the Unit, I am engaged in an SSR project under the UN Peacebuilding Fund (PBF), to which the Government of Japan also contributes. Restoring trust in security institutions that were involved in the suppression of citizens under the long-term regime is an urgent task, and UNDP supports the Ministry of Justice, the National Police, the military, the Immigration Department, civil society organizations, and the media in promoting their understanding of SSR policy, gender mainstreaming, and dialogue on the legal framework. Through supporting stakeholders from different positions as they come together toward a common goal, I have learned that taking sufficient time and accumulating dialogue is indispensable for building sustainable peace.



With my supervisor and colleagues at the Sahel Governance Forum (the author is second from the left)

Furthermore, at the "Sahel Governance Forum," which brought together senior-level officials from countries across the Sahel region, I served as the lead focal point of the UNDP The Gambia Country Office. In this capacity, I coordinated with the host government and international organizations and contributed to preparing briefing materials for the UNDP Regional Director for Africa. The Forum was a significant occasion to reaffirm the importance of rebuilding social cohesion and trust toward the stability of the rapidly changing Sahel region, and through this experience, I once again recognized the importance of reflecting the voices of local communities in policy dialogue.

Now, as I have the opportunity to learn from multiple perspectives about the challenges that remain in our pursuit of a more democratic society, I find it truly meaningful and rewarding to be able to engage in governance and electoral assistance on the front lines of peacebuilding, working with UNDP, which has the ability to provide assistance to countries from a truly neutral standpoint. As a Japanese UN Volunteer, I would like to continue to do my best to contribute to the democratic development of The Gambia.

framework, and in particular in recent years has been advancing cooperation on the project level with the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund (GCERF) and the International Institute for Justice and the Rule of Law (IIJ), which are inspired institutions of GCTF.

Furthermore, as part of Japan's efforts to promote the spread and entrenchment of the "rule of law" in the international community, in February, MOFA, IIJ , the United Nations Asia and Far East Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders (UNAFEI), and the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs of France co-hosted the "Central Asian Counter Terrorism Workshop: Building Cooperation and Coordination to Promote the Rule of Law " in Tokyo. The workshop invited prosecutors and law enforcement officials from five Central Asian countries (Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan) and held discussions on topics including the conduct of investigations and prosecutions of terrorism-related cases under fair and independent criminal justice procedures, as well as the repatriation, rehabilitation, and reintegration of former terrorist fighters.

Subsequently, in December, MOFA, UNODC, UNAFEI, and the European Union (EU) co-hosted the "Workshop on Counter-Terrorism and the Rule of Law in South Asia" in Tokyo, where participants discussed, from the perspective of public-private cooperation, the role of youth in preventing violent extremism and responses in the digital space.

Furthermore, through bilateral counter-terrorism consultations, the Quad (Japan-Australia-India-U.S.) Counterterrorism Working Group, and other initiatives, Japan exchanges information on terrorism situations and affirms the strengthening of partnerships, while developing practical cooperation with other countries.

B Criminal Justice Initiatives

The UN Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ) and the UN Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice ("Congress") (both of which have their secretariats under UNODC) are in charge of shaping policy on crime prevention and criminal justice in the international community. In March 2021, the 14th UN Congress ("Kyoto Congress") was convened in Kyoto. In accordance with the overall theme, "Advancing crime prevention, criminal justice and the rule of law: toward the achievement of the 2030 Agenda," the political declaration ("Kyoto Declaration"), summarizing the matters that should be addressed over the medium- to long-term by the international community in the areas of crime prevention and criminal justice, was adopted. Continuing to demonstrate leadership thereafter, Japan has been working in cooperation with UNODC and others on: (a) the regular convening of the "Criminal Justice Forum for Asia and the Pacific (Crim-AP) " as a platform for criminal justice practitioners in the Asia-Pacific region to share information and exchange views; (b) the regular convening of the "Global Youth Forum for a Culture of Lawfulness" aimed at enabling youth to discuss issues themselves and have their voices reflected in policy; and (c) work toward formulating UN standards and norms to promote efforts by the international community toward recidivism prevention; while also actively following up on the Kyoto Declaration by supporting the thematic discussions on the Kyoto Declaration conducted by UNODC. Furthermore, at the CCPCJ held in May, Japan submitted a draft resolution to continue following up on the Kyoto Declaration, and the draft resolution was adopted by consensus. As a result, the outcomes of the Kyoto Congress will be carried forward to the 15th UN Congress in 2026 (to be hosted by the United Arab Emirates). In December, the United Nations Model Strategies on Reducing Reoffending (the Kyoto Model Strategies), whose formulation Japan has led, were adopted by the UN General Assembly. Furthermore, through UNODC, INTERPOL, and the Council of Europe, Japan supports the strengthening of prosecutorial and other criminal justice functions in Southeast Asian countries, capacity building related to prison management, and cybercrime countermeasures. In addition, through the United Nations Asia and Far East Institute for the Prevention of Crime

and the Treatment of Offenders (UNAFEI),[13] Japan conducts training courses in Japan on offender treatment, crime prevention, and crime countermeasures, contributing to capacity building for criminal justice officials in various countries. As a State Party to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC), which establishes an international legal framework to more effectively prevent and combat transnational organized crime, including terrorism, Japan promotes international cooperation through mutual legal assistance based on the Convention and efforts to review the status of its implementation. Furthermore, as cybercrime has today become a cross-border threat, in order for the international community to address cybercrime in a unified manner, the United Nations Convention against Cybercrime; Strengthening International Cooperation for Combating Certain Crimes Committed by Means of Information and Communications Technology Systems and for the Sharing of Evidence in Electronic Form of Serious Crimes, negotiations on which commenced at the UN in 2019, was adopted at UN Headquarters in New York in December 2024. With the aim of ensuring "free, fair, and secure cyberspace," Japan worked toward the conclusion of negotiations, including by serving as Vice-Chair of the Ad Hoc Committee established to draft the Convention. Subsequently, a signing ceremony for the Convention was held in Hanoi, Viet Nam, on October 25 and 26, 2025, and while Japan deferred signature at the ceremony in order to scrutinize the Convention, the Ambassador of Japan to Viet Nam attended and conveyed the significance of the Convention and Japan's contribution to enhancing international capacity to combat cybercrime.

C Anti-corruption Measures

There is growing global interest in addressing corruption, which has been pointed out as a factor that threatens sustainable development and the rule of law. Against this backdrop, Japan, as a State Party to the United Nations 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, actively participates in discussions for the effective implementation of the UNCAC and the strengthening of international cooperation on preventing and combating corruption. In September 2023, under the UNCAC implementation review mechanism (mutual reviews conducted among the State Parties), an executive summary was published on the results of a country review conducted on Japan's implementation of the UNCAC regarding the provisions for criminalization and law enforcement (Chapter III) and international cooperation (Chapter IV). Japan also participates actively in the activities of the Anti-Corruption Working Group convened under the G20 framework and has contributed to the formulation of an outcome document of the Working Group on the administration of seized and confiscated assets linked to corruption. Furthermore, in October 2025, Japan attended the ministerial meeting in Mpumalanga, South Africa, held for the fourth time since the establishment of the G20 Anti-Corruption Working Group. The G20 countries, including Japan, engaged in discussions on strengthening the international anti-corruption framework. In addition, Japan conducts the International Training Course on the Criminal Justice Response to Corruption in Japan through the UNAFEI. Japan is an active participant in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Working Group on Bribery, which engages in the prevention of bribery of foreign public officials through peer reviews among state parties of the OECD Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials in International Business Transactions, to monitor the implementation of this convention.

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), a multilateral framework, establishes the international standards for measures that countries should implement and conducts peer

(13) A regional UN research institute established in 1962 based on an agreement between the Government of Japan and the UN. Located in Akishima City, Tokyo, it is operated by the Ministry of Justice, and continuously implements training courses in the field of criminal justice for participation invited from overseas.

reviews to assess levels of implementation. In recent years, the FATF has also been engaged in initiatives to prevent financing for the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and has issued statements calling for the eradication of illegal financial activities by North Korea. As a founding member, Japan has actively participated in these discussions. At the FATF Plenary held in October 2024, Japan achieved upgraded ratings for all recommendations identified as needing improvement in its Fourth Round Mutual Evaluation, and is currently advancing preparatory work toward the Fifth Round Mutual Evaluation of Japan, for which an on-site visit is scheduled for the summer of 2028. In addition to these efforts through FATF, Japan actively takes measures to counter the financing of terrorism as a State Party to the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism, and also implements its own response measures to freeze the assets of terrorists and terrorist entities in accordance with UN Security Council resolution 1373(14) and designations by the UN Security Council Taliban Sanctions Committee and the ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee. As of November 30, 2025, Japan has implemented asset freezing and other measures, based on the Foreign Exchange and Foreign Trade Act and international terrorist asset freezing laws, on 387 individuals and 94 entities related to Taliban, Al-Qaida, and ISIL (Da'esh) as designated by the respective UN Security Council Sanctions Committees, as well as 40 individuals and 31 entities designated in accordance with UN Security Council resolution 1373, making a total of 416 individuals and 122 entities (excluding 11 individuals and 3 entities overlapping in both categories).

E Measures to Combat Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants

To effectively combat increasingly sophisticated and hidden trafficking in persons, Japan has strengthened its domestic system in accordance with its "2022 Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Persons," while proactively providing assistance to developing countries. In 2025 as well, Japan continued to conduct training programs through the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) to deepen mutual understanding on human trafficking countermeasures (especially prevention, victim protection and support for self-reliance of victims) of stakeholders in various countries, including Japan, and to promote more effective regional cooperation. For example, Japan implemented a technical cooperation project with the Government of Thailand via JICA from January 2022 to January 2025, and with the Government of Cambodia from March 2022. Furthermore, since fiscal year 2025, Japan has been implementing a third-country training program on "Enhancing the Capacity of Transnational Collaboration for Protection of Victims of Trafficking in Persons in the Greater Mekong," aiming to enhance the capacity of relevant organizations to support victims of trafficking in persons. With respect to cooperation with international organizations, Japan continued in 2025, through funding to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), to provide assistance for the safe return of foreign victims of trafficking in persons protected in Japan, and to carry out social reintegration assistance programs to prevent the recurrence of trafficking after they return to their home countries. Japan also provided support to strengthen response capacity, including training programs for law enforcement authorities, by funding projects organized by the UNODC in Southeast Asia. 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 Drug Control Measures

In cooperation with UNODC, Japan is contributing to investigations and development of analytical information for interdiction of the production, manufacturing, and trafficking of precursor chemicals and newly emerged synthetic drugs, and the maintenance and enhancement of cooperative networks. Japan is

(14) Adopted by the UN Security Council in September 2001, after the September 11 terrorist attacks in the U.S. in the same year. It calls on UN Member States to take comprehensive measures against those who commit or involved in terrorist acts, such as by freezing their assets.

also strengthening practical capabilities for cross-border international drug control, providing development support for alternative livelihoods such as the production of alternative crops in place of illicit cultivation of plant materials for drugs to prevent the vulnerable communities (including migrants and youths) in farming villages in developing countries with particularly unstable political situations and rural areas with poor border controls from becoming involved in organized crime, as well as advancing efforts to strengthen maritime law enforcement capabilities including crackdowns on trafficking. At the same time, Japan is engaged in global efforts to combat drugs, while giving consideration to region-specific development challenges in the area of drug control.

4 Disarmament and Nonproliferation and the Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy

(1) Nuclear Disarmament

As the only country to have ever suffered atomic bombings during war, Japan has a historical mission to lead international efforts to realize a world without nuclear weapons.

At the same time, Japan is facing the most severe and complex security environment since the end of World War II, and in areas surrounding Japan, nuclear arms expansion is advancing in both quantity and quality. Against this backdrop, based on the premise that Japan itself will not possess nuclear weapons, the extended deterrence provided by the U.S., including its nuclear capabilities, is essential in order for Japan to protect the lives and property of its citizens, as well as its own independence and peace.

Moreover, as seen in the situation surrounding the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), there is a divergence of views on how to advance nuclear disarmament, not only between nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear-weapon States but also among non-nuclear-weapon States depending on whether they are exposed to nuclear threats. Under such circumstances, it is essential to persistently advance realistic and practical efforts, while bridge-building between states with divergent views, in order to promote nuclear disarmament in a substantive manner.

With the aim of realizing a world without nuclear weapons, Japan is steadily advancing efforts toward nuclear disarmament. While building on the "G7 Leaders' Hiroshima Vision on Nuclear Disarmament" issued at the G7 Hiroshima Summit in May 2023 as a solid platform, Japan will continue and strengthen realistic and practical efforts by implementing each of the initiatives under the "Hiroshima Action Plan"(15) announced by Prime Minister Kishida at the NPT Review Conference in 2022. Furthermore, Japan has continued to pursue bridge-building between states with divergent views. It has done this, for example, through meetings of the International Group of Eminent Persons for a World without Nuclear Weapons (IGEP), submitting the Resolution on the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons in the UN General Assembly, and cooperation and collaboration with like-minded countries, including within the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (NPDI), as well as individual consultations. Moreover, Japan intends to continue maintaining and strengthening the NPT regime, which is the only universal framework toward realizing a world without nuclear weapons. It aims to achieve this through cumulative efforts including through building up realistic and practical efforts by also involving nuclear-weapon States, such as through encouraging states to promote the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and to immediately commence negotiations on a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT), promoting disarmament and non-proliferation education, and further, discussions towards the realization of effective nuclear

(15) Proposed by Prime Minister Kishida at the NPT Review Conference in August 2022. As the first step of a realistic roadmap to take us from the "reality" we face in the harsh security environment to the "ideal" of a world without nuclear weapons, it is rooted in the following five actions alongside efforts to reduce nuclear risk: (1) shared recognition on the importance of continuing the record of non-use of nuclear weapons; (2) enhancing transparency; (3) maintaining the decreasing trend of the global nuclear stockpile; (4) securing nuclear non-proliferation and promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear energy; and (5) encouraging visits to Hiroshima and Nagasaki by international leaders and others.

disarmament verification. The TPNW is an important treaty that could be regarded as a final passage to a world without nuclear weapons. On the other hand, it imposes a comprehensive ban on the possession and use of nuclear weapons, and under the current circumstances, it is highly unlikely that any nuclear-weapon States will sign the treaty given its incompatibility with nuclear deterrence. It is difficult to pursue nuclear disarmament without the engagement of nuclear-weapon States, and Japan believes that it remains preferable for global nuclear disarmament efforts to be promoted under the NPT. In light of the increasingly challenging road toward realizing a world without nuclear weapons, Japan, as the only country to have ever suffered atomic bombings during war, considers it even more pertinent to continue making every effort to advance realistic and practical measures with the participation of both nuclear-weapon States and States Parties to the TPNW, based on the NPT regime, while maintaining and strengthening deterrence as well as responding appropriately to security threats as the fundamental premise.

A Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)

Japan places great importance to the maintenance and strengthening of the NPT regime, which is the cornerstone of the international nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime. The NPT Review Conference, held every five years to ensure the achievement of the treaty's objectives and compliance with its provisions, has conducted discussions reflecting the international situation of each era since the NPT's entry into force in 1970.

The Third Session of the Preparatory Committee for the 11th NPT Review Conference, scheduled to be held in 2026, was convened at United Nations Headquarters from April 28 to May 9, with Foreign Minister Iwaya attending from Japan. Foreign Minister Iwaya delivered a statement at the General Debate, in which he stated that, at a time when the international order based on the rule of law is being challenged and multilateral frameworks for international cooperation, including the NPT, also face difficulties, efforts are needed to ease divisions in the international community and to restore and strengthen the functioning of multilateral cooperation frameworks based on multilateralism. He called on all State Parties to cherish and exercise the spirit of dialogue and cooperation to this end and work together toward the 2026 NPT Review Conference. He also appealed to all countries to fulfill their responsibility to find common ground in order to maintain and strengthen the NPT architecture, which is the only universal framework for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation and to advance toward the realization of a world without nuclear weapons, while introducing the recommendations of the International Group of Eminent Persons for a World without Nuclear Weapons as a positive example of how engaging in sincere dialogue and constructive discussion can create wisdom even in a world of deepening divisions. At this Preparatory Committee, the Chair, under his own responsibility, submitted a working paper "Recommendations by the Chair," which reflected a wide range of elements that Japan regards as priorities, including enhancing the transparency regarding States' nuclear arsenal, the immediate commencement



Foreign Minister Iwaya delivering a statement at the third session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2026 NPT Review Conference (April 28, New York, U.S.)



Foreign Minister Iwaya delivering remarks at the sixth meeting of the International Group of Eminent Persons for a World without Nuclear Weapons (March 30, Tokyo)

of negotiations on an FMCT, the promotion of the entry into force of the CTBT and disarmament and non-proliferation education. Furthermore, the joint statement on disarmament and non-proliferation education, initiated by Japan, received the highest number of participation to date from 96 countries, including Japan, and demonstrated the high level of interest in and broad support for disarmament and non-proliferation education. In addition, the side event on the International Group of Eminent Persons for a World without Nuclear Weapons (IGEP) was held, at which Foreign Minister Iwaya delivered opening remarks, followed by a panel discussion. Japan appreciates the issuance of the Chair's Summary under the current severe security environment, and considers it meaningful that the State Parties demonstrated a common recognition of the importance of maintaining and strengthening the NPT regime toward the next NPT Review Conference in 2026, and that candid exchanges of views were held in person.

B International Group of Eminent Persons for a World without Nuclear Weapons (IGEP)

The International Group of Eminent Persons (IGEP) was established in 2022 to provide a forum for participants from nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States, as well as those from countries participating and not participating in the TPNW, to exchange ideas and thoughts beyond their respective national positions, with the involvement of former and incumbent political leaders of the world, and to engage in candid discussions concerning a concrete path toward the realization of a world without nuclear weapons. Following the first meeting (December 2022, Hiroshima), the second meeting (April 2023, Tokyo), the third meeting (December 2023, Nagasaki), the fourth meeting (May 2024, Yokohama), and the fifth meeting (November 2024, online), the sixth and final meeting was held in Tokyo on March 30 and 31. In addition to three Japanese members, including Chair SHIRAISHI Takashi (Professor Emeritus of the Prefectural University of Kumamoto), 11 non-Japanese members from both nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear-weapon States also attended the meeting, making 14 members in total. Federica Mogherini, the Rector of the College of Europe (former High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice President of the European Commission) also participated. From the Government of Japan, Foreign Minister Iwaya attended the opening session and stated there is absolutely no wavering in Japan's stance of making steady progress toward the ideal of a world without nuclear weapons, and that the Government will take seriously the recommendations to be compiled at this meeting and continue to work on realistic and practical efforts toward a world without nuclear weapons. Subsequently, Rector Mogherini of the College of Europe delivered remarks, and video messages were introduced from António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations, Michelle Bachelet, former President of Chile, Hans Blix, former Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency, and Amina Mohamed, former Cabinet Secretary for Foreign Affairs of Kenya, followed by remarks from Chair Shiraishi. At the meeting, the IGEP members engaged in discussions on concrete measures to achieve a world without nuclear weapons based on the deliberations accumulated to date, and issued recommendations for the 2026 NPT Review Conference.

C Japan Chair for a world without nuclear weapons

In his address at the General Debate of the UN General Assembly in 2023, Prime Minister Kishida announced the establishment of "Japan Chair for a world without nuclear weapons" at overseas research institutes and think tanks with a view to overcoming the dichotomy of "deterrence versus disarmament." Following the announcement, "Japan Chairs" were established as specialized posts for nuclear disarmament at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (U.S.), Vienna Center for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation (Austria), and the International Institute for Strategic Studies, Asia (IISS-Asia) (Singapore).

Based on the recognition that multilayered efforts, not just government efforts, are important in order to steadily advance the trend of "mainstreaming" nuclear disarmament, the Japan Chair initiative is aimed at stimulating discussions on "realistic and practical nuclear disarmament" for which Japan advocates, as

well as contributing to overcoming divisions in the international community.

D Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (NPDI)

The NPDI, a group of 12 non-nuclear-weapon States[16] from various regions established under the leadership of Japan and Australia in 2010, has served as a bridge-builder 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. In August 2022, Prime Minister Kishida attended the 11th NPDI High-level Meeting held in New York, as the first Prime Minister of Japan to attend this NPDI High-level Meeting. A Joint High-level Statement was released after the meeting, which expressed NPDI's resolve to remain committed to fostering the sustained, high-level political leadership and diplomatic dialogue needed to strengthen the implementation of the NPT. The NPDI has actively contributed to the NPT review process through realistic and practical proposals, including the submission of 19 working papers to the Ninth NPT review process and 18 to the Tenth NPT review process. At the third session of the Preparatory Committee for the 11th NPT Review Conference in 2026 held from April to May, NPDI delivered a joint statement and submitted joint working papers on transparency and accountability, disarmament and non-proliferation education, FMCT, and CTBT.

E Initiatives Through the United Nations (Resolution on the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons)

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 with a view to presenting a realistic and concrete nuclear disarmament approach proposed to the international community. Recognizing the need to present a way forward for realistic and practical measures to realize a world without nuclear weapons, the 2025 draft resolution took into consideration discussions at the third session of the Preparatory Committee for the 11th NPT Review Conference in 2026, and called on the international community to implement concrete measures — including the continued non-use of nuclear weapons, enhanced transparency, an early commencement of negotiations on a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT), and disarmament and non-proliferation education related to promoting understanding of the realities of the atomic bombings — in order to further develop and promote the "Hiroshima Action Plan," while reaffirming that the NPT is the cornerstone of the international nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime.

The resolution was adopted with the support (votes in favor) of 145 countries at the First Committee of the UN General Assembly in October, and 147 countries at the Plenary Meeting of the UN General Assembly in December. The states voting in favor include nuclear-weapon State, and countries representing a wide range of positions, including U.S. allies such as NATO member countries, Australia, the ROK, and the states advocating the TPNW. While other resolutions that comprehensively addressed nuclear disarmament have been submitted to the General Assembly in addition to Japan's draft resolution on the elimination of nuclear weapons, Japan's resolution has received the highest number of supporting states among them. Every year, Japan's resolutions continue to enjoy the broad support of states with divergent views in the international community.

F Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT)

Japan attaches great importance to promoting the entry into force of the CTBT as a realistic measure for nuclear disarmament where both nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear-weapon States can participate. It continues making diplomatic efforts to call on countries which have not signed or ratified the treaty, including states whose ratifications are necessary for its entry into force. The 14th Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the CTBT was held during the UN General Assembly High-Level Week in September. In his statement, Foreign Minister Iwaya noted that the CTBT, which prohibits nuclear testing and thereby

(16) Japan, Australia, Germany, Poland, the Netherlands, Canada, Mexico, Chile, Türkiye, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Nigeria, and the Philippines.

prevents the qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons, remains a crucial treaty for realizing a world without nuclear weapons, and stated that, even before the treaty enters into force, implementing its substance through upholding a moratorium on nuclear testing is critically important, and called on all States that have not yet signed or ratified the treaty to promptly sign and ratify the treaty. He also emphasized that strengthening the verification regime and providing capacity-building support are necessary to ensure the Treaty's effectiveness. At the conference, a final declaration was adopted by the ratifying States and other States Signatories that consented, which calls on non-signatory and non-ratifying states — in particular by the remaining States listed in Annex 2 — for early signature and ratification, calls for the maintenance of the moratoria on nuclear weapons test explosions, confirms support for the build-up of the verification regime, and condemnation of nuclear tests by North Korea.

G Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT[17]: Cut-off Treaty)[18]

An FMCT is a treaty concept that aims at prohibiting the production itself of fissile materials such as highly-enriched uranium and plutonium for nuclear weapons. Regulating the production itself of raw materials for nuclear weapons prevents the emergence of new states possessing nuclear weapons and limits the production of nuclear weapons by nuclear-weapon States, and therefore would have great significance from both disarmament and non-proliferation perspectives. However, since the adoption of a UN General Assembly resolution in 1993 recommending negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices that is non-discriminatory, multilateral, and internationally and effectively verifiable, no consensus has been reached on the commencement of negotiations on such a treaty despite decades of discussion in the Conference on Disarmament (CD).

Against this backdrop, various initiatives were undertaken during the 2010s with a view to creating political momentum toward negotiations,



First Meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the "FMCT Friends" (September 24, New York, U.S.)

including the High-Level Meeting of the Conference on Disarmament convened by the UN Secretary-General (2010), the Expert Meeting on the FMCT co-hosted by the Governments of Japan and Australia (2011), the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on the FMCT (2014–2015), and the FMCT High-Level Experts Preparatory Group (2017–2018); Japan actively participated in the discussions at each of these meetings. However, consensus among the relevant states on commencing negotiations was not reached.

In light of the 30th anniversary in 2023 of the adoption of the UN FMCT resolution, the "G7 Leaders' Hiroshima Vision on Nuclear Disarmament" issued at the G7 Hiroshima Summit in May of that year called for renewed political attention to an FMCT. Japan co-hosted a Commemorative High-Level Event on a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT) with Australia and the Philippines in September of that year, raising the international community's interest in the treaty concept. In March 2024, at the Ministerial Meeting of the UN Security Council on "Nuclear Disarmament and Non-Proliferation" chaired by Japan, Japan announced the launch of "FMCT Friends" in order to maintain and enhance political momentum for an FMCT, and at the High-Level Launch Meeting of the Friends of a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT) hosted in September of that year, the launch of "FMCT Friends" was confirmed. In September 2025, the First FMCT Friends Ministerial Meeting, attended by Foreign Minister Iwaya, was held, and a joint ministerial

(17) FMCT: Treaty Banning the Production of Fissile Material for Nuclear Weapons or other Nuclear Explosive Devices / Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty

(18) A treaty concept that aims to prevent the increase in the number of nuclear weapons by prohibiting the production of fissile material (such as highly enriched uranium and plutonium) that are used as material to produce nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices.

Special Feature

"80 Years since the Atomic Bombings: Testimonies to the World" Program

From June 12 to 19, two atomic bomb survivors (*hibakusha*) and three youths engaged in efforts to pass on the testimonies and experiences of the *hibakusha* were dispatched to France, the United Kingdom (UK), and Poland under the program titled "80 years since the atomic bombings: testimonies to the world." This program was implemented to mark the 80th year since the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and is one of the concrete measures, under the three pillars of initiatives to promote understanding of the realities of the atomic bombings that was announced in September 2024: "dispatch of atomic bomb survivors and others overseas," "visits to the atomic-bombed cities," and "strengthening of outreach communications."

During the visit, the *hibakusha* served as Special Communicators for a World without Nuclear Weapons and the youths as Youth Communicators for a World without Nuclear Weapons, and delivered testimonies of their atomic bomb experiences and engaged in exchanges with local young people (Special Communicators: YAHATA Teruko and IIDA Kunihiko; Youth Communicators: INOUE Tsugumi, MASUMOTO Natsumi, and YAHATA Megumi McGowan).

Testimonies of Atomic Bomb Experiences



Testimony of atomic bomb experience (June 16, London, UK)

At the testimony sessions by *hibakusha* that were held in France, the UK, and Poland, venues in all three countries were filled to capacity each with audiences of well over one hundred people. The Special Communicators delivered lectures on their own experiences of the atomic bombings, while the Youth Communicators spoke about their activities, including their efforts to pass on the experiences of the *hibakusha* to future generations. The audience listened intently and asked questions about the experiences of the *hibakusha*, including the circumstances at the time of the bombings and the hardships that were endured in the aftermath. They also asked questions such as how the Special Communicators had found the courage to speak publicly after coming to terms with their experiences of atomic bombings, and how youths, despite not having directly experienced the atomic bombings themselves, pass on the testimonies of the *hibakusha*. These questions reflected the strong interest in testimony and outreach activities of the Special Communicators and Youth Communicators. Following the sessions, a long line of audience members formed to express their appreciation personally to the five Communicators, and the Communicators actively interacted with local residents.

Exchanges with Local Youths

The three Youth Communicators interacted with university students in France and the UK and with high school students in Poland, and gave presentations on peace activities such as the passing on of the experiences of atomic bombings. They also took part in discussions with the participation of the Special Communicators.

The local young people asked questions about the conditions of the atomic-bombed cities at the time of the bombings, and there was an instance where a participant asked the Special Communicators for a message for the younger generation. There was also interest expressed in the peace activities of the Youth Communicators, who are of the same generation as the participants, including the passing on of the experiences of atomic bombings, and frank exchanges of views took place among them.

The Government of Japan attaches importance to passing on the realities of the atomic bombings to the international community and future generations, and regards this as the starting point of all efforts toward nuclear disarmament, and its responsibility as the only country to have ever suffered atomic bombings during war.

As reflected in many comments received from local audiences, such as "the strongest message I took away was that nuclear weapons must never be used against anyone," this program served as an opportunity to deepen understanding of the realities of the atomic bombings across borders and generations.

Going forward, Japan will continue to advance initiatives to promote understanding of the realities of the atomic bombings, in cooperation with *hibakusha* and youths engaged in efforts to pass on the testimonies of the *hibakusha*.

statement calling for coordination toward an early start of negotiations on an FMCT was adopted.

H Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Education

As the only country to have ever suffered atomic bombings during war, Japan attaches great importance to education on disarmament and non-proliferation. Specifically, Japan is actively engaged in conveying the reality of the atomic bombings both domestically and internationally through such efforts as the translation of atomic bomb survivor testimonies into multiple languages, the invitation of young diplomats and others from various countries to Hiroshima and Nagasaki through the United Nations Disarmament Fellowship Programme,(19) and support for the organization of atomic bomb exhibitions overseas.(20)

More than 330 atomic bomb survivors who have delivered testimonies on their atomic bomb experiences have been bestowed with the title of "Special Communicators for a World without Nuclear Weapons,"(21) and in light of its growing importance — as atomic bomb survivors continue to age — of passing down the reality of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki across generations and national borders, more than 830 young people both domestically and internationally have been bestowed with the title of "Youth Communicators for a World without Nuclear Weapons."

In June, on the occasion of the 80 years since the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and from the perspective of further strengthening efforts to promote understanding of the realities of the atomic bombings, two atomic bomb survivors and three youths involved in inheritance activities were dispatched to France, the United Kingdom, and Poland under the program entitled "80 years since the atomic bombings: testimonies to the world." During their visit, the atomic bomb survivors acting as Special Communicators for a World without Nuclear Weapons, and the youth acting as Youth Communicators for a World without Nuclear Weapons conducted activities such as delivering testimonies on their atomic bomb experiences and lectures as well as engaging in exchanges with local younger generations. (See the Special Feature on page 235.)

Regarding the "Youth Leader Fund for a World Without Nuclear Weapons," established through Japan's contribution of 10 million U.S. dollars to the UN with the goal of creating a global network of future generations with the shared goal toward the elimination of nuclear weapons by bringing future leaders such as young policymakers and researchers from both nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States to Japan to learn firsthand the realities of the atomic bombings — in August 2024, 49 young leaders selected among those who completed the training courses participated in a week-long study tour in Japan, during which they visited Hiroshima and Nagasaki. In July 2025, an event was held at the Permanent Mission of Japan to the United Nations to commemorate the start of the Fund's second cohort, at which Foreign Minister Iwaya delivered a video message, stating that the role of younger generations in passing on the realities of the atomic bombings and conveying them broadly throughout the world is becoming even more significant, while strongly encouraging the participants to build a global network of future leaders who share the common goal of freeing humanity from nuclear weapons.

I Initiatives Toward Future Arms Control and Disarmament

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 bilateral arms control treaties. For example, the Treaty between the U.S. and Russia on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms (New START Treaty), which provides for reductions in nuclear warheads and their delivery vehicles, among other measures, demonstrates important progress in

(19) A UN training program aimed at fostering disarmament experts particularly in developing countries. Its implementation was decided at the First United Nation Special Session on Disarmament in 1978. Since 1983, Japan has invited participants of the program (young diplomats and others from various countries) to Japan at the expense of the Government of Japan; as of 2024, 1,027 participants have visited Japan. The study visit to Japan provides a meaningful opportunity to promote understanding of the realities of the atomic bombings through tours of museums in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, talks by atomic bomb survivors about their experiences, and other activities.

(20) Opened as a permanent exhibition about atomic bomb in New York, U.S., Geneva, Switzerland, and Vienna, Austria, in cooperation with Hiroshima City and Nagasaki City.

(21) From 2010 to 2025, more than 330 atomic bomb survivors have been named as "Special Communicators for a World without Nuclear Weapons."

nuclear disarmament between the U.S. and Russia. Japan welcomed the five-year extension of the Treaty announced in February 2021. However, in August 2022, Russia announced the exemption of all its facilities from inspection activities temporarily. It also notified the U.S. about the postponement of the Bilateral Consultative Commission (BCC) scheduled for November the same year. In January 2023, the U.S. Department of State submitted a report to Congress stating that Russia cannot be certified as being in compliance with the New START Treaty. In February of the same year, President Putin announced in his Address to the Federal Assembly the suspension of the implementation of the New START Treaty. In light of these developments, the "G7 Leaders' Hiroshima Vision on Nuclear Disarmament," for example, also expressed deep regret over Russia's decision to undermine the New START Treaty. However, in February 2026, the New START Treaty reached the end of its extension period and expired. In view of the recent situations surrounding nuclear weapons, it is important to establish a new arms control framework that encompasses a wider range of countries beyond the U.S. and Russia, while also including a broader range of weapon systems. From this perspective, Japan has been engaging with the relevant countries at various levels on this issue. Furthermore, the aforementioned Resolution on the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons also refers to the special responsibility of nuclear-weapon States to commence arms control dialogues on effective measures to prevent a nuclear arms race, as well as to good-faith negotiations among the three states possessing the largest number of nuclear weapons on a future nuclear arms control framework to cap increases in their nuclear weapons.

(2) Non-proliferation and Nuclear Security

A Japan's Efforts Toward Non-proliferation

As stated in the 2022 National Security Strategy of Japan, 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 and 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.

Amid the upheaval of the international order, there are growing concerns over proliferation in countries and regions such as North Korea and Iran. Proliferation risks are also growing on the back of many factors. For one, economic growth has enabled expanded capacity to produce and supply weapons as well as materials that could be diverted to the development of such weapons. In addition, distribution channels have become more complex alongside advancing globalization, and procurement methods for substances of concern and other materials have become increasingly sophisticated. The emergence of new technologies has also heightened the risk of diversion of civilian technologies to military uses. Furthermore, with growing demand for nuclear energy in recent years, non-proliferation and nuclear security are also becoming increasingly important.

Under these circumstances, Japan has been implementing its non-proliferation policies through international non-proliferation regimes and rules, taking non-proliferation measures domestically, and promoting close coordination with and capacity building support for other nations.

Measures for preventing proliferation include IAEA safeguards, export control, and counter-proliferation initiatives, as well as the aforementioned NPT, CTBT, and FMCT.

Safeguards refer to verification activities for preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons, conducted in accordance with safeguards agreements between states and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), and aim to ensure that nuclear energy (nuclear materials) will not be diverted from peaceful uses, such as nuclear power generation, to nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. Safeguards are a primary means of ensuring nuclear non-proliferation, which is one of three pillars of the NPT, and strengthening safeguards is essential to promote nuclear disarmament and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy . As a designated

member of the IAEA Board of Governors,[22] Japan is advancing various efforts including supporting the IAEA's activities, supporting enhanced understanding and implementation capabilities toward safeguards, and promoting the universalization of the Additional Protocol (AP)[23] Japan also contributes to capacity development in the area of safeguards in each country, such as through its contributions to the meetings of the Asia Pacific Safeguards Network (APSN) and training projects conducted in Japan for Asian countries.

Export control is an effort undertaken from the supply-side toward countries of proliferation concern, terrorist organizations, and other entities attempting to acquire or distribute weapons or related materials or technologies. There are four export control frameworks (international export control regimes) in the international community. Japan participates in all of them upon 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,[24] and the Wassenaar Arrangement (WA) for conventional weapons, lists dual-use goods and technologies that could contribute to the development of the weapons subject to control. To ensure the non-proliferation of goods and technologies of concern, participating countries implement export control measures on the listed items and technologies in accordance with their domestic laws. Japan is actively involved in international rule-making and the implementation of rules, and the Permanent Mission of Japan to the International Organizations in Vienna serves as the Point of Contact of the NSG.

Furthermore, Japan is promoting counter-proliferation initiatives with a view to complementing such safeguards and the activities of the international export control regimes, and comprehensively addressing the proliferation and threat of weapons of mass destruction. Specifically, Japan participates actively in the activities of the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI),[25] and works jointly with each country to implement and consider possible measures with relevant international and national legal authorities in order to interdict the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and missiles, along with related materials. In addition, with regard to the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1540,[26] 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 regimes through means such as making financial contributions to support the implementation of the resolution by Asian nations.

Non-proliferation measures, including export control, play a role in enhancing the predictability of the international business environment and promoting investment and trade. In order to carry out efficient and effective export control while ensuring free trade in the highly globalized world economy, Japan is advancing international coordination efforts, including the harmonization and strengthening of the national

---

(22) 13 countries designated by the IAEA Board of Governors. The designated member states include Japan and other countries with advanced nuclear energy capabilities.

(23) A protocol with the IAEA that State Parties conclude in addition to a Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement (CSA) that Non-nuclear-weapon NPT States Parties are required to conclude and is applied on all nuclear materials pertaining to the peaceful nuclear activities in the States Parties with the IAEA pursuant to Article III 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 October 2024, 143 countries have concluded the Additional Protocol.

(24) Apart from export control regimes, the Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation (HCOC), which includes the principle of exercising restraint in their development and deployment, addresses the issue of ballistic missiles. As of October 2025, 145 countries subscribe to the HCOC.

(25) Launched in 2003. As of the end of 2025, 116 countries participate in and support the PSI. In 2013, the six countries of Japan, Australia, New Zealand, the ROK, Singapore, and the U.S. agreed to conduct a yearly rotation exercise in the Asia Pacific region. Through the cooperation of agencies including MOFA, the National Police Agency, the Ministry of Finance, the Japan Coast Guard, and the Ministry of Defense/SDF, Japan has hosted PSI maritime interdiction exercises in 2004, 2007, 2018, and 2025, PSI air interdiction exercises in 2012, and an Operational Experts Group (OEG) meeting in 2010. Japan has also actively participated in training and related meetings hosted by other countries, including the training hosted by Australia most recently in September 2024.

(26) 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 — comprising Security Council members and with a mandate to review and report to the Security Council the level of resolution 1540 implementation by member states.

Special Feature

Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) Japan-Hosted Exercise "Pacific Shield 25"

The PSI is an initiative launched in 2003 by 11 countries, including Japan, at the proposal of the United States (U.S.). Under the initiative, participating countries jointly consider and implement measures to interdict the transfer or transport of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), ballistic missiles, and related materials in order to prevent their proliferation. Since 2014, Japan, the U.S., the Republic of Korea (ROK), Australia, New Zealand, and Singapore — major participants in the PSI in the Asia-Pacific region — host PSI training exercises on a rotating basis within the region annually. Following maritime interdiction exercises in 2004 and 2007, an air interdiction exercise in 2012, and a maritime interdiction exercise in 2018, Japan hosted its fifth such exercise — the maritime interdiction exercise "Pacific Shield 25" — from December 2 to 5, 2025, together with an Operational Experts Group (OEG) Meeting to discuss the future direction of the PSI.

In addition to the six countries above, 20 countries and one related organization participated in the exercise as observers. On the Japanese side, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), National Police Agency, Ministry of Finance / Customs, Coast Guard, and Ministry of Defense / Self-Defense Forces (SDF) participated in coordination with one another. Specifically, the SDF, the U.S., Australia, and the ROK conducted live exercises involving the detection, pursuit, and boarding of a suspected vessel carrying WMD-related materials, while the National Police Agency, Customs, and Coast Guard conducted port exercises that included the inspection of chemical substances. In addition, an academic session was held to exchange views aimed at raising awareness of non-proliferation, a simulation-based tabletop exercise was conducted on responding to the proliferation of WMD-related materials, and an OEG Meeting was held with the participation of 21 countries to discuss the future direction of the PSI.

This series of exercises was the first hosted by Japan in seven years. Through it, Japan contributed to enhancing the capabilities of relevant authorities of each country to interdict the proliferation of WMD and related items, strengthening mutual coordination among the law enforcement agencies, military and defense authorities, and intelligence agencies of each country, and deepening the understanding of the PSI among non-participating countries.



Tokyo Metropolitan Police Department conducting preliminary inspection of suspect substances during the port exercise (December 3, Tokyo)



Group photo of representatives of participating countries at the opening ceremony (December 2, MOFA)

Japan and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)

The IAEA is an organization related with the UN, which was established in 1957 with the aim of promoting peaceful uses of nuclear energy and at the same time, ensuring that nuclear energy is not used for any military purpose. Article III of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which entered into force in 1970, sets out the obligation of non-nuclear-weapon States to accept safeguards — that is, verification activities carried out in accordance with agreements concluded between such States and the IAEA — with a view to preventing the diversion of nuclear technology from peaceful uses to military uses.

The IAEA, known as the nuclear watchdog, from the perspective of nuclear non-proliferation, plays a key role in implementing safeguards and is also engaged in nuclear non-proliferation challenges and regions in countries such as North Korea and Iran, while also addressing nuclear terrorism. Furthermore, from the perspective of promoting peaceful uses of nuclear energy, the IAEA has been strengthening not only technical support related to nuclear power generation, but also research and support for nuclear technologies in non-power applications such as health, medicine, food and agriculture, water resource management, the environment, and industrial uses. In recent years, it has also been focusing on fusion energy, and its activities range widely.

Since joining the IAEA as an original member state, Japan has contributed to discussions in the General Conference and Board of Governors meetings as a designated member state, and has also deepened cooperation with the IAEA traditionally in the nuclear non-proliferation field and in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, and actively supported IAEA activities in the human resources, financial, and technical aspects. Recently, in addition to cooperation on the discharge of ALPS treated water[1] into the sea by TEPCO's Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station, and on nuclear safety in Ukraine, Japan is also advancing cooperation on various initiatives that the IAEA is promoting against the backdrop of growing global interest and demand for the use of nuclear energy in areas such as medicine, food, and the environment. Some examples are the "Rays of Hope" (an initiative related to radioactive cancer treatment and diagnosis) advocated by the IAEA and "Atoms4Food" (an initiative related to food issues), aimed at the attainment of SDGs in developing countries. Japan contributes funding to such initiatives.

Through opportunities such as visits by Director General Rafael Mariano Grossi to Japan as a guest of MOFA on five occasions, Japan is strengthening cooperation with the IAEA in both nuclear non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.



Foreign Minister Iwaya with IAEA Director General Grossi on his visit to Japan as a guest of MOFA (February 18, Tokyo)

1 ALPS treated water refers to water that contains radioactive substances from inside the buildings of the Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO)'s Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station(FDNPS) and has been purified and treated through multiple treatment facilities, including ALPS (Advanced Liquid Processing System), until the concentrations of all radioactive substances besides tritium satisfy the safety regulatory standards. As for tritium, the water is significantly diluted with seawater before the discharge into the sea so that it fully satisfies safety regulatory standards.

export control systems of various countries, in cooperation with Japan's industry and academia which have advanced technologies. In this regard, Japan holds the Asia Senior-level Talks on Non-Proliferation (ASTOP)(27) and the Asian Export Control Seminar(28) every year in order to promote a better understanding of the non-proliferation regimes and strengthen regional efforts, mainly in Asian countries.

B Regional Non-proliferation Issues

In 2025, North Korea continued its nuclear and missile development, including through repeated ballistic

(27) A multilateral Director-General-level meeting launched in 2003 and hosted by Japan to discuss various issues related to the strengthening of the non-proliferation regime in Asia among the 10 ASEAN member states, China, India, the ROK, as well as the U.S., Australia, New Zealand, Canada, France, the Netherlands, and the EU, which have common interests in Asian regional security. Most recently, the 19th meeting was held in October 2024, and discussions were held on topics such as proliferation challenges in Asia and the strengthening of export control.

(28) 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. (It was suspended only in 2021 due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.)

missile launches. This series of actions by North Korea is a flagrant violation of relevant UN Security Council resolutions, and constitutes a grave and imminent threat to Japan's national security. At the same time, it also poses a clear and serious challenge to the region and the international community, and is absolutely unacceptable. The IAEA Director General's report in August pointed out that North Korea's nuclear activities continue to be a cause for serious concern, and that the continuation of North Korea's nuclear program is a clear violation of UN Security Council resolutions. Furthermore, at the IAEA General Conference in September, a resolution calling strongly on North Korea to take concrete actions toward the complete, verifiable, and irreversible dismantlement of all of its nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programs, as well as the prompt suspension of all related activities, was adopted by a majority vote, demonstrating the united position of IAEA member states toward the denuclearization of North Korea. Japan also actively communicated to the international community the importance of addressing North Korea's nuclear issue at the Third Preparatory Committee for the 2026 NPT Review Conference held in April through May, as well as at the IAEA General Conference in September and at IAEA Board of Governors meetings.

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. Military cooperation such as the transfer of ballistic missiles from North Korea to Russia is a flagrant violation of UN Security Council resolutions, and Japan will continue to coordinate closely with related countries such as, the U.S. and the ROK, as well as international organizations such as the UN and the IAEA. At the same time, 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. Japan will also continue to contribute actively to discussions on North Korea's nuclear and missile activities in international export control regimes such as the NSG and the MTCR.

Iran has continued actions to reduce its commitments under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA)(29) since the withdrawal of the U.S. (during the first Trump administration) from the JCPOA in 2018 and the reimposition of independent sanctions on Iran. In February 2021, Iran suspended the implementation of transparency measures under the JCPOA including the AP, and commenced production of 60% enriched uranium in April the same year.

In June, Israel and the U.S. attacked Iranian nuclear facilities including Natanz and Fordow. In August of that year, the E3 (France, Germany, and the UK) notified the President of the UN Security Council of Iran's significant non-performance of its JCPOA commitments, and on September 19, a draft resolution in the UN Security Council to continue the termination of sanctions measures against Iran was rejected. Consequently, on September 28, sanctions against Iran under previous UN Security Council resolutions (including Resolutions 1737, 1747, 1803, and 1929) as provided for in operative paragraph 12 of UN Security Council Resolution 2231 were re-imposed, and Iran was once again obligated to cease certain proliferation-sensitive nuclear activities including uranium enrichment.

The IAEA is continuing its engagement with Iran with a view to resolving Iran's nuclear issue, including the series of safeguards issues (in which nuclear materials that had not been declared to the IAEA were found in Iran; in June, the IAEA Board of Governors found Iran's non-compliance with its safeguards obligations in light of this unresolved issue). Following the attack on Iran by Israel and the U.S. in June, Iran has suspended its cooperation with the IAEA, and Japan is strongly urging Iran to immediately resume full cooperation with the IAEA. From the standpoint that resolving the

(29) 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>
Limitation on uranium enrichment-related activities
- Limitation on the number of centrifuges in operation to 5,060 units
- Keeping its uranium stockpile under 300 kg of up to 3.67%, 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.

nuclear issue through dialogue is important, Japan is also emphasizing the importance of diplomacy, including the early resumption of consultations between the U.S. and Iran. (For developments following the attack by Israel and the U.S. on Iran on February 28, 2026, see Chapter 2, Section 7, 2(5) Iran, page 171.) Japan will also continue to contribute to discussions related to Iran's nuclear, missile, and unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) activities in the international export control regimes such as the NSG and the MTCR.

As for Syria, the IAEA Board of Governors in 2011 found that activities such as Syria's undeclared construction of a nuclear reactor would constitute non-compliance with its safeguards agreement with the IAEA, and the issue remains unresolved and under discussion to this day. The IAEA visited three facilities related to the undeclared construction of nuclear reactors by October 2024. Progress is expected through engagement with the new government going forward. To address this outstanding issue, Japan has called upon Syria to cooperate fully with the IAEA. It is important for Syria to sign, conclude and implement the AP.

C Nuclear Security

"Nuclear security" is aimed at preventing acts of terrorism involving the use of nuclear and other radioactive materials. In the wake of the September 2001 terrorist attacks in the U.S., there has been growing recognition of the importance of nuclear counter-terrorism measures. Thereafter, multilateral conferences, including the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism (GICNT), Nuclear Security Summit, and the International Conference on Nuclear Security (ICONS) have been held with a view to strengthening nuclear security. Progress has also been made in cooperation in the international community, with the entry into force of the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism in 2007 and of the Amendment to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material in 2015. However, as the activities of the GICNT conducted under the joint chairs of the U.S. and Russia came to a standstill due to Russia's aggression against Ukraine, the U.S. launched the Global Forum to Prevent Radiological and Nuclear Terrorism (Global FTPRNT) in 2024 and held its inaugural meeting, at which measures to enhance nuclear counter-terrorism capabilities were discussed, among other matters. It also called for efforts to ensure the safety and security of nuclear facilities in Ukraine.

In recent years, amid growing energy demand in each country and a global trend toward decarbonization, international interest in nuclear power generation has been increasing. In this context, countries advancing the peaceful use of nuclear energy need to raise awareness of nuclear security issues — such as the risk of proliferation of nuclear weapons and nuclear materials to non-state actors — and to work toward ensuring the highest level of nuclear security standards. Japan will also continue to contribute, in coordination with the IAEA and relevant countries, toward ensuring the highest level of nuclear security standards in the international community under the leadership of the IAEA Director General.

(3) Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy

A Multilateral Efforts

Along with nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, the peaceful uses of nuclear energy is 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. Against the backdrop of growing global energy demand and rising interest in decarbonized energy sources, many countries use, or plan to use, nuclear power.(30)

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";(31) that is, (a) Safeguards, (b) Nuclear Safety (e.g. measures to ensure safety to prevent nuclear accidents), and (c) Nuclear Security. Japan has, through bilateral and multilateral frameworks,

(30) According to the IAEA, 415 nuclear reactors are in operation worldwide and 62 reactors are under construction (IAEA website; as of December 2025).

(31) "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.

been conducting diplomacy aimed at establishing as a shared understanding among the international community the importance of ensuring the "3S," and also carries out human resources development support programs that contribute to strengthening the "3S." As the country that experienced the Tokyo Electric Power Company (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 enhancing global nuclear safety. From this perspective, Japan will continue to contribute, in cooperation with the IAEA, to capacity building in the field of emergency preparedness and response through the "IAEA Response and Assistance Network (RANET) Capacity Building Centre (CBC)," which was designated in Fukushima Prefecture in 2013.

In Ukraine, the nuclear safety and security of nuclear facilities, including the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant, which has remained under prolonged Russian occupation as a result of Russia's aggression, are under threat. Japan strongly condemns Russia's aggression, and will continue to support the IAEA's efforts to ensure the nuclear safety and security of nuclear facilities in Ukraine, including the seven pillars(32) and the five principles(33) set out by the IAEA Director General.

Nuclear energy is applied not only to the field of power generation, but also to the field of non-power generation, including health, medical treatment, food, agriculture, the environment, and industrial uses. Promoting the peaceful uses 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 States Parties. Therefore, the IAEA also contributes to technical cooperation for developing countries.

In this context, Japan is actively supporting the IAEA's activities through technical support under the "Regional Cooperative Agreement for Research, Development, and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology (RCA)," as well as financial support through contributions to the "Technical Cooperation Fund (TCF)" and the "Peaceful Uses Initiative (PUI)," with a view to spreading the benefits of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy primarily to developing countries, underpinning the NPT — which is the cornerstone of the international nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime — and contributing to the achievement of the SDGs. Examples of support projects facilitated by Japan's contributions to the PUI include cancer control projects, projects to address the food issue, and projects to address the marine plastic waste issue.

B Bilateral Nuclear Cooperation Agreements

Bilateral nuclear cooperation agreements are concluded to establish a legal framework required for ensuring a legal assurance from the recipient country on nuclear non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear-related material and equipment that are transferred between the two countries, so as to realize cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy between them. Under such bilateral agreements, cooperation in areas such as the improvement of nuclear safety can be promoted. Japan makes its decision on whether or not to conclude a nuclear cooperation agreement framework with another country taking into account a wide range of factors such as non-proliferation efforts and nuclear energy policy of its partner country, and its trust in and expectations toward Japan, as well as the bilateral relationship between the two countries among others. As of December, Japan has concluded

(32) 1. The physical integrity of the facilities — whether it is the reactors, fuel ponds, or radioactive waste stores — must be maintained;
2. All safety and security systems and equipment must be fully functional at all times;
3. The operating staff must be able to fulfil their safety and security duties and have the capacity to make decisions free of undue pressure;
4. There must be secure off-site power supply from the grid for all nuclear sites;
5. There must be uninterrupted logistical supply chains and transportation to and from the sites;
6. There must be effective on-site and off-site radiation monitoring systems and emergency preparedness and response measures;
7. There must be reliable communications with the regulator and others.

(33) 1. There should be no attack of any kind from or against the plant, in particular targeting the reactors, spent fuel storage, other critical infrastructure, or personnel;
2. Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant should not be used as storage or a base for heavy weapons (i.e., multiple rocket launchers, artillery systems and munitions, and tanks) or military personnel that could be used for an attack from the plant;
3. Off-site power to the plant should not be put at risk. To that effect, all efforts should be made to ensure that off-site power remains available and secure at all times;
4. All structures, systems and components essential to the safe and secure operation of Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant should be protected from attacks or acts of sabotage;
5. No action should be taken that undermines these principles.

bilateral nuclear cooperation agreements with 14 countries and one organization, which in order of entry into force of the agreement are: Canada, France, Australia, China, the U.S., the UK, the European Atomic Energy Community (EURATOM), Kazakhstan, the ROK, Viet Nam, Jordan, Russia, Türkiye, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and India.

C Decommissioning of TEPCO's Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station and Handling of ALPS Treated Water

The work of decommissioning, contaminated water and treated water management, at TEPCO's Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station, as well as decontamination and environmental remediation are challenging. However, Japan is making steady progress in these areas by leveraging the collective technologies and knowledge of the world, and in close cooperation with the IAEA, the expert organization in the field of nuclear energy. In April 2021, the Government of Japan announced its basic policy on the handling of ALPS treated water, and in July of the same year, signed the Terms of Reference (TOR) on Reviews of Safety Aspects of Handling ALPS treated water at TEPCO's Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station with the IAEA. Based on this TOR, the IAEA Task Force consisting of the IAEA officials and international experts selected by the IAEA has conducted third-party reviews on the Government of Japan and TEPCO in safety and regulatory aspects.

On July 4, 2023, IAEA Director General Grossi visited Japan and handed to Prime Minister Kishida the Comprehensive Report compiled by the IAEA, summarizing these reviews conducted based on the TOR. The report concluded that (a) the approach to the discharge of ALPS treated water into the sea, and the associated activities, are consistent with relevant international safety standards, (b) that the discharge of the ALPS treated water will have a negligible radiological impact on people and the environment, and (c) indicated the IAEA's plans to continue implementing additional reviews and monitoring during and after the discharge.

After the Inter-Ministerial Council for Contaminated Water, Treated Water and Decommissioning Issues and the Inter-Ministerial Council for Steady Implementation of the Basic Policy on Handling ALPS Treated Water were held on August 22 of that year, the discharge of ALPS treated water commenced on August 24 the same year. ALPS treated water is being discharged as planned, and safety has been confirmed based on the monitoring results to date and assessments by the IAEA.

After the start of the discharge of ALPS treated water into the sea, the IAEA conducted five safety and regulatory review missions in October 2023, April 2024, December 2024, May 2025, and December 2025. In the published reports on the First through Fourth Review Missions conducted after the start of the discharge into the sea, the IAEA reaffirmed the fundamental conclusions of the safety review as outlined in the Comprehensive Report dated July 4, 2023.

In the light of the interest of the concerned countries, Japan and the IAEA concurred in conducting additional measures under the IAEA's framework on September 20, 2024. On the same day, Japan and China announced a "Shared Recognition between Japan and China" regarding the discharge of ALPS treated water into the sea and China's import restrictions on Japanese aquatic products, which mentioned that after conducting additional measures under the framework of the IAEA, the Chinese government will initiate adjustment of its import restrictions on Japanese aquatic products, and will steadily restore imports of Japanese aquatic products. From October of that year onward, the missions of additional measures have been conducted on multiple occasions with the participation of experts from third countries including China, and the published results reports have confirmed the safety of the discharge of ALPS treated water into the sea. The Chinese government has also announced that all results of analyses of samples completed to date have been normal. At the end of June 2025, the Chinese government issued a public notice to restore imports of aquatic products from certain regions of Japan. It remains important to continue implementing the "Shared Recognition between Japan and China," and the Government will continue to request China to facilitate exports, including through the prompt re-registration of Japanese export-related facilities, while strongly calling for the lifting of import restrictions on aquatic products from the remaining 10 prefectures.

In order to make progress in the decommissioning works and in recovery with the support and correct understanding of the international community, the Government of Japan periodically releases comprehensive reports through the IAEA that cover matters such as progress in decommissioning and contaminated water and treated water management at 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 the relevant organizations, including Diplomatic Missions in Tokyo and to the IAEA. Furthermore, Japan has organized more than 100 briefing sessions to the Diplomatic Missions in Tokyo since the nuclear power station accident and provided and disseminated information through Japanese diplomatic missions overseas or through social media and other means.

Regarding the safety of discharge of ALPS treated water into the sea, the Government of Japan continues to provide information sincerely to the international community in a highly transparent manner, based on scientific evidence, and to respond appropriately to claims that may encourage reputational damage.

(4) Biological and Chemical Weapons

A Biological Weapons

The Biological Weapons Convention (BWC)[34] is the only multilateral legal framework comprehensively prohibiting the development, production and possession of biological weapons. However, how to reinforce the Convention is a challenge as there are neither provisions on measures to verify 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 intersessional 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 BWC regime.

At the Ninth Review Conference of the BWC held in 2022, it was decided that a working group open to all States Parties would be established, with a view to strengthening all aspects of the implementation of the BWC. The working group started meeting from 2023, and States Parties are discussing measures on international cooperation, the scientific and technological developments, and compliance and verification relevant to the BWC.

B Chemical Weapons

The Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC)[35] comprehensively prohibits the development, production, stockpiling, and use of chemical weapons, and stipulates that all chemical weapons stockpiles 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 Organisation 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 free of chemical weapons were highly acclaimed, and the Organisation was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2013.

Japan, which has a highly developed chemicals industry and numerous chemicals factories, accepts numerous OPCW inspections.

Japan also actively cooperates with the OPCW in many other concrete ways. In March 2024, Japan contributed about 26 million Japanese yen to the OPCW to contribute to chemical weapon protection and assistance in Ukraine. This fund will be used to provide Ukraine with chemical identification analyzers through the OPCW. Furthermore, on the occasion of the 108th Session of the Executive Council of the OPCW in March 2025, and marking the 30th anniversary of the Aum Shinrikyo Tokyo sarin gas attack in March 1995, a joint Japan-U.S. side event on chemical terrorism was held to raise awareness of the threat of chemical terrorism and to promote discussion in the international community on countering chemical terrorism. In addition,

(34) Entered into force in March 1975. As of December 2025, 187 countries or regions are parties to the BWC.

(35) Entered into force in April 1997. As of December 2025, 193 countries or regions are parties to the CWC.

Japan is engaged in efforts to increase the number of States Parties, as well as to enhance the effectiveness of the CWC by strengthening the national implementation measures of the CWC by States Parties.

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 tanks, artillery, and landmines to small arms and light weapons such as handguns. The problem of conventional weapons, which are used widely in actual wars and cause injury and death to civilians, is serious in light of both national security and humanitarian concerns. The disarmament agenda presented in 2018 by UN Secretary-General António Guterres categorizes disarmament of conventional weapons as one of the three pillars, "Disarmament that Saves Lives." Japan continues to make active efforts through international cooperation and support toward matters concerning conventional weapons, and participates in discussions at the relevant conferences.

A Small Arms and Light Weapons

Described as "de facto weapons of mass destruction" due to the many human lives they take, small arms and light weapons 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 2001, Japan has been working with other countries to submit a resolution on the illicit trade of small arms and light weapons 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 and light weapons, including training and the collection and destruction of weapons. In 2019, Japan contributed 2 million U.S. dollars to a funding facility established under UN Secretary-General Guterres' Agenda for Disarmament to address the issue of small arms and light weapons, and projects to support countries affected by illicit small arms and light weapons are implemented through this funding facility.

B The Arms Trade Treaty (ATT)(36)

The Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), which seeks to establish common standards to regulate international trade and prevent the illicit transfer of 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. Moreover, after the Treaty entered into force, Japan has continued to contribute actively in ways such as hosting the Fourth Conference of States Parties to the ATT in Tokyo as the first Presidency elected from the Asia-Pacific region in August 2018. At the 11th Conference of States Parties (CSP11) to the ATT held in August 2025, in its statement, Japan explained its efforts including outreach and information sharing to States not Parties in the Asia-Pacific region toward the universalization of the Treaty, and called on all States Parties to continue the strict implementation of the Treaty. Japan also made active contributions to discussions on transparency and reporting, promotion of implementation, and other matters.

C Convention on Prohibitions 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)(37)

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

(36) As of December 2025, there are 117 countries or regions that are parties to the ATT. Japan signed the Treaty on the date it was opened for signing and deposited its instrument of acceptance in May 2014.

(37) As of December 2025, 128 countries and regions are parties to the CCW.

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 (GGE) on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS)(38) have been held under the CCW framework since 2017, and 11 guiding principles on LAWS were formulated in 2019. Japan has continued to contribute actively and constructively to such discussions on international rule-making. In March 2023, Japan submitted the "Draft articles on autonomous weapon systems – prohibitions and other regulatory measures on the basis of international humanitarian law" to the GGE, with the U.S., the UK, Australia, Canada, and the ROK. At the GGE meeting convened in March 2023, a report incorporating the prohibition of weapons systems that cannot adhere to international humanitarian law and the restriction of other weapons systems was adopted unanimously. Furthermore, in May 2024, in light of the UN General Assembly resolution on LAWS, a working paper summarizing Japan's views on LAWS was submitted for the purpose of contributing to the preparation of the Report of the Secretary-General and discussions within the GGE.

Against the backdrop of increasingly active international discussions on the impact of emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence (AI), on the military domain, the second summit of Responsible Artificial Intelligence in the Military Domain (REAIM)(39) was held in the ROK in September 2024. In addition, in April, in light of the UN General Assembly resolution on "Artificial Intelligence in the military domain and its implications for international peace and security," Japan submitted a working paper summarizing its views on this field.

D Anti-Personnel Mines

Since the conclusion of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction (Ottawa Convention)(40) in 1998, Japan has continued to promote comprehensive measures under the Convention, including 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."

In December, Japan presided over the 22nd Meeting of States Parties to the Ottawa Convention held in Geneva (Switzerland). Foreign Minister Motegi delivered a video message, calling on participants to make the meeting an opportunity to reaffirm their commitment to the Convention, and stated that Japan would continue to work in close cooperation with other countries to lead efforts to develop the Convention and promote international mine action toward the realization of a "mine-free world."

E Cluster Munitions(41)

The international community takes seriously the humanitarian consequences brought about by cluster munitions. Japan is therefore taking steps to address this issue via victim assistance and unexploded ordnance clearance.(42) Japan is also continuing its efforts to increase the number of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions(43) (CCM). At the 13th Meeting of States Parties to the CCM held in September, Japan participated in discussions concerning these issues and shared its proactive efforts.

(38) LAWS: Lethal Autonomous Weapons System

(39) REAIM: Responsible Artificial Intelligence in the Military Domain

(40) The Convention, which entered into force in 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 2025, there are 166 countries and regions that are parties to the Convention, including Japan.

(41) 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.

(42) See the White Paper on Development Cooperation for specific efforts on international cooperation regarding cluster munitions and anti-personnel mines.

(43) 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 2025, there are 111 countries and regions that are parties to the Convention, including Japan.

5 Japan's Efforts at the United Nations

(1) Japan-UN Relationship

The UN is an international organization that nearly all the countries in the world are members of (193 Member States as of December 2025). It addresses various challenges in diverse areas such as conflict resolution and peacebuilding, counter-terrorism, disarmament and non-proliferation, poverty and development, human rights, refugee issues, environment and climate change issues, disaster risk reduction, and public health.

Since joining the UN in 1956, Japan has leveraged both the universality and expertise of the UN to realize policy aims through multilateral cooperation in a wide range of areas, including the three pillars of UN activities—peace and security, development, and human rights. Japan has served as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) a record 12 times among all UN Member States, actively contributing to the realization and maintenance of international peace and security—a prominent example of such efforts. In order to support such activities, the Government of Japan financially contributes to the UN alongside actively engaging in the organizational aspects (management) of the UN. Japan also supports Japanese staff working in the UN to obtain important posts. With the international order undergoing major upheavals, it is becoming more important than before to strengthen international norms based on the rule of law. Japan is working proactively to strengthen multilateralism with the UN at its core, as well as the functions of the UN, including UN Security Council reform.

(2) Major Events in 2025

The High-Level Week of the 80th UN General Assembly convened in September. Prime Minister Ishiba and Foreign Minister Iwaya attended from Japan.

In his address at the General Debate of the UN General Assembly, Prime Minister Ishiba reflected on the founding of the UN and made a strong call for the urgent need to reform the Security Council. He also expressed Japan's resolve to strengthen its efforts toward peace and stability in the Middle East region, called for the realization of "a world without nuclear weapons," and communicated Japan's approach to international cooperation in co-creating solutions to challenges with other countries. He further pointed to the importance of healthy and robust democracy, and called for "solidarity and tolerance, not division and confrontation."



Prime Minister Ishiba delivers a general debate speech at the UN General Assembly (September 23, New York, U.S.; Photo: Official Website of the Prime Minister's Office of Japan)



Meeting between Prime Minister Ishiba and UN Secretary-General Guterres at the UN General Assembly High-Level Week (September 23, New York, U.S.; Photo: Official Website of the Prime Minister's Office of Japan)

Prime Minister Ishiba also took the opportunity of the UN High-Level Week to meet with UN Secretary-General Guterres and other leaders of countries and international organizations, and exchanged opinions actively on various issues in the international arena and bilateral relations. In his meeting with UN Secretary-General Guterres, Prime Minister Ishiba once again pointed out the urgent need of Security Council reform, and expressed the intention to continue

Special Feature

United Nations 80th Anniversary

In 2025, the United Nations (UN) marked the milestone of its 80th anniversary. Since its founding in 1945, under humanity's pledge never to repeat the scourge of war, the UN has continued to serve as the central forum for multilateral cooperation across a wide range of fields including international peace and security, development, and human rights.

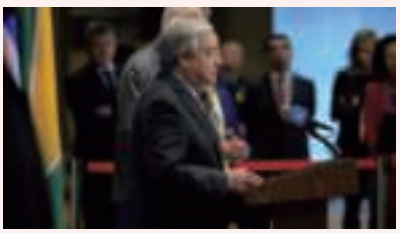
The Path to the Founding of the UN

The UN was born out of reflection on the failure of the League of Nations to prevent World War II. From April to June 1945, representatives of 50 countries gathered in San Francisco, United States (U.S.), to attend the "United Nations Conference on International Organization." At the conference, the Charter of the United Nations, which proclaimed the determination "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war," was drafted and signed on June 26 of the same year. The UN Charter entered into force on October 24 of the same year, which became the day of the founding of the UN and is still celebrated in countries around the world as "United Nations Day." The UN Charter sets forth, as the purposes of the UN, the achievement of international cooperation in maintaining international peace and security, developing friendly relations among nations, solving international problems, and promoting respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and at the same time stipulates principles including the sovereign equality of states, the peaceful settlement of disputes, and the non-use of force.

While the UN had 51 Member States at its founding, it has 193 Member States as of 2025, and continues to address international peace and security and global issues as the sole universal international organization of its kind. It has carried out wide-ranging activities, including peacekeeping operations, humanitarian assistance, and sustainable development, expanding and deepening its role with each era.

The 80th Anniversary of the UN and UN Reform

Having marked its 80th anniversary in 2025, the UN has embarked on fundamental reform of its organization in order to respond to the rapidly changing international situation and increasingly complex global issues. At the center of this effort is the "UN80 Initiative." This is a reform of the entire UN system proposed by UN Secretary-General António Guterres on March 11. It is an initiative aimed at realizing an even stronger and more effective UN befitting the 21st century. The UN80 Initiative consists of three workstreams: "efficiency improvement," "mandate implementation review," and "structural changes and programmatic realignment," and discussions on reform are being advanced by the UN Secretariat and Member States toward realizing a more functional UN.



UN Secretary-General Guterres announces the UN80 Initiative (March 12, New York, U.S.; Photo: UN)

Efforts toward UN reform are not limited to the UN80 Initiative. In order to enable the UN to respond more effectively to the various challenges facing the international community, UN Security Council reform is also necessary. As world leaders emphasized the urgent need to reform the UN Security Council at the "Summit of the Future" held during the UN General Assembly in September 2024, there is a broadly shared view that UN Security Council reform reflecting the realities of the international community should be realized at an early date so as to make the body more legitimate, effective, and representative.

Over the long span of 80 years, as the international community has undergone major changes, the UN has confronted the challenges of each era and has repeatedly reformed and evolved. Now, 80 years since its founding, the UN is being called upon all the more to transform itself for the next generation.

collaborating in terms of UN reform, including the UN80 Initiative.(44) He also reiterated his request for the maintenance and increase of Japanese staff employed in UN-related organizations and agencies. Secretary-General Guterres expressed high appreciation for Japan's approach to development, noting that it stands from the perspective of the partner countries.

Foreign Minister Iwaya engaged in approximately 30 meetings, discussions and other engagements, including the G7 Foreign Ministers' Meeting, the Japan-U.S.-ROK Foreign Ministers' Meeting, the G20 Foreign Ministers' Meeting, the Meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the G4 Countries on UN Security Council Reform, which he chaired, and the High-Level International Conference on the Two-State Solution for the Israeli-Palestinian Issue. Through meetings and discussions with various countries, Japan communicated its position and commitment to advancing multilateralism with the UN at its core and to making proactive contributions to the realization and maintenance of international peace and security. Through multilateral meetings among like-minded countries and multilateral fora, as well as through meetings with foreign ministers of various countries, Japan confirmed close coordination with partner nations on the regional and international situation, including the situation in the Indo-Pacific region and the situations in Ukraine and the Middle East, as well as on urgent issues facing the international community.

(3) UN Security Council and its Reform

A UN 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 10 non-permanent members that are elected by UN Member States (for two-year terms). The UN Security Council's agenda covers a wide range of areas from the peaceful settlement of disputes and addressing proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and terrorism, to peacebuilding and Women, Peace, and Security (WPS). In recent years, new themes such as climate change and food security have also been covered. The UN Security Council also has a mandate to determine the details of activities in UN Peacekeeping Operations (PKO) and UN Special Political Missions (SPM).

B Reform of the UN Security Council

The composition of the UN Security Council has largely remained unchanged since the establishment of the UN, even amid significant changes to the structure of the international community and diversification of the UN's functions today. In response to Russia's aggression against Ukraine in February 2022, a resolution that deplores the aggression by Russia and calls for the withdrawal of Russian troops was put to a vote in the UN Security Council. However, it was not adopted, as Russia exercised its veto. Consequently, the UN Security Council was unable to take a coordinated response. This clearly shows that the UN Security Council cannot function effectively in response to situations such as Russia's aggression against Ukraine. There is a broadly shared view among the international community that an early reform of the UN Security Council is necessary to make the body more legitimate, representative, and effective.

To play an even more proactive role toward the realization of international peace and security through the UN, Japan has been making efforts to convince other countries to pursue an early reform of the UN Security Council, with the expansion of both permanent and non-permanent members 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 (IGN) on UN Security Council reform. Six meetings took place during the 79th session of the UN General Assembly, between November 2024 and June 2025. During the 79th session, concrete discussions were held on various proposals by Member States and groups, including on the allocation of seats, the veto, and working methods, through the

(44) A reform of the entire UN system proposed by UN Secretary-General Guterres on March 11, 2025, aimed at realizing a stronger, more effective UN fit for the 21st century. It consists of three pillars (workstreams): "efficiency in the UN secretariat," "mandate implementation review," and "structural and programmatic realignments."



Meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the G4 Countries (Brazil, Japan, India, and Germany) on UN Security Council Reform (September 25, New York, U.S.)

initiative of the Co-Chairs of the IGN. In October, Annalena Baerbock, President of the 80th session of the UN General Assembly, appointed the Permanent Representatives of Kuwait and the Netherlands to the UN as Co-Chairs of the Intergovernmental Negotiations (with the Permanent Representative of Kuwait reappointed).

Japan places great importance on the initiatives of the G4 (Japan, Brazil, Germany, and India), a group that cooperates on promoting UN Security Council reform. Foreign Minister Iwaya chaired the Meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the G4 Countries in September in conjunction with the High-Level Week of the UN General Assembly. At the meeting, the participants welcomed the call by leaders from around the world set out in "Pact for the Future"(45) for the urgent need to reform the UN Security Council, and concurred on working with the relevant countries including Africa and the U.S. to achieve concrete progress as soon as possible, on the occasion of the 80th anniversary of the establishment of the UN. Japan will continue to work closely with many countries and persevere toward the realization of UN Security Council reform.

(4) Organizational Aspects of the UN (Management)

A Management

UN Secretary-General Guterres positions reforms in the management of the UN along with peace efforts and development as issues of priority, and works continuously to enhance global governance. In 2021, he issued a report entitled "Our Common Agenda" which proposed concrete measures to adapt the UN to a new era, and in 2024, organized the Summit of the Future at his initiative. Japan supports the objectives of the reform with the hope that the UN will fulfill its mission more effectively and efficiently. In March 2025, the Secretary-General put forward the "UN80 Initiative" for UN reform, proposing reform measures including reductions in UN posts and the budget, with a view to making the UN stronger, more effective, and fit for the 21st century as it marks its 80th anniversary.

B Budget

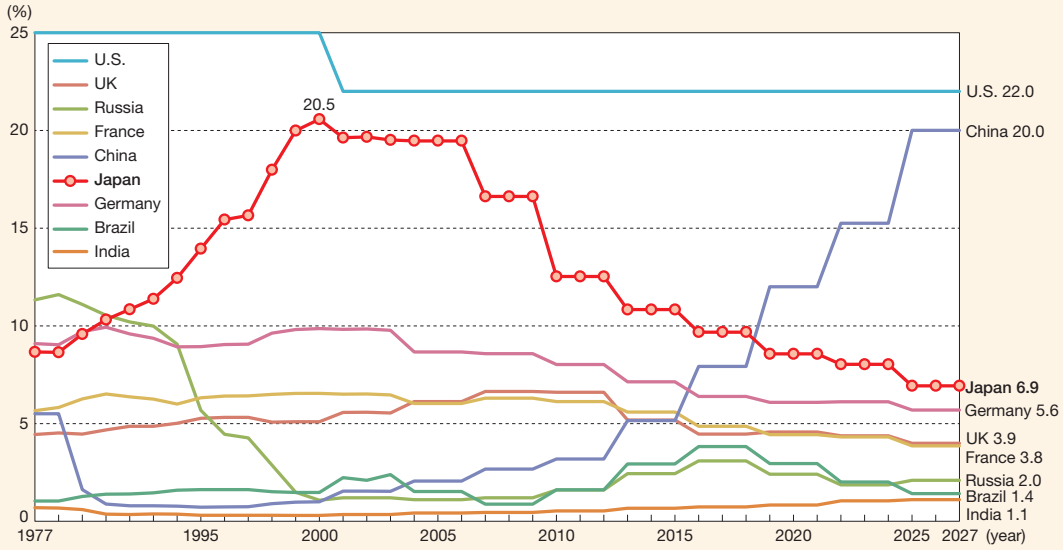
The UN budget is mainly composed of the regular budget for general programs (an annual budget for the period from January to December), and the peacekeeping budget for UN peacekeeping operations (an annual budget for the period from July to the following June).

The regular budget for 2026 amounting to approximately 3.45 billion U.S. dollars was approved at the UN General Assembly in December. As part of the "UN80 Initiative," the budget was reduced by approximately 9.6% compared to the previous year, with about 2,600 posts eliminated. With regard to the peacekeeping budget, the budget for 2025/2026 amounting to approximately 5.39 billion U.S. dollars was approved in June.

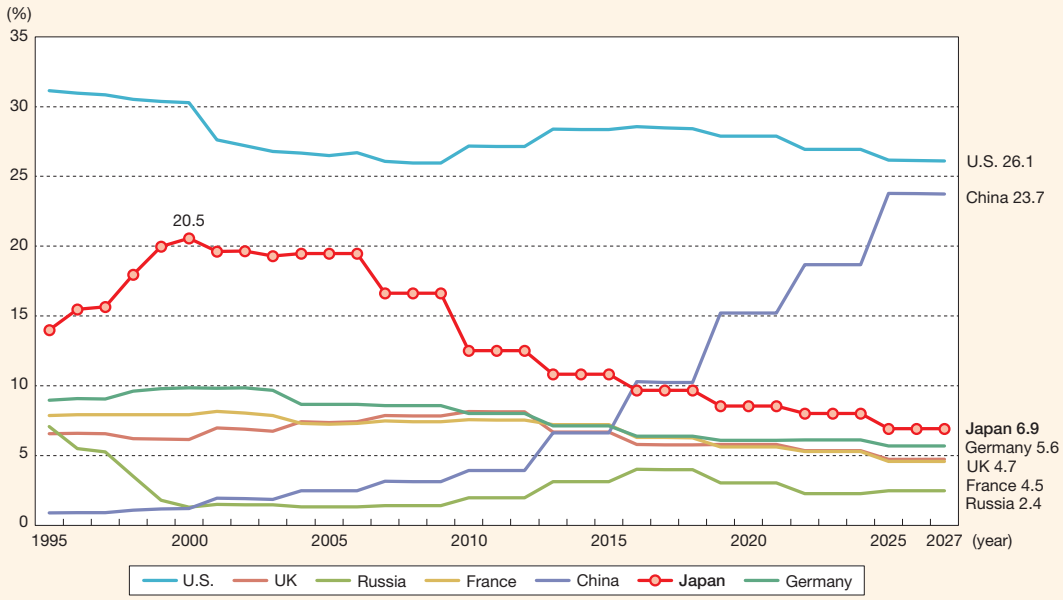
The budget to support UN activities is composed of assessed contributions mandatorily paid by Member States and voluntary contributions provided in accordance with Member States' policy needs. For assessed contributions, Japan currently ranks third following the U.S. and China, and contributed approximately 237.23 million U.S. dollars to the regular budget for 2025, and approximately 373.26 million U.S. dollars to the peacekeeping budget for 2025/2026. As a major financial contributor, Japan has been encouraging the UN to make more efficient and effective use of its financial resources. The scale of assessments, which provides the basis for calculating the amount of assessed contributions, is revised every three years based on the capacity of Member States to bear financial burden.

(45) "Pact for the Future": The outcome document adopted at the "Summit of the Future" held at the UN General Assembly in September 2024. For the first time at the leaders' level, it included concrete content on UN Security Council reform, in addition to the rule of law, human dignity, the realization of "a world without nuclear weapons," and other matters.

Trends in UN Regular Budget Scale of Assessments of Top Contributors (%)



Trends in UN PKO Budget Scale of Assessments of Top Contributors (%)



Japan's scale of assessment, revised at the end of 2024, is 6.930% (2025-2027), following the U.S. and China.

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 (COC), both of which are standing subsidiary committees of the General Assembly and are comprised of members serving in their personal capacities. They play important roles for decision making at the General Assembly; while the ACABQ reviews the overall administrative and budgetary issues of the UN and makes recommendations to the General Assembly, the COC makes a proposal on the scale of assessments of the regular budget to be submitted to the General Assembly. Members from Japan have served continuously on both of these committees.

6 The Rule of Law in the International Community

"The rule of law" is, generally, the concept that recognizes the superiority of the law over all forms of power. It is an essential cornerstone of a fair and just society within a country. At the same time, it contributes to peace and stability in the international community and constitutes the basis of the international order that consists of friendly and equitable relations between states. In the international community, under the rule of law, we must not allow rule by force, and all countries must observe international law in good faith, and there must be no unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force or coercion. Japan promotes strengthening of the rule of law as one of the pillars of its foreign policy and promotes rule-making in various fields as well as ensuring their proper implementation.

(1) Japan's Diplomacy to Strengthen the Rule of Law

Japan makes use of various opportunities, including international conferences, to affirm with other States the importance of a free and open international order based on the rule of law. In addition, Japan participates actively in rule-making in various sectors, contributing to the formation and development of a new international legal order. In order to promote the peaceful settlement of disputes and the maintenance of legal order, Japan also actively cooperates with international judicial organizations to strengthen their functions via both human resource and financial contributions, and makes proactive efforts on international cooperation in relation to the rule of law by supporting the improvement of legal systems and organizing events on international law.

In light of Russia's aggression against Ukraine and the situation in the Middle East, it is becoming more important to strengthen the rule of law toward international peace and security. In June, Foreign Minister Iwaya held meetings in The Hague (Netherlands) with IWASAWA Yuji, President of the International Court of Justice (ICJ), and AKANE Tomoko, President of the International Criminal Court (ICC). Foreign Minister Iwaya conveyed that Japan attaches great importance to the role of the ICJ and the ICC in strengthening the rule of law in the international community and that Japan will continue to strongly support the ICJ and the ICC. Foreign Minister Iwaya and the two Presidents confirmed to continue coordination and cooperation to maintain and strengthen the rule of law in the international community. In addition, upon the return visits to Japan by ICJ President Iwasawa, Foreign Minister Motegi (December) and Prime Minister Takaichi (January 2026) received courtesy calls by ICJ President Iwasawa; upon the return visits to Japan by ICC President Akane, Foreign Minister Iwaya (August) and both Prime Minister Takaichi and Foreign Minister Motegi (January 2026) received courtesy calls by ICC President Akane, and, on each occasion, they confirmed continued coordination toward the maintenance and strengthening of the rule of law in the international community.

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

accepts the compulsory jurisdiction[(46)] 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. For example, Japan is a major financial contributor to the ICC and the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA). In March, Judge Iwasawa was elected President of the ICJ. As of 2025, Japan has produced a number of prominent figures serving on international judicial bodies, including ICJ President Iwasawai (ICJ judge since 2018; elected President in March 2025), Judge HORINOUCHI Hidehisa of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS) (incumbent since 2023), and ICC President Akane (ICC judge since 2018; elected President in March 2024), and strives to enhance the effectiveness and universality of international courts and tribunals. Furthermore, with the aim of fostering human resources capable of playing an active role in international litigations in the future, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) provides active support to Japanese nationals interning at international judicial organizations and other related organizations through the Support Program for Internships at International Courts and other International Organizations.

At the same time, in order to further strengthen its capacity in dealing with international litigation, MOFA is engaged in efforts to enhance expertise on international judicial proceedings, and to create a strong organization that can perform well in international litigation by strengthening relationships with legal experts and law firms in and outside Japan, that are active in proceedings at major international courts and tribunals. In the field of economy as well, the importance of dispute settlements based on World Trade Organization (WTO) agreements, Economic Partnership Agreements (EPA), and investment agreements has been growing in recent years. Against this backdrop, in the handling of dispute settlements under the WTO agreements and others, MOFA engages in litigation work, such as preparation of written submissions, handling of evidence, and preparation and participation in oral proceedings, in close cooperation with the relevant ministries and agencies as well as external experts (domestic and foreign law firms, academics, etc.). It also advances initiatives such as analyzing case law and academic theories, and engages in dispute prevention. In these ways, Japan strives to strengthen its capacity for strategic and effective dispute settlement.

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, including the codification 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, ASADA Masahiko, Professor of Doshisha University and Professor Emeritus of Kyoto University, serves as a member (incumbent from 2023) and is contributing to the development of international law by participating in the debates on draft articles. Japan also sends government representatives to various meetings of the HCCH, UNCITRAL and UNIDROIT, taking an active lead in the discussions. In particular, Japan has been showing its presence as a member state of UNCITRAL since the founding of the commission, such as by proposing and realizing the enlargement of the membership of UNCITRAL as well as projects in the field of dispute settlement, and being elected at the election of UNCITRAL members in 2024. In the

(46) 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 (as of the end of 2025).

HCCH, TAKESHITA Keisuke, Chairperson (incumbent since 2020, Professor at Hitotsubashi University), serves as chair of the working group on international jurisdiction, including international lis pendens. Furthermore, in UNIDROIT, KANDA Hideki, Professor Emeritus of the University of Tokyo, serves as chair of the Working Group on the Legal Nature of Voluntary Carbon Credits (incumbent from 2014), and contributes to leading-edge discussions on carbon credits.

C International Cooperation and Human Resource Development

Japan is also actively engaged in international cooperation on the rule of law, not only to promote the rule of law in the international community, but also to strengthen it within various countries. For example, to further develop the rule of law, Japan provides support for the development of legal systems, especially in Asian countries. It also participates constructively in the discussions and provides human and financial cooperation to the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization (AALCO), the only inter-governmental organization in the Asia/Africa region on issues related to international law. In addition, Japan participates actively as an observer in the Committee of Legal Advisers on Public International Law (CAHDI), which examines questions related to public international law under the Council of Europe (CoE). In August, MOFA organized the Tokyo International Law Seminar, a training program for practitioners in the field of international law — held annually since 2023 — for officials from Asia and Africa, as well as Japanese lawyers and international law scholars, as an effort to foster professionals in the field of international law. As part of the Tokyo International Law Seminar, the 2025 Asia Cup, an international law moot court competition for students in Asia including Japan, was also held, which aims to raise awareness of the importance of the peaceful settlement of disputes and to nurture future international lawyers and enhance exchanges among them.

(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. Therefore, Japan has consistently advocated for the "Three Principles of the Rule of Law at Sea" to be followed by every nation ((a) making and clarifying claims based on international law; (b) not using force or coercion in trying to drive their claims; and (c) seeking to settle disputes by peaceful means).

The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) serves as the foundation for such rule of law at sea. The Convention has 171 States Parties (including some regions not officially recognized as nations by Japan; as of February 2026) including 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 recognition that all activities in the oceans and seas, including territorial seas and exclusive economic zones (EEZ), etc., ought to be carried out in accordance with the provisions of UNCLOS is widely shared and accepted in the international community. As problems concerning the oceans and seas grow more complex and diverse, it is important to preserve and strengthen the maritime order based on UNCLOS, which serves as a universal and unified legal framework.

To achieve the objectives of UNCLOS, several international organizations have been established based on UNCLOS. The International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS), established in 1996, fulfills an important role in 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 and the protection of the marine environment 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 produced Japanese judges to ITLOS since its establishment. Former Ambassador for UNCLOS Horinouchi is currently serving as a judge (nine-year term starting from October 2023).

The Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (CLCS) plays an important role in the operation of the system for establishing the outer limits of the continental shelf. Since its establishment, Japan has

continued to produce members of the Commission (Japan's current member is YAMAZAKI Toshitsugu, Professor Emeritus at the University of Tokyo and Guest Professor at Kochi University (term ends on June 15, 2028)), and also contributes financially through means such as providing contributions to the trust fund for the purpose of defraying the costs of participation of members from developing countries, thereby continuing to cooperate with the Commission in terms of both human and financial resources. In addition, in the International Seabed Authority (ISA), established for the primary purpose of administering mineral resources in the Area (the sea-bed and ocean floor and subsoil thereof, beyond the limits of national jurisdiction), Japan has consistently served on the ISA's Council since its establishment. Deliberations are being held at the ISA on regulations on the exploitation of mineral resources in the Area, and Japan participates actively in the negotiations, contributing constructively to discussions toward the development of exploitation regulations that give due consideration to both the preservation of the marine environment and the utilization of resources.

Furthermore, in December, Japan acceded to the Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ Agreement) adopted in June 2023 (entered into force on January 17, 2026). Meetings of the Preparatory Commission were held in April and August to prepare for the entry into force of the BBNJ Agreement and the convening of the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Agreement. Japan participated actively in the discussions of the Preparatory Commission from the position of emphasizing the balance between conservation and sustainable use.

(3) Initiatives in the Political and Security Fields

Japan is actively engaged in concluding international agreements in the political and security field in order to strengthen its legal basis for diplomatic activities. Regarding the Reciprocal Access Agreements (RAA) that establish procedures when the defense force of one country conducts activities while visiting another country as well as define the status of the visiting force, the Japan-Philippines RAA entered into force in September. With regard to Agreements concerning Reciprocal Provision of Supplies and Services ("Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreements," or ACSA), which establish a framework such as the settlement procedures for the reciprocal provision of supplies and services between the Self-Defense Forces and the military forces of other countries, the Japan-Italy ACSA entered into force in September, while agreements were signed with the Netherlands and New Zealand in December, and with the Philippines in January 2026. In addition to these, Japan has also further advanced efforts to conclude Agreements concerning the Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology, which set out provisions on the handling of defense equipment and technologies to be transferred, as well as Agreements on the Security of Information, which serve as the basis for sharing classified information on security with the relevant countries. With regard to Agreements concerning the Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology, the Agreement signed with Mongolia in December 2024 entered into force in January, while an agreement in principle was reached with Spain in November. Agreements were also signed with Canada in January 2026 and with Bangladesh in February 2026. As for Agreements on the Security of Information, the agreement signed with Ukraine in November 2024 entered into force in June, the agreement signed with Canada in July entered into force in January 2026, and Japan announced the start of negotiations with the EU in July.

(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 remain 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 has negotiated and signed or concluded include tax conventions, investment agreements, and social security agreements with various countries and regions. Furthermore, Japan also actively engaged in negotiations on EPAs and other

agreements, with the aim of expanding free and fair economic spheres and strengthening wide-ranging economic relationships.

With regard to bilateral EPAs, the Diet of Japan granted its approval for the Protocol Amending the Agreement between Japan and the Republic of Indonesia for an Economic Partnership in April, and the Japan-Bangladesh EPA was signed in February. In addition, the Certification of the Improvements to Schedules of Specific Commitments (Services Domestic Regulation) under the WTO Agreement entered into force for Japan in June, and the Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies under the WTO Agreement entered into force in September.

Furthermore, Japan, with a view to protecting and promoting the livelihoods and activities of Japanese citizens and companies, is working to ensure the proper implementation of existing international agreements, including by seeking to make use of the WTO dispute settlement system.

In social areas such as human rights, labor, the environment, health, fisheries, maritime affairs, aviation, and tourism, 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, the Agreement between Japan and the Czech Republic for Air Services was concluded in July. In the maritime sector, Japan concluded the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Fishing Vessel Personnel (STCW-F Convention) of 1995 in November. In the environmental sector, Japan acceded to the BBNJ Agreement and accepted the 2009 Amendment to the 1996 Protocol to the London Convention in December.

(5) Initiatives in the Field of Criminal Justice

The International Criminal Court (ICC) is the first-ever permanent international criminal court to prosecute and punish, 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% of the entire assessed contributions to the Court as of 2025. Moreover, Japan has consistently produced judges since its accession to the ICC, and Judge Akane is currently serving as the President of the ICC. Japan also cooperates on the activities of the ICC in the aspect of human resources, with YAMADA Jun, then Deputy Secretary-General of the Asian African Legal Consultative Organization (AALCO) elected as Chair of the Committee on Budget and Finance, among others. In the ICC's work to promote the rule of law in the international community, it is becoming increasingly important to promote universalization and strengthening of its effectiveness. Japan actively engages in promoting the securing of cooperation with the ICC, examining issues related to the scope of jurisdiction, establishing the principle of complementarity, and ensuring efficiency in its judicial procedures, through fora such as the working groups of the Assembly of States Parties. Against this backdrop, from February onward, the U.S. announced sanctions against certain ICC officials and others. Japan has consistently supported the ICC, and is working in cooperation with the ICC and other States Parties with a view to what would be most effective in enabling the ICC to carry out its activities fully while maintaining its independence and ensuring its safety. Furthermore, in November, as part of Japan's human resource contribution to the ICC, Japan nominated YAMAUCHI Yoshimitsu, Director, the United Nations Training Cooperation Department, the Research and Training Institute of the Ministry of Justice and Ambassador for International Judicial Cooperation, who is a Japanese expert in the field of criminal justice, as a candidate for the ICC judicial election to be held at the end of 2026.

Furthermore, to address cross-border crimes, Japan is further working on ensuring judicial cooperation in criminal matters, such as providing necessary evidence for other countries. 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). In December, Japan and Canada signed the MLAT.

7 Human Rights

Many people around the world are in dire human rights situations. The protection and promotion of human rights is the foundation for peace and stability in the international community. Japan recognizes that human rights are universal values and that the protection of human rights is the basic responsibility of all countries, regardless of differences in the method of achieving this goal and their cultures. While speaking out firmly against any serious violation of human rights, Japan considers, under the basic principle of "dialogue" and "cooperation," that it is important to promote voluntary efforts of each country through bilateral dialogues and cooperation with countries that are working toward democratization and the protection of human rights. In addition, while advocating the standpoint of bridge-building in Asia and protection of 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.

In 2025, Japan held the third Japan-U.S. Strategic Dialogue on Democratic Resilience in November. At this dialogue, both sides exchanged views on human rights in Asia, as well as emerging human rights challenges such as transnational repression and misuse of surveillance technology, and reaffirmed their commitment to continued cooperation in the field of human rights between Japan and the U.S. Furthermore, the 27th Japan-EU Human Rights Dialogue was held in February in Brussels (Belgium), the 15th Japan-Iran Human Rights Dialogue was held in April in Tehran, and the 13th Japan-Cambodia Human Rights Dialogue was held in August in Phnom Penh. Both sides exchanged information on their respective efforts in the field of human rights and exchanged views on cooperation in multilateral fora.

(1) Initiatives within the UN

A UN Human Rights Council

The Human Rights Council holds sessions throughout the year in Geneva (Switzerland) (three regular sessions per year) to discuss issues and make recommendations concerning the protection and promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms. Japan has served as a member of the Council for five terms until 2023. Most recently, it was elected in the election of the Human Rights Council members held in October 2023 and serves on the Council for the term from January 2024 to December 2026 (sixth term).

At the high-level segment of the 58th Session of the Human Rights Council held from February to April (a meeting of the key representatives from each country), Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs IKUINA Akiko delivered a statement. She stressed that it was important for the international community to continue dialogue and cooperation amid the increasingly dire circumstances facing many people in countries across the globe, including in Ukraine and the Middle East including the Gaza Strip. She also spoke about Japan's continued determination to contribute to the protection and promotion of human rights in Asia and the world, and strongly urged North Korea for the immediate resolution of the abductions issue. Furthermore, she expressed Japan's deep concerns over the human rights situation in China, including Hong Kong, Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region and Tibet Autonomous Region, and urged China to take concrete actions. At the same session, the resolution on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea), submitted by the EU and Australia and co-sponsored by Japan, was adopted without a vote (adopted for 18 consecutive years). This resolution strongly demands again that North Korea sincerely listen to the voices of the abductees and their families, and clarify the fate and whereabouts of disappeared persons, and faithfully provide accurate, detailed, and full information promptly to the families of abductees, and in particular, realize the immediate return of all Japanese abductees.

At the 60th Session held in September and October, the resolution on the human rights situation in Cambodia, submitted by Japan as the main sponsor, was adopted without a vote. This resolution reflects the concern of the international community over the human rights situation in Cambodia and

encourages the Government of Cambodia to put effort into improving the human rights situation. It also extended the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Cambodia for two years.

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 80th session of the General Assembly, the resolution on the Situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea), submitted by the EU and co-sponsored by Japan, was adopted without a vote at a session of the Third Committee in November and at a plenary session of the UN General Assembly in December (adopted for the 21st consecutive year). The resolution further reiterates the growing urgency and importance of the abductions issue, which involves a serious violation of human rights, and of the immediate return of all abductees, as they and their family members are ageing and there is no time to lose, and also strongly demands again that North Korea sincerely listen to the voices of the victims and their families, faithfully provide accurate, detailed, and full information to their families on their fates and whereabouts, and in particular, realize the immediate return of all Japanese abductees. At the same session, the United States, on behalf of 15 countries, delivered a joint statement expressing continued deep concern about the serious human rights violations taking place in China, based on credible reports of violations against ethnic and religious minorities, including Uyghurs and Tibetans. Japan was the only participating country from Asia.

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 countries such as Syria, Iran, and Myanmar, as well as on various human rights issues that include social development and the rights of the child.

C Implementation of the National Action Plan (NAP) on Business and Human Rights

In response to the "Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs)" endorsed by the UN Human Rights Council, Japan has been promoting respect for human rights in the context of business activities. These include the Government of Japan's formulation of the NAP on Business and Human Rights in 2020 and the cross-industry Guidelines on Respecting Human Rights in Responsible Supply Chains in 2022, as well as its decision on a government policy on human rights consideration in public procurement in April 2023. At the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Policy Promotion for the Implementation of Japan's National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights held in May 2024, a decision was made to commence work on revising the NAP with the approaching deadline in FY2025, and the revised NAP was approved and published at the committee meeting held in December 2025. Furthermore, MOFA carries out publicity and promotional activities through seminars targeting companies in Japan and overseas, and cooperates with international organizations, mainly in countries where Japanese enterprises are operating, to conduct training for Japanese companies and their suppliers in these countries and to provide support to local governments on the formulation and implementation of National Action Plans. MOFA, in cooperation with the relevant ministries and agencies, will steadily implement the NAP going forward, while continuing to engage in dialogues with stakeholders. (See the Special Feature on page 261.)

D Asia-Pacific Regional Meeting of Pathfinding Countries for Ending Violence Against Children

In November, the Regional Meeting of Asia-Pacific Pathfinding Countries for Ending Violence Against

Children[47] was held in the Philippines. At the meeting, participating countries shared updates on their efforts toward ending violence against children and discussed the strengthening of mutual exchange. Japan also participated as a Pathfinding Country and presented the current status and future outlook of its domestic measures.

(2) Initiatives Concerning International Human Rights Law (IHRL) and International Humanitarian Law (IHL)

A International Human Rights Law (IHRL)

The protection of human rights is the responsibility of all States, and Japan continues its efforts to realize the rights recognized under the human rights treaties to which it is party. As one of Japan's contributions under human rights treaties, the election of members of the Committee Against Torture was conducted in October at the 20th Meeting of States Parties to the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, held at the United Nations Office at Geneva. Japan's candidate, MAEDA Naoko (Professor, Graduate School of Law, Nagoya University), was re-elected to the top position in the election. (See the Column on page 262.)

B International Humanitarian Law (IHL)

Japan has actively been engaged in efforts to strengthen the implementation of IHL both domestically and internationally. In August, Japan participated in the Asia and the Pacific Regional Conference on IHL and also announced its participation in the Global Initiative on IHL. As part of its efforts to raise awareness of IHL, Japan, as it does every year, dispatched an official from MOFA to serve as a judge in the IHL Moot Court and Role-Play Competitions, organized by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), in November.

(3) Contribution to Refugee Issues

From the perspective of international contribution and humanitarian aid, Japan became the first country in Asia in 2010 to accept refugees under a resettlement program (the transfer of refugees from a country, where they have sought temporary asylum after fleeing their countries of origin, to a third country that agrees to accept them for long-term settlement). As of the end of FY2024, Japan has accepted a total of 332 refugees from 135 households.

Refugees arriving in Japan undergo a six-month training program, which includes language studies for daily life and employment support services. Those who have completed the training program live independently in their respective areas of resettlement.

(47) Countries participating in the "Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children (GPeVAC)" (currently the "Pathfinding Global Alliance on Ending Violence Against Children"), a voluntary initiative of countries committed to eliminating violence against children. Since 2018, Japan has been a "Pathfinding Country" (a country that commits to working toward the elimination of violence against children within its own borders), and has been actively involved in activities both domestically and internationally, including the formulation of an "Action Plan to End Violence Against Children" and contributions to the "Fund to End Violence Against Children."

Special Feature

Progress in Initiatives on "Business and Human Rights" and Revision of the National Action Plan

Amid growing interest in the social impact of corporate activities, in October 2020, the Government of Japan formulated the "National Action Plan (NAP) on Business and Human Rights (2020-2025)" (hereinafter referred to as the "Previous NAP") to steadily implement the "Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs)," and has been pursuing initiatives related to the three pillars of UNGPs: "the State duty to protect human rights," "the corporate responsibility to respect human rights," and "access to remedy." Furthermore, the Government has supported corporate efforts for respecting human rights through measures such as the formulation of the "Guidelines on Respecting Human Rights in Responsible Supply Chains" (2022), the decision on the government's policy on human rights considerations in public procurement (2023), the preparation of various forms of guidance materials, the holding of seminars, and the establishment of consultation centers. As a result, initiatives undertaken by companies themselves have made progress, particularly among large enterprises.

Meanwhile, as human rights due diligence (HRDD) — defined as identifying, preventing, mitigating, addressing, and providing information on adverse impacts on human rights arising from corporate activities — and information disclosure are being strengthened among Western countries in particular, Japanese companies with supply chains spanning multiple countries and regions are increasingly required to take such measures. At the same time, various challenges have emerged, including the practical implementation of HRDD, raising awareness of and promoting the use of effective remedy mechanisms, and the need to expand efforts among small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and in regional areas.

Against this backdrop, the Government of Japan commenced the revision of the Previous NAP in 2024. In undertaking the revision, an outline and a draft were prepared based on various issues raised in the "Stakeholders' Report," which compiled wide-ranging views from representatives of various sectors including civil society, businesses, and labor unions, together with discussions at the Roundtable and Working Group meetings, and subsequent deliberations and coordination among the relevant ministries and agencies. Following a public consultation, the revised NAP was approved at the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Policy Promotion for the Implementation of Japan's National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights, held in December 2025.

Premised on the three pillars of UNGPs, the revised NAP maintains the four objectives set out in the Previous NAP — namely, "protection and promotion of human rights for society as a whole, including international society," "ensuring policy coherence in relation to Business and Human Rights," "ensuring and enhancing the international competitiveness and sustainability of Japanese business enterprises," and "contribution to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)." At the same time, by re-examining the measures that relevant ministries and agencies had previously implemented separately within their respective policy areas and organizing them into a cross-cutting, integrated framework from the perspective of "Business and Human Rights," the revised NAP explicitly sets eight priority areas for Government action. The revised NAP also expanded on the descriptions for calling on companies to take concrete actions to introduce and implement HRDD.



Cover of the National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights (Revised Edition)

Through the implementation of the new NAP, the Government of Japan aims to enhance the international competitiveness and achieve sustainable development of Japanese enterprises, while further contributing to the protection and promotion of human rights across the entire international community.

Column

The Contemporary Significance of the Work of the Committee against Torture — On the Occasion of Re-election as a Committee Member —

MAEDA Naoko, Professor of Nagoya University


The author

I serve as a member of the Committee against Torture, which was established under the "Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment" (the Convention against Torture). In the Committee member election held in October 2021, I stood as Japan's first-ever candidate and was elected with the highest number of votes (term: 2022-2025; Vice-Chair in 2024 and 2025). In the election held in October 2025, in which I stood as a candidate again, I was re-elected with the highest number of votes (term: 2026-2029).

The Convention against Torture was drafted in response to a major international concern that arose during the 1970s, when military dictatorships and developmental authoritarian regimes emerged in several countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Practices such as torture, enforced disappearances, and extrajudicial summary executions became widespread, making it necessary to address these issues effectively. The Convention was drafted on the basis of the Declaration on the Protection of All Persons from Being Subjected to Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1975) and was adopted in 1984. Japan acceded to the Convention in 1999.

The year 2024 marked the 40th anniversary of the adoption of the Convention against Torture. In today's world, where various conflicts are witnessed on a daily basis, a wide range of issues relating to torture and other forms of inhumane treatment in conflict situations continue to accumulate. The Committee against Torture is expected to play an even more active role in promoting the prompt redress of human rights violations in individual countries. It does so through procedures such as the review of reports periodically submitted by the States Parties, the consideration of communications submitted by victims alleging violations of their rights, and inquiries including on-site visits.

The Convention against Torture must be applied equally to all States Parties and serve as one pillar of the universal human rights protection system. Each of the 175 States Parties (as of the end of December 2025) has its own particular circumstances in terms of culture and tradition, religion, state systems, economic conditions, and other factors. Bearing these circumstances in mind, and yet to ensure that divisions over human rights do not become further polarized, I intend, in my capacity as a Committee member, to continue efforts to deepen the international community's understanding of the universality of human rights and the importance of the rule of law through constructive dialogue with states, civil society, and others.

As Committee members, we are required to have legal expertise and carry out our duties in our personal capacity, rather than as representatives of our respective states. Through two election campaigns, I have keenly felt the depth of trust that the international community places in Japan as a nation. Additionally, as the Committee against Torture has long been criticized for the low representation of women among its members, I intend to contribute to the Committee's work from the perspective of promoting women's empowerment.

8 Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

Russia's ongoing aggression against Ukraine since 2022, as well as the situation in Gaza since October 2023, have seriously affected particularly women and girls, as evidenced by the increase in reports on conflict-related sexual violence. Furthermore, large-scale natural disasters such as typhoons, hurricanes, floods, earthquakes, and large fires, caused by climate change, are occurring frequently around the world regardless of the country, and there are growing anxieties about healthcare, food, and energy. These problems further highlight existing gender inequalities. For this reason, it is necessary to prioritize the realization of gender equality and the promotion of women's empowerment as one of the most important issues for peace and prosperity in Japan and the world. It is vital to place women and girls at the center of various policies and measures in order to realize a more peaceful and prosperous society. Gender mainstreaming, which is to incorporate the gender perspective into all policies, is becoming increasingly important in the international community. In particular, it is important to adopt the perspective of "Women, Peace and Security" (WPS), the foundational concept that the international community has a better chance to achieve sustainable peace by the equal and full participation of women in all stages of decision-making leading up to post-conflict peacebuilding. The Basic Policy on Economic and Fiscal Management and Reform 2025 (commonly known as "Honebuto Policy 2025"), which serves as the basis for the government budget, covered WPS for the third consecutive year since 2023. Japan will continue to contribute to the realization of gender equality including WPS, and the promotion of women's empowerment by hosting international conferences on women, vigorously supporting developing countries through development assistance as well as international cooperation with other countries and international organizations. On January 15, 2026, Prime Minister Takaichi, at a meeting with the Group of Women Ambassadors in Japan, stated that gender equality is an indispensable element for ensuring sustainable development, and that she would like to work hard and show results for the present and future of the world to sweep away biases such as "women are not suited for leadership."

(1) G7

At the G7 Kananaskis Summit held in June, with a view to promoting gender mainstreaming, multiple Leaders' Statements included references to gender-related challenges in specific fields. For example, the G7 Critical Minerals Action Plan refers to combating gender-based violence in the mining industry, while the G7 Leaders' Statement on AI for Prosperity states that the Leaders of the G7 will drive economic growth, address talent shortages, and ensure equal opportunity, by encouraging girls, as well as members of communities left behind by globalization, to pursue science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education and increasing women's representation in the AI talent pool at all levels.

(2) G20

The Chair's Statement of the G20 Empowerment of Women Ministerial Meeting held in Johannesburg, South Africa in October included "recognise that the women, and peace and security agenda, including, the full, equal, meaningful and safe participation and leadership of women in all stages of peacebuilding and conflict resolution processes, is essential for the maintenance and promotion of global peace and security." The Leaders' Declaration issued at the G20 Johannesburg Summit held in November reaffirmed our full commitment to the empowerment of women and girls and to urgently remove social and economic barriers to achieve gender equality, ensure women's full, equal and meaningful participation and leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life, and commits to take accelerated action to eradicate all forms of violence including sexual violence and harassment against all women and girls, and violence occurring in public and private life, online and offline, and to undertake reforms to ensure women have full and equal access and rights to economic resources, access to finance and markets to support women's entrepreneurship and women-led businesses and cooperatives. It also reflected the WPS concept of recognizing the role of women as agents of peace.

(3) International Cooperation for the Empowerment of Women in Developing Countries

Through the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and international organizations, Japan is engaged in educational support and human resource development, as well as efforts toward the economic empowerment of women and the elimination of gender-based violence in developing countries.

A Educational Support and Human Resource Development

At the Global Education Summit held in July 2021, Foreign Minister Motegi announced in his video message that Japan will provide education support of more than 1.5 billion U.S. dollars over a five-year period, and support the provision of opportunities for quality education and human resource development to at least 7.5 million girls in developing countries. These efforts are now ongoing. Consistent with the concept of "investment in people" described in Japan's Development Cooperation Charter (Cabinet decision in 2023), Japan will continue to promote cooperation on efforts in the education sector while also taking into consideration the perspectives of providing quality education, building capacity for women, children, and youth, and securing educational opportunities under situations of conflict and disaster.

B Supporting Women Through JICA

To promote the economic empowerment of women, Japan has conducted training in Japan based on the theme of promoting business and entrepreneurship among women, attended by participants from eight countries in Africa. It has also provided support for promoting entrepreneurship and business among women in Sri Lanka. To promote peace and security for women, it has provided support to strengthen the capacity of organizations involved in addressing trafficking in persons in the Cambodia region. Furthermore, in Kenya and Pakistan, Japan has conducted training with participants from 13 countries on the themes of cooperation aimed at protecting the survivors of gender-based violence and supporting them to gain independence, and eradicating gender-based violence.

C Approach to Sexual Violence in Conflict

Sexual violence as a tactic of war is a problem that cannot be overlooked. It is vital to put an end to the impunity of perpetrators and to provide support for victims. Japan has been actively working in this field to eliminate human rights violations against women in the 21st century. Japan prioritizes cooperation with international organizations such as the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict (OSRSG-SVC), and participation in discussions at international fora. In 2025, Japan provided financial support of approximately 0.37 million U.S. dollars to the OSRSG-SVC to implement a project in the Democratic Republic of the Congo that aimed to strengthen access to justice for survivors of sexual violence, particularly through providing legal counsel and strengthening judicial cooperation in internally displaced persons camps and areas affected by armed groups. In addition, in 2025, Japan contributed an additional 2 million Euros to the Global Survivors Fund (GSF), founded by 2018 Nobel Peace Prize laureates Dr. Mukwege and Ms. Murad, bringing Japan's total contributions to 12 million Euros (as of December 31, 2025). As a member of the board, Japan is also actively involved in the management of GSF. Furthermore, Japan continues to make voluntary contributions to the Trust Fund for Victims of the International Criminal Court (ICC), earmarking contributions for victims of sexual violence and putting efforts into protecting victims of such violence. In addition, Japan also provides support through UN Women.

(4) Initiatives in the UN

A Women, Peace and Security (WPS)

Japan is strongly promoting WPS as one of its major diplomatic policies. WPS was first stipulated in UN Security Council resolution 1325 adopted in 2000. Marking the 25th anniversary of the adoption of this groundbreaking resolution in 2025, Japan served as

co-chair of the WPS Focal Points Network[48] together with Norway, and has led international discussions on promoting WPS by hosting a capital-level meeting in Tokyo and a high-level side event during the UN High-Level Week, among other events. In line with the Third Edition of the National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (2023-2028) (an action plan toward implementation of UN Security Council resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, and the related resolutions) revised in 2023, Japan contributes to international organizations such as UN Women and OSRSG-SVC, and implements WPS projects in the Middle East, Africa, and Asia.

B Cooperation with UN Women

Through UN Women, Japan is implementing projects related to WPS, such as capacity building for women and girls in developing countries to participate in the peacebuilding and reconstruction processes. It is also working on the economic empowerment of women such as livelihood and entrepreneurship support, and support for women affected by gender-based violence. Japan also supports women's economic empowerment through providing daily necessities to women and girls who have been affected by conflict and natural disasters, and job creation and vocational training. Furthermore, Japan is strengthening its cooperation with UN Women, including through inviting UN Women Executive Director Sima Bahous to Japan in December.

C United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)

The 69th session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW69), held in March, was attended by more than 13,000 representatives from Member States and civil society organizations, making it the largest session in the history of the CSW. The session was convened on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and was held on the theme of review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century." On behalf of Japan, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs ERI Arfiya spoke at the Ministerial Roundtable, addressing Japan's efforts toward achieving gender equality, including the formulation of the Basic Plan for Gender Equality and the Basic Policy on Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women, collaboration with the private sector and civil society, as well as the advancement of WPS. In the General Discussion, Japan stated it will continue to contribute to gender equality and the empowerment of women in cooperation with various stakeholders, including UN agencies and civil society.

(5) Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)

Since 1987, Japan has continued sending committee members to the CEDAW (comprising 23 members (individual capacity)). In October 2024, a review was conducted in Geneva (Switzerland) on the Ninth Periodic Report of Japan on the Implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (submitted in September 2021). The government delegation, consisting of representatives from the relevant ministries and agencies and headed by Director General Okada of the Gender Equality Bureau of the Cabinet Office, explained the status of implementation in each area since the Ninth Periodic Report.[49]

(6) Next Generation Networking Program for Gender Equality

With a view to promoting gender equality together with Asia and the world and realizing a flexible and resilient society rich in diversity and inclusion, MOFA

(48) The WPS Focal Points Network is the largest WPS-related network among UN Member States to promote the WPS commitments through sharing lessons learned and good practices among Member States and regional organizations. In addition to governments, regional organizations also participate. As of December 2025, there are a total of 106 members, comprising 96 countries and 10 regional organizations.

(49) For Comments from Japan on the Concluding Observations regarding the ninth periodic report of Japan, see MOFA's website: https://www.mofa.go.jp/files/100773663.pdf

(49)

launched the "Next Generation Networking Program for Gender Equality" in FY2025, working to nurture the next generation of leaders in the field of gender. As part of this program, the Next Generation Forum for Gender Equality was held at the United Nations University on December 10, at which State Minister for Foreign Affairs HORII Iwao delivered the opening remarks and UN Women Executive Director Sima Bahous delivered a keynote speech. The subsequent sessions featured panel discussions on the themes of women's participation and gender bias (gender roles) respectively. In addition, reports were given by young researchers who had been dispatched to overseas research institutions in 2025 under this program.

Special Feature

Initiatives for the 25th Anniversary of Women, Peace and Security (WPS)

In 2025, which marks the 25th anniversary of the adoption of United Nations (UN) Security Council resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (WPS), Japan assumed the co-chair of the WPS Focal Points Network together with Norway and has led international discussions on WPS. Japan has also launched the Next Generation Networking Program for Gender Equality with a view to promoting gender equality (Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5) together with Asia and the world and achieving a flexible and resilient future society that is rich in diversity and inclusivity and able to respond to new challenges.

WPS Focal Points Network Meeting

At the WPS Focal Points Network 7th Capital Level Meeting held in Tokyo in February, participants, primarily WPS focal points, engaged in two days of discussions, sharing good practices and experiences from various countries and regions on three themes: "Role of Women in Peace Mediation and Peacebuilding and as Human Rights Defenders," "Further Elaboration of the WPS Agenda, Including Advancing Its Application to Disaster Risk Reduction," and "Significance of Development and Implementation of National and Regional Action Plans." On the final day, based on the two-day discussions, the draft Communiqué of the WPS Focal Points Network 7th Capital Level Meeting was presented and indicated the concrete directions and actions that the international community should take. In addition, on the afternoon of the second day, a public symposium entitled "Women, Peace and Security 25th: Toward Intergenerational Initiatives" was organized and active discussion was held particularly among youth participants engaged in WPS-related efforts.

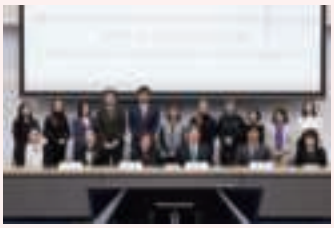


Foreign Minister Iwaya attending the WPS Focal Points Network High-Level Side Event (September 24, New York, U.S.)

In September, a WPS Focal Points Network High-Level Side Event was held in New York, the United States, attended by Foreign Minister Iwaya and other participants including President Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah of Namibia, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Norway Espen Barth Eide, and ministers from 15 other countries, emphasizing political commitments to WPS. In his opening remarks at the meeting, Foreign Minister Iwaya stated that Japan would leverage its experience as co-chair of the WPS Focal Points Network to continue to vigorously promote WPS as one of the main pillars of Japan's foreign policy and contribute even more to the promotion of WPS internationally.

Convening the "Next Generation Forum for Gender Equality" — A New Initiative —

In December, as part of the "Next Generation Networking Program for Gender Equality," the Next Generation Forum for Gender Equality was held in co-host with the United Nations University (UNU) and with the cooperation of UN Women. Following opening remarks by State Minister for Foreign Affairs Horii and a keynote address by UN Women Executive Director Sima Bahous, panel discussions were held on the themes of "Women's Participation" and "Gender Bias (Gender Roles)." Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs ERI Arfiya also attended as a panelist, and a lively discussion was exchanged among young speakers leading the promotion of gender equality in their respective fields.



Participants at the Next Generation Forum for Gender Equality (December 10, UNU)

Through the Next Generation Networking Program for Gender Equality and various other opportunities, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will promote research and discussion by practitioners and youth who will be the future promoters of gender equality, reflect the gender perspective in various policies and measures, and work toward developing the next generation who will contribute to advancing the SDGs and a gender-equal society both domestically and internationally.

Section 2 Japan's International Cooperation (Development Cooperation and Response to Global Issues)

As the international community faces compound crises, including Russia's aggression against Ukraine, the worsening situation in the Middle East, and global issues, 2025 was a year in which the importance of development cooperation in addressing these issues was further recognized.

1 Development Cooperation

(1) Development Cooperation Charter and Japan's ODA Allocation

A Effective and Strategic Implementation of ODA(1) based on the Development Cooperation Charter

Development cooperation has been facing changes in recent years, including an increase in private capital flows and the increasingly complex needs of developing countries. In addition, given Japan's difficult fiscal situation, further efficiency improvements are also necessary. Against this backdrop, the "Development Cooperation Charter,"(2) approved by the Cabinet in June 2023, identifies "co-creation" — under which various actors bring together their respective strengths and jointly create solutions through dialogue and collaboration — as one of its basic policies, while also setting out a policy to more effectively and strategically utilize development cooperation as one of the most important tools of diplomacy.

To strengthen the strategic utilization of development cooperation, Japan launched the Co-creation for common agenda initiative, under which Japan proactively proposes attractive cooperation menus to developing countries that leverage Japan's strengths , combining ODA, other official flows (OOF), and private finance, in areas that should be strategically addressed from a foreign policy perspective. In September 2023, Japan published the Strategy Document for the Co-creation for common agenda initiative, detailing strategically important areas to focus resources and human capital in line with Japan's foreign policy. In August 2025, the strategic document was revised adding "Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR)" so that the strategic area became "Climate Change Response, Green Transformation (GX), and DRR," as well as introducing "Health" as a strategic area.

Japan is also advancing initiatives to contribute to further improve ODA efficiency and strengthen coordination with a wide range of public and private actors. In 2024, the "Advisory Panel on New Financing for Development" was established, and recommendations were submitted calling for, among other things, the strengthening of ODA's risk-taking function. Building on these recommendations, in April 2025, the Act of the Incorporated Administrative Agency - Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) was amended, with three main objectives: promoting the mobilization of private financial resources; strengthening partnerships with domestic and international entities capable of addressing diverse development challenges, and increasing flexibility and efficiency of finance of JICA.

(1) ODA: Official Development Assistance
Public funds to promote development cooperation, the main purpose of which is to help improve the economic development and welfare of developing countries
(Ref.) ODA White Paper
https://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/oda/page_000017.html

(2) For the Development Cooperation Charter, please refer to the MOFA website:
https://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/oda/page24e_000410.html

(1)

(2)

B Japan's ODA Allocation

Japan's total ODA in 2024 was approximately 16.49 billion U.S. dollars (-15.9% year on year),[3] based on the Grant Equivalent System (GE system).[4] Japan ranks fourth among the members of the OECD/DAC,[5] following the United States (U.S.), Germany, and the United Kingdom (UK). Japan's ODA as a percentage of Gross National Income (GNI) based on the GE system was 0.39%, placing Japan in 13th place among members of the OECD/DAC (Source: OECD Data Explorer (December 2025)).

(2) Development Cooperation in 2025

In 2025, Japan engaged mainly in the following (A to D below).

A Support for Ukraine, Assistance to the Palestinians, and the Global South as well as Response to Humanitarian Crises

To date, Japan has announced and steadily provided assistance to Ukraine and relevant surrounding countries in the fields of humanitarian assistance, finance, food, and recovery and reconstruction. For example, in order to address Ukraine's difficult fiscal situation and support Ukraine's reconstruction and development, in April, the Exchange of Notes on a yen loan "Extraordinary Revenue Acceleration (ERA) Loan for Ukraine" was concluded. Under the framework of "ERA Loans for Ukraine," which the G7 leaders agreed to launch at the G7 Apulia Summit in 2024, Japan will provide a yen loan of up to 471.9 billion yen. In addition, Japan held the "Ukraine Mine Action Conference" in Tokyo in October. At this conference, Japan announced the "Ukraine Mine Action Support Initiative," consisting of three pillars of support for mine action in Ukraine: (1) Strengthening Human Resource and Technology; (2) Ensuring Seamless Transition to Recovery and Reconstruction: The Nexus; and (3) Diversifying and Strengthening Partnerships with Third Countries and International Organizations.

With regard to Palestine, in response to the worsening situation in Gaza, which was triggered by the terror attacks against Israel by Hamas and others in October 2023, Japan has been implementing humanitarian assistance in areas such as health and medical care, food, and water, as well as early recovery assistance including debris removal, support for debris management and health and medical care systems, and the provision of equipment and materials necessary for the restoration of water supply and sewage systems, through international organizations and Japanese non-governmental organizations (NGOs), among others.

Furthermore, in order to strengthen relationships with developing and emerging countries, known as the "Global South," Japan utilized opportunities such as the 9th Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD 9), held in August 2025, and the Summit of the "Central Asia plus Japan" Dialogue (CA+JAD), held in December, to carry out development cooperation, including the Co-creation for common agenda initiative tailored to the characteristics of each country and region, and worked to strengthen relationships with Global South countries.

In addition to the deterioration of humanitarian conditions caused by conflicts as described above, with natural disasters becoming more frequent and severe worldwide due to the effects of climate change, damage is becoming more serious and the humanitarian situation is worsening, particularly in Global South countries with fragile economic and social foundations. In response to this situation, Japan also continued to provide humanitarian assistance through bilateral channels, international organizations, and Japanese NGOs.

B Achievement of a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)"

Japan is promoting concrete initiatives utilizing ODA strategically in order to achieve a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)" together with the broad range

(3) The main forms of Japan's ODA are divided, from the perspective of the nature of funds, into grants (comprising grant and technical cooperation) and government loans, and from the perspective of recipients, into bilateral aid (to governments) and multilateral aid (mainly contributions and subscriptions to international organizations).

(4) The "Grant Equivalent System (GE System)" was introduced by the OECD/DAC as the standard ODA accounting method from 2018 onwards, and records the grant-equivalent amount of government loans as ODA. The grant-equivalent amount is calculated by applying a formula to the terms of lending such as disbursement amount, interest rate, and repayment period; the more concessional the terms, the larger the amount recorded. Compared to the net disbursement method (the previous OECD/DAC standard, which records the full disbursement amount while deducting repayments), this method more accurately evaluates Japan's government loans. (https://warp.ndl.go.jp/web/20240305164854/https://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/oda/white/2019/html/topics/01.html)

(4)

(5) OECD/DAC: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development / Development Assistance Committee

of partners in the international community who share this vision and the Indo-Pacific region, which is a focal point of the world's vitality.

Japan has been developing "quality infrastructure" to strengthen regional connectivity, supporting the development of legal systems, strengthening capacity building in the areas of debt management and macroeconomic policy, and extending capacity building assistance to maritime law enforcement agencies to ensure maritime security (provision of equipment such as patrol vessels and coastal monitoring radars, human resource development, etc.), and will continue to promote these efforts.

In particular, the development of quality infrastructure represents an important foundation for the realization of FOIP. 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 principles as openness, transparency, economic efficiency in view of life-cycle costs, and debt sustainability. In its new plan for FOIP, announced in March 2023, Japan will redouble efforts to achieve FOIP, mobilizing more than 75 billion U.S. dollars, representing a total of both private and public infrastructure spending, to grow the Indo Pacific region by 2030 with other countries.

In addition, with regard to the G7 Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment (PGII), an initiative to promote quality infrastructure investment launched at the G7 Elmau Summit in 2022, at the G7 Development Ministers' Meeting held in October 2025 under the chairmanship of Canada, the Ministers reaffirmed the importance of the G7 working together to mobilize public and private investment toward quality infrastructure, and welcomed the fact that the G7 has collectively mobilized more than 410 billion U.S. dollars to the initiative under PGII to date.

C Addressing Global Issues

Japan is working to resolve global issues, including the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These efforts are taking place in line with the country's Development Cooperation Charter, which positions the concept of "human security in the new era"(6) as its guiding principle and under the revised SDGs Implementation Guiding Principles of December 2023.(7) Japan will continue to proactively promote "human-centered international cooperation" in the areas of health, food, nutrition, gender, education, disaster risk reduction, water and sanitation, climate change and environmental issues, including humanitarian assistance. In doing so, Japan will promote visible development cooperation while utilizing collaboration with Japanese NGOs working on international cooperation. Furthermore, as humanitarian crises become more protracted and diversified, Japan will promote humanitarian assistance, including support for refugees and displaced persons, poverty reduction, economic and social development, and peacebuilding and state-building, based on the concept of the "Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus (HDP Nexus)" which in addition to humanitarian and development assistance, aims to strengthen efforts to address the root causes of conflict in order to achieve sustaining peace.

D Diplomatic Efforts in Support of Japan's Economy

Japan seeks to revitalize its own economy through the development of developing countries and Japan is promoting initiatives for achieving the growth of both.

Specifically, Japan will continue to promote public-private collaboration through the Co-creation for common agenda initiative, which proactively offers attractive cooperation menus that leverage Japan's strengths as set out in the Development Cooperation Charter, and through ODA that mobilizes private financial resources, among other means. In addition, in order to utilize Japan's advanced technologies to address social challenges in developing countries, Japan will promote quality infrastructure investment and supply chain resilience through financial cooperation and technical cooperation leveraging Japanese products. Furthermore, with the aim of addressing challenges in developing countries through the overseas

(6) Human security is a concept that pursues freedom from fear and want, and the right of individuals to live happily and in dignity through their protection and empowerment.

(7) SDGs Implementation Guiding Principles (decided by the SDGs Promotion Headquarters on December 19, 2023)

business operations of Japanese companies, Japan will support the overseas expansion of Japanese companies, including small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and startups, by supporting preliminary surveys such as needs assessments and business validation in developing countries through JICA's "SDGs Business Supporting Survey (JICA Biz)."

(3) Initiatives in Major Regions

A East and Southeast Asia

The peace, stability, and prosperity of the East and Southeast Asia regions are directly linked to Japan's national security and economic development and are therefore vital to Japan. Through development cooperation, Japan has helped these regions to resolve various development issues including poverty reduction, by promoting economic growth and human security, and has contributed to the development of these regions.

Above all, as member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) are keys to achieving FOIP, Japan provides support toward efforts aimed at overcoming issues faced by ASEAN and further promoting ASEAN integration. Based on the fact that it was confirmed that the principles of the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP) and FOIP match one another at the Japan-ASEAN Summit Meeting held in 2020, Japan plans to continue strengthening Japan-ASEAN cooperation going forward in terms of maritime cooperation, connectivity, the SDGs and economy, which are priority fields of the AOIP. As a principal initiative under this framework, the "Japan-ASEAN Comprehensive Connectivity Initiative," announced in September 2023, is further promoting efforts to strengthen connectivity on both the structural and non-structural fronts. For example, in addition to physical infrastructure development such as the development of passenger railways in Metro Manila (the Philippines) and the expansion of Vientiane International Airport (Laos), Japan is promoting support to strengthen connectivity across diverse areas including digital connectivity, maritime cooperation, supply chains, electricity, and human and knowledge connectivity. Furthermore, at the Japan-ASEAN Summit in 2025, Prime Minister Takaichi proposed the launch of the new "Japan-ASEAN Co-creation Initiative for Artificial Intelligence (AI)" and announced Japan's commitment to promoting cooperation aimed at building an AI ecosystem in the ASEAN region.

Furthermore, a wide range of concrete cooperation is being promoted in light of the "Joint Vision Statement on ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation" and its implementation plan adopted at the Commemorative Summit for the 50th Year of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation in December 2023. For example, as a new public-private partnership initiative to solve issues through co-creation, cooperation in the digital field is being accelerated in collaboration with various actors, including private companies, with regard to "Co-creation for common agenda initiative," which was agreed upon with Cambodia in December 2023. This includes the establishment of a public-private roundtable meeting in March 2024, Japan is promoting the resolution of social challenges in Cambodia utilizing digital technologies, with the participation of Japanese companies.



A patrol vessel procured with Japan's assistance (Philippines; Photo: JICA)



Technical guidance on firefighting for the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) (September, Philippines; Photo: JICA)

Japan is actively providing support for capacity building for maritime law enforcement to countries positioned along Japan's sea lanes such as the Philippines and Viet Nam, with the aim of building a 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. Furthermore, 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. In 2025, training was provided on topics such as public international law, criminal justice, the creation and promotion of new industries through innovation promotion, smart cities, and the strengthening of local government capacity.

Japan is also providing a variety of bilateral and multilateral forms of cooperation to the four Mekong region countries (Cambodia, Thailand, Viet Nam, and Laos) as a traditional development partner. In response to the expansion of damage from flooding and drought due to the effects of climate change and river basin development, in March Japan decided to provide a grant for the Flood and Drought Risk Management, including strengthening early warning systems, coordinated with the Mekong River Commission (MRC).

With regard to Myanmar, since the coup d'état in February 2021, and compounded by the effects of the earthquake that struck central Myanmar in March 2025, the humanitarian situation has been deteriorating continuously. Accordingly, Japan is actively implementing humanitarian assistance (food, medical supplies, etc.) and support to improve the lives of the people of Myanmar in forms that directly benefit them, through international organizations and NGOs. In particular, in response to the earthquake damage that occurred in March, Japan dispatched Japan Disaster Relief (JDR) Medical Teams and Japan Self-Defense Forces unit to transport medical equipment and supplies, conducted medical activities on the ground, and also provided emergency relief goods such as sanitary items and water through the United Nations (UN) and JICA. Furthermore, Japan provided an Emergency Grant of 6 million U.S. dollars in the fields of health and medical care, among others, through international organizations and so on.

B Southwest Asia

Southwest Asia is a strategically important region situated as a marine transportation hub that connects East Asia with the Middle East. It also offers immense economic potential, with high economic growth and large-scale infrastructure demand expected. As a result, the region is attracting attention from Japanese companies as an important market, production base, and investment destination. On the other hand, parts of the region face many challenges such as serious poverty, undeveloped basic social infrastructure, such as education and healthcare, measures against frequently occurring natural disasters, and delays in the development of industrial infrastructure. Japan is undertaking efforts for resolving these challenges through ODA, which includes human security, achievement of the SDGs, and fostering the investment environment for Japanese companies.

Development cooperation with India, which has achieved remarkable economic growth in recent years, represents an important component of the "Japan-India Special Strategic and Global Partnership." Japan is promoting development cooperation that benefits both Japan and India by bringing together the strengths of both countries to solve social issues through the co-creation of new value. In addition, from the perspective of addressing global challenges, the need for economic and social development in India, with its large population, remains substantial. In 2025, Japan concluded the Exchange of Notes concerning yen loans for support in areas such as the promotion of private investment, capacity building for forest officials, the construction of seawater desalination facilities and metro systems, and assistance to improve livelihoods for those engaged in the fisheries sector, thereby supporting the realization of inclusive and sustainable growth in India.

In August, at the Japan-India Summit Meeting held during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Japan, both leaders confirmed their continued cooperation toward the realization of the "Project for Construction of Mumbai-Ahmedabad High Speed Rail," which is a flagship project of Japan and India. In addition, in the "Japan-India Joint Vision for the Next Decade" announced at the same meeting, both sides concurred to broaden the scope of cooperation, including through the launch of the new "Japan-India AI Cooperation

Initiative (JAI)" to promote complementary cooperation between Japan and India on innovation promotion and AI.

Under the "Strategic Partnership" elevated between Japan and Bangladesh in 2023, and with a view to Bangladesh's graduation from Least Developed Country (LDC) status in 2026, Japan continues to advance support related to infrastructure development and improvement of regional connectivity under both the "Bay of Bengal Industrial Growth Belt (BIG-B)" initiative and the "Industrial Value Chain concept connecting the Bay of Bengal and Northeast India" concept based on the new FOIP plan — extending this support also to the interim government that was inaugurated in August 2024. Japan is also continuing humanitarian assistance to more than 1.14 million displaced persons from Myanmar who remained in Bangladesh following the mass influx since 2017 and whose numbers continue to grow. In addition, Japan is implementing cooperation in support of the priorities of the Bangladesh interim government, including the provision of voter registration equipment in preparation for Bangladesh's next general election, financial support in the areas of economic reform, and climate action, and is working to maintain and strengthen the longstanding bilateral relationship with the country.

In Sri Lanka, the humanitarian situation has worsened due to an economic crisis, including a shortage of imported materials due to an acute shortage of foreign currency, since the temporary suspension of all payments on the country's foreign debt in April 2022. As co-chair of the Official Creditor Committee (OCC), Japan has led Sri Lanka's debt restructuring process, and in July 2024, the members of the OCC and Sri Lanka signed a Memorandum of Understanding on debt restructuring. Furthermore, in March 2025, Japan concluded the first bilateral agreement on debt restructuring between a member country of the OCC and Sri Lanka, formally completing the debt restructuring between the two countries. In addition, during President Anura Kumara Disanayaka's visit to Japan in September, Japan decided to provide the "Project for the Enhancement of Productivity in the Dairy Sector" (463 million Japanese yen), contributing to the improvement of livelihoods of small-scale dairy farmers in the Northern and Eastern Provinces of Sri Lanka, among other continued support measures. In response to the severe damage caused by a cyclone in late November, Japan dispatched the JDR Medical Team and provided emergency relief goods. Japan also decided to provide an Emergency Grant of 2.5 million U.S. dollars through international organizations to provide humanitarian assistance such as distribution of food and non-food items.



Medical examination by a medical team (December 6, Chilaw, Sri Lanka)

In the Maldives, in order to strengthen countermeasures against high waves and storm surges on the main island of Malé, in July Japan decided to provide a grant (1.555 billion Japanese yen) for the "Project for Disaster Resilience Enhancement in the Malé Island."

In Pakistan, in May Japan provided water-related equipment (510 million Japanese yen), and in December decided to provide cooperation for the strengthening of local administration in border areas contributing to regional stability (518 million Japanese yen), among others.

In Nepal, in February Japan decided to provide cooperation (250 million Japanese yen) contributing to the development of infrastructure such as irrigation facilities and the improvement of the capacity of local government officials to respond to disasters, centered on areas affected by natural disasters.

In Bhutan, Japan is providing support not only in infrastructure areas such as road development and bridge replacement, but also across a wide range of fields including improving agricultural productivity

and hydroelectric power stations, and is also providing human resource development support utilizing technical cooperation.

C Pacific Island Countries

The Pacific Island countries are not only Japan's "neighbors," connected by the Pacific, but also have deep historical connections with Japan. Moreover, as these countries possess a vast exclusive economic zone (EEZ), they are a key region for maritime transportation for Japan, and also provide vital fishing grounds for Japan's distant-water bonito and tuna fisheries. Therefore, 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, territories that are scattered over a wide ocean area, difficulty in breaking into the international market, and vulnerability to damage from natural disasters. In light of these circumstances, Japan, as a partner of the Pacific Island countries, has implemented cooperation to support their autonomous and sustainable development.

At the 10th Pacific Islands Leaders Meeting (PALM10), held in July 2024, participants adopted the "10th Pacific Islands Leaders Meeting (PALM 10) Joint Action Plan," which positions as priority areas for cooperation the seven priority areas identified in the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF)'s "2050 Strategy": (a) political leadership and regionalism, (b) people-centered development, (c) peace and security, (d) resources and economic development, (e) climate change and disasters, (f) ocean and environment, and (g) technology and connectivity. Furthermore, at PALM10, in response to climate change, which is the "single greatest existential threat" to the Pacific Island countries, Prime Minister Kishida announced the "Pacific Climate Resilience Initiative," an initiative that mobilizes all of the country's technologies, know-how, and funds by a concerted national effort and is comprised of three pillars: (a) strengthening disaster risk reduction and response capacity, (b) promoting decarbonization, and (c) supporting Pacific-led efforts. Examples of support in these priority areas include assistance for improvements to water supply systems in Koror State and Airai State in Palau and for the development of Fua'amotu International Airport in Tonga in the area of infrastructure development; support for the development of facilities and training equipment at a national fisheries university in Papua New Guinea in the maritime area; provision of the Stand-by Loan for Disaster Recovery and Rehabilitation in Fiji in the area of disaster risk reduction; and provision of equipment for groundwater resource development in Samoa in the area of climate change.

Japan is also implementing the Project for Human Resource Development Scholarship (JDS), a grant program to train young government officials through studying at Japanese higher education institutions, in Solomon Islands, Fiji, and Papua New Guinea as well. Furthermore, in collaboration with the U.S. and other countries, Japan is strengthening cooperation in new fields that contribute to economic security, such as cooperation related to submarine cables.

D Latin America and the Caribbean

Latin America and the Caribbean has maintained long-standing friendly relations with Japan and shares historical ties with Japan, as demonstrated by the presence of around 3.1 million Japanese descendants, known as "Nikkei," residing in the region. The region is a major supplier of natural resources and food, as well as a potential emerging market with gross regional product of more than 7 trillion U.S. dollars. On the other hand, the region has large development needs in the areas of climate change and the environment, disaster risk reduction, health and medical care, and public security, among others, and Japan has been providing various forms of cooperation tailored to the circumstances and needs of each country.

In the area of climate change and the environment, at the Japan-Brazil Summit Meeting in March, Japan decided to advance cooperation — also utilizing the Co-creation for common agenda initiative — focused on the recovery of degraded pasture (pastures and farmland whose soil has deteriorated due to inadequate land management, overgrazing, etc.) and on measures to address illegal deforestation in the Amazon, from the perspectives of global warming countermeasures and food security. Additionally, as emergency humanitarian assistance in response to natural disasters, Japan provided emergency relief goods to Bolivia, which was

struck by flooding, and provided an Emergency Grant to three Caribbean countries; Jamaica, Cuba, and Haiti.

In the area of health and medical care, regarding Honduras, where the cancer mortality rate is high, Japan signed a letter of intent on tripartite cooperation in medicine (radiotherapy) among Japan, Honduras, and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), and decided to provide a grant of 640 million Japanese yen for the procurement of cancer treatment-related equipment in order to establish an environment in which the people of Honduras can more easily receive radiotherapy.

In addition, in response to the rapid deterioration of the security and humanitarian situation in Haiti, caused by the recurrent violence and human rights abuses by armed groups (gangs), Japan is undertaking initiatives focused on both security and humanitarian assistance to contribute to the stabilization of the situation in Haiti. In September, Japan decided to provide a grant of approximately 400 million Japanese yen through the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) to strengthen the suppression of illegal trafficking at borders and at sea by improving the operating environment and conducting training for law enforcement agencies (the National Police, Coast Guard, and Customs) in the Western and Southeastern Departments.

Japan also has entered into partnership programs with Chile, Brazil, Argentina, and Mexico to promote human resources development in Latin America, the Caribbean, Africa, and other regions, through triangular cooperation[(8)] in areas such as disaster risk reduction, poverty reduction, and policing systems.

E Central Asia and the Caucasus

The Central Asia and Caucasus region is surrounded by Russia, Asia, and Europe. Given its geopolitical importance and its transportation routes connecting East Asia and Europe, the development and stability of this region are important for the development, stability, and connectivity of the whole of Eurasia, including Japan. Cooperation with this region, which continues to see high growth and a rising population, is becoming increasingly important from the perspective of maintaining and strengthening a free and open international order based on the rule of law amid a rapidly changing international environment.

Against this backdrop, in December, the Summit of the "Central Asia plus Japan" Dialogue (CA+JAD) was held in Tokyo for the first time at the leaders' level, and it was agreed that "Green and Resilience," "Connectivity," and "Human Resource Development" would serve as priority areas for future cooperation. Under the priority area of "Green and Resilience," grants were decided to be provided to support the development and energy efficiency of economic and social infrastructure and to strengthen disaster risk reduction capacity. In the area of "Connectivity," the sides concurred on promoting "Enhancing Connectivity through Support for the Further Development of the 'Trans-Caspian International Transport Route'." Within this cooperation framework, cooperation was carried out in collaboration with the World Customs Organization (WCO), which works on international cooperation in the area of customs, to improve the efficiency of customs clearance and enhance risk management capabilities for customs officials, and grants were decided to be provided for the development of the route through provision of equipment and infrastructure development. Furthermore, under the priority area of "Human Resource Development," Japan provided support for the development of government officials who are expected to demonstrate leadership in policymaking at the core of their government in the future through the grant Project for Human Resource Development Scholarship (JDS), as well as support for the development of advanced human resources through Japan Centers and other projects. In addition, Japan has also contributed to improving the welfare of the people through grants in the healthcare and medical fields.

F The Middle East and North Africa

Securing peace and stability in the Middle East and North Africa regions, which are geopolitical keys in that they are the crossroads of Europe, sub-Saharan

(8) Triangular Cooperation refers to a form of development cooperation in which a developed country, a donor country or an international organization supports collaboration between developing countries by providing resources such as human resources, technology, funding, and knowledge.

Africa and Asia, is crucial not only for the energy security of Japan but also for the stability of the world. From this point of view, Japan is providing support to achieve peace and stability in the region.

In Egypt, Japan is providing support across a wide range of fields, including human resource development and infrastructure development. For example, Japan is working to promote the introduction of Japanese-style education at Egypt-Japan Schools (EJS) and the Egypt-Japan University of Science and Technology (E-JUST), which are being advanced under the leadership of President Abdel-Fattah El-Sisi, and is devoting efforts to cooperation in the area of education and human resource development, covering the full range from pre-school education through postgraduate study. In September 2025, the opening ceremony for the Egypt-Japan KOSEN (EJ-KOSEN) was held. In August of the same year, the Exchange of Notes concerning the grant "Project for the Construction of Diving Support Vessel" was concluded for the provision of a diving support vessel for the maintenance of the Suez Canal. In September of the same year, the Exchange of Notes concerning the yen loan "Greater Cairo Metro Line No.4 Phase 1 Project (IV)" was concluded for the development of Cairo Metro Line 4. In light of the deteriorating situation in Gaza and other developments in the international community, Egypt has become increasingly important for peace and stability across the Middle East, and further strengthening of comprehensive bilateral cooperation under the Japan-Egypt Strategic Partnership is anticipated.

Jordan is experiencing social and economic burdens due to the influx of displaced persons from neighboring countries and regions, and is in a difficult fiscal situation due to the impact of the worsening situation in neighboring countries and regions. To help improve this situation, Japan concluded an Exchange of Notes concerning the yen loan "Enhancing the Resilience for Economic Growth and Human Capital Development Program Loan" with Jordan in November 2025, and decided to provide financial support through the loan. Furthermore, to address challenges such as the heightened risk of terrorism and the increase in cross-border crime arising from the recent destabilization of the Middle East as a whole and the worsening situation in neighboring countries, in November of the same year Japan concluded an Exchange of Notes of the "Economic and Social Development Programme" to provide a grant for the procurement of equipment for security enhancement and cybersecurity.



Open class on classroom guidance for Special Activities (Tokkatsu) at an Egypt-Japan School (EJS) (Cairo, Egypt; Photo: JICA)

In Morocco, Japan has been actively promoting bilateral cooperation in areas such as fisheries and agriculture. In January 2025, Japan concluded the Exchange of Notes concerning the grant for "Project for the Development of the New Generation Fishing Port at Souiria K'dima" and has been advancing the development of the fishing port at Souiria K'dima. In February of the same year, Japan delivered a marine and fisheries research vessel constructed through a yen loan to strengthen scientific survey capabilities related to the marine environment and fisheries resources. Furthermore, in November of the same year, Japan concluded the Exchange of Notes concerning the yen loan "Project for Agricultural Water Development in the Southeast Area of Gharb Plain" under which agricultural trunk canals, pumping stations, and other facilities will be constructed in the Gharb region.

With regard to Syria, under its assistance policy of providing humanitarian assistance to all Syrian people facing difficulties, Japan has been providing humanitarian assistance to Syria and neighboring countries in coordination with international organizations and others. In addition, in order to provide educational opportunities to Syrian youth who have been deprived of the opportunity to attend school, Japan has accepted 144 Syrian students since 2017. Furthermore, in December 2025, Japan resumed bilateral economic cooperation with Syria, which had been suspended following the Syrian crisis that began in 2011.

In Afghanistan, in light of the serious humanitarian crisis since the Taliban took over Kabul in August 2021, Japan has been providing humanitarian support in areas such as health care, education, and food,

including support for basic humanitarian needs, while collaborating with international organization etc. In response to earthquake damage in eastern Afghanistan in September 2025 and in the north of the country in November, Japan provided emergency relief goods such as blankets and sleeping pads through JICA. In addition, in response to the damage of the earthquake in September, Japan also implemented an Emergency Grant of 1 million U.S. dollars in such fields as food, and health and medical care through international organizations and so on.

G Africa

Africa has a population of approximately 1.4 billion people in 54 countries, and continues to attract attention and anticipation from the international community for its high potential in becoming the driving force for the world's growth, backed by its abundant natural resources. On the other hand, it also faces various challenges such as poverty, a vulnerable healthcare system, and the rise of terrorism and violent extremism. Given this background, Japan has been contributing to the development of Africa over the years, utilizing development cooperation.

Building on this, Japan held TICAD 9 in August and, under the theme of "Co-create innovative solutions with Africa," engaged in discussions with co-organizers, African countries, and other participants, focused on private-sector-led sustainable growth, youth and women, and regional integration and connectivity within and beyond the region. In this context, Japan announced a number of initiatives reflecting its unique strengths. For example, in the Indian Ocean-Africa economic region, which has the potential to become a new center of growth in the global economy, Japan launched the "Economic Region Initiative of Indian Ocean-Africa" aimed at contributing to Africa's regional integration and industrial development through collaboration with countries surrounding the Indian Ocean, including India and Middle Eastern countries. In the area of health, Japan launched the "Investment Promotion Package for Sustainable Health in Africa" to support improvements in governance, the enhancement of the investment environment, and the mobilization of domestic resources in African countries. Furthermore, on the occasion of TICAD 9, Japan launched two Co-creation for common agenda initiatives: the region-wide Co-creation for common agenda initiative "Strengthening the Global Supply Chain through Nacala Corridor Development" targeting Mozambique, Malawi, and Zambia, and the initiative "Resolving Social Challenges and Strengthening Economic Resilience through Startup Support" targeting Nigeria.



Nacala Port connecting the Indian Ocean and the Nacala Corridor (Nampula, Mozambique; Photo: Penta-Ocean Construction Co., Ltd. and Tooa Kensetsu Kogyo Co., Ltd. Joint Venture)

(4) Approaches to Appropriate and Effective Implementation of ODA

A Approaches to Appropriate Implementation of ODA

In order to secure transparency and improve planning of ODA projects, MOFA listens to the views of external experts at each phase and formulates projects based on these opinions. In the planning phase of project candidates, MOFA holds the Development Project Accountability Committee meeting in public, exchanges views with independent committee members that have knowledge of the relevant fields 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 (5,507 projects published as of the end of December 2025) on the "ODA Mieru-ka Site" after the implementation 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 (internal evaluations for projects

valued between 200 million and 1.0 billion Japanese yen and third-party evaluations for projects valued at over 1.0 billion Japanese yen) on projects implemented by MOFA to improve ODA management and ensure accountability. The suggestions and lessons drawn from the evaluation are utilized for the policy formation and project implementation of future ODA. MOFA also publishes the evaluation results on its website to ensure transparency.

Furthermore, from the perspective of ensuring the safety of personnel engaged in development cooperation, MOFA and JICA are striving to implement the safety measures formulated in the Final Report of the Council on Safety Measures for International Cooperation Projects (released in August 2016) and are continuing and strengthening efforts to ensure the effectiveness of safety measures for personnel engaged in international cooperation projects.

B Approaches to Effective Implementation of ODA

In order to promote the formulation of ODA projects that can produce high project effects, MOFA formulates country-specific development cooperation policies that set out priority areas and policies for each ODA project target country, while comprehensively examining the key policies of Japan's Development Cooperation Charter and the priorities of issues and development plans of the developing countries themselves. Moreover, the Rolling Plan is formulated as an appendix to the Country Development Cooperation Policy that lists projects at various stages from implementation decision to project completion, visualizing where individual projects are positioned within the policy and how they correlate with other projects. Through these efforts, the limited ODA budget is strategically allocated to projects that are important to both Japan and recipient countries, and multiple projects are implemented in an organically linked manner to increase development effectiveness.

C Efforts with regard to International Discussions on ODA

Japan also contributes actively to international discussions on ODA. At the OECD/DAC, discussions are being held on the promotion of private finance mobilization with ODA as a catalyst toward financing for sustainable development, and on collaboration with diverse partners including emerging donors. In addition, OECD/DAC is working to provide opportunities for mutual learning so that development assistance provided by emerging donors will be accountable and transparent in a manner consistent with international rules and standards.

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, MOFA makes efforts to promote understanding among the citizens through the effective dissemination of information. MOFA strives to promote publicity on Japan's development cooperation activities among a wider range of targets in an easy-to-understand manner through social media, such as the MOFA website, ODA X account, as well as through YouTube videos, e-mail subscriptions, contents creation and other tools, and has produced a video in which "ODA Man," MOFA's ODA public relations character, explains the benefits that ODA brings to developing countries and to Japan, among other topics. The 34th "Global Festa JAPAN 2025" (September), co-hosted by MOFA, JICA, and the Japan NGO Center for International



Key visual for "Taka no Tsume-dan no Ike! ODA Man"



Key visual for Global Festa JAPAN 2025

Special Feature

ODA Evaluation Workshop — A Quarter Century of Elevating the Quality of International Cooperation together with Recipients —

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) conducts an initiative called "ODA Evaluation" to enhance the effectiveness of ODA. The purpose of ODA Evaluation is to objectively assess how ODA has been utilized and what effects it has produced, with a view to improving future assistance approaches and raising its quality, and to explain the results and lessons learned to the Japanese public. Based on the recognition that donor countries and developing countries are "equal" partners in a cooperative relationship, MOFA has focused on the importance of strengthening developing countries' own evaluation capabilities, and has been holding "ODA Evaluation Workshops" since 2001. These workshops deepen the understanding of government officials from the Asia-Pacific region regarding ODA evaluation methods and challenges and enhance their capabilities, thereby contributing not only to improving the efficiency of the donor side but also to a more proactive approach taken by developing countries and to greater transparency in evaluation.



In-person participants at the 20th ODA Evaluation Workshop (November 13, Tokyo)



Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs Eri delivering remarks at the inauguration of the APEA Conference (November 12, Tokyo)

Through the accumulation of ODA Evaluation Workshops held in various countries, calls for those specialized in evaluation across the Asia-Pacific region to gather in one place to discuss each country's experiences and challenges — as a means of further enhancing evaluation capabilities throughout the region — came to fruition, and the Asia Pacific Evaluation Association (APEA) was established in 2012, bringing together evaluation experts from the Asia-Pacific region. Through people-to-people and intellectual exchanges among experts from within and outside the region, APEA has made significant contributions to fostering an evaluation culture throughout the Asia-Pacific region, and has also been highly regarded for its contribution to the promotion of Japan's international cooperation through evaluation. In recognition of these achievements, APEA received the Foreign Minister's Commendation in 2025.

On November 13, MOFA co-hosted with APEA the 20th ODA Evaluation Workshop in Tokyo as a key component of the 5th APEA Conference program. Thirty-one government officials from Asia-Pacific countries involved in their respective governments' evaluation work and in reporting on SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals) progress to the United Nations through Voluntary National Reviews (VNR) participated online in the workshop. Furthermore, in a first for the workshop that had previously been held exclusively for government officials, 24 evaluation experts in business and academic fields attending the APEA Conference also participated in person, contributing to mutual understanding between the two groups.

At the inauguration of the APEA Conference, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs ERI Arfiya delivered remarks, emphasizing the need to further strengthen the values of "co-creation" and "equal partnership" at the core of Japan's international cooperation framework, as the world faces common social challenges. She also praised APEA's receipt of the Foreign Minister's Commendation, touched on the indispensability of strengthening monitoring and evaluation capabilities in addressing these challenges, and expressed the importance of strengthening collaboration and partnerships with various stakeholders in this field.

To date, MOFA has worked to enhance the evaluation capabilities of developing countries through ODA Evaluation Workshops. Going forward, MOFA intends to make an evolutionary change to the format of these workshops and, in collaboration with international evaluation networks including APEA, to advance a new form of cooperation in which participants learn from one another.

Cooperation (JANIC), was held in a hybrid format combining in-person attendance and online streaming, attracting 30,000 visitors and viewers over two days. MOFA has continued to dispatch ministry officials to educational organizations in actively conducting "ODA Delivery Lectures" for youth and others as part of its efforts to promote understanding of development cooperation. In addition, MOFA makes active efforts in overseas publicity, including site-visit tours to its development cooperation project 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)" was adopted at the United Nations (UN) Summit in 2015 and sets out the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for realizing a society under the principle of "Leave No One Behind." Japan is promoting initiatives for achievement of the SDGs, having established the SDGs Promotion Headquarters headed by the Prime Minister, with the Chief Cabinet Secretary and Foreign Minister as the Deputy Director-Generals and composed of all cabinet ministers as members. Additionally, Japan established the SDGs Promotion Round Table Meeting, bringing together stakeholders from a wide range of fields including the private sector, civil society, experts, and youth to exchange views on the promotion of the SDGs. Since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, through the process of various initiatives and rule-making efforts by diverse stakeholders both at home and abroad, the nature of economic and social activities in the international community as a whole, including Japan, has undergone rapid and significant transformation, from people's awareness and lifestyles to industrial structures and financial flows.

On the other hand, in addition to serious global issues such as climate change and infectious diseases, the international community as a whole is facing complex crises that were not anticipated at the time the SDGs were adopted. As a result, progress towards achieving the SDGs by 2030 is facing significant difficulties.

The Government of Japan revised the SDGs Implementation Guiding Principles in December 2023, presenting guidelines for strengthening and accelerating efforts toward achieving the SDGs, and worked to strengthen the implementation structure and cooperation among stakeholders. At the UN High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) in July 2025, Japan conducted its Voluntary National Review (VNR) on SDGs progress for the third time and for the first time in four years. State Minister for Foreign Affairs MIYAJI Takuma expressed Japan's unwavering commitment to advancing efforts toward achieving the SDGs, and demonstrated that not only the government but also diverse stakeholders are participating to promote efforts toward achieving the SDGs.

A Human Security

Human security is a concept that pursues the creation of a country and society where individuals can live happily and in dignity, free from fear and want. Japan has long advocated human security as a pillar of its diplomacy, and in the Development Cooperation Charter revised in June 2023, Japan positioned human security as a guiding principle that underlies all of its development cooperation. In regard to bilateral cooperation, too, Japan has also put effort into the dissemination and implementation of this concept through support including Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects.

Japan has also led discussions at the UN, and through contributions to the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security, which was established at the UN in 1999 under Japan's leadership, has supported the dissemination and implementation of human security by UN agencies. The 2030 Agenda, which advocates the principle of "Leave No One Behind," also places the concept of human security at its core. Additionally, in response to Japan's efforts, the UN Secretary-General's

report on human security was published in January 2024, the first one in 10 years. The report noted that human security has functioned not only as a concept but also as a genuinely useful tool in practice, and that the importance of human security-based approaches is increasing. It also emphasized that human security serves as a tool to enhance "solidarity" among states, among people, and between people and the planet, premised on the ownership of each country over the survival, livelihoods, and dignity of its own people. The importance of human security was highlighted in 2025 through the aforementioned VNR and through events held during thematic weeks at Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan. At TICAD 9 in August, a thematic event on human security in Africa was held, during which Foreign Minister Iwaya referred to the importance of human security in Africa. Furthermore, in his general debate statement at the UN General Assembly in September, Prime Minister Ishiba spoke about Japan's international cooperation based on the concept of human security, and stated that Japan will continue to work to disseminate and implement the concept of human security.

B Approaches in the Area of Disaster Risk Reduction

While there are concerns about frequent and intensified disasters due to climate change, disaster risk reduction is essential for realizing poverty eradication and sustainable development. Leveraging the Japanese knowledge of disaster risk reduction accumulated through numerous experiences with disasters, Japan has actively promoted international cooperation in various fields of disaster risk reduction, including leading the adoption of the "Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030," at the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction held in Sendai, Miyagi Prefecture in 2015. At the United Nations High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) in July 2025, in conjunction with the conduct of Japan's VNR, Japan hosted a side event on the theme of "Sustainable Economic Growth and Disaster Risk Reduction," attended by State Minister for Foreign Affairs Miyaji, JICA, the City of Sendai, and others. With the participation of representatives from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), and officials from the governments of Thailand and Mexico, the event served as a platform to convey the importance of disaster risk reduction in the international community and Japan's efforts in this area.

In 2025, the 10th anniversary was marked of the adoption of the UN General Assembly resolution designating November 5 as "World Tsunami Awareness Day." Japan co-organized an event for "World Tsunami Awareness Day 2025" with the permanent missions of relevant countries to the UN and relevant international organizations, at UN Headquarters in New York on November 5, and Foreign Minister Motegi sent a message to the event. Three high school students from Miyagi Prefecture and the City of Sendai participated in the event and shared their own efforts in disaster risk reduction. Furthermore, the High School Students Summit on "World Tsunami Awareness Day" was held in Sendai on November 27 and 28, with 27 high school students from 9 countries visiting Japan and, together with 61 Japanese high school students, compiling the "Sendai Declaration" on tsunami disaster risk reduction.

Starting with the Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction scheduled to be co-organized with UNDRR in Sendai in 2027, Japan will continue to share its experiences and lessons learned from disasters with the rest of the world and promote "Mainstreaming Disaster Risk Reduction" to introduce the perspective of disaster risk reduction into the policies of each country.

C Education

In the area of education, in 2015 Japan formulated the "Learning Strategy for Peace and Growth" in conjunction with the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, and announced a new strategy for promoting sustainable development through inclusive, equitable, and quality educational cooperation based on the concept of human security. In the Development Cooperation Charter revised in June 2023, building on this strategy, Japan positioned education as an indispensable "investment in people" for advancing human security and clarified its policy of working toward quality education for all and ensuring educational opportunities in conflict and

disaster situations. In particular, with regard to collaboration with international organizations, Japan places emphasis on this as a means of generating synergies with bilateral cooperation, and has provided financial cooperation to the "Global Partnership for Education (GPE)" and the "Education Cannot Wait (ECW)," which play central roles in the field of international education. At TICAD 9 held in August 2025, Japan participated in thematic events hosted by each fund and introduced the cooperative relationships Japan is implementing.

D Approaches in Agricultural Areas

In coordination with relevant countries such as G7 and G20 member states and international organizations, and also utilizing opportunities such as TICAD 9 in August, Japan is examining approaches toward resolving food security challenges facing Global South countries and is supporting initiatives to apply the technologies and knowledge possessed by Japanese companies to solve challenges on the ground. Through these efforts, the Government of Japan is contributing to the resolution of food security challenges on a global scale, while also promoting the expansion of business operations and growth investment in the Global South by Japan's agriculture, forestry, fisheries, and food-related companies. At the G20 Johannesburg Summit in November, Japan issued a statement by Prime Minister Takaichi expressing Japan's commitment to providing support for strengthening production capacity tailored to the circumstances of each region, with the aim of building resilient and sustainable agricultural and food systems.

E Approaches in the Area of Water and Sanitation

Japan has continuously been one of the largest donor countries in the area of water and sanitation since the 1990s. Furthermore, Japan has implemented high quality assistance utilizing Japan's experiences, expertise, and technologies, as well as proactively participated in discussions in the international community. At the 3rd High-Level International Conference on the International Decade for Action "Water for Sustainable Development 2018–2028" held in June 2024, Foreign Minister Kamikawa stated in a video message that Japan would promote various initiatives through water-related initiatives including the "Kumamoto Initiative for Water," and expressed Japan's desire to work together, focusing on vulnerable people such as women, children, youth, the elderly, persons with disabilities, and indigenous peoples, to achieve all goals and targets through water, leaving no one behind and working toward a desirable future. In 2025, Japan also implemented various forms of support, including the development of water supply systems to ensure safe water access for people in developing countries in Asia and Oceania, Africa, and Latin America, among other regions.

(2) Global Health

Health is a basic condition that is essential to achieving human security that Japan is advocating for, which protects the survival, livelihood, and dignity of each individual. In recent years, the global COVID-19 pandemic has shed light on the fact that global health is not only directly relevant to people's health but is also an important issue for the global society, including that of Japan's. This includes major risks in the economy, society, and security. Given this understanding, and with lessons learned during COVID-19, the Government of Japan formulated its new Global Health Strategy in May 2022. The strategy outlines Japan's goals to contribute to developing a global health architecture (GHA), strengthen Prevention, Preparedness and Response (PPR) to public health emergencies such as pandemics, and achieve a more resilient, more equitable, and more sustainable universal health coverage (UHC)[(9)] that is required in the post-COVID-19 era to ensure human security.

As a specific initiative, the Government of Japan, together with the World Bank and the World Health Organization (WHO), is working to support capacity building for health and finance officials in developing countries toward achieving UHC, and to enhance momentum for advancing UHC through the convening of high-level events. In 2025, Japan launched

(9) UHC (Universal Health Coverage): A state of which all people have access to the basic health services they need, when and where they need them, at an affordable cost without financial hardship.

the "UHC Knowledge Hub" in Japan to foster collaboration among stakeholders. In December, as part of the activities of the UHC Knowledge Hub, the Government of Japan invited leaders from countries and organizations committed to advancing UHC and convened the "UHC High-Level Forum."

Japan continues to work closely with public-private partnerships and international organizations, such as the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, Gavi (the Vaccine Alliance),(10) Unitaid, UHC2030,(11) Global Health Innovative Technology Fund (GHIT), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), and the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF), to address various global health issues. Furthermore, under the philosophy of breaking the cycle of "panic" and "neglect" and leading the world to structural change in preparation for the next pandemic, Japan continues to work to raise international awareness and maintain momentum through various international conferences it hosts or participates in.

In June, the fourth replenishment meeting of the Gavi Vaccine Alliance (Global Summit: Health and Prosperity through Immunization) was held, attended by Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs MATSUMOTO Hisashi on behalf of Japan, who stated that Japan strongly supports Gavi's mission to "leave no one behind through immunization" and will continue to provide support. Furthermore, during the High-Level Week of the UN General Assembly in September, Foreign Minister Iwaya attended the UHC Friends Group ministerial meeting and reiterated Japan's determination to continue promoting efforts toward achieving UHC and contributing to global health.

At the 8th replenishment conference of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria held in November, Japan explained its efforts on global health and expressed its determination to continue supporting the Global Fund.

A collective response of the international community is needed for global health crises such as COVID-19. Efforts have been undertaken to review and create international norms to strengthen pandemic PPR. From 2021 to 2022, WHO Member States decided to hold discussions to amend the International Health Regulations (IHR) and to negotiate a new legal instrument on pandemic PPR ("Pandemic Agreement"). As a result, the legal instrument was adopted by consensus as the "WHO Pandemic Agreement" on May 20, 2025 at the 78th World Health Assembly. Furthermore, the International Health Regulations (2005) (IHR (2005)), whose amendments were adopted at the 77th World Health Assembly in 2024, entered into force on September 19, 2025.

(3) Labor and Employment

Promoting decent work is one of the goals in the 2030 Agenda (Goal 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all), and achieving this is also positioned as a primary objective of the activities of the International Labour Organization (ILO).

As a permanent member of the ILO Governing Body, Japan actively participates in deliberations on international labor standards and other matters at the International Labour Conference and the Governing Body, together with representatives of governments, employers, and workers from its member states. Through voluntary contributions to the ILO, Japan is also actively providing support for the creation of employment opportunities and improvement of working conditions with a focus on youth and women in developing countries, and for efforts to eliminate child labor, thereby working toward sustainable development in the area of labor.

(4) Environmental Issues and Climate Change

A Global Environmental Issues

Further awareness has been built worldwide on the importance of addressing global environmental issues and global interest in these issues has also risen, 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

(10) Gavi (Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance): A public-private partnership that supports immunization in low- and middle-income countries.

(11) An organization that works to promote UHC in the international community with the aim of achieving UHC by 2030.

in various multilateral environmental agreements and relevant international organizations. At the seventh session of the United Nations Environment Assembly, held in Nairobi, Kenya in December, various environmental issues were addressed under the theme of "Advancing sustainable solutions for a resilient planet," and Japan conveyed its views and initiatives during thematic discussions and co-proposed a resolution on "Promoting synergies, cooperation or collaboration for national implementation of multilateral environmental agreements and other relevant environmental instruments," leading discussions toward its adoption. Japan also contributes to projects that address global environmental issues as one of the major donor countries for the Global Environment Facility (GEF), which is designated as a financial mechanism for multiple environmental conventions.

(A) Conservation of the Marine Environment

Addressing the problem of marine plastic litter, as a matter of urgency, 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 illegal dumping and improper waste management. Toward the realization of the "Osaka Blue Ocean Vision," launched at the G20 Osaka Summit in 2019, which aims to reduce additional pollution by marine plastic litter to zero by 2050, Japan, in cooperation with international organizations such as the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), provides support mainly in Asia for environmentally sound plastic waste management and disposal, including support for the accumulation of scientific knowledge and model building necessary for measures to prevent the outflow of marine plastic litter. In response to the growing momentum toward the creation of a new international framework for measures against plastic pollution including in the marine environment, at the 5th United Nations Environment Assembly in March 2022, it was determined to establish an Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) for the development of an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution including in the marine environment, with the ambition to of completing its work by the end of 2024. However, negotiations were not concluded by the end of that year, and the second part of the fifth session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC5.2) was held in Geneva (Switzerland) in August 2025. At this session, Japan actively worked to facilitate discussions, including by leading informal consultations on the core obligations provisions of the treaty, but significant gaps remained among countries on issues such as restricting plastic production, and substantive agreement on the text of the articles was not reached. A further resumed session is to be held to continue negotiations, and Japan will continue to actively contribute to discussions with a view to reaching an early conclusion of negotiations.

In June, the 2025 United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14 (the 2025 United Nations Ocean Conference (UNOC3)) was held in Nice, France. A political declaration and voluntary commitments from countries, international organizations, and civil society, collectively referred to as the "Nice Ocean Action Plan," were compiled, with Japan registering 24 voluntary commitments. Japan also highlighted its strong commitment to international cooperation on ocean matters as an ocean nation, introducing Japan's advanced initiatives such as the calculation of absorption by blue carbon(12) ecosystems and the utilization of marine biological big data to better understand marine ecosystems, as well as support for developing countries including waste management support for the prevention of marine pollution, contributing to the realization of sustainable oceans.

In September, the Seventh Ocean Panel Leaders' Meeting of the "High Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy"(13) was held in New York, U.S., during the High-Level Week of the United Nations General Assembly, where views were exchanged on the acceleration of action toward building a sustainable

(12) Carbon that is absorbed by coastal and marine ecosystems through photosynthesis and subsequently accumulates on the seafloor or in the deep sea. (Source: Ministry of the Environment website)

(13) A panel composed of the leaders of major maritime nations, co-chaired by the Prime Minister of Norway and the President of Palau. Japan has been a member since receiving an invitation to participate at the time of its establishment in 2018, with successive Prime Ministers serving as members. Member countries (as of 2025): Norway, Palau, Japan, Australia, Canada, Chile, Fiji, France, Ghana, Indonesia, Jamaica, Kenya, Mexico, Namibia, Portugal, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Seychelles, UK, and Brazil.

ocean economy and on climate action in the ocean. The Government of Japan stated that it places high importance on the early conclusion of negotiations for the treaty on plastic pollution and will work with other countries to achieve this.

(B) Conservation of Biodiversity

In February, the resumed meeting of the Sixteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP16.2) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) was held in Rome, Italy, where decisions were adopted on the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) monitoring framework and review mechanism and on resource mobilization for biodiversity conservation.

In July, the 15th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Convention on Wetlands (COP15) was held in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe, where a total of 25 resolutions were adopted, including the "Strategic Plan of the Convention on Wetlands 2025-2034." At the Wetland City Accreditation ceremony held during the same conference, Nagoya City in Aichi Prefecture was accredited. Also in the same month, Lake Inawashiro was newly registered as a Ramsar Site.

With regard to the regulation of international trade in endangered species of wild fauna and flora, the 20th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES (CITES CoP20)[(14)] was held from November 24 to December 5 in Samarkand, Uzbekistan. Japan actively participated in the deliberations from the perspective of emphasizing, based on scientific evidence, the harmonization of conservation and sustainable use of wild fauna and flora, and the implementation of rational trade regulation. Regarding the proposal to list all species of the genus Anguilla in Appendix II, Japan responded by taking the position of opposing the listing with respect to the Japanese eel, on the grounds that resource management is thoroughly implemented, sufficient resource levels are secured, and there is no risk of extinction due to international trade. The proposal was rejected in Committee I by 35 votes in favor and 100 votes against, with the opposition exceeding one-third of voting countries, and the rejection of the proposal was also finalized at the plenary session.

In recent years, illegal wildlife trade has intensified, drawing international attention as one of the key sources of funding for international terrorist organizations. Japan is working to strengthen capacity to combat illegal wildlife trade through contributions to the CITES "Monitoring the Illegal Killing of Elephants (MIKE) Programme," among others. As recent contribution results, Japan has been supporting projects in Rwanda, Botswana, Namibia, and Zimbabwe since 2021, and in October 2025 supported the "MIKE Sub-Regional Steering Committee Meeting in West Africa" held in Senegal.

Japan also contributes to international rule-making for promoting conservation and sustainable uses of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture.

Through participation in the Eleventh Session of the Governing Body of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA) held in November, Japan participated in discussions toward improving the functioning of the Multilateral System (MLS) to promote access to genetic resources and their use, including in plant breeding.

With regard to efforts in the forestry area, through contributions to the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO), Japan continued to implement field projects in 2025 that contribute to the sustainable management of tropical forests and the promotion of sustainable and legal trade in tropical timber. In October, the 61st Session of the International Tropical Timber Council was held in Panama City, Panama, where discussions were held on the renegotiation of the International Tropical Timber Agreement (ITTA), which is valid until December 6, 2029, as well as on administrative budgets.

(C) International Management of Chemicals and Hazardous Waste

From April 28 to May 9, in Geneva, Switzerland, the Joint Conferences of the Parties (COPs) to the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal, the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade, and the Stockholm

(14) Full name: Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)

Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants were held, where technical issues and operational challenges for each convention were discussed. Furthermore, in June, an intergovernmental meeting aimed at establishing a science-policy panel on the sound management of chemicals and waste and pollution prevention was held in Punta del Este, Uruguay, and the "Intergovernmental Science-policy Panel on Chemicals, Waste and Pollution (ISP-CWP)" was newly established. Japan contributed to the smooth formation of consensus, including by serving as co-chair at the meeting.

In November, the Thirty-Seventh Meeting of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer (MOP37)[(15)] was held in Nairobi, Kenya, where discussions were held on the effective implementation of the Protocol, including the enhancing of regional atmospheric monitoring.

With regard to the "Minamata Convention on Mercury," the Sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP-6) was held in Geneva, Switzerland in November, where decisions were made on the "programme of work and budget for the biennium 2026–2027," as well as and progress and future efforts on the activities of the Implementation and Compliance Committee and effectiveness evaluation were discussed. Agreement was also reached on prohibiting the manufacture, import, and export of dental amalgam by the end of 2034. Furthermore, Japan submitted a draft resolution on the regulation and management of mercury-contaminated waste and led the discussions.

B Climate Change

(A) United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement

Global efforts are essential to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, which are the cause of climate change. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), adopted in 1992, is an international framework for addressing climate change, and its ultimate objective is to achieve stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system. 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 the 21st session of the Conference of the Parties (COP21) held in Paris in December 2015. The Paris Agreement provides that parties communicate their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) 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 195 countries and organizations, including Japan (as of December 2025).

(B) Initiatives to Achieve Carbon Neutrality by 2050

In October 2020, Japan declared that it would aim to realize carbon neutrality with net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, and in April 2021, Japan announced that it aims to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 46% in fiscal year 2030 from its fiscal year 2013 levels. Furthermore, Japan announced its intention to continue its strenuous efforts in its challenge to meet the lofty goal of cutting its emissions by 50%. In February 2025, as an ambitious target consistent with the global 1.5°C goal and on a linear pathway toward achieving net zero by 2050, Japan decided to aim for reducing 60% and 73% from fiscal year 2013 levels in fiscal years 2035 and 2040 respectively, and submitted these goals as new Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) under the Paris Agreement to the UNFCCC Secretariat.

(C) 30th session of the Conference of the Parties to UNFCCC (COP30)

At COP30, held in Belém, Brazil from November 10 to November 22, host country Brazil presented the Portuguese "Mutirão" (joint effort, collaboration, working together) as the theme, and discussions were held on accelerating the implementation of the Paris Agreement and advancing international cooperation. As an outcome of COP30, the "Global Mutirão Decision" was adopted, incorporating a wide range of content spanning areas such as mitigation and finance,

(15) MOP: Meeting of the Parties

based on three pillars: (1) the 10th anniversary of the Paris Agreement; (2) transition from negotiation to implementation; and (3) accelerating implementation, solidarity, and international cooperation. Specifically, regarding mitigation, language was incorporated calling for a strong message toward achieving the 1.5°C target and early submission by countries that have not yet submitted their NDC. Regarding finance, a call was incorporated to triple adaptation finance in the context of the New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG) decided at COP29 the previous year. Separately, decisions were adopted under each negotiating agenda item, including one on the Global Goal on Adaptation, and together with the "Global Mutirão Decision," these are collectively referred to as the "Belém Political Package."

(D) Providing Assistance to Developing Countries for Climate Action

Developed countries, including Japan, are providing various forms of assistance to developing countries, including financial support, capacity building, and technology transfer, so that developing countries can implement sufficient climate action.

Japan announced at the G7 Summit in 2021 and at COP26 that it would provide climate assistance in both private and public finance totaling up to approximately 70 billion U.S. dollars over the five-year period from 2021 to 2025, and double its assistance for adaptation, totaling approximately 14.8 billion U.S. dollars, and has been steadily implementing this.

The Green Climate Fund (GCF), a multilateral fund that provides support for developing countries to address climate change, also plays an important role in this assistance. Japan has contributed a total of approximately 319 billion Japanese yen to the fund to date, and in October 2023, Japan announced that it would contribute up to approximately 165 billion Japanese yen during the second replenishment period (2024 to 2027), which is the same amount as in the first replenishment. At the GCF Board meeting in October 2025, the expanded accreditation of JICA — one of Japan's Accredited Entities (partner institutions authorized to access GCF funds) — was approved, and 22 new cooperation projects were adopted, including a results-based payment project for mitigation outcomes through JICA's activities related to reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD+) in Laos.

With regard to the "Fund for responding to Loss and Damage (FRLD)" to assist developing countries that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change, in responding to loss and damage, Japan contributed 10 million U.S. dollars (1.37 billion Japanese yen) in March 2024 and 5 million U.S. dollars (695 million Japanese yen) in March 2025. The Fund's Board has convened a total of seven times by the end of 2025, during which progress was made on the selection of an Executive Director, the establishment of the legal basis for setting up the Fund Secretariat at the World Bank, and other matters , and the board decided that an early support scheme — the "Barbados Implementation Modalities (BIM)" — will be implemented for two years from 2026.

Japan is actively contributing to discussions toward the appropriate operation of these funds as a board member of the GCF and FRLD.

(E) Asia Zero Emission Community (AZEC)[16]

On October 26, Prime Minister Takaichi co-chaired the 3rd Asia Zero Emission Community (AZEC) Leaders Meeting in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, jointly with Prime Minister Anwar of Malaysia. Prime Minister Takaichi noted that approximately 120 cooperation projects had been developed through MOUs between Japan and AZEC partner countries in the one year since the 2nd AZEC Leaders Meeting, and referred to the progress being made in the development of rules to promote activities that contribute to decarbonization of Asia, sectoral initiatives, and individual projects involving both the public and private sectors. At the meeting, AZEC partner countries adopted the AZEC Leaders' Joint Statement and its attachment "The Progress Made in 2024–2025 Following the Action Plan for Next Decade." In these documents, the importance of the AZEC principles and the need to accelerate action in "this critical decade" were reaffirmed, and progress

(16) Asia Zero Emission Community (AZEC): A platform proposed by Japan in January 2022 with the aim of having Asian countries share the vision of advancing decarbonization and cooperate to promote energy transition. There are 11 participating countries: Indonesia, Australia, Cambodia, Singapore, Thailand, Japan, the Philippines, Brunei, Viet Nam, Malaysia, and Laos.

over the past year based on the "Action Plan for Next Decade" adopted at the previous meeting was shared.

(F) Joint Crediting Mechanism (JCM)

The JCM is a mechanism for contributing to greenhouse gas emissions reduction and removal in partner countries through diffusion of advanced decarbonization technologies to these countries. The mechanism allows Japan to acquire a portion of credits from its contribution, assisting both Japan and the partner countries to achieve their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC). The "Grand Design and Action Plan for New Capitalism, Follow-up," approved by the Cabinet in June 2022 states that Japan will accelerate consultation with relevant countries, aiming to increase JCM partner countries up to around 30 by 2025. In 2025, Japan newly signed Memoranda of Cooperation on the Joint Crediting Mechanism (JCM) with Tanzania and India, and in August the number of partner countries reached 31. As of December of the same year, 290 JCM projects are being implemented with partner countries. Japan will continue to promote projects and discover new cases to reduce greenhouse gas emissions worldwide.

(G) Request for Advisory Opinion from the International Court of Justice and Japan's Response

Following the adoption in March 2023 of a United Nations General Assembly resolution requesting an advisory opinion from the International Court of Justice (ICJ) regarding the obligations of States in respect of climate change, procedures were carried out for the issuance of the advisory opinion by the ICJ. Japan submitted a written statement to the ICJ in March 2024, and then made a statement at the oral proceedings in December 2024.

In July 2025, the ICJ issued an advisory opinion on climate change, covering the obligations of States Parties under the UN Charter, climate change-related treaties and other relevant international agreements, as well as the obligations of States under customary international law. This constituted the first advisory opinion by the ICJ on State obligations in respect of climate change. Japan will continue to actively engage in strengthening the rule of law in the international community, while working proactively to address climate change, a common and urgent challenge for all humanity.

(5) Arctic and Antarctic

A Arctic

(A) Current State of the Arctic

The Arctic Circle is centered on the Arctic Ocean and extends north of 66°33' north latitude. Five countries (the U.S., Canada, Denmark, Norway, and Russia) are Arctic Ocean coastal States, and eight countries (adding Iceland, Sweden, and Finland to the above five countries) comprise the Arctic States.

If effective countermeasures are not taken, the Arctic Ocean's summer sea ice will likely disappear almost completely by the middle of this century. Furthermore, the effects of global warming are more amplified in the Arctic than in any other region of the globe, and rapid changes in the Arctic environment due to global warming could have serious and irreversible effects on the livelihoods of the inhabitants and the ecosystems of the Arctic. On the other hand, the decreasing amount of sea ice is giving rise to growing economic opportunities such as the use of the Northern Sea Route and the development of resources. In response to changes in the strategic environment, some Arctic States and others are also strengthening their security initiatives to secure their own interests.

The Arctic Council (AC),[(17)] established by the eight Arctic States, plays a central role in addressing issues related to the Arctic. Based on the discussions and knowledge sharing with relevant countries and Indigenous peoples at the AC, policies decided at the Ministerial meetings are orienting cooperation in the Arctic. In May 2025, the chairmanship transitioned from Norway to Denmark (for a two-year term). The AC has identified climate change countermeasures, environmental protection, sustainable development,

(17) An intergovernmental consultation body established in 1996 with the aim of promoting cooperation, coordination, and interaction among the eight Arctic States (Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden, and the U.S.), on common issues related to the Arctic region (in particular, sustainable development, environmental protection, etc.), while gaining the involvement of indigenous communities. (It does not address military and security issues.) Japan obtained observer status in 2013.

and the rights and livelihoods of Indigenous peoples as priority issues, and cooperation on these issues is taking place. In addition, while the AC does not address military and security issues, peace and security in the Arctic is a major challenge among the Arctic States.

Non-Arctic states have also become increasingly interested in the Arctic in recent years due to global warming and expanding economic opportunities. In addition to Japan, the UK, France, Germany, Spain, the Netherlands, Poland, China, India, Italy, Singapore, the Republic of Korea (ROK), and Switzerland are observer states to the AC.

(B) Japan's Arctic Policy and International Activities

Japan is aiming to contribute to the international community with an emphasis on three areas, research and development, international cooperation, and sustainable use, based on "Japan's Arctic Policy" announced in 2015. Japan established the post of Ambassador in charge of Arctic Affairs to oversee issues related to the Arctic. In addition, based on the "Ocean Development Strategy" formulated in 2024, Japan is promoting research and development and sustainable utilization of the Arctic region, as well as international cooperation in Arctic policy. Furthermore, Japan aims to accelerate Arctic research and strengthen international collaboration by utilizing the Arctic research vessel 'Mirai II,' which is expected to enter service in 2026, as an international research platform. Japan places importance on cooperation related to the Arctic in its bilateral relations and regional cooperation with the Arctic States. Japan's "Nordic Diplomacy Initiative," the basic policy of Japan's Nordic diplomacy announced in January 2024, also lists the Arctic as a major area of cooperation. Additionally, as an observer of the AC, Japan has been contributing to the AC's efforts through discussions and knowledge sharing at the Senior Arctic Official meetings, the sectoral Working Groups, and the Expert Groups of the AC on topics such as conservation of Arctic flora and fauna, protection of Arctic marine environment, and sustainable development, and will continue to actively participate in these meetings. Furthermore, various forums hosted by the Arctic States and attended by a wide range of stakeholders from industry, government, and academia are also promoting the exchange of opinions and knowledge sharing on issues related to the Arctic. Moreover, exchanges of views and sharing of insights on Arctic issues are taking place at various forums hosted by Arctic States. In particular, by participating in events such as the Arctic Frontiers Conference, the Arctic Encounter Symposium, and the Arctic Circle Assembly, which bring together a diverse range of stakeholders from industry, government, and academia, Japan is sharing its knowledge on Arctic scientific research and conveying the importance of the rule of law in the Arctic Ocean.

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 adopted in 1959, 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 Consultative Meeting (ATCM) and the Protection of Antarctic Environment

At the 47th Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting (ATCM47), held in Milan, Italy from June to July, discussions were held on a framework for tourism activities in the Antarctic, information exchange, and the engagement of the Antarctic Treaty System in addressing climate change issues. The next session, the 48th Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting (ATCM48), for which Japan will serve as the host country for the first time in 32 years, is scheduled to be held in Hiroshima City in May 2026.

(C) Japan's Antarctic Observation

As for Japan's Antarctic observation activities, Japan is implementing research and observation activities based on the 10th six-year plan of the Japanese Antarctic Research program (from FY2022 to FY2027), in

Special Feature

Japan's SDGs Progress Report: Voluntary National Review (VNR) 2025



VNR Report on the implementation of 2030 Agenda

In July, at the Ministerial Segment of the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) held in New York, the United States (U.S.), State Minister for Foreign Affairs MIYAJI Takuma presented, on behalf of the Government of Japan, a Voluntary National Review (VNR) on the implementation of 2030 Agenda.[1] The VNR is an important opportunity for Member States of the United Nations (UN) to conduct regular reviews of progress toward the SDGs, based on the "2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" adopted at the UN Summit in 2015.

In this VNR, Japan highlighted, as one of its strengths in promoting the SDGs, the fact that the SDGs have broadly permeated Japanese society, with diverse stakeholders actively engaging from their respective positions. Japan also affirmed that the concept of "everyone will make it happen" is indispensable to realizing the SDGs' principles of "Leave No One Behind." Against this backdrop, Japan expressed its commitment to continuing its efforts toward achieving the SDGs without wavering, together with various stakeholders, even amid a challenging international situation.

The VNR process itself embodies this multi-stakeholder partnership. Diverse stakeholders, centered on the members of the SDGs Promotion Roundtable Meeting,[2] were actively involved, and an independent stakeholder assessment chapter was included. In March, a "Stakeholder Meeting toward the Implementation of the VNR" was convened to facilitate an exchange of views among stakeholders from a wide range of fields. Furthermore, opinions from a broad spectrum of the public were incorporated through a public comment process.

Japan also presented its approach, as a "nation on the leading edge of societal challenges," to addressing the issues it faces, including the declining birthrate and aging population, SDGs promotion in local communities, and disaster risk reduction. Japan set out its intention to draw on these experiences and knowledge and to co-create with the international community, making use of opportunities such as the Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan.

At the HLPF presentation, Japan made concerted efforts to deliver a concrete and impactful address based on these principles. Through video, Japan introduced "WheeLog!," an accessibility digital map developed by ODA Yuriko (Founder and Executive Director of Non-Profit Organization, WheeLog!), that assists wheelchair users with their mobility. This was followed by a presentation by CHIBA Soichiro (Chair of Y7/Y20, Founder of Thousandleaf LLC), a member of the SDGs Promotion Roundtable Meeting, who spoke from a youth perspective on the nature of a sustainable society. Finally, KANIE Norichika (Professor, Graduate School of Keio University) highlighted the importance of the multi-stakeholder partnership fostered through the VNR process, and stated that Japan should jointly engage in discussions on frameworks beyond 2030.


Japan's Delegation at the HLPF Ministerial Segment (July 22, New York, U.S.)

Japan will play a leading role in achieving the SDGs and in discussions and rule-making on international sustainability beyond 2030.

1 For the VNR report, see the Ministry of Foreign Affairs website:
https://warp.ndl.go.jp/web/20251018203906/https://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/oda/sdgs/vnr/vnr2025en.html
2 A consultative body established under the SDGs Promotion Headquarters at the Prime Minister's Office, in which a wide range of stakeholders from government, NGOs, NPOs, experts, the private sector, youth, and various organizations gather to exchange views and cooperatively advance Japan's efforts toward achieving the SDGs.

1

addition to long-term continuous observation. The 10th six-year plan aims to conduct various research observation to understand past and present changes in the ice sheets, ocean and atmospheric general circulation, and upper atmosphere in the Antarctic region as well as elucidating their mechanisms.

3 Science and Technology Diplomacy

Science and technology constitute the foundational elements for peace and prosperity that support socio-economic 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 science and technology diplomacy efforts, 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 KISHI Teruo, Professor Emeritus of the University of Tokyo, as the first Science and Technology Advisor. Following the end of his term, Prof. Kishi was replaced by MATSUMOTO Yoichiro, Professor Emeritus of the University of Tokyo as the new advisor in April 2020. Moreover, KANO Mitsunobu, Professor of Okayama University, has assumed the post as the first Science and Technology Co-Advisor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs to support the work of the Science and Technology Advisor in April 2019.From April 2022, KOTANI Motoko, Executive Director of RIKEN, a National Research and Development Agency, and Executive Vice President of Tohoku University, assumed the post as the new Co-Advisor. Prof. Matsumoto and Dr. Kotani support the activities of the Foreign Minister from the perspective of science and technology, and provide advice on the utilization of science, technology and innovation in the planning and coordination of various foreign policies to the Minister and relevant divisions.

Additionally, the Science and Technology Diplomacy Advisory Network has been established under the supervision of the Science and Technology Advisor, aiming to make further contributions in the process of planning and formulating various diplomatic policies. As part of this network, "The Advisory Board for Promoting Science & Technology Diplomacy," consisting of 22 experts from related fields, with Prof. Matsumoto as the chair and Dr. Kotani as the vice-chair, hold meetings regularly to discuss various topics aimed at enhancing the structure and function of science and technology diplomacy. The 8th Advisory Board Meeting was held in December.

Prof. Matsumoto and Dr. Kotani are working to build and strengthen a network of science and technology advisors from various governments by taking advantage of opportunities such as meetings of the Foreign Ministry Science & Technology Advisors Network (FMSTAN), which brings together science and technology advisors from the foreign ministries of various countries. Prof. Matsumoto visited Germany and Switzerland in October, the Netherlands and Italy in November, and Denmark in December; Dr. Kotani visited the U.S. in February, the UK in March, Malaysia in August, and Mexico in December. At meetings with science and technology organizations in each country, they introduced Japan's science and technology diplomacy initiatives and exchanged views with counterparts on science and technology cooperation.

Moreover, Prof. Matsumoto regularly hosts science and technology diplomacy seminars by inviting experts in various fields to raise the level of knowledge on science and technology within MOFA.

In terms of science and technology cooperation with other countries, Japan has concluded 33 bilateral science and technology cooperation agreements with 47

countries and the EU.[18] Based on these agreements, it organizes regular Joint Committee meetings with these countries to conduct intergovernmental dialogue. In 2025, Japan held Joint Committee meetings with Israel, Switzerland, Germany, India, Brazil, the ROK, and Chile, and with the attendance of relevant ministries and agencies, discussed the current state of cooperation in various fields and future directions.

In December 2025, Japan reached an agreement in principle with the European Commission on an agreement concerning Japan's associate membership in Horizon Europe, the EU's international research and development support framework.

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 is 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 and the Caucasus region. Japan also participates in ITER project to demonstrate the scientific and technological feasibility of fusion energy.

(18) The Japan-USSR Science and Technology Cooperation Agreement was succeeded by Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Armenia, Georgia, Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, Turkmenistan, and Tajikistan on different dates. The Japan-Czechoslovakia Science and Technology Cooperation Arrangement was succeeded by the Czech Republic and Slovakia respectively in 1993. The Japan-Yugoslavia Science and Technology Cooperation Agreement was succeeded by Croatia, Slovenia, Macedonia (name at that time), Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Montenegro on different dates.

Column

Strategic Strengthening of Science and Technology Diplomacy Centered on International Brain Circulation

MATSUMOTO Yoichiro, Science and Technology Advisor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs (MOFA)



The author

While global challenges such as climate change, environmental degradation, and resource constraints are becoming increasingly serious, it is also said that the international community has entered an unpredictable and divided era amid rising geopolitical tensions in recent years. In today's world, where such complex factors are intertwined, ever more sophisticated diplomatic strategies are required. Science and technology diplomacy, which links science and technology — indispensable for addressing global challenges — with diplomacy, is one such strategy and is being practiced by many countries.

Science and technology is not merely a driving force of economic growth; its importance in the realm of social and public policy has also grown simultaneously. As complex and global social challenges become apparent, science and technology is being deployed not only to advance specific fields and strengthen economic competitiveness, but also as a means of achieving social sustainability and serving the public interest. Underlying this shift is the fact that the impact of science and technology on society has expanded to a point where its relationship with society, including ethical, legal, and social acceptance dimensions, can no longer be ignored. At its core is the growing emphasis on the concept of inclusiveness: the pursuit of a society in which everyone can equitably enjoy the benefits of science and technology.

As seen in recent developments surrounding critical and emerging technologies, science and technology can function both as a strategic resource that influences competition among nations and as a factor of disparities among them. At the same time, science and technology, as the common knowledge of humanity, also constitutes a foundation for dialogue and cooperation. No recent research in science and technology can be completed within a single state; it has evolved into activities that presuppose the movement of human resources across borders and the establishment of sustainable international networks. Many countries are implementing policies, centered on both attracting outstanding researchers from abroad while strategically sending domestic talent overseas, thereby raising both the level of research and international influence. Statistically, international collaborative research co-authored by multinational teams shows markedly higher citation counts and greater research-paper impact compared to teams comprising a single institution or nationality. In order for Japan's science and technology to maintain its presence in the world going forward, and to enhance its international contributions and diplomatic influence through science and technology, it is necessary for Japan as a nation to clearly position a human resource strategy, with international brain circulation at its core. To that end, the integration of science and technology diplomacy, the strategic external foundation, with science and technology policy, the domestic institutional foundation, is indispensable. MOFA is also advancing initiatives that contribute to the promotion of international brain circulation, including the establishment of Science and Technology Fellows at diplomatic missions overseas and support for building networks of leading Japanese researchers active abroad.

The challenge of science and technology diplomacy lies in how to achieve both "competition" and "co-creation" between states simultaneously. Today, when technology is deeply intertwined with economic security, neither complete openness nor complete closure is realistic. What is needed is "strategic coordination," that is, a framework for working together with trusted countries and regions on common challenges. It is important to also explicitly articulate the promotion of science and technology diplomacy in science and technology policy, and to strongly communicate and implement an approach in which Japan works as one.

Section 3 Economic Diplomacy

1 Overview of Economic Diplomacy

(1) Overview

In the international community, as competition among nations intensifies and shifts in the balance of power are accelerating and becoming increasingly complex, uncertainty in the global economy is mounting. In particular, events such as the COVID-19 pandemic from 2020 onward, Russia's aggression against Ukraine, and the escalating situation in the Middle East have exposed vulnerabilities in supply chains and caused surging prices for energy and commodities. As protectionism and inward-looking tendencies strengthen globally, there is also an urgent need to address the resilience of supply chains, including those for critical minerals, as well as non-market policies and practices and economic coercion.

Against this backdrop, in August the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) undertook an organizational reform to address diplomatic policy in an even more agile and strategic manner, establishing within the Economic Affairs Bureau a new Economic Policy Coordination Division, a new Economic Diplomacy Strategy Division, and a new Economic Security Division. Under this new structure, MOFA will strategically advance economic diplomacy, centered on three pillars: (a) creating new markets and innovation; (b) maintaining and strengthening the rules-based, free and fair international economic order; and (c) strengthening economic security, thereby contributing to the enhancement of Japan's economic power, which is the foundation of Japan's national strength. Specifically, first, in order to create new markets and innovation, MOFA will diplomatically support the overseas expansion of Japanese companies and the technologies in which Japan holds competitive advantages in global markets, including in countries known as the "Global South," which represent growth markets, and will pursue efforts to promote inward foreign direct investment in Japan and international brain circulation. Second, in order to maintain and strengthen the rules-based, free and fair international economic order, MOFA will continue to work in coordination with the ally and like-minded countries to lead multilateral and bilateral discussions. MOFA will also take the lead in shaping international rules in new areas including artificial intelligence (AI), promote economic partnerships through the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) and other agreements, and work to maintain and strengthen the rules and frameworks of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Third, as the importance of economic security continues to grow, with a view to ensuring Japan's strategic autonomy and strategic indispensability, MOFA will work to strengthen the resilience of supply chains including those for critical minerals, protect and promote the development of critical and emerging technologies, and ensure stable supplies of energy and food. MOFA will also actively engage in discussions aimed at strengthening the international economic order in a manner that serves Japan's economic security, including through responses to non-market policies and practices and economic coercion.

(2) Responding to New and Emerging Challenges

With technological innovation, new challenges that require cross-cutting approaches have also emerged. In particular, as a technology that now determines national power, AI has not only intensified competition among countries but has also become an important area of diplomacy directly linked to security.

As a major AI-related diplomatic event in 2025, the AI Action Summit was held in France in February, attended

by government representatives from approximately 90 countries, representatives of international organizations, and private-sector entities. On the occasion of the Summit, Japan signed the Council of Europe Framework Convention on Artificial Intelligence and Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law. At the G7 Kananaskis Summit in Canada in June, the "G7 Leaders' Statement on AI for Prosperity" was released. In July, the United States (U.S.) announced an AI Action Plan, and shortly thereafter, China held the World Artificial Intelligence Conference (WAIC) and announced the "AI Global Governance Action Plan." In August, the UN General Assembly adopted a Terms of Reference (TOR) resolution for the "Independent International Scientific Panel on Artificial Intelligence" and the "Global Dialogue on Artificial Intelligence Governance."

Since taking the lead in launching the "Hiroshima AI Process"(1) on international governance of generative AI in 2023, Japan has actively contributed to the development of international rules toward building an ecosystem of "safe, secure, and trustworthy AI." Through the "Hiroshima AI Process Friends Group," Japan has been working to expand the implementation of the Hiroshima Process International Guiding Principles for All AI Actors and the Hiroshima Process International Code of Conduct for Organizations Developing Advanced AI Systems. In February 2025, Japan held the first in-person meeting of the Friends Group in Tokyo. During the same year, Malaysia, Indonesia, Egypt, Switzerland, and the Philippines newly joined the Friends Group, and as of December of that year, the Group had expanded to 60 countries and region.

At the same time, Japan is advancing efforts to co-create an ecosystem of "safe, secure, and trustworthy AI" together with Global South countries, including India, Africa, ASEAN (the Association of Southeast Asian Nations), and Central Asia, in a manner tailored to the needs of each country and region. For example, at the Japan-ASEAN Summit in October, Japan announced the launch of the "Japan-ASEAN Co-Creation Initiative for Artificial Intelligence (AI)," aimed at jointly building an AI ecosystem in ASEAN across the following four pillars: Co-Creation of AI Solutions, Institutional Development and Governance, Human Resource Development and Capacity Building, and Infrastructure Support.

Japan will continue to advance "safe, secure, and trustworthy AI," promote the development of international AI governance, and foster innovation through the use of AI by utilizing opportunities such as summit and foreign ministers' meetings, as well as diplomatic missions overseas, while strengthening coordination with like-minded countries.

2 Revitalizing the Economy through Support for the Overseas Expansion of Japanese Companies and Inbound Demand and Investment

(1) Promotion of Japanese Companies' Overseas Business Expansion by MOFA and Diplomatic Missions Overseas

Many Japanese companies that support the development of the Japanese economy are actively engaged in overseas expansion, and the number of Japanese companies operating overseas has been increasing over the medium- to long-term, despite being affected by domestic and overseas economic conditions and other circumstances. From the perspective of incorporating into the Japanese economy the momentum of economic growth overseas, including in Global South countries, support for Japanese companies by the government is also becoming increasingly important.

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 each diplomatic mission overseas, under the motto of being "the world's most open and approachable government offices," ambassadors and consuls-general themselves take the lead, working together with staff including

(1) The Hiroshima AI Process: A process for discussing international rules about generative AI, launched at the G7 Hiroshima Summit in May 2023, under Japan's presidency. In the G7 leaders' statement of December 2023, the "Hiroshima AI Process Comprehensive Policy Framework" including "Hiroshima Process International Guiding Principles for All AI Actors" and "Hiroshima Process International Code of Conduct for Organizations Developing Advanced AI Systems" was endorsed.

Japanese business support officers, officials in charge of cross-border economic affairs, and other staff, to provide support tailored to local conditions and company needs — including providing various information to Japanese companies, lobbying foreign governments, and supporting entry into third-country markets. In addition, MOFA provides consultation services regarding economic coercion, and some diplomatic missions overseas in Asia, Africa, and other regions utilize Japanese lawyers who are familiar with local laws, regulations and legal situations to hold seminars and legal consultations on local legal systems.

Furthermore, diplomatic missions overseas have been actively utilizing facilities such as embassies and ambassadors' residences and other facilities as venues to publicize and promote the "Japan Brand" — including products, technologies, and services from Japanese companies, as well as Japanese agricultural, forestry, and fishery products — at various events including product exhibitions and tastings by Japanese companies, business development seminars, and local government trade fairs, as well as for interacting and networking with local companies and related organizations.

(2) Promotion of the Japanese Infrastructure System in Overseas Business Expansion

To capture infrastructure demand, especially from emerging economies, and to promote overseas deployment of infrastructure systems by Japanese companies, the Ministerial Meeting on Strategy relating to Infrastructure Export and Economic Cooperation, chaired by the Chief Cabinet Secretary and comprising relevant cabinet ministers, was established in 2013, and 58 meetings were held by December 2025. This Meeting annually revised and followed up on the "Infrastructure System Export Strategy" formulated in 2013, and in December 2024, in light of changes surrounding the overseas deployment of infrastructure systems such as structural changes in the global infrastructure market, it formulated the "Infrastructure System Overseas Promotion Strategy 2030," which sets out the future direction for overseas expansion including in areas that go beyond traditional concepts of infrastructure, and charts a course for the public and private sectors to work together to achieve growth for both Japan and its partner countries. The strategy lays out specific measures across three pillars: (a) enhancing Japan's "earning power" and global competitiveness through co-creation with partner countries; (b) prompt response to new societal requirements such as economic security, and securing national interests; and (c) an agile response to seize opportunities in GX (Green Transformation), DX (Digital Transformation) and other social changes. The strategy also sets a goal of achieving 45 trillion yen in orders for infrastructure systems by 2030. In addition to promoting top-level sales, including at the leaders and foreign minister levels, MOFA is also providing support through diplomatic missions overseas and through the more effective and strategic use of Official Development Assistance (ODA), including the Co-creation for Common Agenda Initiative.

(3) Promotion of the Export of Japanese Agricultural, Forestry and Fishery Products and Food (Including Efforts toward the Removal of Import Restrictions on Japanese Food Products after the Great East Japan Earthquake)

Expanding exports of Japan's agricultural, forestry, and fishery products and food is a major objective of the Government of Japan. Based on the "Strategy for Export Expansion of Agricultural, Forestry, Fishery Products and Food," which was revised in May 2025, the government is making a concerted effort to accelerate its initiatives. MOFA is also working with related ministries and agencies, Japanese companies, and local governments to further expand exports of Japan's agricultural, forestry, and fishery products and food. In particular, Japanese business support officers (in charge of the food industry) have been assigned to 85 diplomatic missions overseas in 63 countries and regions, and some of these missions also have "advisors for promoting the export of agriculture, forestry, and fishery products and food" who are familiar with local conditions. In addition, MOFA is actively promoting the attractiveness of Japanese agricultural, forestry, and fishery products and food through its network of diplomatic missions overseas and by utilizing social media and other means, as well as by seizing various opportunities such as receptions and cultural events to which dignitaries from various countries and

regions are invited. Furthermore, at diplomatic missions overseas in some cities, "Export Support Platforms" have been established together with the Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) overseas offices and the Japan Food Product Overseas Promotion Center (JFOODO), and MOFA is working in coordination with relevant organizations to further promote exports.

One of the biggest barriers to increasing exports is import restrictions on Japanese agricultural, forestry and fishery products and food by countries and regions following the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO)'s Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station accident. Completely eliminating these restrictions and addressing Japan's reputational damage are top priorities for the Government of Japan, and 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, a total of 50 countries and regions have lifted their restrictions, including Taiwan, which announced the lifting of restrictions in November 2025.

As of the end of that year, five countries and regions still maintained restrictions (the Republic of Korea, China, Hong Kong, Macau, and Russia). In particular, China, Hong Kong, Macau, and Russia newly strengthened their restrictions following the start of the discharge of ALPS treated water(2) into the sea in August 2023.

With regard to China, in September 2024, the two countries announced a "Shared Recognition between Japan and China" regarding the discharge of ALPS treated water into the sea and import restrictions on Japanese aquatic products. The Chinese side committed to conducting additional measures under the IAEA framework. Following the measures, China will adjust its import restriction measures on Japanese marine products, thereby steadily restoring those imports. Since October 2024, the missions of additional measures have been conducted on multiple occasions with the participation of experts from third countries including China, and the published results reports have confirmed the safety of the discharge of ALPS treated water into the sea. The Chinese government has also announced that the results of analyses of samples completed to date have been normal. At the end of June 2025, the Chinese government issued a public notice restoring imports of aquatic products from certain regions of Japan. With regard to the resumption of imports of Japanese aquatic products, it is of utmost importance to faithfully implement the "Shared Recognition between Japan and China" announced in September 2024, and the Government of Japan will continue to urge China to facilitate exports, including by promptly re-registering Japan-side export-related facilities, and will strongly call for the lifting of the remaining import restrictions on agricultural and aquatic products from 10 prefectures.

At the WTO, Japan has consistently and strongly urged China and other countries and regions to promptly remove their restrictions at relevant WTO committees, and has explained its position at those meetings, and has also requested discussions with China and other countries and regions based on the Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS Agreement). Furthermore, in accordance with the provisions of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) Agreement to which both Japan and China are parties, Japan has requested discussions and technical consultations with the Chinese government and has asked China to respond to the request in accordance with its obligations under the Agreement. MOFA will closely work with the relevant ministries, agencies, local governments and international organizations and will continue taking every opportunity and making every effort to persistently explain and appeal to these countries and regions, with the goal of having restrictions promptly removed and reputational damage repaired based on scientific evidence.

(4) Foreign Direct Investment in Japan

With regard to promotion of foreign direct investment in Japan, the Council for Promotion of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in Japan, which has met every year since 2014, is spearheading initiatives to promote activities for discovering and attracting investments.

(2) ALPS treated water is water that contained radioactive substances from inside the buildings of the Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO)'s Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station (FDNPS) and has been purified and treated through multiple treatment facilities, including ALPS (Advanced Liquid Processing System), until the concentrations of all radioactive substances besides tritium satisfy the safety regulatory standards. As for tritium, the water is significantly diluted with seawater before the discharge into the sea so that it fully satisfies safety regulatory standards.

The Council gathers feedback from foreign company managers and takes measures such as regulatory and institutional reforms and support measures that help improve the investment environment in Japan. At its 13th meeting held in June 2025, the "Program for Promotion of Foreign Direct Investment in Japan 2025" was formulated, organizing newly identified issues under five pillars, and the government is addressing them across ministries and agencies. The Basic Policy on Economic and Fiscal Management and Reform 2025 (Basic Policy 2025), which was formulated by the Council on Economic and Fiscal Policy and then decided by the Cabinet, also sets targets of achieving a balance of 120 trillion yen in foreign direct investment in Japan by 2030 and 150 trillion yen as early as possible in the first half of the 2030s.

MOFA is strategically implementing various initiatives through diplomatic missions overseas based on the measures formulated by the Council for Promotion of Foreign Direct Investment in Japan. In FY2024, the "Contact Points for Promotion of Foreign Direct Investment in Japan," established at 126 diplomatic missions overseas, conducted collect information which contributes to improving investment-related rules and regulations, calling for foreign direct investment in Japan by leveraging networks of diplomatic missions overseas, and holding events to promote foreign direct investment in Japan, among other initiatives. More than 850 activities were conducted in FY2024. In June 2023, "FDI Task Forces" were established in five locations (New York, London, Paris, Dusseldorf, and Sydney), through collaboration between heads of diplomatic missions overseas and JETRO overseas offices, in order to fundamentally strengthen mechanisms to attract human resources and investment from overseas. In January 2025, six additional locations (Los Angeles, Toronto, Amsterdam, Singapore, New Delhi, and Dubai) were added, expanding the network to a total of 11 locations, further strengthening foreign direct investment attraction activities.

In Japan, MOFA held a Global Business Seminar in March as a means to widely disseminate information about the appeal of investing in Japan and its regions as seen from overseas. Lectures were given by government, local government, and business representatives, and lively discussions were held by the more than 100 people in attendance, which included representatives of domestic and international companies, foreign missions in Japan, and chambers of commerce, as well as national and local government officials.

(5) Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan and International Horticultural Expo 2027, Yokohama, Japan (GREEN×EXPO 2027)

Under the theme of "Designing Future Society for Our Lives," Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan was held at Yumeshima, Osaka, from April 13 to October 13, 2025. With 165 official participants (countries, regions, and international organizations) — the largest number ever for an international exposition held in Japan — more than 29 million visitors from around the world attended over the 184-day period, and the Expo concluded as a great success. The Expo provided a valuable opportunity for many Japanese citizens to deepen their engagement with the world and to widely promote Japan's appeal to the international community.

During the Expo, National Days and Special Days of official participating countries, regions, and international organizations were held throughout the period, and many members of royal families, heads of state and government, and ministers from various countries visited the Expo site as official guests of Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan invited by the Government of Japan. These distinguished guests from various countries attended official ceremonies and cultural events at the Expo venue, visited the pavilions of their own countries and the Japan Pavilion, and deepened their engagement with Japan by showcasing and sharing their unique cultures. Many dignitaries also took the opportunity of their visit to Japan to hold meetings with Prime Minister Ishiba, Foreign Minister Iwaya, other cabinet ministers, members of the Diet, and leading figures from the business community. The visits to Japan by dignitaries from various countries during the Expo period contributed to strengthening bilateral relations, served as an opportunity to incorporate overseas vitality into Japan through business-related engagements, and also provided opportunities for regional revitalization.

In 2027, the International Horticultural Expo 2027, Yokohama, Japan (GREEN×EXPO 2027) is scheduled to be held in the City of Yokohama under the theme of "Scenery of the Future for Happiness." This Expo aims

Column

Support for Japanese Companies through Diplomatic Missions Overseas

With the aim of becoming "the most open and responsive diplomatic mission in the world," each diplomatic mission overseas actively responds to inquiries and requests for assistance from Japanese companies. While the content of inquiries and the nature of support vary depending on local conditions — including regional characteristics, political and economic circumstances, and the number of Japanese companies — these missions follow the "Guidelines for Supporting Japanese Companies' Activities Overseas" as a uniform guiding framework, while leveraging a wide range of networks and various tools including support schemes of relevant ministries and agencies such as Official Development Assistance (ODA). For example, through the "Contact Points for Japanese Business Support," the following support is provided.

- Provision of local information (political situation and security, laws and regulations, market trends, etc.)
- Promotional activities for Japanese products utilizing diplomatic mission facilities
- Lobbying foreign government authorities toward regulatory and systemic improvements and other reforms
- Provision of legal consultation services through the cooperation of Japanese lawyers
- Collection and provision of infrastructure-related information
- Response to economic coercion

Such support examples by diplomatic missions overseas are posted on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) website as "Good Practices in Japanese Business Support." For instance, in India, a Supreme Court ruling triggered large-scale tax investigations targeting Japanese and other foreign companies. The companies concerned were required to bear substantial tax burdens, including arrears and penalties. In response, the Embassy of Japan in India, working in coordination with the Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) New Delhi office and the Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry in India, gathered and consolidated information on the impact on Japanese companies and subsequently lobbied repeatedly to the Government of India. As a result, the Ministry of Finance of India issued a circular instructing the tax authorities not to carelessly impose taxation based on the said Supreme Court ruling, but rather to carefully examine the facts of each case. Furthermore, a subsequent legislative amendment led to a substantive reduction in the actual tax burden on Japanese companies.

MOFA will continue to work, under the close coordination between MOFA headquarters and diplomatic missions overseas, as well as in cooperation with relevant ministries and agencies, to utilize various opportunities and tools to support the enhancement of the international competitiveness of Japanese companies and the improvement of the overseas business environment, and to provide support for the activities of individual Japanese companies.



A scene from a symposium held in coordination with Japan's business community (March 4, Embassy of Japan in the United Kingdom)

to present "Nature-based Solutions" to global challenges including coexistence with nature centered on flowers and greenery, as well as sustainable agriculture, climate change, and decarbonization. MOFA, working in coordination with the Japan Association for the International Horticultural Expo 2027, Yokohama and relevant ministries and agencies, is making full use of diplomatic opportunities to actively invite countries and international organizations to participate, while also supporting the exhibition preparations of countries and international organizations that intend to participate.

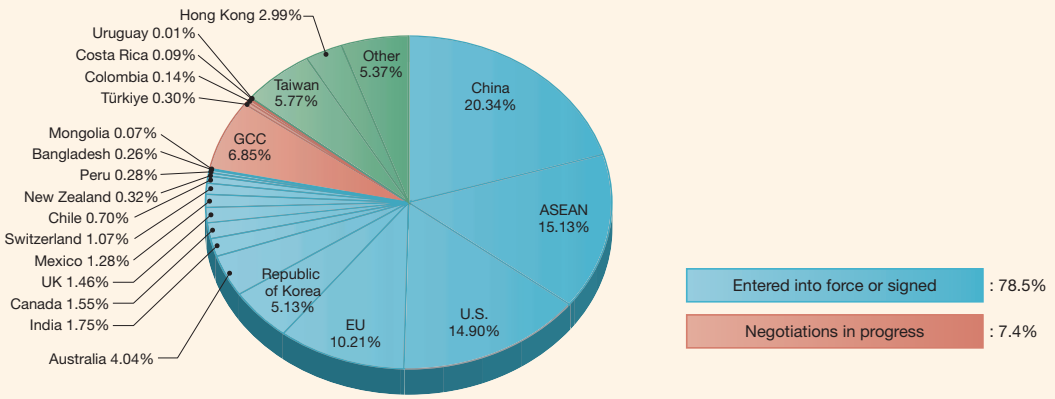
3 Maintaining and Strengthening a Rules-Based, Free and Fair International Economic Order

(1) Promotion of Economic Partnerships

In recent years, despite the advancement of economic globalism, uncertainty in the international economy is increasing due to increasingly pronounced protectionist movements and conflicts in various parts of the world. 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.

Regarding bilateral EPAs, after vigorous negotiations, Japan signed an EPA with Bangladesh in February 2026, and is also advancing negotiations on EPAs with the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)[(3)] Concerning the CPTPP, at the Ninth Commission Meeting of the CPTPP held in November 2025, Uruguay, the UAE, the Philippines, and Indonesia were identified as aspirant economies— which are in line with the Auckland Principles,[(4)] on the response to new accession requests as confirmed among the Parties. Moreover, the decision was made to establish an Accession Working Group (AWG) for Uruguay. Additionally, decisions were made to commence negotiations on amendments to the Agreement in the areas such as Electronic Commerce, Trade in Services, Customs Administration and Trade Facilitation, Competitiveness and Business Facilitation,

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 January 2026))

(3) Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC): Established by Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Bahrain, Oman, Qatar, and Kuwait.

(4) Principles for responding to new accession requests (the three Auckland Principles):
(a) Being ready to meet the high standards of the Agreement;
(b) Having demonstrated a track record of complying with trade commitments;
(c) Decisions being made based on the consensus of CPTPP Parties.

including provisions for the supply chain resilience. Furthermore, the Parties reaffirmed to advance work toward strengthening the implementation and operation of the Agreement against economic coercion and market-distorting practices.

As of the end of 2025, Japan's EPA/FTA ratio (the proportion of trade volume with countries with which Japan has EPA or FTA that have already entered into force or been signed, to Japan's total trade volume) reached approximately 78.5% (source: 2026 Trade Statistics of Japan, Ministry of Finance). Japan will continue working actively toward the strategic expansion of the CPTPP while maintaining its high standards, ensure the transparent implementation of the RCEP Agreement, and negotiate other EPAs in order to expand the free and fair economic order that is the basis for its own peace and prosperity.

A Multilateral Agreements, etc.

(A) Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP)

The CPTPP sets high-standard rules in a wide range of areas, including tariffs, services, investment, e-commerce, intellectual property, and state-owned enterprises. It also provides opportunities 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 CPTPP has great strategic significance in that it will establish a free and fair economic order with countries sharing fundamental values and principles, including freedom, democracy, fundamental human rights and the rule of law, and contribute significantly to the security of Japan and stability in the Indo Pacific region, ensuring regional and global peace and prosperity. The 12 countries of Japan, Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, the U.S., and Viet Nam signed the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPP Agreement) in February 2016. However, due to the U.S.' announcement of its withdrawal from the TPP Agreement in January 2017, Japan proactively led discussions among the 11 countries for the early realization of the TPP. Agreement in principle was reached at the TPP Ministerial Meeting in November 2017, and the CPTPP was signed in Chile in March 2018. Six countries (Mexico, Japan, Singapore, New Zealand, Canada, and Australia) completed their domestic procedures, satisfying the conditions required for the entry into force of the agreement, and the agreement entered into force on December 30, 2018. The agreement entered into force for all 11 countries that signed it, with Viet Nam becoming a party in January 2019, Peru in September 2021, Malaysia in November 2022, Chile in February 2023, and Brunei in July 2023.

Since the CPTPP entered into force, regarding the United Kingdom (UK), which applied for accession in February 2021, the Protocol on the Accession of the UK was signed in July 2023, setting out the UK's compliance with the rules in each area prescribed by the CPTPP as well as the commitments on market access to be granted mutually by the CPTPP Parties and the UK. Japan approved the Protocol in the Diet in December of that year, after which the Protocol entered into force for 10 countries including Japan in December 2024. At the Commission Meeting of the CPTPP in November of that year, the decision was made to establish an AWG for Costa Rica's accession. At the Ninth Commission Meeting of the CPTPP held in Australia in November 2025, Uruguay, the UAE, the Philippines, and Indonesia were identified as aspirant economies— which are in line with so-called "Auckland Principles" on the response to new accession requests, as agreed among the Parties, and the decision was made to establish an AWG for Uruguay. It was also decided that accession processes for the other three economies would be commenced in 2026, if appropriate. Beyond these, China and Taiwan applied for accession in September 2021, Ecuador in December 2021, Ukraine in May 2023, and Cambodia in November 2025. Japan will properly assess whether the countries, regions, and economies that have requested membership are fully capable of meeting the high standards of the CPTPP and have the intention and ability to continue to do so in their post-accession implementation, while also taking into account strategic perspectives and the understanding of the public.

(B) Japan-EU Economic Partnership Agreement (Japan-EU EPA)

In February 2019, the Japan-EU EPA, which at the time accounted for about 30% of global GDP and

40% of global trade, entered into force. The EU is an important partner for Japan, being its third largest export partner (9.3% of total exports) and third largest import partner (10.5%) (both as of 2024)

Six years have passed since the Agreement entered into force, and in 2025, work was undertaken to address challenges and promote cooperation in areas including trade in goods, technical barriers to trade, trade in services, investment and electronic commerce, government procurement, trade and sustainable development, and regulatory cooperation, with a view to further developing the expanding Japan-EU trade relations. The Government of Japan will continue to closely cooperate on further deepening the Japan-EU economic relationship by promoting efforts to ensure effective implementation of the EPA through minister-level meetings of the Joint Committee and specialized committees and working groups.

(C) Japan-UK Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (Japan-UK CEPA)

The Japan-UK CEPA, which entered into force in January 2021 after the UK left the EU, is an important cornerstone for further deepening economic relations between Japan and the UK as global strategic partners who share fundamental values. The Japan-UK CEPA, based on the Japan-EU EPA and comprising 24 chapters in total, stipulates rules that are more advanced and high-level than those of the Japan-EU EPA in such areas as electronic commerce and financial services. In addition, it is the first EPA concluded by Japan to include a chapter on promoting women's access to the opportunities and benefits created by trade. With the cooperation of the Japanese and UK governments, the Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE) Seminar 2025 was held online in February, and the Women's Economic Empowerment Forum Osaka Expo 2025 was held in August at the UK Pavilion at Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan.

The Government of Japan will continue to promote efforts to ensure effective implementation of the EPA through minister-level meetings of the Joint Committee and specialized committees and working groups, and will continue to cooperate closely to further deepen economic relations between Japan and the UK.

(D) Japan-GCC Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA)

The conclusion of the EPA with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) is important not only for the improvement of the business environment through the effects of tariff reductions and improvement to rules, but also in the interest of energy security.

EPA negotiations between Japan and the GCC began in 2006 and were then suspended in 2009. However, when Prime Minister Kishida visited Saudi Arabia in July 2023, Prime Minister Kishida and GCC Secretary General Jasem Al Budaiwi concurred to resume negotiations in 2024, and the first round of negotiations after the resumption of negotiations was held in December of that year. Two rounds of negotiations were held by December 2025.

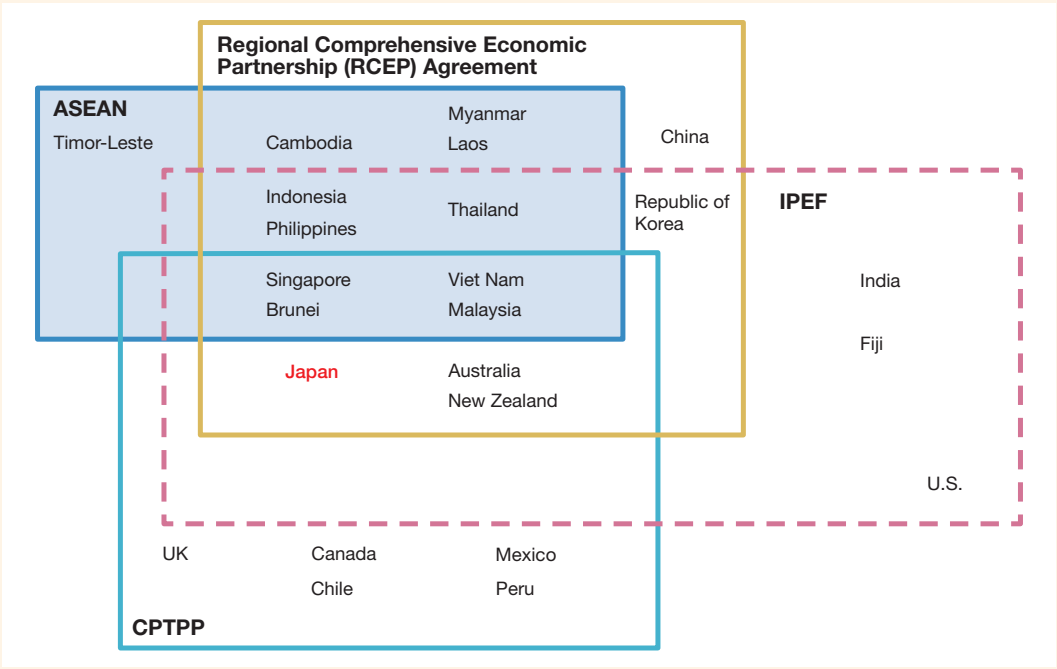
The Japan-GCC EPA is expected to provide strong support to the socio-economic reforms being promoted in the GCC countries toward industrial diversification and reduction of dependence on oil, and to contribute to further strengthening relations between Japan and the GCC.

(E) Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) Agreement

The RCEP is an economic partnership agreement involving the members of ASEAN (excluding Timor-Leste, which formally joined ASEAN in October 2025), Japan, Australia, China, the ROK, and New Zealand. RCEP participating countries account for roughly 30% of the world's total GDP, total trade value, and population. The entry into force of 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. Following the ceremony to launch negotiations for the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership held at the ASEAN-related summit in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, in November 2012, the Agreement was signed at the fourth RCEP Summit in November 2020, after approximately eight years of negotiations.

The RCEP Agreement entered into force on January 1, 2022, and a total of 11 Joint Committee meetings and four Ministers' Meetings were held by the end of 2025. In October 2025, the fifth Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) Summit — the first

■ Multilateral economic agreements in the Indo-Pacific region



since the Agreement's entry into force — was held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Japan places importance on maintaining and strengthening a rules-based, free and fair economic order in the region through the full and transparent implementation of the RCEP Agreement, and will work closely with the relevant countries to that end.

(F) Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF)

The IPEF is a framework for discussing economic cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region, and in 2024 the IPEF Supply Chain Agreement, the IPEF Clean Economy Agreement, the IPEF Agreement, and the IPEF Fair Economy Agreement entered into force. Since then, discussions on the implementation of the agreements have progressed, and various initiatives toward strengthening supply chain resilience are being undertaken in the Supply Chain Council (SCC), the Crisis Response Network (CRN), and the Labor Rights Advisory Board (LRAB) established under the Supply Chain Agreement.

(G) Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific (FTAAP)

The Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Putrajaya Vision 2040 (adopted in 2020), which outlines the medium- to long-term direction of APEC, states that APEC "will advance economic integration in the region in a manner that is market-driven, including through the work on the Free Trade Area of the Asia Pacific (FTAAP) agenda." A FTAAP agenda Work Plan was formulated in 2022, and work is underway to materialize this agenda.

Japan has contributed to sharing knowledge and supporting capacity building on the FTAAP agenda by holding workshops on the "competition chapters" in EPAs and competition policy.

At the APEC Leaders' Meeting in Peru in 2024, the "Ichma(5) Statement on A New Look at the Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific agenda" was adopted, which clearly states that new programs will be launched to examine areas such as customs procedures, investment, digital trade, competition policy, state-owned enterprises, trade and labor, and trade and environment, taking into account existing free trade agreements. It

(5) Ichma: Name of a site of ancient Peruvian civilization.

was also confirmed at the APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting in the Republic of Korea (ROK) in 2025 that these efforts would continue.

B Bilateral Agreements

(A) Japan-Türkiye Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA)

As an important country that serves as a hub among Europe, the Middle East, the Central Asia and Caucasus region, and Africa, Türkiye has considerable economic potential and is attracting attention as a production base for exports to surrounding regions. Amid high expectations from the business communities of both countries for the early conclusion of a Japan-Türkiye EPA, the two countries confirmed to launch negotiations at the Japan-Türkiye Summit Meeting in January 2014, and 17 rounds of negotiations have been held as of December 2024. Türkiye has concluded EPAs or FTAs with more than 20 countries and regions to date, and it is expected that the conclusion of this EPA will facilitate stronger competitiveness for Japanese companies.

(B) Japan-Bangladesh Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA)

Bangladesh has traditionally been a friendly country to Japan, and the two countries have fostered good relations primarily through economic cooperation. In April 2023, the relationship between the two countries was elevated to a "Strategic Partnership," and economic relations between the two countries have further developed in recent years. In light of this situation, the decision was made to launch Japan-Bangladesh EPA negotiations in March 2024, with the aim of expanding trade between the two countries, and improving the investment environment through the establishment of rules. Seven rounds of negotiations were held by the end of September 2025. Agreement in principle was reached in December, and the Agreement was signed in February 2026.

The conclusion of the Japan-Bangladesh EPA is expected to foster even stronger economic relations between the two countries, as well as contribute to realizing a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)" and to further elevating Japan's presence in South Asia.

(C) Japan-United Arab Emirates (UAE) Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA)

The UAE is an important strategic partner for Japan in terms of energy security, and in recent years the two countries have been promoting cooperation in a wide range of fields under the framework of the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership Initiative (CSPI).

With the aim of further strengthening economic relations between the two countries, including the expansion of trade and investment, the decision was made to launch negotiations for a Japan-UAE EPA in September 2024, and seven rounds of negotiations were held by January 2026.

C Other EPAs that have Entered into Force

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 the EPAs after their entry into force. Regarding the Japan-Indonesia EPA, the Protocol Amending the Agreement between Japan and Indonesia for an Economic Partnership was signed in August 2024. The Protocol received approval from the Japanese Diet in April 2025.

In accordance with the EPAs, the Government of Japan has been accepting candidates for nurses and certified care workers from Indonesia, the Philippines, and Viet Nam. In total, 4,565 (as of FY2025) candidates have been accepted from Indonesia, 4,055 from the Philippines, and 2,014 from Viet Nam. From these three countries, the total number of nurses and certified care workers who have passed national exams is 719 and 3,616 individuals, respectively, as of FY2024.

D Investment-related Agreements

Investment-related agreements (Investment agreement and EPA/FTA including investment chapter) constitute an important legal basis to improve predictability for investors and promote their investment activities by establishing common rules for the protection of investors and their investment assets, enhancement of transparency in regulations, expansion of investment opportunities, procedures for investment dispute settlement,

Current investment-related agreements (Note) (as of the end of February 2026)

Status of negotiations on investment-related agreements(Note)

In force: 54 (37 investment agreements, 17 EPAs)
Signed / not in force: 7 (5 investment agreements, 2 EPAs)
Under negotiation: 17 (13 investment agreements, 4 EPAs/FTAs)

(Note) Investment agreements and EPAs/FTAs including an investment chapter

Covering 85 countries/regions
Once the agreements under negotiation also enter into force, this will cover 97 countries/regions

In force (terminated agreements excluded) (L) denotes treaties with investment liberalization

Investment agreement

Note: A private investment arrangement with investment liberalization was made between Japan and Taiwan in 2011. ( ): year of entry into force

1 Egypt (1978)
2 Sri Lanka (1982)
3 China (1989)
4 Türkiye (1993)
5 Hong Kong (1997)
6 Bangladesh (1999)
7 Russia (2000)
8 Pakistan (2002)
9 Republic of Korea (2003)(L)
10 Viet Nam (2004) (L)
11 Cambodia (2008)(L)
12 Laos (2008)(L)
13 Uzbekistan (2009)(L)
14 Peru (2009)(L)
15 Papua New Guinea (2014)
16 Kuwait (2014)(L)
17 Iraq (2014)
18 Japan, China, and Republic of Korea (2014)
19 Myanmar (2014)(L)
20 Mozambique (2014)(L)
21 Colombia (2015)(L)
22 Kazakhstan (2015)
23 Ukraine (2015)
24 Saudi Arabia (2017)
25 Uruguay (2017)(L)
26 Iran (2017)
27 Oman (2017)
28 Kenya (2017)
29 Israel (2017)(L)
30 Armenia (2019)(L)
31 Jordan (2020)
32 United Arab Emirates (2020)
33 Cote d'Ivoire (2021)(L)
34 Georgia (2021)(L)
35 Morocco (2022)
36 Bahrain (2023)
37 Angola (2024)(L)

EPA including investment chapter

1 Singapore (2002)(L)
2 Mexico (2005)(L)
3 Malaysia (2006)(L)
4 Chile (2007)(L)
5 Thailand (2007)(L)
6 Brunei (2008)(L)
7 Indonesia (2008)(L)
8 Philippines (2008)(L)
9 Switzerland (2009)(L)
10 India (2011)(L)
11 Australia (2015)(L)
12 Mongolia (2016)(L)
13 CPTPP (Note 1) (2018)(L)
14 EU (2019)(L)
15 ASEAN (2020 (Note 2))(L)
16 United Kingdom (2021)(L)
17 RCEP Agreement (Note 3) (2022)(L)

Note 1: CPTPP: Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership

Note 2: Year of entry into force of the Protocol to Amend the Agreement

Note 3: RCEP Agreement: Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement

Under negotiation

Investment agreement

1 Algeria
2 Qatar
3 Ghana
4 Tanzania
5 Turkmenistan
6 Senegal
7 Kyrgyz Republic
8 Nigeria
9 Ethiopia
10 EU
11 Azerbaijan
12 Ukraine (revised)
13 Tunisia

EPA/FTA including investment chapter

1 GCC
2 Japan, China, and Republic of Korea
3 Türkiye
4 United Arab Emirates

(For reference) CPTPP accession negotiations: Costa Rica, Uruguay

Signed / not in force

- TPP Agreement (Note 4)(signed February 2016, approved) (EPA)(L)
- Paraguay (signed December 2025, unapproved)
- Argentina (signed December 2018, approved)(L)
- Tajikistan (signed December 2025, unapproved)(L)
- Zambia (signed February 2025, unapproved)
- Serbia (signed December 2025, unapproved)
- Bangladesh (signed February 2026, unapproved)

Note 4: TPP Agreement denotes Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement

and other matters. Japan has actively engaged in concluding investment-related agreements, as these agreements are considered to improve the investment environment for Japanese companies overseas as well as to attract foreign investment to the Japanese market.

In December 2025, the Japan-Paraguay Investment Agreement, the Japan-Tajikistan Investment Agreement, and the Japan-Serbia Investment Agreement were signed. As of the end of February 2026, 54 investment-related agreements have entered into force (37 investment agreements and 17 EPAs), and seven investment-related agreements have been signed but have not yet entered into force (five investment agreements and two EPA). Altogether, there will be 61 investment-related agreements covering 85 countries and regions. Including investment-related agreements that are currently under negotiation, these investment-related agreements will cover 97 countries/regions and approximately 95% of Japan's outbound direct foreign investment.(6)

E Tax Conventions/Agreements on Social Security

(A) 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), and to prevent tax evasion and 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 network.

In 2025, a new tax convention between Japan and Ukraine (comprehensively revised) entered into force

(6) Ministry of Finance, "Statistics on Foreign Direct Investment Positions by Region (Assets) (Global Basis) (as of end of 2024)"

in August, a new tax convention between Japan and Turkmenistan (comprehensively revised) entered into force in November, and a new tax convention between Japan and Armenia (comprehensively revised) entered into force in December. Additionally, a new tax convention with Kyrgyzstan (comprehensively revised) was signed in December. Furthermore, in June, negotiations were launched for a new tax convention with Laos, and for a new agreement to replace the existing tax convention with the Czech Republic. As of December of that year, Japan had concluded 90 tax conventions and related agreements, which apply to 157 countries and regions.

(B) Agreements on Social Security

Agreements on social security aim to resolve the issues of the double payment of social security insurance premiums and pension entitlement. 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 24 as of December 2025.

(2) International Organizations

A World Trade Organization (WTO)

(A) Challenges Facing the WTO and WTO Reform

The WTO, which marked its 30th anniversary in 2025, has contributed to the economic growth of Japan and the world as the foundation of a rules-based, free and open multilateral trading system. The world is currently facing a number of geopolitical challenges, as well as changes in the global economy such as the growth of digital trade, and new challenges such as non-market policies and practices and economic coercion. It is undeniable that the WTO has not been able to adequately address these crises and challenges, and the need for WTO reform has never been more urgent if the multilateral trading system, with the WTO as its core, is to be maintained and strengthened.

Against this backdrop, Japan is promoting international efforts to reform the WTO, placing particular emphasis on improving decision-making to enable the formulation of rules in line with the times, the issue of "special and differential treatment" for developing countries, addressing non-market policies and practices, and reviewing the dispute settlement system.

(B) Formulation of rules in line with the times

The Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies, adopted at the 12th WTO Ministerial Conference (MC12) in June 2022, entered into force on September 15, 2025, for those members that had accepted it, upon acceptance by 111 WTO Members — corresponding to two-thirds of all WTO Members. The Agreement includes provisions prohibiting subsidies that lead to illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing and contributes to the sustainable use of living marine resources. The entry into force of the Agreement — the second newly established multilateral agreement since the WTO's establishment in 1995 — is also significant in that it demonstrates that the WTO's rule-making function remains fully operational. Japan is also engaged constructively in discussions toward an early conclusion of the "second wave" negotiations on the Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies, which aim to achieve comprehensive disciplines.

In addition to rule-making by all WTO members, such as the Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies, Japan has been promoting Joint Statement Initiatives (JSIs)[7] as a new initiative for rule-making by like-minded members. The JSIs primarily cover three areas: investment facilitation, e-commerce, and services domestic regulation. Regarding investment facilitation, at the 13th WTO Ministerial Conference (MC13) in February 2024, the conclusion of the negotiations on the "Investment Facilitation for Development Agreement" was declared. Efforts have been made and still ongoing towards incorporation into Annex 4 of the WTO Agreement. Regarding e-commerce, Japan, together with Australia and Singapore, led the discussions as a co-convenor and contributed to publishing the text of the "Agreement on Electronic Commerce" in July 2024, and thereafter carried out coordination and outreach with other participating countries in order to

(7) Joint Statement Initiatives refer to initiatives based on a joint statement issued by plurilateral like-minded members. They were adopted at the 11th WTO Ministerial Conference in December 2017, and mainly include initiatives on (a) services domestic regulation, (b) electronic commerce, and (c) investment facilitation.

incorporate this Agreement as an annex to the WTO Agreement. Regarding the new disciplines on services domestic regulation, on which negotiations among like-minded members were concluded in December 2021, the settlement between participating countries to incorporate the new disciplines into their schedules was completed in February 2024. As of December 2025, the disciplines have taken effect for 55 countries and regions including Japan, marking a concrete achievement of the rule-making by like-minded countries at the WTO.

(C) Dispute Settlement

The WTO dispute settlement system is aimed at seeking a rules-based settlement of economic disputes arising between WTO Members, whereby providing security and predictability to the multilateral trading system. Since December 2019, the Appellate Body (serving as the final instance) has "ceased to function" due to a failure to (re)appoint its members, falling short of the quorum required to hear an appeal, but the dispute settlement system itself continues to be used by WTO Members. In March 2023, Japan joined the Multi-Party Interim Appeal Arbitration Arrangement (MPIA), which was launched by like-minded countries in 2020 as a framework to temporarily replace the functions of the Appellate Body, and has continued to actively participate in discussions on reform of the dispute settlement system even after joining the MPIA.

As of the end of December 2025, four cases to which Japan was one of the parties to the dispute had been brought to the WTO's dispute settlement mechanism.

(D) 14th WTO Ministerial Conference (MC14)

In preparation for MC14, scheduled for March 2026, Japan actively contributed to discussions and stressed the importance of WTO reform and related matters at the Informal Gathering of WTO Ministers hosted by Australia in June 2025; the G20 Trade and Investment Ministerial' Meeting and the APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting and Ministerial Meeting in October of that year;' and the G20 Summit in November of that year.

B Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)

(A) Features

The OECD is an international organization with 38 member countries with shared values for the purpose of economic growth, development assistance, and the expansion of free, multilateral trade. The OECD conducts research and analysis on a wide range of economic and social areas and makes specific policy recommendations. Through discussions held by approximately 30 committees, it has formed international standards and rules. Since its accession to the OECD in 1964, Japan has been actively engaged in OECD initiatives through discussions at various committees as well as financial and human resources contributions.

(B) 2025 OECD Ministerial Council Meeting

The 2025 OECD Ministerial Council Meeting (MCM), chaired by Costa Rica, was held in June in Paris, France, under the theme "Leading the Way towards Resilient, Inclusive, and Sustainable Prosperity through Rules-Based Trade, Investment and Innovation." Japan was represented by five ministers and other officials, including Minister for Digital Transformation TAIRA Masaaki and State Minister for Foreign Affairs FUJII Hisayuki.

State Minister for Foreign Affairs Fujii spoke on the importance of maintaining and strengthening the multilateral trading system with the WTO at its core, economic security including responses to economic coercion, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, and outreach to non-member countries — particularly in Southeast Asia — in line with the concept of "co-creation." In addition, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Fujii conveyed to OECD Secretary-General Mathias Cormann in a bilateral meeting that Japan's commitment to the OECD remains unchanged.

In addition, on the occasion of the MCM, Japan co-hosted a side event titled "Enhancing Economic Security and Building Economic Resilience" together with Lithuania, the Vice-Chair country, with the aim of facilitating dialogue on the various challenges surrounding economic security.

(C) Initiatives in Various Sectors

The OECD plays an important role in shaping rules and standards in the economic and social spheres,

as well as in promoting these rules and standards in emerging economies through deepening cooperation with other international fora such as the G20, G7, and APEC. Its initiatives include leading discussions on reviewing the international taxation system, revising principles on AI and corporate governance, disseminating and implementing the G20 Principles for Quality Infrastructure Investment,[8] and engaging in aid coordination.

(D) Outreach to Southeast Asia

With the growing significance of the Indo-Pacific region in the global economy, it is an important task for the OECD to strengthen relations with Indonesia, and Thailand and with which the OECD has opened accession discussions, other emerging economies in Southeast Asia and to promote the OECD's rules and standards. In this context, the OECD has been working to strengthen its ties with the region through policy dialogues, including through the Southeast Asia Regional Programme (SEARP). As part of these efforts, in August the "Co-creation Workshop on the OECD AI Policy Toolkit," hosted by the OECD, was held at the Japanese Ambassador's Residence in Bangkok, Thailand, where active discussions took place among AI experts from Southeast Asian countries with the aim of reflecting Southeast Asian perspectives in the AI Policy Toolkit, sharing the current situations and challenges in their respective countries.

Japan will continue to encourage future OECD membership from the Southeast Asian region, utilizing the OECD Tokyo Office and the technical cooperation of Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).

(E) Contributions in Terms of Financial and Human Resources

As of 2025, Japan was the second largest financial contributor to the OECD, covering 7.9% of the OECD's mandatory contributions (the U.S. is first, covering 18.3 %). Moreover, Japanese nationals have successively served as one of the Deputy Secretary-Generals (including the incumbent Deputy Secretary-General, MASAKI Yasushi), and 88 Japanese staff work at the OECD Secretariat as of the end of 2024.

(3) G7

The G7, which marked the 50th anniversary of its founding in 2025, has been united in its response to the various challenges facing the international community. Amid rising uncertainty in the global economy and continuing challenges such as Russia's aggression against Ukraine, the two perspectives emphasized at the 2023 G7 Hiroshima Summit — upholding the free and open international order based on the rule of law, and strengthening engagement with international partners beyond the G7 — are becoming increasingly important, and were shared under Canada's G7 presidency in 2025.

At the G7 Kananaskis Summit, held from June 15 to 17, candid discussions took place among the G7 Leaders on topics including global economic outlook, economic security and the resilience and diversification of critical minerals supply chains, emerging technologies such as AI and quantum, wildfire response, as well as the international issues concerning Ukraine, the Middle East, and the Indo-Pacific.[9] Guested countries and organizations participated in some of the sessions, and President Volodymyr Zelenskyy of Ukraine participated in the session on the situation in Ukraine.

Prime Minister Ishiba conveyed Japan's positions and efforts to G7 members and the international community as follows.

In Session 1, "Global Economic Outlook," Prime Minister Ishiba pointed out that the global economy is exposed to risks such as geopolitical tensions and natural disasters, and that uncertainty has further increased. He emphasized the necessity of maintaining close communication among the G7, reducing uncertainty of the global economy and working together to achieve stable growth.

---

(8) Endorsed at the G20 Osaka Summit in June 2019, the Principles for Quality Infrastructure Investment include elements such as openness, transparency, economic efficiency, and debt sustainability.

(9) For details about the G7 Kananaskis Summit, including the outcome documents, see the Ministry of Foreign Affairs website: https://warp.ndl.go.jp/web/20250801111500/https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/pageit_000001_02025.html

In Session 2, "Economic Growth, Economic Security and Resilience," Prime Minister Ishiba stated that strengthening and diversifying the supply chain resilience for critical minerals is an urgent issue and stressed the need for close coordination with the G7 and its partner countries to address this issue.

In Session 3, "Making Communities Safe," Prime Minister Ishiba expressed his intention to work closely with other countries on wildfires. In addition, he commended Canada's leadership in addressing Transnational Repression and stressed the importance of a coordinated response by each country. He further expressed Japan's intention to continue to cooperate within the G7 to eliminate international crime organizations involved in migrant smuggling.

In Session 4, "Making the world secure," regarding the situation in Ukraine, Prime Minister Ishiba stressed that unity of the G7 is important to prompt swift, positive, and concrete action from Russia. He further pointed out that the way peace is achieved in Ukraine could impact the entire international order, including the Indo-Pacific region, and emphasized the importance of establishing a peace framework that deters renewed aggression. Regarding the situation in the Middle East, in response to the Israel-Iran situation, Prime Minister Ishiba highlighted the importance of diplomatic efforts to de-escalate the situation. He also stated that the development of nuclear weapons by Iran is unacceptable, and the leaders reaffirmed the importance of resolving the nuclear issue through dialogue. Regarding the Indo-Pacific situation including China, while drawing on the fact that he had held meetings with many Asian countries since assuming office and the voices of Asia he has lent an ear to, Prime Minister Ishiba emphasized the importance of increased G7 engagement in the region.

In Session 5, "A strong and Sovereign Ukraine," Prime Minister Ishiba stated that Japan would further promote public-private partnership assistance for recovery and reconstruction, including industrial development, in Ukraine. He also stated that Japan would continue to strengthen cooperation with like-minded countries, including NATO members, regarding the situation in Ukraine.

In Session 7, "Energy Security," Prime Minister Ishiba pointed out that, in addition to the diversification of energy sources, the enhancement of supply chain resiliency and the diversification of the supply chain that support them are also challenges that the G7 and partner countries and organizations should work together to address. In addition, he pointed out the importance of quality infrastructure investment, which Japan has taken the initiative in advocating, and he also stressed the need to support large-scale infrastructure as well as grassroots efforts to improve the living standards of developing countries, such as providing electricity to rural areas and ensuring access to drinking water.



G7 Kananaskis Summit (June 16, Kananaskis, Canada; Photo: Official Website of the Prime Minister's Office of Japan)

Additionally, under Canada's G7 presidency in 2025, in addition to the Kananaskis Summit held in June, the G7 Leaders' Video Conference was held in February to discuss the G7's response to Russia's aggression against Ukraine as well as on other matters.

A total of six G7 Foreign Ministers' Meetings were held in 2025, including those held online. Following discussions from the previous year, the G7 Ministers engaged in close communication on international and regional situations such as the situations in the Middle East, Ukraine, and the Indo-Pacific.

At the G7 Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Charlevoix, Canada held on March 13 and 14, in light of the G7 was marking its 50th anniversary, the G7 members discussed the role of the G7 in today's international community and reaffirmed the importance of maintaining and strengthening the unity of the G7 for various issues in the international community.

At the G7 Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Niagara, Canada held on November 11 and 12, the G7 reaffirmed the importance of communicating closely and cooperating as the G7 on regional situations and issues that have a significant impact on peace and security

of the international community, including the Middle East, the Indo-Pacific, and Ukraine. Regarding the situation in the Middle East, the G7 members reiterated their strong support for the Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict put forward by the U.S. President Donald J. Trump and confirmed the importance of all parties engaging constructively in the Plan, including on humanitarian assistance. Regarding the situation in Ukraine, they confirmed the importance of an immediate ceasefire and of cooperating as the G7 to achieve a just and lasting peace. Regarding the situation in the Indo-Pacific, the G7 reaffirmed the importance of a free and open Indo-Pacific based on the rule of law and reiterated their strong opposition to any unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force or coercion, including in the East China Sea, the South China Sea, and across the Taiwan Strait. The G7 members discussed international and regional affairs and reaffirmed the importance of a coordinated response by the G7 to the various issues.

The G7 Trade Ministers' Meeting was held in Paris, France, on June 4 on the occasion of the OECD Ministerial Council Meeting, where the participating ministers engaged in active discussions on topics such as tackling non-market policies and practices that create overcapacity, strengthening economic security and supply chain resilience, and resolving challenges facing the international trading system.(10)

(4) G20

The G20 is the "premier forum for international economic cooperation," in which major developed and emerging economies participate, accounting for more than 80% of the global GDP. At the G20 Johannesburg Summit held in South Africa on November 22 and 23, discussions were held on important issues facing the international community, including the global economy as well as disaster risk reduction, debt sustainability, critical minerals, AI, and the situations in Ukraine and the Middle East.(11) In addition, the leaders gathered in Johannesburg released a Leaders' Declaration recording the points of agreement reached under South Africa's G20 Presidency.

Prime Minister Takaichi introduced the specific initiatives that Japan has been leading in the G20 and emphasized the importance of finding common ground and points of agreement rather than focusing on division and confrontation, and of advancing concrete cooperation and collaboration toward resolving challenges in a manner in which all G20 members share responsibility, a view that gained the support of many members. Prime Minister Takaichi also stated that Japan will continue to actively contribute to resolving the various issues facing the international community, working closely with G20 members including the U.S., the G20 Presidency for 2026.

The G20 Foreign Ministers' Meeting was held in Johannesburg, South Africa, on February 20 and 21, attended by Foreign Minister Iwaya. At the meeting, participants discussed regional affairs including the situations in Ukraine and the Middle East, as well as initiatives toward the G20 Summit in November. Foreign Minister Iwaya stated that, amid the compound crises facing the international community, it is important to firmly restore an international order based on the rule of law to ensure peace and stability in the international community, and that unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force should never be tolerated anywhere in the world. Additionally, on September 25, the Second G20 Foreign Ministers' Meeting Under South Africa's Presidency was also held at UN Headquarters on the theme "The United Nations at 80 years: Reaffirming Peace as a path to sustainable economic development," with discussions mainly focused on the reciprocal relationship between peace and sustainable economic development, G20 initiatives to solve various global issues, and the enhancement of cooperation with international organizations including the UN, etc.

(10) For details about the G7 Trade Ministers' Meeting, see the following website:
https://warp.ndl.go.jp/web/20250801111500/https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/pageit_000001_02025.html

(11) For details about the G20 Johannesburg Summit, including the outcome documents, see the following website:
https://www.mofa.go.jp/ecm/epc/pageite_000001_01378.html

(10) (11)



G20 Johannesburg Summit (November 23, Johannesburg, South Africa; Photo: Official Website of the Prime Minister's Office of Japan)

(5) Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC)

APEC is a framework of economic cooperation in which 21 economies (countries and regions) in the Asia-Pacific region participate.

The Putrajaya Vision 2040, which outlines APEC's medium- to long-term direction, clearly states that "Our vision is an open, dynamic, resilient, and peaceful Asia-Pacific community by 2040, for the prosperity of all our people and future generations." Under this vision, the organization is carrying out activities such as liberalizing and facilitating trade and investment in the region, promoting regional economic integration, and engaging in economic and technical cooperation in the region. Japan's active involvement in APEC and promotion of regional cooperation is of great significance to supporting the country's economic growth and the overseas expansion of Japanese companies.

In 2025, the Republic of Korea (ROK) held the APEC Chairmanship. Under the theme "Building a Sustainable Tomorrow" and the priorities "Connect, Innovate, Prosper," active discussions took place not only on trade and investment issues but also on new challenges such as AI, demographic changes, and cultural and creative industries.

At the APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting held in Gyeongju , ROK, on October 31 and November 1, the "2025 APEC Leaders' Gyeongju Declaration" was adopted, which set out the realization of the APEC "Putrajaya Vision 2040" including achieving a free, open, and fair trade and investment environment, as well as many other elements that Japan attaches importance to, such as the promotion of quality infrastructure investment, the building of a trustworthy AI society, responses to demographic changes, and the stable supply of electricity.

Prime Minister Takaichi emphasized the importance of maintaining and strengthening a rules-based, free and fair international economic order and advancing WTO reform for realizing sustainable development and prosperity in the Asia-Pacific region, and expressed Japan's determination to work on expanding fair competitive conditions through maintaining and strengthening the high standards of the CPTPP and expanding its membership, and ensuring the transparent implementation of the RCEP, as well as on promoting strategic growth investment through the diversification of supply chains to enhance resilience against risks such as natural disasters, and public-private cooperation in the development of quality infrastructure. She also argued for the importance of cooperation on the "safe, secure, and trustworthy AI" ecosystem; advancing AI governance for generative AI through the "Hiroshima AI Process"; promoting digitalization to address the declining birthrate and aging population, creating work environments where everyone can work comfortably; and combating piracy and counterfeiting to promote the content industry.

Furthermore, at this Economic Leaders' Meeting, it was decided that Japan will serve as the APEC Chair in 2031.

(6) Intellectual Property Protection

Strengthening the protection of intellectual property is crucial to promoting innovation and achieving economic growth. From this perspective, Japan is contributing to the strengthening of multilateral collaboration at APEC, the WTO (TRIPS),[12] and the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO). In addition, Japan is working to improve an environment for ensuring that Japanese intellectual property is appropriately protected and utilized both domestically and internationally through means such as establishing high-standard provisions on the acquisition and exercise of intellectual property rights in bilateral and

(12) TRIPS Agreement (Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights): An agreement on trade-related aspects of intellectual property rights.

multilateral economic partnership agreements that include the CPTPP, RCEP Agreement, Japan-EU EPA, and Japan-UK CEPA.

At the same time, in order to provide prompt and effective support to Japanese companies facing increasingly serious intellectual property issues such as counterfeit and pirated goods worldwide, MOFA has appointed Intellectual Property Officers at almost all diplomatic missions overseas, and is collecting information, strengthening coordination with relevant local organizations, and engaging the authorities of the countries concerned. MOFA also holds regular meetings for these officers with the aim of sharing up-to-date information on each country and region, experience in responding to infringement cases, and relevant knowledge, in order to strengthen the response systems of diplomatic missions overseas. In 2025, a meeting was held targeting Japanese diplomatic missions in China.

4 Economic Security

(1) Economic Security

A Trends Surrounding Economic Security

In recent years, various challenges have been surfacing in fields that cut across national security and the economy. The scope of the national security domain is expanding rapidly. Various risks are emerging, such as the risk of stolen or leaked advanced civilian technologies being converted to military use in other countries, the risk of suppliers influenced by foreign governments obstructing the stable operation of critical infrastructure such as those for telecommunications, the risk of disruptions to the supply of critical goods due to over-dependencies on other countries, and the risk of being targeted by economic coercion by some countries seeking to achieve political objectives by using their advantages in the supply chain or their purchasing power in the market as leverage.

In light of the emergence of various threats related to economic means, securing Japan's national interests such as peace, security, and economic prosperity by carrying out economic measures, in other words economic security, is becoming increasingly important.

In the face of various economic threats at hand, the National Security Strategy (NSS), formulated in December 2022, also lays out that Japan will coordinate ideas on necessary economic measures and execute these measures comprehensively, effectively, and intensively to enhance Japan's self-reliance and to secure the advantage and indispensability concerning its technologies and others.

In light of the fact that it has become clear that supply chain vulnerabilities can have adverse impacts in diverse fields even from the perspective of development, the Development Cooperation Charter approved by the Cabinet in June 2023, as one of the priority policies in Japan's development cooperation, advocates promoting cooperation to enhance resilience and diversification of supply chains as well as economic diversification, sustainable development of critical mineral resources, and stable supply and security of food, among other forms of cooperation, in order to strengthen the socioeconomic autonomy and resilience of developing countries.

In addition, domestic legislation related to economic security has progressed. In May 2022, Japan enacted the Economic Security Promotion Act centered around four pillars: enhancing the resilience of supply chains, ensuring the stable provision of essential infrastructure services, supporting the development of advanced critical technologies, and non-disclosure of selected patent applications. Various systems related to these four pillars are currently being implemented. In November 2025, Prime Minister Takaichi instructed Minister in charge of Economic Security Onoda Kimi to swiftly commence discussions toward the amendment to the Economic Security Promotion Act.

In May 2024, the Act on the Protection and Utilization of Critical Economic Security Information, which introduces a security clearance system in the field of economic security, was enacted. It entered into force in May 2025.

B Recent Initiatives by Other Countries

Other countries have also been rapidly advancing initiatives to promote economic security in recent years.

In the U.S., President Trump took office on January 20 and issued numerous executive orders related to

economic security, including the "America First Trade Policy," which sets out a policy of defending the economy and national security by strengthening domestic industries and technological dominance through the "Unleashing American Energy," aimed at securing cheap and reliable energy in the U.S.; and the "Removing Barriers to American Leadership in Artificial Intelligence," aimed at maintaining and strengthening the global AI dominance of the U.S. In addition, citing concerns that imports of products from other countries could harm national security, the U.S. implemented tariff measures on steel and aluminum, automobiles and automotive parts, copper semiprocessed products and derivatives, and lumber and its derivatives under Section 232 of the Trade Expansion Act of 1962. It also conducted investigations by the Secretary of Commerce under the same provision regarding semiconductors, pharmaceuticals, and critical minerals etc., scrutinizing the national security implications of imports of these critical goods. Furthermore, at the end of August, the U.S. Department of the Interior announced a proposal to add potash, silicon, copper, silver, rhenium, and lead to its list of minerals critical to the economy and national security (the critical minerals list). With regard to AI, the White House announced in July the "Winning the AI Race: America's AI Action Plan," centered on three pillars: accelerating AI innovation, building AI infrastructure, and leading international AI diplomacy and security.

In the EU, efforts continue to be advanced based on the "European Economic Security Strategy" issued in June 2023 and the five initiatives announced in January 2024 to promote the Strategy, comprising foreign investment screening, export controls, outbound investment, support for research and development involving technologies with dual-use potential, and research security. Regarding outbound investment, a European Commission recommendation based on a public consultation was published in January. The proposed revision of the regulation on the screening of foreign investments was adopted by the European Parliament in May and by the EU Council in June, respectively, with the process moving to trilogue negotiations involving the European Commission. European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen confirmed the need to address economic security challenges including securing critical raw materials and strengthening supply chain resilience at the G7 Kananaskis Summit in June and in her State of the Union Address in September. Furthermore, led by the Commissioner for Trade and Economic Security, the "Economic Security Package" was announced in December, designating six high-risk priority areas: reducing strategic dependencies in goods and services, attracting secure investment, promoting a strong European defense and space industry and other critical industrial sectors, ensuring EU leadership in critical technology areas, protecting sensitive information and data, and defending critical infrastructure.

Australia has, thus far, positioned the securing of national resilience and the protection of assets and infrastructure as its national interests, and advanced concrete measures to that end. These include the formulation of the Australia's International Cyber and Critical Technology Engagement Strategy (April 2021), which sets out the policy of promoting the identification of technologies that should be protected, and the tightening of investment screening systems for land and businesses related to sensitive national security (January 2021). Furthermore, in November 2024, Australia amended the Security of Critical Infrastructure Act 2018 to further enhance security. This includes measures such as promoting information sharing between public and private entities by clearly stipulating the protection of trade secrets provided by businesses and other parties to the government, and introducing powers that allow regulators to issue remedial orders pertaining to the mandatory development of risk management programs by critical infrastructure owners and operators.

Canada announced its Critical Minerals Strategy in 2022 and strengthened its efforts ranging from the research and exploration of critical minerals to their recycling. In January 2024, Canada issued a statement on new measures to protect Canadian research, which incorporates the publication of a list of named research organizations connected to military, national defense, or state security entities that may pose a risk to Canada's national security, as well as a list of sensitive technology research areas, and asserts that grants and funding will not be provided to research in these areas if any of the researchers involved in activities supported by the grant

are affiliated with, or in receipt of funding or in-kind support from, a university, research institute or laboratory connected to such entities. In August of the same year, the Government of Canada announced measures — including a 100% surtax on Chinese-made electric vehicles (EVs) and a 25% surtax on steel and aluminum goods imported from China, with the aim of protecting Canadian workers and major economic sectors from China's unfair trade practices. These surtax went into effect in October of the same year.

C Diplomatic Efforts Toward the Promotion of Economic Security

Diplomacy plays a significant role in promoting economic security. Japan, in cooperation with the international community, is engaged in active diplomacy in areas such as further strengthening cooperation with its ally and like-minded countries, responding to issues based on existing rules, and rule-making to address new challenges.

In relation to further strengthening cooperation with its ally and like-minded countries, Japan leverages bilateral efforts including through the Japan-U.S. Economic Policy Consultative Committee Meeting (the Economic "2+2") and economic security consultations, as well as cooperation under the G7, Japan-Australia-India-U.S. (Quad), and Japan-U.S.-ROK, to expand and deepen cooperation with a view to developing common recognition and coordinating policies.

With regard to responses based on existing rules, Japan has been working in coordination with like-minded countries to seek correction of unfair trade policies and practices by other countries, from the perspective of consistency with existing rules such as World Trade Organization (WTO) agreements. Furthermore, Japan gathers and analyzes information on economic security measures and trade rules, drawing on the efforts of like-minded countries, and works to ensure that Japan's economic security policy needs are appropriately met.

With regard to rule-making to respond to new challenges, existing international agreements are not sufficient for addressing areas such as critical and emerging technologies, economic coercion, and others. In fields where there is a need to further develop international rules, Japan continues to play a leading role in international debates in cooperation with like-minded countries.

D Cooperation with its Ally and Like-minded Countries

Following on from last year, Japan continued to make particularly significant progress in cooperation with its ally and like-minded countries in 2025.

Under the G7 framework, at the G7 Kananaskis Summit held in June, three Leaders' Statements related to economic security were released: the "G7 Critical Minerals Action Plan," the "G7 Leaders' Statement on AI for Prosperity," and the "Kananaskis Common Vision for the Future of Quantum Technologies." At the Summit, Prime Minister Ishiba emphasized that strengthening and diversifying critical minerals supply chains is an urgent challenge and stressed the need to work closely with the G7 and partner countries to address it. He also pointed out that the role of resource-rich countries is extremely important, and that cooperation is vital in launching new mineral resource projects for supply chain diversification and in frameworks such as the "Partnership for Resilient and Inclusive Supply-chain Enhancement (RISE)," aimed at raising local added value in developing countries.

At the OECD Ministerial Council Meeting held in June, it was confirmed that a rules-based, open and fair multilateral trading system with the WTO at its core is important and indispensable for building more stable, predictable, and resilient supply chains. At the side event on "Enhancing Economic Security and Building Economic Resilience," co-hosted by Japan and Lithuania as Vice-Chair country, a call was made for strengthened multilateral cooperation toward enhancing economic resilience and ensuring global economic stability, while noting the role the OECD plays in maintaining the international trading system.

At the G7 Trade Ministers' Meeting held in June, the ministers engaged in active discussions on topics such as addressing non-market policies and practices resulting in overcapacities, strengthening economic security and supply chain resilience, and resolving challenges facing the global trading system.

At the Japan-Australia-India-U.S. (Quad) Foreign Ministers' Meeting held in July, the Ministers concurred to launch the "Quad Critical Minerals Initiative," in

order to strengthen economic security and collective resilience by collaborating on securing and diversifying critical minerals supply chains.

Japan-U.S.-ROK Foreign Ministers' Meetings were held in February, April, July, September, and October, during which the three countries have continued discussions on economic security. For example, at the Japan-U.S.-ROK Foreign Ministers' Meeting held in September, they welcomed the fact that action-oriented discussions among the three countries had contributed to tangible trilateral efforts. They also exchanged views on economic security, such as enhancing supply chain resilience, including for critical minerals, and protecting and promoting critical and emerging technologies, including quantum and AI. They reaffirmed their commitment to working closely together in these fields.

With regard to Japan's relations with the U.S., at the Japan-U.S. Summit Meeting held in February, the two leaders confirmed cooperation to lead the world in strengthening the bilateral industrial base and developing critical technologies such as AI, quantum computing, and advanced semiconductors, as well as to strengthen efforts to counter economic coercion and build resilience, in order to bring the economic partnership to a new dimension. They also resolved to continue discussions to align policies for the further promotion and protection of critical sensitive technologies, including through export controls, and for the strengthening of supply chain resilience. Furthermore, at the Japan-U.S. Summit Meeting held in October, Prime Minister Takaichi and President Trump signed a document on critical minerals and rare earths ("Japan-U.S. Framework for Securing the Supply of Critical Minerals and Rare Earths through Mining and Processing"). Furthermore, they concurred to further strengthen economic security initiatives in a wide range of fields, including critical technologies such as AI, as well as shipbuilding.

With regard to relations with European countries, in March, the first Japan-UK Economic 2+2 Ministers' Meeting ("Economic 2+2") was held in Tokyo, at which the ministers of both countries discussed four themes: Economic Security, Enhancement of Free and Open International Trade, Energy Security, and Engagement with Third Countries including the Global South. In October, the Second Meeting of the Japan-Germany Economic Security Consultations was held in Tokyo, building on the outcomes of the Japan-Germany Summit Meeting held in July 2024. Furthermore, in November, the second Japan-France Economic Security Working Group was held under the Exceptional Partnership announced between the leaders of Japan and France in December 2023, based on the Roadmap on Japan-France Cooperation (2023-2027). The representatives of both countries discussed key economic security issues such as enhancement of supply chain resilience, including for critical minerals; non-market policies and practices; addressing overcapacity; and the protection of critical and emerging technologies. The two countries also concurred on the importance of further strengthening bilateral cooperation as well as coordination in international fora including the G7, for which France will hold the Presidency in 2026.

With regard to Japan's relations with the EU, at the sixth Japan-EU High-Level Economic Dialogue held in May, the two sides exchanged views on their respective initiatives regarding economic security and confirmed the importance of cooperation among like-minded partners. They also confirmed the substantial progress achieved under the "Transparent, Resilient and Sustainable Supply Chains Initiative," and concurred to continue cooperation on strengthening and diversifying critical minerals supply chains, and promoting and protecting critical and emerging technologies. Furthermore, at the 30th Japan-EU Summit held in July, the two sides discussed economic security, and concurred to launch the "Japan-EU Competitiveness Alliance" and to promote concrete cooperation in a wide range of areas including economic security.

With regard to Japan's relations with the ROK, at the Japan-ROK Summit Meeting held during President Lee JaeMyung's visit to Japan in January 2026, the two leaders concurred on deepening discussions going forward among relevant ministries in order to promote strategic and mutually beneficial cooperation in the field of economy and economic security. Additionally, they held in-depth discussions on the cooperation regarding supply chain.

With regard to Japan's relations with Australia, at the 12th Japan-Australia 2+2 Foreign and Defence Ministerial Consultations ("2+2") held in September,

Japan and Australia concurred on further strengthening collaboration in economic security, including through the utilization of the Japan-Australia Economic Security Dialogue. They also affirmed their commitment to enhancing specific cooperation in areas such as supply chain resilience, critical minerals, energy, and undersea cables.

As for India, at the Japan-India Summit Meeting held during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Japan in August, the two leaders launched the Japan-India "Economic Security Initiative" in order to strengthen cooperation between the two countries, including building resilient supply chains for critical materials, and released the "Fact Sheet on Japan-India Economic Security Cooperation," which lists concrete initiatives by industry, academia, and government. In the Fact Sheet, the two countries identified semiconductors, critical minerals, information and communications technology, clean energy, and pharmaceuticals as key sectors that will receive heightened priority for strategic cooperation.

In relation to Canada, Japan announced the "Japan-Canada Action Plan for contributing to a free and open Indo-Pacific region" in 2022, which includes cooperation in the field of energy security. Furthermore, the two countries signed Memorandums of Cooperation Concerning Battery Supply Chains and Industrial Science and Technology respectively in September 2023, further accelerating cooperation in these fields.

With regard to Japan's relations with Southeast Asian countries, during Prime Minister Ishiba's visit to Viet Nam in April, Japan and Viet Nam concurred on expanding cooperation in economic security. During Prime Minister Hun Manet's visit to Japan in May at the Japan-Cambodia Summit Meeting, Japan and Cambodia shared the recognition of the importance of economic resilience and economic security and concurred to maintain and strengthen the international economic order. Furthermore, at the Japan-U.S.-Philippines Foreign Ministers' Meeting held in July, the three Ministers concurred on further strengthening and materializing cooperation among three countries in areas such as enhancing the resilience of infrastructure, information and communications, and supply chains of resources including critical minerals. Subsequently, during Prime Minister Takaichi's visit to Malaysia in October to attend ASEAN-related summit meetings, at the Japan-Malaysia Summit Meeting, she confirmed with Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim that Japan and Malaysia will further enhance cooperation in the field of economic security such as stable liquefied natural gas (LNG) supply, rare earths, and AI.

(2) Securing a Stable Supply of Energy at Affordable Prices

A The Current Situation Concerning Energy in Japan and Abroad

(A) Situation in the World

Changes in 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 (1) demand, global demand for primary energy has shifted towards non OECD member countries, primarily China and India. With respect to (2) supply, the U.S. became the world's largest producer of both oil and natural gas due to the "Shale Revolution,"(13) and liberalization of export controls on crude oil in December 2015. The U.S. is promoting energy export policies such as further exports of the U.S. LNG. As for (3) resource selection, based on the fact that production and usage on energy account for about two-thirds of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, the transitions to cleaner energy resources such as renewable energy are accelerating. In addition, since the Paris Agreement on climate change was adopted in December 2015, companies and other organizations have made further progress in their efforts toward low-carbonization. Since 2021, numerous countries around the world have declared that they will achieve carbon neutrality in the second half of this century. On the other hand, energy prices, which had been on an upward trajectory since 2021, experienced significant volatility in 2022 amid the energy crisis caused by Russia's aggression against Ukraine, and since October 2023 due to the intensifying situation in the Middle East.

(13) Shale Revolution: In the latter half of the 2000s, new technologies were developed in the U.S. for drilling oil and natural gas from rock layers called "shale," and it became possible to do so at economically viable costs. As a result, U.S. crude oil and natural gas production increased significantly, affecting international affairs in many ways.

Energy prices in 2024 have retrieved relative stability. In 2025, oil prices temporarily rose due to the intensification of the situation in the Middle East triggered by Israel's attack on Iran in June, but subsequently, energy prices have remained relatively stable (as of the end of 2025) owing to the easing of tensions, as well as the loosening of supply and demand conditions resulting from concerns over economic slowdown caused by U.S. tariff measures and the reduction in production cuts (i.e., increase in production) by the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) +.[(14)] However, the international community continues to face the challenge of how to achieve both the stable securing of energy and the realization of decarbonization.

(B) Situation in Japan

Since the Great East Japan Earthquake, the percentage of fossil fuels out of power generation in Japan has reached about 90% (approximately 67.5% in FY2024) in 2012, up 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 2011 earthquake to 6.3% in 2014. In recent years, it has remained in the range of 12 to 13%, which remains at a low level compared to other OECD countries. Approximately 95% of Japan's oil imports come from Middle Eastern countries. With regard to LNG and coal, Japan depends less on the Middle East than for oil but almost completely on other countries. Under these circumstances, efforts to secure a stable supply of energy at affordable prices are becoming increasingly important. At the same time, there is also a call to address climate change.

B Diplomatic Efforts to Secure a Stable Supply of Energy at Affordable Prices

Securing a stable supply of energy at Affordable 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, and Strategy Meeting on Diplomatic Missions Overseas Concerning Energy and Mineral Resources

In order to focus on the acquisition and stable supply of energy and mineral resources, and with a view to strengthening the function of diplomatic missions overseas, "Special Expert for Energy and Mineral Resources" have been assigned to 60 diplomatic missions overseas in a total of 53 countries as of the end of 2025. These individuals collect and consolidate on-site information on oil, natural gas, coal, and critical mineral resources, and strive to build and strengthen comprehensive and mutually beneficial bilateral relations with resource-rich countries through liaison and coordination with private companies and related organizations.

Furthermore, since 2009, MOFA has been holding regular Strategy Meetings on Diplomatic Missions Overseas Concerning Energy and Mineral Resources, bringing together representatives of diplomatic missions overseas located in major resource-rich countries as well as ministries, agencies, institutions, experts, and companies, to discuss diplomatic efforts to ensure a stable supply of energy and mineral resources, formulate policy, and strengthen mutual cooperation. Going forward, MOFA will continue to share the current status and challenges of resource diplomacy efforts in each country, and deepen coordination between relevant domestic organizations and diplomatic missions overseas.

(B) Efforts for Energy Market Stabilization

Russia's aggression against Ukraine that began in February 2022 caused energy prices to soar, with oil prices exceeding 130 U.S. dollars per barrel and European gas market prices rising above 70 U.S. dollars per million BTU. This destabilized the energy market.

Amidst this situation, in February and March, Japan diverted to Europe a portion of the LNG handled by Japanese companies in order to alleviate the tight supply and demand of natural gas in Europe. In addition, as a member of the International Energy Agency (IEA), Japan conducted two collective releases of oil reserves

(14) OPEC+ consists of OPEC member countries and major oil-producing non-member countries.

from March to April, releasing a total of 22.5 million barrels of petroleum reserves, the largest amount ever.

With regard to stabilization of the energy market, Japan has also been calling on resource-producing countries to stabilize the market and increase production. In May and September 2025, Prime Minister Ishiba held meetings with Crown Prince Sabah Khalid Al-Hamad Al-Sabah of Kuwait, and in May of the same year, Foreign Minister Iwaya held a meeting with Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al-Saud of Saudi Arabia. In addition to making use of the opportunities presented by successive summit and ministerial-level meetings with oil-producing countries, Japan also makes efforts to lobby at various levels through its diplomatic missions overseas and relevant ministries and agencies.

(C) Initiatives and Results Achieved by International and Other Organizations

Japan makes active use of international fora and rules to coordinate and collaborate internationally toward achieving a stable energy supply and enhancing the diversity and resilience of supply chains for critical mineral resources. To ensure energy security and achieve realistic energy transitions toward decarbonization, Japan also communicates to the international community the importance of securing a stable energy supply and diversifying supply sources, as well as achieving a system for the stable supply of critical mineral resources essential for achieving energy transitions.

In March, Executive Director Fatih Birol of the IEA, visited Japan and paid a courtesy call to Prime Minister Ishiba, and also held a meeting with Foreign Minister Iwaya. At the courtesy call, Prime Minister Ishiba expressed gratitude for Executive Director Birol's support for Japan's energy policy, including his visit to TEPCO's Kashiwazaki-Kariwa Nuclear Power Station, and stated that cooperation with the IEA is increasingly crucial for Japan, which faces significant challenges in achieving energy self-sufficiency amid an unstable global energy security landscape. At the meeting, Foreign Minister Iwaya stated that the core mission of the IEA is energy security. In response, Executive Director Birol stated that energy security remains at the core of the IEA's mission, expressed appreciation for Japan's contributions to the IEA, and conveyed his expectations for further strengthening of cooperative relations between Japan and the IEA going forward.

In April, the "Summit on the Future of Energy Security," co-hosted by the IEA and the UK, was held in London, and State Minister for Foreign Affairs Fujii attended on behalf of Japan. He noted the necessity of taking a broad perspective on the complex and evolving energy security landscape, pointed out that diversification, attention to geopolitical risks, and preparedness for emergencies remain crucial, and stated that Japan would continue to collaborate with various actors to bolster global energy security.

(D) Energy Charter Treaty

The Energy Charter Treaty (ECT) is a multilateral treaty that entered into force in April 1998 (entered into force for Japan in 2002). It 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(15) has been signed by 40 countries and organizations mostly located in Europe and Central Asia (as of October 2025). Following negotiations to revise the treaty since 2020, a Modernized text of the Energy Charter Treaty was adopted at the 35th meeting of the Energy Charter Conference in December 2024. The modernized treaty includes the application of the investment protection provisions of the treaty to new energy sources such as hydrogen and ammonia, clarification of the obligations of Contracting Parties regarding investment protection, more detailed procedure of Investor-State Dispute Settlement (ISDS), establishment of new provisions regarding sustainable development and corporate social responsibility, and provisions regarding further promotion of freedom of transit. Japan has contributed to the development of the ECT by serving as the chair of the Energy Charter

(15) The ECT prescribes the liberalization of the trade and transit of energy source materials and commodities, the protection 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.

Conference in 2016, the first time for a chair to be from East Asia, and hosting the 27th meeting of the Energy Charter Conference in Tokyo. In addition, HIROSE Atsuko, a Japanese national, has been Deputy Secretary General of the Energy Charter Secretariat, established under the ECT, since September 2021.

(E) Efforts in the Public Relations Field

In March, MOFA held the Asia Energy Security Seminar in hybrid format under the theme of "Energy Security in Energy Transitions." The seminar featured keynote presentations by experts from the IEA, the Center for Strategic and International Studies(CSIS), the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA), and the Institute of Energy Economics, Japan (IEEJ), followed by panel discussions on the actions required to address emerging energy security risks arising from the energy transition as well as traditional energy security risks that continue to evolve and persist, with lively discussion taking place.

(3) Ensuring Food Security

A Food Security Situation

The global food security situation has deteriorated rapidly and on a global scale, especially in Africa and the Middle East, due to Russia's aggression against Ukraine. This comes at a time when multiple risks including COVID-19, rising energy prices, climate change, and conflicts are impacting agri-food systems, causing supply chain destabilization and disruptions. There also exist many challenges to building sustainable and resilient agri-food systems, including how to best use land for food production, conduct agricultural production adapted to climate change, and make efficient use of fertilizers.

According to the 2025 State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (SOFI)(16) report, between 638 million and 720 million people worldwide faced hunger in 2024. While the number of people facing hunger has decreased in regions such as Southeast Asia, South Asia, and South America, it continues to increase in most parts of Africa and in Western Asia.

B Diplomatic Efforts to Ensure Food Security

To ensure food security in the international community, MOFA is implementing and building on the following diplomatic efforts.

(A) Cooperation in International Frameworks

At the G20, under the chairmanship of South Africa in 2025, a Food Security Task Force was established, and Japan actively contributed to the discussions. The "Ubuntu Approaches on food security and nutrition and excessive food price volatility, "formulated by this Task Force under the commitment to shape a future where all people have access to sufficient, safe, affordable, and nutritious food, aims to address the adverse impacts of excessive food price volatility particularly on low-income households, and to continue to ensure a resilient and sustainable food system and food security. The formulation of this document was also welcomed at the leader's level at the G20 Johannesburg Summit in November. At Session 2 "A Resilient World — G20's Contribution" of the Summit, Japan communicated that it would provide support for productivity enhancement tailored to the conditions of each region in order to build a resilient and sustainable agri-food system.

(B) Strengthening Cooperation with International Organizations

As a responsible member of the international community, Japan supports the activities of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the UN, a specialized agency of the UN in the fields of food and agriculture. Japan, a major donor to the FAO, contributes significantly to strengthening global food security through the provision of development assistance that contributes to building resilient and sustainable food systems and the creation of international rules such as food safety standards. Japan also conducts Japan-FAO annual strategic consultations, working to strengthen Japan-FAO relations, including the reflection of Japan's policy direction in the FAO's programs.

(16) The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (SOFI): SOFI is an annual report on global food insecurity and nutrition jointly prepared by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the World Health Organization (WHO).

(4) Fisheries (Tuna, Whaling, etc.)

Japan is one of the major fishing countries and consumers of fishery products in the world. Japan actively contributes through international organizations to the appropriate conservation management and sustainable use of marine living resources.

Japan advocates the view that cetaceans are one of the marine living resources that should be utilized in a sustainable manner based on scientific evidence. Based on the fact that the International Whaling Commission (IWC) has a dual mandate, that is, of "conservation of whale stocks" and "orderly development of the whaling industry," Japan has sincerely engaged in dialogues based on scientific data collected for more than 30 years. However, it unveiled the fact that it is not possible to seek the coexistence with States that deny sustainable use of whales and focus exclusively on their protection. Therefore, Japan withdrew from the IWC in 2019 and resumed commercial whaling.

Japan limits commercial whaling to its territorial sea and Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) with catch limits calculated in line with the method adopted by the IWC, which is based on scientific evidence, and in a manner that will not adversely affect the stock even if the whaling continues for 100 years.

Japan's policy of actively contributing to international cooperation for the proper management of marine living resources has not changed since its withdrawal from the IWC. Since withdrawing from the IWC in 2019, Japan has continued to participate as an observer in IWC plenary meetings and the IWC Scientific Committee, and has been actively engaging and cooperating with international organizations such as the North Atlantic Marine Mammals Commission (NAMMCO). Japan has also developed non-lethal scientific research on whale stocks, some of which is conducted jointly with the IWC. The results are provided to the IWC and other international organizations as important data that can serve as a basis for realizing sustainable utilization and appropriate management of whale stocks.

Illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing is a serious threat to the sustainable fishing industry. Taking the opportunities presented by international conferences in 2025, including the ninth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD 9), the G7, G20, and APEC, Japan continued to confirm the importance of the international community working together to promote measures against IUU fishing. Furthermore, Japan has been encouraging non-contracting parties to sign the Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (PSMA), which stipulates rules for port states to take measures against IUU fishing vessels, including denial of port entry. Japan is also providing capacity building assistance to developing countries for the purpose of countering IUU fishing, including the provision of relevant equipment.



Training on IUU Fishing Countermeasures by JICA (September 10, Iwate; Photo: JICA)

In the Central Arctic Ocean, there are concerns about the possibility of unregulated fishing in the future due to partial melting of ice caused by global warming. Against the backdrop of these concerns, the Agreement to Prevent Unregulated High Seas Fisheries in the Central Arctic Ocean entered into force in June 2021 with 10 member countries and organizations, including Japan and five Arctic Ocean coastal states. At the fourth meeting of the Parties to the Agreement held in June 2025, discussions were held toward the formulation of conservation and management measures related to exploratory fishing.

As one of the largest tuna consumer countries, Japan has joined Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs) for tuna, and leads discussions on establishing conservation and management measures (CMMs) at annual meetings and other occasions. In recent years, results are being seen from active efforts through international resource management. Regarding Pacific bluefin tuna, at the annual meeting of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries

Commission (WCPFC) in December, progress in discussions on the development of a management procedure and other related matters was reported. In addition, at the annual meeting of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) held in November, an increase in the total allowable catch (TAC) for Atlantic bluefin tuna and the quota allocations for each contracting party for the period 2026–2028 was approved. As for southern bluefin tuna, at the annual meeting of the Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna (CCSBT) held in October, based on the recommendation of the Scientific Committee, it was concurred to maintain the current TAC for 2026.

With respect to Pacific saury, at the annual meeting of the North Pacific Fisheries Commission (NPFC) held in Osaka in March, based on harvest control rules that automatically calculate total allowable catches for Pacific saury based on its resource levels, an agreement was reached to reduce the TAC by 10%. For future meetings, it remains important to further improve resource management.

As for Japanese eel, the fourth scientific meeting on eel was held in June under the leadership of Japan. Scientific knowledge on the management of eel stocks was shared. Also in June, the 18th informal consultation on international cooperation was held in person in Shizuoka, where Japan, the ROK, China, and Taiwan discussed and confirmed the upper limits of glass eel input into aquaculture ponds, and the four parties issued a joint press release about the results of the consultation. (For discussions at the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) Conference of the Parties concerning the conservation of Japanese eel, see Chapter 3, Section 2, 2. (4) A (B).)

Special Feature

OECD × Southeast Asia
— Co-creating a New Future with AI —

Once, artificial intelligence (AI) seemed a distant symbol of the future. Yet today, its influence has become a tangible reality — from everyday decision-making to the very nature of the international order. Rather than dividing people from one another or nation from nation, AI is becoming a new language for "co-creation."

The text up to this point was in fact written by AI. Did you notice? AI has already become embedded in our daily lives and is being used in every conceivable setting — from navigation applications to self-checkout registers — while at the same time posing challenges around ethics, trust, and inclusiveness. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) is seeking to present one set of solutions to these challenges.

To address both the opportunities and risks posed by AI, and building on a proposal from Japan, the OECD adopted the "OECD AI Principles" in 2019 — the first intergovernmental standard on AI. These principles call for AI to be designed and operated in a manner that respects democratic and human-centered values. In 2024, reflecting the outcomes of the Hiroshima AI Process,[1] the principles were revised to include, among other additions, provisions addressing the spread of disinformation and misinformation generated by generative AI.





Discussion scene at the OECD "AI Policy Toolkit" Co-creation Workshop (above) and group photo taken after the workshop (below) (August 6, Bangkok, Thailand)

As a policy instrument to give concrete form to these principles, the OECD is developing an "AI Policy Toolkit" that allows countries to assess the alignment of their own AI policies with the "OECD AI Principles," and to refer to examples of AI utilization in other countries. This initiative serves the interests not only of member countries, but of the broader international community, including the Global South. However, such policy instruments are meaningless unless they permeate the international community, and one-way communication is likewise undesirable. Disseminating the "AI Policy Toolkit" across the international community, particularly to Southeast Asian countries and other Global South countries, remains a challenge.

From this perspective, Japan is seeking to play a role in "co-creating" the "AI Policy Toolkit" together with Southeast Asia in particular. For Southeast Asian countries as well, international standards on AI are important for achieving both economic growth and the development of resilient and secure AI systems. In August 2025, Japan co-hosted a Co-creation Workshop on the "AI Policy Toolkit" at the residence of the Japanese Ambassador in Bangkok, Thailand, with the participation of AI experts from Southeast Asian countries, Japan, and the OECD. The workshop aimed to reflect the Southeast Asian perspectives into the OECD's "AI Policy Toolkit," and active discussions took place among participants. The input obtained through the workshop will serve as valuable guidance as the OECD proceeds with further development of the toolkit. In this way, Japan will continue to act as a "bridge" between Southeast Asia and the OECD in the field of AI, carrying forward initiatives of importance to both sides.

1 Hiroshima AI Process: A process for discussing international rules about generative AI, launched at the G7 Hiroshima Summit in May 2023, under Japan's presidency. In the G7 leaders' statement of December 2023, the "Hiroshima AI Process Comprehensive Policy Framework" including "Hiroshima Process International Guiding Principles for All AI Actors" and "Hiroshima Process International Code of Conduct for Organizations Developing Advanced AI Systems" was endorsed.

Section 4 Efforts to Promote Understanding and Trust in Japan

1 Strategic Communications

(1) General Overview

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) is strengthening its communication efforts so that understanding of Japan deepens in the international community and perceptions based on objective facts are formed. In particular, in recent years when international information warfare occurs on a constant basis, appropriately responding to information dissemination that damages Japan's credibility is of utmost importance in narrowing the margin for information manipulation. For this reason, strategic communication aimed at enhancing understanding of Japan's policies and initiatives and interest in Japan has become more important than ever. MOFA conducts strategic communications based on the fundamental policy of (a) making further efforts to disseminate Japan's policies, initiatives, and positions; (b) sharing Japan's rich and diverse attractions, and (c) expanding interest in, understanding of, and support for Japan. MOFA collects and analyzes information from a variety of angles, and then conducts strategic communications while also taking into account the National Security Strategy.

A Disseminating Japan's Policies, Initiatives, and Positions

In 2025, the international community became increasingly divided and confrontational, such as with Russia's protracted aggression against Ukraine and the continuing crisis in the Middle East. In response, MOFA, through various diplomatic opportunities and initiatives and while utilizing social media, has focused on disseminating information about Japan's basic ideas on, and initiatives for, peace, stability, and prosperity in the international community; maintaining and strengthening the international order based on the rule of law; and global issues. In addition, MOFA has also worked to enhance public awareness of issues concerning the recognition of history and territory/sovereignty.

In particular, the Prime Minister, the Foreign Minister, and other government officials hold press conferences, give interviews, contribute articles, or give speeches during overseas visits and international conferences, and Japan's diplomatic missions overseas also actively communicate with the governments, citizens, and media of their host countries. When foreign media outlets publish reports that include factual errors, the MOFA Headquarters and diplomatic missions overseas promptly lodge protests or post rebuttals, to ensure that media reports are made based on objective facts and understanding. In addition, MOFA creates publicity materials such as videos on Japan's foreign policy and then utilizes them through overseas television networks, websites, social media, and various other means. 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 these perspectives, MOFA invites influential experts and media personnel to Japan from abroad, and arranges opportunities for them to exchange views with various people, including Japanese government officials, 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.

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, accurate information about the Rising Sun Flag is provided in a variety of forms, including making multi-language

explanatory materials and videos available on MOFA's website to gain understanding from the international community.(1) Moreover, in response to communications not based on facts, given the current situation in which information is instantaneously disseminated on a global scale, MOFA promptly communicates necessary rebuttals and accurate facts.

In order to increase the effectiveness of these communications, it is essential for MOFA to utilize social media such as X, Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube, as well as MOFA's website. In order to gain broader understanding, MOFA is making efforts to strengthen its communications, including by actively utilizing short videos and infographics(2) on social media.



B Sharing Japan's Rich and Diverse Attractions

Fostering an international environment in which Japan and its people are favorably received — including through such communications by Japan — is also important. To (a) disseminate accurate information and (b) communicate the diverse attractions of Japanese culture are the two pillars of public diplomacy. With regard to sharing Japan's rich and diverse attractions, from the viewpoint of promoting understanding of Japan abroad, MOFA conducts a variety of cultural exchange and communication projects through its diplomatic missions overseas, and the Japan Foundation (JF) with the aim of further expanding the circle of Japan's Friends and fostering an international environment in which Japan and its people are favorably received.

Specifically, through cultural exchange projects conducted via its diplomatic missions and JF's overseas offices around the world, as well as activities such as the Japan International MANGA Award, MOFA actively promotes the appeal of a wide range of Japanese culture, from traditional culture to pop culture utilizing social media and other outreach methods. In doing so, MOFA has worked in cooperation with relevant stakeholders in Japan and abroad to promote the preservation of tangible and intangible cultural heritage throughout the world and the inscription of Japan's cultural and natural heritage on the World Heritage List and the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. Moreover, in order to promote a deeper understanding of Japan, through organizations such as JF, MOFA has been promoting people-to-people and intellectual exchanges, helping to spread the Japanese language, and supporting Japanese studies at universities and research institutes in major countries around the world, and has also been promoting youth exchanges between Japan and other countries and regions through programs such as "Japan's Friendship Ties Programs."

Through these public diplomacy efforts, MOFA will continue to make even further efforts with the aim of expanding interest in, understanding of, and support for Japan in the future.

(2) Responding to Information Warfare, Including Countering Disinformation

As geopolitical competition intensifies, international information warfare in the cognitive domain through information manipulation, including spread of disinformation, is a constant occurrence, as has been particularly conspicuous over the situation in Ukraine and Israel/Palestine. Foreign information manipulation, in

(1) Reference 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
"Rising Sun Flag as Japanese Longstanding Culture" (Posted on MOFA's YouTube channel from October 8, 2021)

(2) Infographics refers to figures and illustrations used to represent data and information in an easy-to-understand manner.

which state and non-state actors deliberately spread disinformation and/or narratives to undermine confidence in Japan's policies or to impede democratic processes and international cooperation, is becoming increasingly important to address.

MOFA is aware of this and, based on the National Security Strategy, is steadily strengthening its information gathering, analysis and communication capabilities in response to information warfare through the cooperation of its information, policy and communication divisions, while also making efforts to conduct strategic communications in a timely and appropriate manner based on the results of information gathering and analysis.

In responding to foreign information manipulation, it is of utmost importance to strengthen the resilience of society as a whole, including media, think tanks and NGOs, and it is essential to tackle this through a public-private partnership. In April 2024, in order to raise broad understanding of MOFA's international efforts to counter information warfare, MOFA launched a page on its website entitled "The responses to information manipulation, including spread of disinformation," which is updated as needed.

In addition, based on the understanding that countries sharing the same concerns over foreign information manipulation should take concerted action, Japan is promoting cooperation with like-minded countries and others. Furthermore, Japan has been continuously holding discussions on information manipulation in bilateral formats and multilateral consultations, including the G7 Rapid Response Mechanism (RRM), and has been engaged in discussions aimed at strengthening information sharing and response capabilities with countries and regions that share the same values.

(3) Information Provision Through the Internet

As information increases and spreads rapidly across the internet, MOFA has been actively engaged in providing information through its website and various social media platforms — including by opening a new official Instagram account in 2023, in addition to X, Facebook, and YouTube — in order to increase understanding and support of Japan's foreign policy among people both inside and outside of Japan. In addition to livestreaming the regular press conferences by the Foreign Minister (in Japanese and English), MOFA also promptly and proactively communicated information about domestic and international diplomatic events such as the Ninth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD 9), the situation in Ukraine, the situation in Gaza, and other topics. Furthermore, MOFA also places importance on using recent trends to communicate diplomatic policy, such as by posting short videos on social media in which the Foreign Minister personally delivers messages about domestic and international diplomatic events involving the Foreign Minister, and by utilizing infographics incorporating figures and illustrations in addition to text.

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 diverse appeals. MOFA has also been working to provide information in local languages through the social media and the websites of Japan's diplomatic missions overseas (embassies, consulates general, and permanent missions).

(4) Media Coverage of Japan in Other Countries and Regions, and Dissemination to Foreign Media

MOFA promptly and proactively provides information and assistance to foreign media in order to gain the understanding and support of the international community on Japan's policies, initiatives and positions. Communication through foreign media includes efforts to conduct interviews with the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister, regular press conferences by the Foreign Minister (livestreaming is also available online), briefings (overview explanations), 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. Furthermore, in cases where there are significant factual errors or reports that are incompatible with Japan's position, MOFA promptly lodges protests or posts rebuttals to the media in an effort to ensure that media reports are made based on objective facts and understanding.

In 2025, Japan's diplomacy attracted international attention through events including the 2025 World Exposition (Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan), the holding of TICAD 9 in Yokohama, the formation of the Takaichi Cabinet and its subsequent overseas visits, the Japan-United States (U.S.) Summit Meeting on the occasion of U.S. President Donald J. Trump's visit to Japan, and the Summit of the "Central Asia plus Japan" Dialogue held in Tokyo. The Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister made frequent overseas visits and actively communicated with foreign media through contributions and interviews. For example, Prime Minister Takaichi contributed articles to major newspapers in each destination country in order to communicate Japan's position at each summit and the significance of the bilateral relationship between Japan and the countries visited, including at the ASEAN-related Summit Meeting in Malaysia (October), which was her first overseas visit after taking office as Prime Minister, and at the G20 Johannesburg Summit (South Africa).

In 2025, the Prime Minister contributed articles and gave interviews 71 times, and the Foreign Minister contributed articles and gave interviews a total of 20 times. Additionally, MOFA provided information to foreign media through the Press Secretary and other means, and held press briefings to local media on the occasions of overseas visits by the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister. Under the project to invite foreign media, in 2025, 12 invitation programs were provided, and 32 journalists from 21 countries participated in the project.

(5) JAPAN HOUSE

MOFA has established JAPAN HOUSE overseas communication hubs in three cities, namely Sao Paulo (Brazil), London (United Kingdom (UK)) and Los Angeles (the United States (U.S.)). The purpose is to attract a wide range of people, including those who know very little about Japan and to enlarge the base of people who are interested and well-versed in Japan by communicating Japan's rich and varied attractiveness as well as its various policies, initiatives, and views.

JAPAN HOUSE promotes effective communication by (a) communicating through "All-Japan" efforts by the central and local governments, private sectors, and other actors, (b) promoting outreach that reflects the needs of local communities, and (c) providing a "one-stop-service" where various information related to Japan can be obtained from one location.

With the slogan "Mind-blowing Encounters with Japan across the Globe," each JAPAN HOUSE conducts locally designed exhibitions which are independently organized by each hub, as well as 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 high-quality exhibitions by leveraging the know-how 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 culture, pop culture such as films and manga, and design, as well as its various policies, initiatives and views, are also widely disseminated through other formats such as lectures, seminars, workshops, webinars, library spaces, websites and social media, merchandise, and food and beverages. JAPAN HOUSE is also currently working actively to win over new audiences by conducting some exhibitions in other cities or in neighboring countries, and by using hybrid methods combining in-person and online formats, and through exhibitions and events related to Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan. By the end of December 2025, the total number of visitors to the three hubs had exceeded 8.42 million, indicating that the hubs are becoming firmly established as major cultural facilities in each city.

2 Cultural, Sports, and Tourism Diplomacy

(1) Overview

A very large number of foreign nationals develop an interest in Japan and visit Japan through Japanese culture. MOFA and JF carry out various projects ranging from communicating the appeal of Japanese culture to promoting sports and inbound tourism. For example, "Cultural Projects of Diplomatic Missions Overseas" introduce the broad spectrum of Japan's attractions,

from traditional culture such as tea ceremony, flower arrangement, and martial arts, to food culture and pop culture such as anime, manga, and fashion.

In order to carry on the legacy of Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games held in 2021, MOFA engaged in initiatives as part of the "Sport for Tomorrow (SFT)," which is Japan's program for international exchanges and cooperation through sports, such as various sports exchanges and sports promotion support projects overseas, dispatching and inviting sports instructors through the JICA Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCV) program, and the provision of sporting equipment and improvement of sporting facilities through Cultural Grant Assistance. MOFA is also providing information about these initiatives in Japan and abroad on MOFA's "MofaJapan × SPORTS" official X (formerly Twitter) account.

MOFA also conducts a range of activities through Japan's diplomatic missions overseas to promote a deeper understanding of Japan amongst the diverse human resources who will lead the next generation. These include providing information on studying in Japan; building alumni networks comprising foreign nationals who have studied in Japan; cooperating with the JET Programme, which invites young foreign nationals to work for local governments in Japan; holding exchange and invitation programs for youth and adults from Asia, the U.S. and other regions; and providing support for Japanese studies at universities and research institutions.

Promoting 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, while also contributing to the realization of a society of harmonious coexistence with foreign nationals in Japan. From these kinds of perspectives, within Japan the Act on Promotion of Japanese Language Education was promulgated and entered into force in June 2019, and the Basic Policy for the Comprehensive and Effective Implementation of Measures to Promote Japanese Language Education (Cabinet Decision) was formulated in June 2020 (revised on September 5, 2025). Based on these policies, through JF, MOFA is working to improve the overseas environment for Japanese language education, including by dispatching Japanese language specialists overseas, conducting training programs for overseas Japanese language teachers, and developing Japanese language education materials. MOFA has also been working to meet social 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) and other partners, Japan has been actively engaged in supporting protection of tangible and intangible cultural heritage as well as natural heritage across the world. Moreover, Japan is actively taking part in the promotion of international frameworks for safeguarding heritage through conventions such as the World Heritage Convention and the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

By putting creative efforts into promoting such cultural and sports diplomacy, such as through greater use of digital tools, and by sharing information on Japan's charms to the world, MOFA also contributes to bringing more foreign visitors to Japan in the future.

(2) Cultural Programs

For Japan's foreign policy to be smoothly implemented in the international community, it is important to promote a better understanding of Japan among the individuals 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 JF.

Diplomatic missions overseas carry out a range of cultural projects as part of efforts to promote a deeper understanding of Japan and to make Japan's image even more positive in the areas under their jurisdiction. For example, they actively introduce Japanese lifestyles and culture such as workshops on tea ceremony, flower arrangement and origami, Japanese film screenings, Japanese music performances, martial arts tournaments and demonstrations, exhibitions on traditional crafts and Japanese photography, popular culture such as anime and manga, as well as Japan's food culture. At the same time, they also plan and implement Japanese speech contests and essay contests.

Additionally, MOFA takes advantage of years marking diplomatic milestones to revitalize cultural and

people-to-people exchange projects and to further strengthen relations by intensively holding large-scale, comprehensive anniversary events with government-affiliated organizations and private companies. In 2025, large-scale cultural events were held to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the normalization of diplomatic relations between Japan and Republic of Korea (ROK), the 130th anniversary of the establishment of the diplomatic relations between Japan and Brazil, the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Japan and Saudi Arabia, the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Japan and Malta, and the 50th anniversary of the establishment of Japan-Cabo Verde diplomatic relations.

JF also leverages its overseas offices and, in collaboration with Japan's diplomatic missions overseas, develops and implements cultural and artistic exchange programs with partner countries.

In 2025, as part of a project to support the holding of Japan festivals to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the normalization of diplomatic relations between Japan and the ROK, JF dispatched the breaking team "KOSÉ 8ROCKS" to the "Japan-Korea Exchange Festival 2025 in Seoul," held in Seoul, to give a stage performance. To mark the 130th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Japan and Brazil, JF dispatched Japanese performance artist Saeborg to São Paulo and hosted his performance "Super Farm," thereby promoting cultural and artistic exchange between Japan and Brazil. Furthermore, taking the opportunity of TICAD 9 held in August, JF dispatched MYTH & ROID, sajou no hana, and MAESHIMA Mayu — popular artists known for performing theme songs from hit anime — to Cairo and Alexandria in Egypt, where they held anime song live concerts and exchange events with local Japanese language learners. Additionally, the "Japanese Film Festival (JFF) Africa Tour" was implemented, with large-scale Japanese film festivals held in Ethiopia, Nigeria, and Rwanda out of the 17 target countries. In connection with this, Japanese films with multilingual subtitles were distributed to all 54 countries in Africa through "JFF Theater," the free streaming platform for Japanese visual content operated by JF. In addition, at Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan, through grants to the Japan Association for the 2025 World Exposition, support was provided to developing countries for travel and accommodation expenses for curators, performers,



60th Anniversary of the Normalization of diplomatic relations between Japan and Republic of Korea (October 22, Seoul, ROK)



Japan-Brazil Friendship Exchange Year (June 28, Manaus, Brazil)



Anime Song Concert in Egypt to Commemorate TICAD 9 — Performance by MAESHIMA Mayu (October 23 to 25, Cairo and Alexandria, Egypt)



Japanese-Style Jazz Dance Team "Hanabi" Viet Nam Performance Program (October 4, Hai Phong, Viet Nam)



Japan Festival Support Program: "Japan-Korea Exchange Festival 2025 in Seoul" (October 12, Seoul, ROK; Photo: kang jaegu)



18th Japan International MANGA Award Ceremony (March 12, Tokyo)

and others involved in the exhibitions of national pavilions and National Day events in Japan.

Furthermore, JF is intensively implementing the people-to-people exchange program "Partnership to Co-create a Future with the Next Generation: WA Project 2.0," which, over the 10-year period from 2024 to 2033, focuses on two pillar projects of "Two-way Intellectual and Cultural Exchange" and the "NIHONGO Partners Program" between Japan and ASEAN countries and others. As part of this effort, in 2025, JF dispatched KINJO Shinji, Artistic Director of the National Theatre Okinawa, to Jakarta (Indonesia) and multiple other cities, where Ryukyuan dance performances were held along with workshops and demonstrations for students at arts universities and for Japanese language learners. Japan also dispatched the Japanese-style jazz dance team "Hanabi" to Hai Phong (Viet Nam), where dance performances were held, and workshops were conducted for students at schools where "NIHONGO Partners" who support Japanese language classes are active, thereby promoting two-way arts exchange between Japan and Southeast Asia. In addition, in 2025, the NIHONGO Partners Program (long-term dispatch) began long-term dispatch to India in addition to seven ASEAN countries (Indonesia, Cambodia, Thailand, the Philippines, Viet Nam, Malaysia, and Laos) and Taiwan, and for the first time, short-term dispatch to Mongolia was also implemented.(3)

The Japan International MANGA Award was launched by MOFA in 2007 to honor overseas manga artists who have created outstanding manga works, with the aims of spreading manga culture overseas and promoting international cultural exchange through manga. In the 19th Japan International MANGA Award, held in 2025, a record high of 738 entries were received from 110 countries and regions. The Gold Award was presented to a work from Brazil, while Silver Awards were presented to works from Saudi Arabia, Viet Nam, and Taiwan. Notably, this year also marked first-ever entries from six countries and regions: Afghanistan, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Togo, Nepal, Puerto Rico, and Libya.

(3) People-to-People Exchange and Exchange in the Area of Education and Sports

To build personal relationships and promote a better understanding of Japan, MOFA carries out a number of programs 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 a wide range of people-to-people exchanges. These projects not only promote mutual understanding and friendship, but also increase the number of "supporters" for Japan in the international community, which in turn considerably benefits Japan's national diplomatic interests.

A Student Exchange Programs

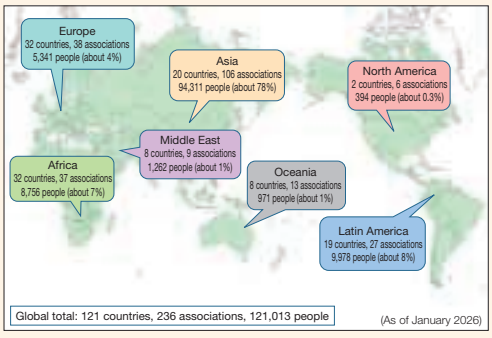
MOFA actively introduces the attractiveness and opportunities of studying in Japan to foreign nationals through Japanese diplomatic missions overseas, and

(3) Under the "NIHONGO Partners Program," long-term dispatch has been conducted to India, Indonesia, Cambodia, Singapore, Thailand, China, the Philippines, Brunei, Viet Nam, Malaysia, Myanmar, Laos, and Taiwan from 2014 to 2025. Mongolia and Timor-Leste have received short-term dispatch only.

implements application and screening procedures to grant the Japanese Government (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology) Scholarship to promising students abroad. It also makes efforts to network with former international students who have returned to their home countries through Japan Alumni Associations and to expand interest in, understanding of, and support for Japan. In March, the fifth Japan Alumni Conference was held in a hybrid format following the same format as the previous year. At the Conference, participants gave reports on each alumni association's domestic activities and exchanged opinions about conferences held in each region, and strengthened networks among alumni from different countries.

The Quad Fellowship was announced at the Second Japan-Australia-India-U.S. (Quad) Summit Meeting in September 2021 as an educational and people-to-people exchange cooperation program, and awards scholarships for studying in the U.S. to outstanding individuals in STEM fields (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) from the four countries. Under this framework, in August 2025, the third cohort of 25 recipients (5 from each country of Japan, Australia, India, and the U.S. and 5 from the ASEAN region) began their studies in the U.S. In addition, 12 MEXT scholarship foreign students studying in Japan were recognized as Japan Fellows to participate in the Fellowship program.

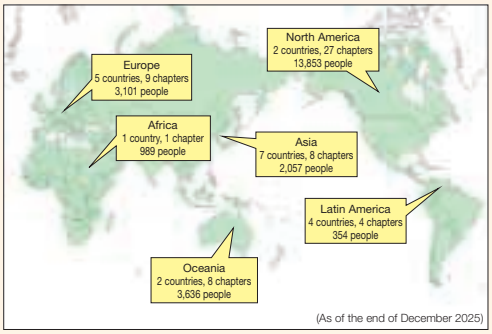
Japan Alumni Associations and members by region



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. 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 by local governments and other entities. MOFA is responsible for the application and screening process, pre-departure orientation at diplomatic missions overseas, and support for the activities of the JET Alumni Association (JETAA), which operates in 21 countries and has about 24,000 members. In FY 2025, 5,933 participants from 54 countries, including 1,501 new participants, were dispatched to all parts of Japan, and more than 81,000 people have participated in the JET Programme to date as of July 1, 2025. JETAA conducts activities to introduce Japan in many countries. Many of those

JET Alumni Association Chapters and members





Farewell Reception for JET Programme Participants from India (July 25, New Delhi, India)

who went through the JET Programme are important human and diplomatic assets for Japan, as they go on to engage as people with great affinity toward or knowledge of Japan, in activities that contribute to expanding interest in, understanding of, and support for Japan while also playing an active role in a variety of fields in both the public and private sectors in their own countries.

C Sports Exchange

Sports enable communication beyond language and can be an effective tool for promoting friendly relations and a better understanding of Japan. Under the "Projects for Sports Diplomacy Enhancement" scheme, MOFA is engaged in sports exchange and cooperation initiatives including providing support for the transport of equipment to sports organizations in various countries, thereby contributing to the development of bilateral relations. This project contributes to enhancing mutual understanding internationally by promoting diplomacy through sports and by expanding interest in, understanding of, and support for Japan. At the same time, it also improves the standing of Japan in the world of international sports.



Projects for Sports Diplomacy Enhancement: Handover Ceremony of Judo Uniforms to Uzbekistan (March 28, Tashkent, Uzbekistan)

D Japan's Friendship Ties Programs

With a view to expanding the basis for Japan's diplomacy, which develops bilateral and inter-regional relationships between Japan and countries and regions in the Asia-Pacific, North America, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, MOFA implements the Japan's Friendship Ties Programs to promote multifaceted understanding of Japan to youths from various countries and regions, through invitations, dispatches,



JENESYS ASEAN-Japan Sports (Football) × SDGs Exchange — Bo Soccer Experience (October 31, Osaka; Photo: Japan International Cooperation Center)

and online exchanges, striving to seek and cultivate future generations with great affinity toward or knowledge of Japan, and working to strengthen the spread of information about Japan from overseas. In 2025, about 1,700 youths participated in these programs, attending lectures by Japanese experts in politics, economics, society, culture, history, and diplomatic policies, and also went on observation tours in each field and had exchanges of opinions and experienced Japanese culture. These programs kindled interest in Japan amongst young people from various countries and regions, broadened the base of support for Japan, and contributed to promoting understanding of Japan and making Japan's image even more positive in the international community via participants sharing what they learned through the program and their experiences in Japan through reports to their organizations and social media. In addition, about 90 follow-up programs, such as alumni reunions and online Japan revisits, have been held for alumni of these programs, thereby continuing to foster strong networks and to promote an even deeper understanding of Japan's relations with other countries and regions in their respective area of interest.

(4) Exchange in the Intellectual Field

A Japanese Studies

Through JF, MOFA comprehensively supports a range of overseas research activities related to the politics, economy, society, and culture of Japan. In 2025, through JF's Japanese Studies Fellowship Program, 87 researchers were provided with the opportunity to visit Japan for research. As part of the "Partnership to Co-create a



Participants in the Summer Program for Aspiring Southeast Asia Scholars in Japanese Studies (June 29 to July 19, Singapore and Tokyo)

Future with the Next Generation: WA Project 2.0," JF, in cooperation with the Japan Studies Association of Southeast Asia (JSA-ASEAN), the National University of Singapore, and the Institute for Advanced Studies on Asia at the University of Tokyo, newly implemented the "Summer Program for Aspiring Southeast Asia Scholars in Japanese Studies" in July 2025, through which lectures, workshops, and other activities were provided for graduate students specializing in Japanese Studies from six Southeast Asian countries (Indonesia, Singapore, Thailand, the Philippines, Viet Nam, and Malaysia), thereby contributing to the development of international careers for participants while strengthening multilayered personal networks and fostering the next generation of Japanese studies scholars.

JF also dispensed grants for expanding Japanese studies faculty members, for organizing seminars and symposiums, dispatch of visiting professors, and for expanding the collection of books on Japan to a total of 51 institutions of Japanese studies in 32 countries and regions in 2025. In addition, it provided support to academic societies with the goal of promoting network building among Japanese studies researchers and research institutions from various countries and regions.

B International Dialogue

Through JF, MOFA implements Global Partnerships Programs for international dialogues that aim to create and share new knowledge and wisdom, to resolve common issues, and to deepen mutual understanding among future generations. Specifically, it hosted seminars and symposiums based on the themes of common international issues, and conducted exchanges by dispatching or inviting prominent cultural figures and other guests. It planned, implemented, and supported exchange projects that contribute to promoting dialogue



ASEAN-Japan Exchange Program for Secondary School Educators — Study Tour in Japan: Japanese Culture Experience at Morimoto Noh Stage (June 26, Fukuoka)

at various levels, human resource development, and the establishment of interpersonal networks. These include the implementation of the Japan Outreach Initiative (JOI) program, which dispatches Japanese coordinators to the U.S. with a view to deepening interest in and understanding of Japan at the grassroots level in the U.S.

In 2025, following on from the previous year, the Japan Foundation Indo-Pacific Partnership Program (JFIPP) was implemented, in which experts and practitioners from the region tackle common issues in order to develop human resources who can contribute to the realization of a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)," with a total of 78 people participating. In March, Oren Cass, a young commentator attracting attention as a leading voice for new conservative thinking under the new Trump administration in the U.S., was invited to Japan, where dialogues with Japanese experts and public symposiums were held. JF also co-hosted, together with the Japanese-German Center Berlin, a symposium in hybrid format on the theme of sustainability in tourism, where researchers and tourism practitioners from both Japan and Germany exchanged discussions and knowledge. Furthermore, as part of the "Partnership to Co-create a Future with the Next Generation: WA Project 2.0," JF invited a total of 98 teachers and others from secondary education institutions in ASEAN countries to Japan, and implemented programs such as school visits, opinion exchanges with Japanese teachers, experiences in Japanese culture, and on-site tours of Japan's efforts to address global issues. It is hoped that these programs will deepen the participants' understanding of and affinity for Japan, and that they will be able to apply the results of their experiences to their own educational settings after returning home.

C Japan-United States Conference on Cultural and Educational Interchange (CULCON)

In CULCON, where public and private sector experts from Japan and the U.S. discuss cultural and educational exchange and intellectual dialogue, a symposium on the theme of building Japan-U.S. partnerships was held in Washington, D.C., U.S. in February. In addition, of the two Japan-U.S. joint subcommittees, the "Subnational Diplomacy/Local & Regional Exchange" subcommittee held its fifth meeting in Rikuzentakata City, Iwate Prefecture in June and its sixth meeting in hybrid format in October. Furthermore, the "Information Access and Sharing in the Digital Age" subcommittee also held its fifth meeting in hybrid format in October. Both subcommittees are scheduled to submit their final reports, including policy recommendations, to the 31st Plenary Session of the Japan-U.S. CULCON to be held in February 2026.

D Cooperation with the United Nations University (UNU)

The UNU is the only UN organization headquartered in Japan, and, as a think tank for all UN agencies, the UNU contributes to the international community not only in research on global issues including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) but also in human resource development by offering degree programs, and in 2025 UNU celebrated its 50th anniversary. Japan provides a variety of cooperation and support to UNU. In August, two thematic events were held at TICAD 9, and multiple TICAD-related events were also implemented. In September, the "Ceremony for the 50th Anniversary of the United Nations University" was held, attended by Foreign Minister Iwaya, Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology ABE Toshiko, Minister of the Environment ASAO Keiichiro, and Governor of Tokyo KOIKE Yuriko. UNU also contributes to promoting discussions on the SDGs through dialogue series and other events organized by UNU.



Congratulatory Message from Foreign Minister Iwaya at the Ceremony for the 50th Anniversary of the United Nations University (September 18, Tokyo, United Nations University)

(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 global popularity, interest in the Japanese language is growing around the world, especially overseas among young people. Further promoting the spread of the Japanese language overseas leads to the promotion of understanding of Japan abroad and the creation of an international environment favorable to the Japanese people and companies. Furthermore, improving the Japanese language proficiency of foreign nationals who wish to work in Japan is also important for those foreign nationals to coexist in Japanese society. A survey conducted by JF in FY 2024 confirmed that approximately 4 million people in 143 countries and regions are learning Japanese. The number of applicants for the Japanese Language Proficiency Test (JLPT) offered by JF (including those taking the test in Japan) temporarily decreased after 2020 due to the spread of COVID-19, but has since recovered and has been rapidly increasing, with the number of applicants in 2025 reaching a record high of approximately 1.94 million.

Through JF, MOFA is working to improve the environment for and to address the diverse needs related to Japanese language education overseas. For example, JF dispatches Japanese language specialists abroad; carries out training programs for Japanese language teachers, foreign-service officers and public officials; trains cultural and academic personnel; supports Japanese language education for children; conducts Japanese language pre-training for nurse and care worker candidates under 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. As a major pillar of the "Partnership to Co-create a Future with the Next Generation: WA Project 2.0" initiative, JF dispatches NIHONGO Partners to support Japanese-language instruction at secondary schools and similar institutions across ASEAN countries and beyond. In 2025, a total of 538 NIHONGO Partners were dispatched to 13 countries and regions. Additionally, 69 teachers and 131 students from host institutions were invited to Japan for training opportunities. To address labor force shortages brought about by the declining birthrate and aging population in Japan, Japan has begun to accept foreign nationals under the April 2019 residence status as "Specified Skilled Workers." Accordingly, through JF, MOFA has been taking new measures since then in accordance with 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), that include conducting the Japan Foundation Test for Basic Japanese (JFT-Basic), which assesses the Japanese language ability of foreign nationals who come to Japan (by the end of 2025, a total of about 530,000 people have taken the test in 13 countries overseas and within Japan), as well as developing and disseminating learning materials and curriculum with the goal of fostering people's Japanese language ability effectively, and nurturing local Japanese language teachers who teach Japanese to those who wish to work in Japan. Additionally, in response to the occurrence of irregularities in Japanese language tests implemented by JF, thorough measures have been implemented to prevent recurrence.

(6) Cooperation through United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

UNESCO is the first international organization that Japan became a Member State of after the war, in 1951. Japan is actively involved in a variety of UNESCO projects in the fields of education, science, and culture. Since 1952, Japan has continued to serve as a Member State of the Executive Board of UNESCO.

Japan cooperates with UNESCO and provides support to developing countries in the fields of education, science, and culture. In the field of culture, Japan places particular emphasis on the preservation and promotion of the world's tangible and intangible cultural heritage and human resource development. Furthermore, Japan participates proactively in international frameworks for the protection of cultural heritage. Specific efforts include the support projects for the conservation and restoration of Angkor monuments in Cambodia, which have continued since 1994, and of the Bamiyan site in Afghanistan, which have continued since 2003. In these projects, Japanese experts play a central role, and human resource development is being promoted to enable local stakeholders to independently take charge of protecting such sites in the future. In addition, support is also provided for the development of conservation and management plans for heritage sites, as well as for their preservation and restoration. Japan also contributed 100,000 U.S. dollars each to UNESCO's emergency education support for Gaza and Lebanon. Japan also continues to provide support to Ukraine's cultural and education sector, which is facing difficulties, through UNESCO. In recent years, Japan has also been providing support for capacity building to African countries and small island developing states to help them strike a balance between protecting cultural heritage and sustainable development. 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 development of domestic institutions and capacity building for relevant parties to enhance countries' ability to protect intangible cultural heritage by themselves.

UNESCO Director-General Audrey Azoulay has been promoting "Strategic Transformation" toward strengthening UNESCO, which includes reforms for the de-politicization of UNESCO and organizational reforms, and Japan has been consistently supporting the Director-General. In May, Foreign Minister Iwaya, during his visit to Paris, held talks with Director-General Azoulay, and both sides agreed to continue to work cooperatively on various challenges within UNESCO going forward. In September, Director-General Azoulay visited Japan, paid a courtesy call on Prime Minister Ishiba, and held meetings with Foreign

Minister Iwaya and Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology Abe, where views were exchanged on continued cooperation between Japan and UNESCO. In November, Director-General Azoulay completed her eight-year tenure and stepped down, and new Director-General Khaled El-Enany took office. Japan will continue to actively contribute to UNESCO's activities promoted under the leadership of the new Director-General.

A World Heritage Convention

The World Heritage Convention aims to protect cultural heritage and natural heritage internationally as heritage belonging to all mankind. Japan concluded the Convention in 1992 (as of December 2025, the number of States Parties to the Convention is 196). 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 2025, a total of 1,248 World Heritage Sites are included on the World Heritage List, including 26 heritage sites (21 cultural heritage sites and five natural heritage sites) in Japan. The 47th session of the World Heritage Committee was held in July 2025 in Paris.

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 2025, the number of States Parties to the Convention is 185). Japan, with abundant experience in safeguarding domestic intangible cultural properties, served as the chair of the intergovernmental working group meetings held in 2021 and 2022 to discuss improvements to the operational mechanism of this Convention, leading discussions by incorporating requests from developing countries. In December 2025, inscription of the following three Japanese cultural elements, on an extended basis as a national extension, on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, was decided. "Washi, craftsmanship of traditional Japanese hand-made paper," "Yama, Hoko, Yatai, float festivals in Japan," and "Traditional skills, techniques and knowledge for the conservation and transmission of wooden architecture in Japan" (Addition of relevant cultural properties to elements already inscribed on the Representative List). In addition, in March of the same year, Japan resubmitted to the UNESCO Secretariat its proposal for "Shodo: Calligraphy in Japan" as a new nomination (as of December 2025, the total number of items inscribed from Japan stands at 23).

C UNESCO Memory of the World Programme

The UNESCO Memory of the World Programme was established in 1992 to promote the safeguarding of and access to, and raise awareness of valuable archival heritage. Of these, according to the UNESCO website, as of December 2025, 570 items have been inscribed under the international register.

The fact that the governments of Member States could not be involved in the assessment process of the nominations under the previous mechanism, even in the cases where there are clear discrepancies of views between the concerned Member States, is not consistent with the founding principle of UNESCO: promoting friendly ties and mutual understanding among Member States. After 2017, submission of new nominations was suspended, and Japan led the comprehensive review process of the programme. As a result, a new mechanism was approved by the UNESCO Executive Board in April 2021, under which nominations are submitted through the governments of Member States. Additionally, a contestation system was newly established, which keeps nominations over which Member States have conflicting views on hold until dialogues between the concerned countries have been concluded. With the completion of the review process, the call for new nominations resumed in July of the same year, and from Japan, the "The Monk Enchin Archives: A History of Japan-China Cultural Exchange" (nominators: Onjo-ji Temple and Tokyo National Museum) was newly inscribed in May 2023; in addition, in April 2025, the new inscription of "Three Editions of Buddhist Sacred Canons stored at Zojoji, Japan" (nominators: The Jodo-Shu Religious Corporation and the Zojoji Religious Corporation) was decided.

Column

At the Frontline of Diplomacy: Locally Attuned Communications by Diplomatic Missions Overseas

In recent years, communication via social media has become highly influential, and its importance as a tool for disseminating information with a view to enhancing understanding and support — both domestically and internationally — for Japan's foreign policy has grown ever greater. Against this backdrop, diplomatic missions overseas and their heads (Ambassadors and Consuls-General), who are active on the frontlines of diplomacy around the world, have established accounts on social media platforms such as X, Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube. Through these accounts, they tailor their communications to the characteristics of each country and region.

As a prerequisite for diplomatic missions overseas and their heads to communicate effectively about their day-to-day foreign policy activities, it is also important to cultivate an environment in which local communities develop a sense of affinity toward Japan and the Japanese people and are well-disposed toward Japan. This column introduces, through examples of social media engagement, how diplomatic missions overseas — in addition to communicating Japan's foreign policy activities on a daily basis on the frontlines of diplomacy — devise creative approaches to foster a sense of closeness to Japan among local communities.



Video posted on September 15 by the Embassy of Japan in Mexico celebrating "Mexican Independence Day"

Communications Attuned to the People and Culture of Mexico

The Embassy of Japan in Mexico is actively leveraging social media to engage in communications that resonate with the people and culture of Mexico, with the aim of improving favorable sentiment toward Japan in Mexican society. As a result of crafting posts and visual compositions that strike an emotional chord with viewers — including a video celebrating "Mexican Independence Day" that generated a significant response not only in Mexico but also among Mexican communities living in the United States — the Embassy has attracted a large and growing number of followers.

By featuring many Embassy staff together in the content, the messaging achieves a sense of unity, and the creative efforts to express respect and affinity for Mexico have succeeded in attracting the attention of a wide audience. Furthermore, communicating in Spanish has helped the content spread not only within Mexico, but also across borders. Through this kind of messaging — sustained engagement that resonates with local people and their culture — the Embassy continues to work toward enhancing understanding of Japan.

Official Facebook of the Embassy of Japan in Mexico:
https://www.facebook.com/JapanEmb.Mexico/

The Ambassador Experiencing Local Customs Firsthand to Expand Affinity toward Japan

The Embassy of Japan in Romania uses social media to share videos introducing the Ambassador's approachable character, with the aim of making the Embassy's activities — unfamiliar to many in everyday life — known to a broader segment of Romanian society. Beginning with a video of the Ambassador enjoying local food, the content has featured the Ambassador experiencing regional culture and home cooking unique to Romania, and attempting to deliver seasonal greetings while dressed in traditional folk costume. Through such efforts, the Embassy has been mindful of creating content that

surprises and delights even those unfamiliar with Japanese diplomats, and that inspires them to become fans of Japan.

This approach has made the Ambassador's activities a topic of conversation even at meetings with senior Romanian government officials and business and cultural figures. Moreover, young people at events where the Embassy exhibits have been known to approach the Ambassador for commemorative photographs, asking "Is Mr. Ambassador here?" Through its social media communications, public awareness of the Ambassador has increased dramatically, enabling the Embassy to carry out its activities more effectively.

Official Instagram of the Embassy of Japan in Romania:
https://www.instagram.com/embassy_jpro/



Video introducing Ambassador of Japan to Romania Katae, who took on the challenge of splitting firewood dressed in traditional folk costume from the Maramureş region


Ambassador of Japan to Iran Tsukada and Iranian musician Sharifian performing together at a concert

Joint Instagram Posts with Notable Figures in Iran

The Embassy of Japan in Iran leverages its personal networks to collaborate with local influencers — including prominent actors, artists, and culinary experts — primarily through Instagram, which is widely used in Iran, thereby reaching Iranians who have had no prior connection with Japan and cultivating among them a sense of affinity toward Japan.

In one particularly notable instance, the Ambassador performed on the Iranian end-blown reed flute (*ney*) at a concert by a prominent Iranian musician, and a video of their joint performance was simultaneously posted on both the musician's and Embassy's account, generating a significant response. The post was covered by major local media outlets and became a topic of conversation among senior Iranian government officials. This has led to further offers of joint posts from a growing number of Iranians, including influencers.

The Embassy of Japan in Iran's Instagram account has a particularly high number of followers among the other countries' Embassies in Iran, and the Embassy's activities communicated through that account attract the attention of a diverse range of local people.

Official Instagram of the Embassy of Japan in Iran:
https://www.instagram.com/japaniniran/

For social media accounts maintained by each Embassy and Ambassador, please refer to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs website:
https://www.mofa.go.jp/about/list_en.html

Column

Number One in the World per Capita! The Achievements of the JET Programme in New Zealand

Embassy of Japan in New Zealand

Are you familiar with the JET Programme?[1] Its full official name is "The Japan Exchange and Teaching Programme," and it primarily places participants in local governments, boards of education, and public schools across Japan, where they support foreign language instruction and international exchange activities. Through these efforts, the JET Programme promotes grassroots internationalization and fosters mutual understanding between Japan and other countries."[2]

Many people will recall being taught English by a foreign teacher at school — and among those teachers, a great many were JET Programme participants. Since the Programme was established in 1987, more than 80,000 participants from 82 countries around the world have taken part, carrying out foreign language education and international exchange activities across Japan. In New Zealand, it is common to encounter people who say, "I'm a former JET." New Zealand is one of the four countries that first took part in the JET Programme — the other three being the United States, the United Kingdom (UK), and Australia — and more than 3,600 New Zealanders have participated to date. With a population of 5.32 million,[3] this means that approximately one in every 1,500 New Zealanders has been a JET Programme participant — a ratio that ranks first in the world. New Zealand is truly a "JET powerhouse" with an exceptionally deep connection to the Programme. In 2025, 171 participants are teaching English or engaging in international exchange and sports exchange activities in local government international affairs sections and other organizations throughout Japan.



Ms. Trées Neal, a JET Programme Coordinator for International Relations (CIR), who visited Hutt City together with the Mayor of Minoh City to serve as interpreter at the ceremony commemorating the 30th anniversary of the international cooperating city partnership between Minoh City and Hutt City (February, Hutt City, New Zealand)



Mr. James Hurring, a former JET Programme participant who is now an origami artist and secondary school teacher

In New Zealand, there are many participants who, through the JET Programme, came into contact with Japanese society and returned home with a deep affection for Japan. After completing the Programme, they go on to thrive in diverse fields, drawing on their JET experience. Some teach Japanese at secondary school, others work as origami artists, and still others engage in local government or agriculture. There are even cases where two JET participants have married each other, and their children have gone on to join the Programme themselves. The degree to which each person loves Japan varies, and not all of them necessarily pursue careers directly connected to Japan. However, the fond memories JET participants carry of their time in Japan, which they share with those around them from time to time, and which spread from person to person, spark interest in Japan among people who have never visited. This creates a virtuous cycle in which a new generation develops an interest in Japan and goes on to participate in the JET Programme.

New Zealand has an extremely high level of affinity for Japan. In opinion surveys on perceptions of foreign countries, Japan ranks fourth — after Australia, the UK, and Canada, countries with historically close ties as English-speaking nations — with 80% of New Zealanders considering Japan a friend.[4] Furthermore, Japanese is included among the five important foreign languages designated for educational institutions by the government, and the ties between Japan and New Zealand encompass countless school-to-school exchange programs and 44 sister city relationships. Japan occupies a close and familiar place in the lives of New Zealanders, and it is no exaggeration to say that JET Programme participants are among those who have helped sustain that connection.

1 For information on the JET Programme, see the Ministry of Foreign Affairs website: https://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/culture/people/youth/jet/index.html
2 For information on the JET Programme, see the official website: https://jetprogramme.org/en/about-jet/
3 Statistics New Zealand (as of 30 June 2025): https://www.stats.govt.nz/
4 Source: Asia New Zealand Foundation, New Zealanders' Perceptions of Asia Survey: https://www.asiamediacentre.org.nz/highlights-of-the-new-zealanders-perceptions-of-asia-and-asian-peoples-2025-surve

1 2 3 4

Column

Connecting through Culture, Partnership toward the Future — Asia, Africa, and Beyond —

The Japan Foundation (JF) has been advancing the "Partnership to Co-create a Future with the Next Generation: WA Project 2.0," comprehensive people-to-people exchange programs with countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), spanning over a ten-year period beginning in 2024 in the fields of Japanese-language education, culture and the arts, Japanese studies, and global partnerships. Under the aims of promoting exchanges and developing human resources among the next generation, diverse exchanges continued to expand in 2025 as well.

As one of the pillars of this project, the "NIHONGO Partners" program has newly launched long-term dispatches to India. There, NIHONGO Partners work each day to serve as a bridge between Japan and India by assisting in Japanese-language classes and introducing Japanese culture as partners to local Japanese-language teachers and students at secondary schools and other educational institutions.

In the field of culture and the arts, the eight Southeast Asian film programmers who had visited Japan for the 2024 Tokyo International Film Festival organized and held special screening events in their respective countries in 2025, sharing the appeal of Japanese film culture with local audiences. In addition, in October, ten new Southeast Asian film programmers visited Japan to participate in the second year of the exchange program.

In the fields of Japanese studies and global partnerships, JF implemented the "ASEAN-Japan Youth Forum" (TASC), in which 28 university students from ASEAN and Japan engaged in group work and joint training sessions held in Japan and the Philippines, taking "plastic waste" as their theme under the vision of "co-creating a peaceful and better world by 2050." Through the Forum, they presented action plans toward resolving the issue. In addition, with the cooperation of the ASEAN Secretariat, JF launched the "ASEAN-Japan Peace Ambassador Project (AJPAP)" involving high school students. In the inaugural program held in 2025 — a milestone year marking the 80th anniversary of the end of World War II — 12 high school students from four countries gathered in Hiroshima, where they jointly engaged in activities including workshops drawing on testimonies of atomic bombing survivors and learning at the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum. With a focus on the younger generation who will carry the future forward, the project aims to provide opportunities for mutual understanding through dialogue and collaboration and to cultivate the next generation of bridge-builders.



ASEAN-Japan Youth Forum (TASC) (September, Biñan, Philippines; Photo: The Japan Foundation)

In Africa as well, capitalizing on the occasion of the Ninth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD 9), JF carried out activities to expand interest in Japanese culture. These included anime song concerts in which artists who perform theme songs from hit Japanese anime were dispatched to Egypt and Côte d'Ivoire, as well as a large-scale Japanese film screening initiative entitled the "Japan Film Festival (JFF) Africa Tour" held in Ethiopia, Nigeria, and Rwanda. JF will continue to broaden the circle of empathy through Japanese culture and plans to expand cultural and artistic exchanges in African countries in 2026 as well. In addition, in 2025, with the aim of promoting Japanese-language education in sub-Saharan Africa, JF joined as a co-organizer of the "Japanese-Language Education Conference in Africa," which is held annually, facilitating the sharing of current conditions and challenges in Japanese-language education across each country. Teachers who participated in the conference have continued to exchange information even after its conclusion, including through reporting on their practices in Japanese-language teaching methodology.



Sub-Saharan African Japanese-Language Speech Contest (July 18, Antananarivo, Madagascar; Photo: The Japan Foundation)

Going forward, JF will continue to advance international cultural exchange that fosters empathy and trust among the next generation, not only in Asia and Africa, but throughout the world.

Chapter 4

Japan's Diplomacy Open to the Public

Section 1	Japanese Society and People Deepening Their Ties with the World	342
Section 2	Supporting Japanese Nationals Overseas	354
Section 3	Diplomacy with the Support of the Public	365



Section 1 Japanese Society and People Deepening Their Ties with the World

1 MOFA's Contribution toward Realizing a Society of Well-Ordered and Harmonious Coexistence with Foreign Nationals

(1) Overview

In July, the "Office for a Society of Well-Ordered and Harmonious Coexistence with Foreign Nationals" was established within the Cabinet Secretariat as the secretariat organization that serves as the central administrative body for the Government's policies on foreign nationals, with MOFA also participating. In November, the first meeting of the "Ministerial Council on the Acceptance of Foreign Nationals and the Realization of a Society of Well-Ordered and Harmonious Coexistence" was held, attended by Foreign Minister Motegi. It is a fact that there are sectors that require foreign human resources amid a labor shortage due to population decline, and inbound tourism is also important. On the other hand, it is also a fact that situations have arisen in which members of the public feel anxiety and a sense of unfairness regarding illegal acts and rule violations by some foreign nationals. MOFA will continue to play an active role in realizing a society of well-ordered and harmonious coexistence with foreign nationals, in coordination with related ministries and agencies.

(2) Visa System

The number of international visitors to Japan in 2025 set a new all-time record. With the aim of contributing appropriately to the promotion of Japan as a tourism-oriented country and the acceptance of foreign nationals, while maintaining both smooth visa operations and rigorous visa screening with a view to preventing the entry of persons who intend to engage in crime or illegal work, or who may become victims of human trafficking, MOFA continues to work on developing the necessary physical and human frameworks and streamlining related operations.

Furthermore, MOFA has been implementing strategic relaxation measures regarding visas for short-term stays, taking into comprehensive consideration the impact on Japan's immigration control and public safety, the economic ripple effects of promoting people-to-people exchange with various countries and regions, the promotion of mutual understanding, and the strengthening of relations with the counterpart countries and regions, while conducting close coordination among related ministries and agencies and carefully making the final determination of the government. In 2025, visa exemption arrangements were introduced for nationals of Paraguay and Montenegro, and the maximum period of stay permitted under visa exemption for nationals of the United Arab Emirates was extended from 30 days to 90 days. Furthermore, from the perspective of further promoting youth exchange with various countries, the Working Holiday Programs with Slovakia, Germany, Ireland, and the Republic of Korea were revised to allow participants from the counterpart countries to participate up to twice in their lifetimes compared to the previous once-in-a-lifetime arrangement.

(3) Measures Related to Accepting Foreign Human Resources

As one of the initiatives aimed at accepting foreign human resources and improving the environment for doing so, MOFA participates in preparing Memorandums of Cooperation (MOC) that set out a framework for information partnerships with the sending countries of the workers under the "Specified Skilled Worker" system (established in April 2019), and in bilateral discussions based on those MOCs. Following the amendment made in 2024 to establish the new Employment for Skill Development Program to replace the existing Technical Intern Training Program, MOFA is also working in collaboration with related ministries and agencies toward the implementation of this new program in 2027.

2 Japanese Playing an Important Role in the International Community

(1) Japanese Playing an Important Role in International Organizations

International organizations are founded to serve the common interest of the international community. People of various nationalities work at these international organizations, drawing on their skills and traits to create an environment where people of the world can enjoy peace and prosperity. Many international organizations are working to address global issues that no one country can solve alone, including Russia's aggression against Ukraine, the Israeli-Palestinian situation and the resulting food and humanitarian crisis, as well as the environment, climate change, refugees, infectious disease control, sustainable development, disarmament and non-proliferation, conflict prevention and peacebuilding, energy, disaster management, labor, human rights and humanity, gender equality issues, etc. Talented individuals with expertise, passion and capabilities to contribute to the world's interests are needed so that international organizations can competently perform their tasks and fulfill their expected roles. Japan makes policy contributions as a member country of these international organizations, as well as financial contributions through assessed and voluntary contributions, and the activities and services of Japanese staff are also an important part of Japan's contributions. Additionally, a larger number of talented Japanese people playing important roles in international organizations will further enhance Japan's presence in the international community. Japanese staff are involved in various fields and duties at different locations, but they share the common mission of solving various issues facing the international community. Moreover, increasing the number of Japanese who work at international organizations as well as undertaking an important role on the global stage will in turn lead to enrichment of Japan's human resources and contribute to the development of Japan as a whole.

Currently, many Japanese nationals are playing important roles in international organizations, including in the United Nations (UN). Among the 15 UN specialized agencies, Mr. METOKI Masahiko has been serving as Director General of the International Bureau — the top position — of the Universal Postal Union (UPU) since January 2022 (re-elected in September 2025), and Mr. ONUMA Toshiyuki has been serving as President of the Council — the top position — of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) since January 2026. (See the Column on page 344.) In addition, Japanese nationals serve as Presidents of both the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and the International Criminal Court (ICC), and Japan has continuously produced Japanese judges for the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS) since its establishment.

In light of the importance of international organizations in leading rule-making in an international society while addressing global challenges, securing leadership and other significant posts that contribute to strengthening ties between Japan and international organizations is a crucial challenge. It is necessary to make a finely tuned response by adopting a long-term perspective while cultivating suitable personnel, so that Japan can actively assist talented individuals with such positions.

The Government of Japan has set a target of 1,000 Japanese nationals working for UN-related agencies by 2025 with the aim of increasing Japanese personnel working at these organizations. To this end, in collaboration with universities, related ministries and agencies, and organizations, MOFA has actively engaged in scouting, training, and supporting Japanese nationals who have potential to play an important role in international organizations. Currently, 979 Japanese nationals (as of the end of 2024; figures gathered by MOFA) are working as professional-level or higher-level staff in UN-related agencies around the world.

In order to increase the number of Japanese personnel, MOFA offers the Junior Professional Officer (JPO) Programme, which dispatches young Japanese nationals who wish to work at international organizations for two years, providing them with the opportunity to gain professional experience and with the aim of gaining regular staff positions in such organizations after their term. MOFA also offers a program to support the promotion of Japanese nationals who has the

Column

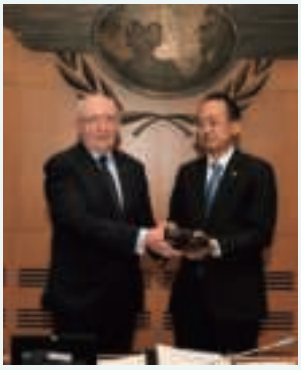
Election of ONUMA Toshiyuki as Council President of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)

The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) is a specialized agency of the United Nations (UN) established pursuant to the Convention on International Civil Aviation (the Chicago Convention), adopted in 1944. ICAO develops international rules across a wide range of aviation domains, including aviation safety and environmental protection. In recent years, it has also increasingly served as a forum for discussing geopolitical issues such as Russia's aggression against Ukraine and North Korea's missile launches.

ICAO's supreme decision-making body is the Assembly, which is convened once every three years and in which all 193 member states and regions participate. Beneath it sits the permanent Council, composed of 36 member states elected by the Assembly, which deliberates on and adopts international standards, and the Secretariat, which supports ICAO's operations. Following Japan's accession to ICAO in October 1953, Japan joined the Council in 1956 and has since continuously served as a Council member, contributing to ICAO through policymaking, funding, and human resources.

In ICAO, unlike many other international organizations where the Secretary General is the head of the organization, the Council President, who chairs the Council composed of representatives from member states, is positioned as ICAO's top authority.

In January 2024, the Government of Japan decided to nominate ONUMA Toshiyuki, then Senior Deputy Director-General of the Civil Aviation Bureau of the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism, as Japan's candidate for the next election for the Council President, with a view to further strengthening Japan's contributions to ICAO, which is becoming increasingly important. Mr. Onuma joined the then-Ministry of Transport in 1992 and has accumulated more than 30 years of experience as a legal expert conversant with aviation policy, dedicating himself to the development of international aviation. He also brings experience from a two-year posting to the ICAO Legal Bureau as a Junior Professional Officer (JPO)[1] between 2001 and 2003, and from December 2024 onwards served as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Delegation of Japan to ICAO, actively contributing to deliberations and earning high regard and trust from member states.



Gavel Passing Ceremony to Mr. Onuma (November 28, Montreal, Canada; Photo: the ICAO Secretariat)

Following his nomination, the Government of Japan actively solicited support from relevant countries, while Mr. Onuma himself also engaged in activities to promote his vision to member states. As a result, he was elected as the next President of the ICAO Council at the election held in Montreal, Canada, on November 26, 2025. This marks the first time in ICAO's approximately 80-year history since its founding that a Council President from the Asia-Pacific region has been elected.



Mr. Onuma's speech at the reception (November 27, Montreal, Canada)

During his term as Council President from 2026 to 2028, Mr. Onuma has pledged to work on the operation of ICAO under three pillars: strengthening ICAO's core mission of pursuing safe and sustainable international aviation; ICAO as a global platform; and promoting the rule of law. The Government of Japan also intends to work in close coordination with ICAO under President Onuma's leadership, and to continue contributing to the development and implementation of international standards in the field of international civil aviation.

1 Junior Professional Officer (JPO) Programme: A scheme under which international organizations accept young personnel funded by their respective national governments, for the purpose of supporting their employment at international organizations, such as the UN. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs began dispatching Japanese nationals under this scheme in 1974.

Column

Voices of Japanese Staff Who Have Been Supporting Activities of the United Nations

Pursuing a United Nations (UN) Career in quest of the Prevention and Peaceful Resolution of Conflicts

GOTOH Kayoko, Director, Europe and Central Asia Division, UN Departments of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and Peace Operations

It has now been three and a half years since I took up my current position as Director for Europe and Central Asia at the UN Secretariat's Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA) and Department of Peace Operations (DPO). The post was advertised in the autumn of 2021, and I was appointed in late February the following year — just days after Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. That event marked a profound shift in the European security framework, posed a direct challenge to the basic principles of the UN Charter, and drove deep fractures into the international community. With this, what I thought would be a relatively calm job primarily dealing with "frozen" conflicts had turned into a demanding daily struggle grappling with how the UN should handle the war in Ukraine and other resurging conflict risks — or, to put it more broadly, what the UN's very "*raison d'être*" should look like going forward.

When I took up my appointment, long-standing colleagues observed, "This job feels like a culmination of your entire career at the UN." I found that remark apt. Having started 34 years ago as a Junior Professional Officer (JPO), I feel genuinely fortunate to have led a career spanning eight duty stations and ten departments/agencies — having such diverse experiences is quite unusual and, I consider, constitutes a unique "strengths" for me as a UN professional. No matter what different new roles I challenged myself with, however, one thing remained constant: my aspiration, ever since I first embarked on my UN career, to contribute to the "prevention and peaceful resolution of conflict." Across all 14 posts leading up to my current position, I have been able to engage with this central theme from a wide range of perspectives.

Of all my experiences, what left the deepest impression was to serve in the "field." There, every day brought new challenges as I pursued the ideals upheld by the UN in the midst of turbulent conflict zones — whether working in UN peacekeeping operations (PKO) in Afghanistan and Timor-Leste or post-conflict reconstruction in the Balkans. And then there was the work at Headquarters: translating the needs and challenges of the field into the grand arena of "international politics," where the interests of Member States collide. In particular, serving as a Political Affairs Officer in the Executive Office of the Secretary-General and supporting the UN's top leadership has taught me the importance of assessing each issue with a broad, strategic view of the organization's overall priorities and interconnections — an experience that, I feel, laid a foundation underpinning my capacity as a senior manager today. Beyond the Secretariat, my parent organization, I also gained experience through secondments to other entities within the UN system. At the UN Development Programme (UNDP), I worked on policy coordination to facilitate the transition from conflict to development; at the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), I oversaw global program operations supporting the fight against transnational crime and terrorism; and at the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), I was able to engage with disarmament for the first time. Disparate as these roles may appear, they, to me, were each woven together around the common theme of "conflict" — and I believe that if any single one were missing, or if the balance in the diverse mix were disrupted, I would not be who I am today.



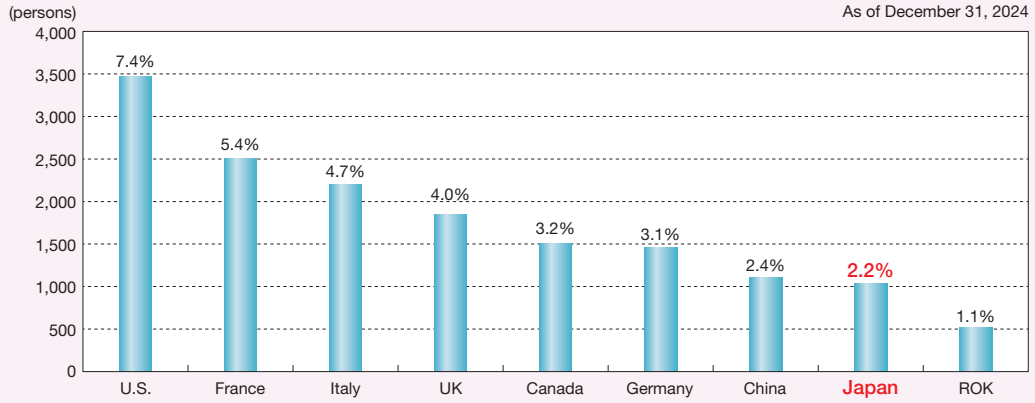
Attending a conference hosted by the UN Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs on women's and youth political participation (the author is third from left in the front row, May, Kyiv, Ukraine)



Briefing the UN Security Council on the situation in Ukraine (the author is second from right in the front row, November)

Shortly after I joined the UN, I heard advice relayed from then Secretary-General Kofi Annan: "Move!" — meaning that anyone building a career in the UN should strive to gain experience in a wide variety of roles in a wide variety of settings. Today, this is known as "Mobility," and it has become a cornerstone of UN human resources policy. Through well-balanced "Moves" across field, Headquarters, and UN system postings, I am now well positioned to do the work that I find genuinely meaningful. Looking back on this journey, I feel that I have managed, to some degree, to embody this guidance of the former Secretary-General I so admire.

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 (46,585).
Note 3: Calculation method differs from that of MOFA.

Source: Created by MOFA from UN document (CEB/2025/HLCM/HR/11)

potential to fulfill managerial roles at international organizations by offering them mid-career level professional opportunity. In addition to increasing Japanese personnel through these initiatives, MOFA is working to coordinate with international organizations and gather information for the recruitment and promotion of Japanese staff.

For Japanese nationals who wish to work at international organizations, the MOFA Recruitment Center for International Organizations continually provides information on vacancy announcements at international organizations on its official website and through mailing lists, social media such as Facebook, X, LinkedIn, and Instagram, as well as YouTube. The Center also focuses on providing assistance regarding post applications. In addition, the Center holds seminars explaining the attractiveness of working at international organizations and methods of getting a job there, and also online and in-person explanatory sessions inviting senior Japanese staff and human resource specialists from international organizations.

MOFA will continue to encourage the recruitment of more 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

Japanese international cooperation NGOs are strategic partners in international cooperation, under Japan's "visible international cooperation," that provide support at the grassroots level that is difficult for the Government and international organizations to reach.

Through NGOs, MOFA actively provides Official Development Assistance (ODA) in the form of grant assistance (Grant Assistance for Japanese NGO Projects) for economic and social development projects implemented by Japanese NGOs in developing countries and regions. The projects cover a wide range of assistance, including education and human resource development, medical and health care, disaster risk reduction, water and sanitation, rural development, support for people with disabilities, and clearing landmines and unexploded ordnances (UXO). In FY2024, MOFA provided funding for 102 projects to 53 organizations implementing Grant Assistance for Japanese NGO Projects in 36 countries and 1 region in Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and Latin America. Moreover, the Government provides NGO Project Subsidies to Japanese NGOs, supporting project formulation for development cooperation projects implemented by NGOs themselves, post-implementation project evaluations, and activities that contribute to the expansion of international cooperation activities.

In addition, the Japan Platform (JPF) — which was established in 2000 through cooperation and partnership between the Government, NGOs, and business communities to provide more effective and rapid emergency humanitarian assistance in the event of large-scale natural disasters and conflicts — has 50 NGO members as of December 2025. (See the Column on page 348.) In 2025, JPF launched programs that included assistance to earthquake victims in central Myanmar, assistance to victims of flooding in Pakistan, emergency assistance for famine in Gaza, and assistance to earthquake victims in eastern Afghanistan. In addition, JPF provided support to refugees and internally displaced persons in Syria, South Sudan, Afghanistan, Yemen, Myanmar, Thailand, Ethiopia, Sudan, Ukraine, and Gaza.

MOFA provides support for NGO activities through various programs aimed at enhancing their capability and expertise as well as developing human resources so that NGOs can strengthen the foundation for their activities and perform further tasks, and publishes the specific outcomes of these measures on the MOFA website. In 2025, MOFA implemented four programs to improve the environment for NGO activities: the "NGO Consultant," "NGO Study Program," "NGO Intern Program," and "NGO Study Group."

Regarding the NGO-MOFA Regular Consultation Meeting, the purpose of which is to promote dialogue and coordination between NGOs and MOFA, in FY2024, the plenary meeting was held in June 2024, and the "Partnership Promotion Committee" and "ODA Policy Council" meetings were held in July and December of the same year and in March 2025, at which lively exchanges of views took place.

B Partnership in Other Major Diplomatic Areas

The Government of Japan holds dialogues with civil society including NGO representatives and experts on matters related to government reports to be submitted based on various human rights treaties, as well as on the National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights, and the National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security, which is based on 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 explosive ordnance risk education (EORE) 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. 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," the Government supports the activities by NGOs and others for atomic bomb survivors and others to convey the realities of the atomic bombings to people around the world. As of December 2025, a total of 335 Special Communicators on 113 occasions and a total of 834 Youth Communicators on 60 occasions have been dispatched to the world through these commission programs.

Concerning the countermeasures against transnational organized crime, in order to promote public-private cooperation on trafficking in persons, the Government exchanges opinions with NGOs regarding recent trends of trafficking in persons and effective measures to appropriately address this crime.

(3) Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) Overseas Cooperation Volunteers, Experts, and Others

The Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCVs, also known as the JICA Volunteer Program) is a Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) program that aims to have Japanese citizens aged 20 to 69 with skills, knowledge, and experience cooperate in and contribute to the economic and social development of developing countries through living, working and fostering mutual understanding with local residents. As of the end of March 2025, a total of 57,442 JOCVs have been dispatched to 99 countries since the program's launch in 1965. The dispatched volunteers have been engaged in approximately 180 job categories in nine sectors: Planning/Government, Business/Tourism, Public Works/Utilities, Human Resources, Agriculture/Forestry/Fishery, Health/Medical Care, Mining and Manufacturing, Social Welfare Services, and Energy. Efforts are also being made to give the knowledge and experience of returned JICA volunteers to Japanese society in educational settings, local

Column

Building the Future through a Circle of Support: 25th Anniversary of the Foundation of Japan Platform

Japan Platform (JPF) was established in 2000 as a globally unique emergency humanitarian assistance platform in which NGOs, the business community, and the Government of Japan operate in equal partnership. Since its founding, JPF has continued to deliver rapid and effective assistance from Japan to victims of natural disasters and to refugees and displaced persons affected by conflict, marking its 25th anniversary in 2025.

The three defining characteristics of JPF's operations are "rapidity," "expertise," and "transparency." JPF's strengths lie in its organizational structure enabling it to decide on rapid deployment on the very day a disaster strikes; in leveraging the specialized expertise of its 50 member NGOs currently active (as of December 2025); and in delivering comprehensive assistance tailored to local needs across areas such as healthcare, food and supplies, water and sanitation, education, psychosocial support, agriculture, and livelihood recovery. Quality and accountability of support are also ensured through reviews and monitoring that include external experts.

With regard to the Ukraine crisis that began in February 2022, JPF has been supporting communities facing prolonged displacement as the war continues to take a severe toll on people's lives and infrastructure. Drawing on international analysis and in coordination with NGOs active on the ground, JPF has deployed assistance that leverages the strengths of each member NGO through country- and region-specific short-, medium-, and long-term strategies (response plans).

In the earthquake that struck central Myanmar in March, member NGOs that had already been providing support to internally displaced persons following the 2021 coup d'état launched emergency response operations and needs assessments from the same day as the disaster, delivering life-saving rapid response and early recovery assistance.

In the Gaza Strip, Palestine, JPF has secured humanitarian aid routes under challenging conditions for delivering aid, with many NGOs carrying out food and supplies distribution. The meticulous work of Japanese NGOs has earned high praise for its respect for local culture.

In regions experiencing protracted humanitarian crises, including Afghanistan, South Sudan, and Syria, JPF continues to provide assistance that respects the identity and dignity of local communities.

As a "platform for assistance," JPF has continued to grow as a space where anyone can direct their concern and join the circle of support. Since its establishment, more than 6,000 companies have participated through donations and service provision, and further collaboration is anticipated to meet the increasingly diverse needs of those requiring assistance.



Local staff distributing food and the people of Gaza receiving it (assistance provided under the Gaza Assistance Program "Emergency Response to Gaza Humanitarian Crisis / Emergency Response to Gaza Famine" ©NICCO/WCK)

In order to connect the front lines of assistance with society at large and promote the resolution of challenges, JPF has also devoted considerable effort to working with media organizations, achieving a wide range of communications. Sharing the common purpose of protecting lives and human dignity, JPF continues to pursue forms of reporting and assistance that generate synergy.

To date, JPF has implemented more than 2,400 assistance projects totaling approximately 96.7 billion Japanese yen across more than 65 countries and regions. Behind each of those figures are people who, just like us, live their lives with family and friends. With the aim of building a society in which all people can shape their own futures and live in security — and so that the children of the next generation may live with hope for a peaceful and happy future — JPF will continue to promote diverse partnerships and expand the circle of support in which more people can take part.



"Global Festa JAPAN 2025," where JPF helped promote awareness of Japan's people-centered humanitarian assistance in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (©JPF)

Column

60th Anniversary of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) Overseas Cooperation Volunteers

60th Anniversary Commemorative Ceremony for the Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers

The Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCV) marked their 60th anniversary in 2025, and a commemorative ceremony was held on November 13 in the presence of Their Majesties the Emperor and Empress. In the first part of the ceremony, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs ERI Arfiya read a congratulatory message on behalf of Prime Minister Takaichi. The message commended the activities of the JOCVs over the past 60 years, expressed hope for the continued active contributions of returned volunteers, and stated that the trust and bonds built up by the JOCVs are invaluable assets. In the second part, returned volunteers took to the stage to introduce a range of ways in which they have been contributing to society since returning to Japan. The ceremony provided an opportunity to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the JOCV, to look back on their history, and to reaffirm its significance.



His Majesty the Emperor delivering his remarks at the 60th Anniversary Commemorative Ceremony for the JOCVs (Photo: JICA)

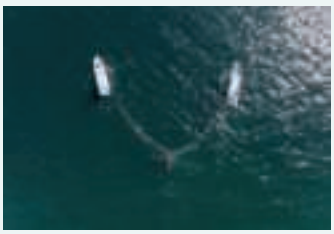
Voices of JOCV Alumni — "From Field Knowledge in Burkina Faso to a System for Reducing Marine Debris"

Dispatched to Burkina Faso, Specialty: Environmental Education (2017–2019) — EGAWA Yuki

During my travels as a student, the sight of waste piling up unprocessed made me think about what could be done to address the waste problem. In 2017, I was dispatched to Burkina Faso as a JOCV in the field of environmental education, where I worked with schools and local governments to conduct awareness-raising activities in educational settings and to organize community clean-ups. At the same time, I faced the reality that there was no final disposal site, and so I helped construct a rudimentary landfill. Through this experience, I learned that combining "soft" approaches, such as education, with "hard" approaches, such as infrastructure, is one way to move toward a solution. I also recognized the need to build systems that do not rely on volunteers alone, and to work as an organization. Through repeated dialogue with local authorities, a cycle of trial and error, and the accumulation of lessons learned through failure, I came to realize that the key to drawing in people who previously had no interest was "a grand vision that resonates with people's hearts and the drive to actually move it forward."



Waste awareness-raising activity at a kindergarten conducted as a JOCV (the author at the center; February 2019, Koudougou, Burkina Faso; Photo: EGAWA Yuki)



Joint pilot demonstration for marine debris collection, in which microplastics were collected off Shodoshima Island (September 2024, Shodoshima Island, Kagawa Prefecture; Photo: cubic-tt [島空撮])

After returning to Japan, drawing on my overseas experience in waste management, I established the NPO Clean Ocean Ensemble and began tackling the issue of marine debris, with Shodoshima Island in Kagawa Prefecture as my base. Working in partnership with fishers, local authorities, businesses, and citizens, I have been pursuing an integrated approach that encompasses the development of debris collection technologies for ocean and river environments, the visualization of the amount of marine debris collected, and the recycling of the collected debris. My goal is to elevate marine debris collection from a mere volunteer activity into an endeavor of economic and social value, and to build a system in which the quantified amount of debris collected exceeds the amount flowing into the ocean. We are also working to add value to these activities from technological and scientific perspectives, while reviewing the organization's management so that the initiative can be sustained as a viable operation.

Thanks to the encouragement and support of many people, our activities have steadily evolved, the number of partner organizations has grown, and the volume of marine debris collected and recycled has increased year by year. The lessons I gained as a JOCV remain with me to this day. Starting from small activities in the field; continuing to be creative with what is available, drawing people in with a grand vision and the drive to act on it, building systems little by little, accumulating small successes amid many failures, and passing them on to the next generation — this continuous effort is, I believe, the path that will surely reduce the waste flowing into the ocean and lead us to a "world with zero marine debris."

communities, and private companies and elsewhere. The activities of JOCVs, which are founded on the participation of Japanese citizens, are highly regarded both domestically and internationally, particularly in host countries. (See the Column on page 349.) JICA experts with specialized knowledge, skills, and experience are dispatched to governmental agencies and sites of development cooperation in developing countries. The experts, providing high-level policy recommendations and transferring necessary skills and knowledge to government officials and engineers of the partner countries, work together with their counterparts to develop, promote and disseminate technologies and systems that are suitable to each country's context. These experts, who 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 formulation of urban planning, contribute to the economic and social development of developing countries and the fostering of mutual trust between Japan and these countries. In FY2024, JICA experts were dispatched to 108 countries and regions based on 1,951 new and ongoing contracts (with a total of 10,055 expert and survey dispatches combined).

3 Cooperation with Local Governments

Regional revitalization is one of the priority issues of the Cabinet. MOFA also actively works on the issue and strives to deploy measures that strengthen comprehensive diplomatic capabilities through collaboration with regions.



Reception co-hosted with the Governor of Gunma Prefecture (February 19, Iikura Guest House, MOFA, Tokyo)

In Japan, the Foreign Minister and respective prefectural governors invite members of diplomatic corps to Japan, foreign chambers of commerce and industry, and company representatives, among others, to the Iikura Guest House, co-hosting receptions and setting up booths as means of broadly promoting the various charms of regions to audiences both in Japan and abroad. MOFA co-hosted receptions with Gunma Prefecture in February, with Nagano Prefecture in March, and with Toyama Prefecture in October, creating opportunities to promote further exchange between the respective prefectures and participants including diplomatic corps in Japan. At the reception co-hosted with Gunma Prefecture, State Minister for Foreign Affairs FUJII Hisayuki, attending on behalf of Foreign Minister Iwaya, noted that "Traditional knowledge and skills of sake-making with koji mold



Reception co-hosted with the Governor of Nagano Prefecture (March 18, Iikura Guest House, MOFA, Tokyo)



Reception co-hosted with the Governor of Toyama Prefecture (October 15, Iikura Guest House, MOFA, Tokyo)

in Japan" had been inscribed on the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, and stated that the Ministry would make every possible effort to promote the appeal of Japanese alcoholic beverages to the world, including the local *sake* of Gunma Prefecture. The reception also featured booths introducing agricultural, forestry and fishery products, local *sake*, traditional crafts, and tourism including hot spring resorts from across the prefecture, as well as a stage performance by a local high school dance club. At the reception co-hosted with Nagano Prefecture, Foreign Minister Iwaya stated that MOFA is working on regional revitalization — including efforts to expand sales channels for Japanese *sake* and agricultural products and to attract inbound tourism — by making full use of the Iikura Guest House and diplomatic missions overseas and in cooperation with local governments — and called for cooperation in promoting the appeal of Nagano Prefecture's food and traditional crafts to the world. The reception featured a variety of booths introducing Nagano Prefecture's initiatives related to tourism, food, traditional crafts, and health and longevity, as well as stage performances featuring a soba noodle-making demonstration and a performance by Togakure-ryu ninja. At the reception co-hosted with Toyama Prefecture, Foreign Minister Iwaya stated that MOFA is focusing on expanding exports of Japanese *sake* and food products by making use of the Iikura Guest House and diplomatic missions overseas and in cooperation with local governments, and called for cooperation in promoting the appeal of Toyama Prefecture's cuisine — including sushi — and traditional crafts to the world. The reception featured a variety of booths introducing Toyama Prefecture's food, *sake*, tourism, traditional crafts, its well-being (happiness) initiatives and reconstruction and recovery efforts following the earthquake disaster, and included a stage performance of "Owara Kaze no Bon."

Moreover, MOFA, together with local governments and others, co-organizes Regional Promotion Seminars to disseminate local policies and attractive points, such as local products, tourism, industry, and investment, for



Scene from the first-session presentations at the "Regional Promotion Seminar" held on January 20



Diplomatic corps visiting the Kamikatsu Zero Waste Center (Diplomats' Study Tour) (July 9, Kamikatsu Town, Tokushima Prefecture)



Scene from the second-session networking reception at the "Regional Promotion Seminar" held on November 10



Diplomatic corps taking a commemorative photograph with the Mayor of Matsuura City and others (Diplomats' Study Tour) (September 30, Matsuura City, Nagasaki Prefecture)

members of diplomatic corps to Japan, foreign chambers of commerce and industry, related companies, and other organizations. On January 20, a seminar was held in Tokyo jointly with Sakai City, Osaka Prefecture; Okinawa Prefecture; Nikko City, Tochigi Prefecture; and Kamikatsu Town, Tokushima Prefecture. On November 10, a further seminar was held jointly with Fukui Prefecture; Masuda City, Shimane Prefecture; Hamada City, Shimane Prefecture; and Karuizawa Town, Nagano Prefecture. The seminars featured presentations on regional attractions, introductions to local specialties, tourist spots, and local industries through exchange sessions with participants, as well as demonstrations of traditional performing arts. These seminars were received by attendees as valuable opportunities to directly experience the attractiveness of regional Japan while being in Tokyo, and they also contributed to promoting exchanges among local governments and participants from the diplomatic corps, among others.

Furthermore, MOFA and Japanese local governments co-organize "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. Co-hosted with the Union of Kansai Governments, a tour of Tokushima Prefecture, Hyogo Prefecture, and Kyoto Prefecture titled "Tour exploring the symbiosis of nature and civilization in the Kansai region" was held on July 9 and 10. Through visits to sites showcasing advanced initiatives and technologies for coexisting with nature, the tour introduced the diverse attractions of the Kansai region. A tour of Matsuura City, Nagasaki Prefecture titled "Home of Aji Fry × Underwater Archaeology Sanctuary – An Experience Tour of Local Attractions" was held on September 30 and October 1, providing diplomatic corps in Japan with opportunities to see, experience, and taste the city's diverse regional resources. A tour of Bizen City and Setouchi City, Okayama Prefecture titled "Experience the Timeless Art of Craftmanship" was held on October 30 and 31. Through visits to facilities related to Bizen ware and Bizen swords, among other sites, the tour introduced the diverse attractions of both cities, including their tourism, history, food, and local specialty products.

Moreover, MOFA holds the "Local Partnership Cooperation Forum" as a venue for providing local governments with explanations of Japan's current diplomatic policies, etc., that relate closely to international exchange activities at the regional level. In FY2025, the Forum was held in February 2026.



Diplomatic corps visiting the former Shizutani School (Diplomats' Study Tour) (October 30, Bizen City, Okayama Prefecture)



Local government's PR video shared by the social media account of the Embassy of Japan in China as part of the "Project to Support Overseas Presentations to Promote the Attractiveness of Regions"

With regard to projects overseas, as a way to counter international reputational damage stemming from the Great East Japan Earthquake, MOFA conducts a comprehensive PR program to support those efforts, including the promotion of exports of products from across Japan and the promotion of tourism, called "Project to Support Overseas Presentations to Promote the Attractiveness of Regions," together with efforts to lift and ease import restrictions including online PR activities in China from October 2025 to March 2026. The 33 local governments created short movies conveying the charms of each region, and these clips were posted on channels such as the Weibo (Chinese social media) account of the Embassy of Japan in China with the aim of allowing many people in China to experience the charms of Japan's regional tourism, culture, and cuisine firsthand using social media. In addition, the Embassy of Japan in China organized events in which Japanese food-related companies and local

governments introduced food and tourism. By also utilizing Key Opinion Leaders (KOL) and influencers, these initiatives convey the attraction of Japan's regions to many people.

Furthermore, MOFA conducted 11 "Regional Promotion Projects" aimed at supporting local governments in expanding sales channels for local products and promoting inbound tourism by making use of Japan's diplomatic facilities overseas to promote the attractiveness of each region.

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 products and events are presented. In 2025, the Birthday of His Majesty the Emperor receptions were held in-person at 245 diplomatic missions overseas, 116 of which promoted the attractiveness of Japan's regions.

Furthermore, MOFA has been supporting various international exchanges between Japanese local governments and their overseas counterparts through a range of initiatives. 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 for the Olympic and Paralympic Games Tokyo 2020, 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 providing the related information to the respective prefectures and ordinance-designated cities, and conducting indirect support by promoting these regional cooperation initiatives on the website of "Local Partnership Cooperation" (named "Glocal (global and local) Diplomatic Network"(1)) on MOFA's website.

In addition to the "Glocal Diplomatic Network," as public relations media for showcasing regional cooperation initiatives, MOFA also distributes Monthly Glocal News,(2) a monthly e-mail newsletter, and posts information via X.(3) Via these PR media, MOFA presents information on its regional cooperation programs, sister city exchanges, Host Town exchanges, and regional international activities promoted by local governments.

Additionally, as part of the overseas promotion activities for Japanese alcoholic beverages (Japanese *sake*, *shochu*, *awamori*, wine, etc.) produced in various parts of Japan, the diplomatic missions overseas are actively promoting Japanese alcoholic beverages by offering tasting occasions at dinners and lunches with government dignitaries 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. On these occasions, diplomatic missions overseas also actively call attention to the fact that "Traditional knowledge and skills of sake-making with koji mold in Japan" has been inscribed on the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

Furthermore, MOFA and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) are collaborating with local governments in the areas of development cooperation. They are working on forms of development cooperation in which the technologies and know-how of local governments contribute to solving challenges — for example, in the field of public services for local residents such as water and sewerage systems and waste disposal — by dispatching Japanese local government officials as experts or by engaging local government officials in projects for the construction and improvement of facilities.

(1) For the "Glocal Diplomatic Network," see MOFA's website: https://www.mofa.go.jp/ms/lpc/page25e_000167.html

(2) For "Monthly Glocal News," see MOFA's website: https://www.mofa.go.jp/ms/lpc/page25e_000219.html

(3) Local Partnership Cooperation Division, X: https://twitter.com/localmofa

(1) (2) (3)

Section 2 Supporting Japanese Nationals Overseas

1 Risks and Safety of Japanese Nationals Overseas

(1) Incidents and Accidents in 2025 and Responses to Them

As of 2025, approximately 14.73 million(1) Japanese nationals traveled overseas over the course of the year, and as of October that year approximately 1.30 million Japanese nationals live abroad. Protecting the lives of Japanese nationals traveling and residing abroad is one of the most important missions of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA).

Against the backdrop of the recovery in the number of Japanese nationals departing overseas and the increasing fluidity of the global situation, and given the heightened possibility of Japanese nationals encountering various risks abroad, MOFA reorganized the structure of the Consular Affairs Bureau in August 2025 and newly established the Japanese Nationals Emergency Response Division and the Japanese Nationals Safety Support Division, in order to be able to respond flexibly to all forms of protection of Japanese nationals overseas. The Japanese Nationals Emergency Response Division is responsible for emergency response including terrorism and for issuing Travel Advice and Warnings for individual countries and regions, while the Japanese Nationals Safety Support Division is responsible for general assistance to individual Japanese nationals and for the public relations and awareness-raising activities related to overseas safety measures.

There had been no Japanese victims of terrorism incidents since 2020; however, in April 2024 one Japanese national was injured in a terrorist attack in Karachi, Pakistan. 2025 was another year in which a large number of terrorist attacks occurred in various regions. The main terrorism incidents in Western countries and other regions included a vehicle-ramming attack in New Orleans, the United States (U.S.) (January); stabbing attacks in Berlin, Germany, Mulhouse, France, and Villach, Austria (February); a shooting attack in Pahalgam, India (April); a stabbing attack in Bielefeld, Germany (May); and a church attack in Manchester, the United Kingdom (UK) (October). Moreover, terrorism incidents occurred frequently in the Middle East, particularly in Iran, Syria, and Afghanistan, as well as in Pakistan and India in Southwest Asia, and in Africa, such as in Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Somalia, and Mozambique.

In recent years, Islamic extremists have expanded their scope of activities around the globe, meaning that terrorist attacks have also been occurring in Western countries and Asia, where many Japanese nationals travel and reside. Terrorist attacks persist, characterized by a high incidence of attacks perpetrated by: homegrown terrorists radicalized online or through other means; lone offenders with limited or no discernible organizational links; and attacks targeting soft targets, i.e., locations with large numbers of civilians. In Western countries, violent acts by far-left and far-right radicals, such as hate crimes motivated by animosity toward a particular race or ethnic group, have also been intensifying in frequency.

Incidents in which Japanese nationals fell victim to crimes, traffic accidents, mountain-climbing accidents, and other accidents continued to occur in many locations around the world in 2025, to which MOFA provided support.

Natural disasters also occurred around the world, causing great damage in cases such as earthquakes, typhoons, hurricanes, heavy rains, and wildfires. The large earthquake in central Myanmar (March) resulted

(1) Source: Immigration Services Agency of Japan

in a large number of casualties, including one Japanese national, and MOFA provided support to the bereaved family.

In the Middle East, following the intensification of exchanges of attacks between Israel and Iran, the Government of Japan raised the Travel Advice and Warning levels for both countries and assisted the departure of Japanese nationals from Israel and Iran using government-arranged buses (June). This was the first-ever simultaneous overland evacuation operation covering two countries, and a total of 128 persons, primarily Japanese nationals, completed their evacuation.

When such emergencies arise, MOFA dispatches an "Emergency Response Team" (ERT) to put in place the initial response structures at the local diplomatic mission and promptly engage in activities to assist Japanese nationals. The ERT was established following the terrorist attack against Japanese nationals in Algeria in January 2013, and is dispatched when emergencies arise in which Japanese nationals have been or are feared to be involved in terrorist attacks, large-scale accidents, natural disasters, or similar events. In 2025, ERT members were dispatched in response to the large earthquake in central Myanmar (March) and the intensification of hostilities between Israel and Iran (June), among other situations.

In addition, whenever necessary depending on the regional situation, MOFA issued overseas travel safety information related to countries and regions where particular caution is considered necessary for traveling and residing.

Whenever necessary, MOFA issues overseas travel safety information on infectious diseases in countries and regions where health and medical caution is required, in 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.

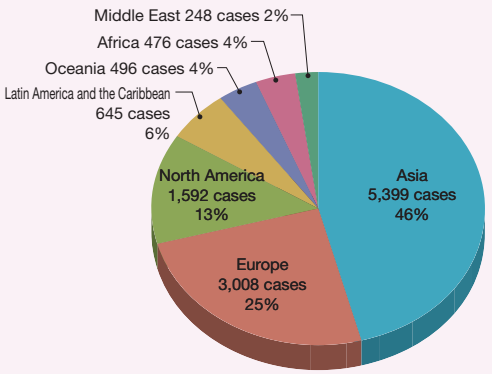
In 2025, new cases of Ebola hemorrhagic fever were reported in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, measles spread in various parts of the world, and cases of Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) were reported in the Middle East. In addition, mosquito-borne infectious diseases such as dengue fever, chikungunya fever, and Zika virus infection spread mainly in Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia, and Africa.

(2) Safety Measures for Japanese Nationals Overseas

The number of Japanese nationals receiving support or protection in 2024 from Japanese diplomatic missions overseas and the Japan-Taiwan Exchange Association was a total of 10,287, and the number of cases of support or protection was 11,864. Under these circumstances, Japanese embassies and consulates general worldwide provided attentive assistance in many ways as well as disseminating information about entry/exit limitations and public safety.

Specifically, MOFA issues the latest safety information for each country and region on its Overseas Safety website. Furthermore, MOFA sends emails and LINE messages on the latest safety information of travel destinations to those Japanese nationals residing abroad who have submitted Overseas Residential Registration or short-term travelers who have registered on the overseas travel registration service (Tabi-Regi).

Breakdown of statistics for support to overseas Japanese nationals in 2024 by region



Source: 2024 Statistics on Assistance Provided by MOFA to Japanese Nationals Overseas



The actors ISHIDA Hikari and MORITAKA Ai introduce Tabi-Regi (for Japanese nationals traveling overseas for less than three months) and Overseas Residential Registration (for Japanese nationals living overseas for three months or more)

Special Feature

Preparing for Emergencies Abroad!
— MOFA's Efforts to Protect Japanese Nationals and Cooperation with Other Countries —

Protecting the lives and physical safety of Japanese nationals residing or traveling abroad is one of the most important missions of the Government of Japan. In particular, supporting the evacuation of Japanese nationals who are in danger to safe locations is a task that carries great responsibility for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), and preparations are carried out on a constant basis. In addition, in recent years, MOFA has been working to strengthen cooperation with other countries in the evacuation of their own nationals.

A recent example of evacuation support operations was the response to the intensification of exchanges of fire between Israel and Iran in June. The Government of Japan simultaneously carried out two overland evacuation support operations to neighboring countries for Japanese nationals, their family members, etc. — 25 from Israel and 103 from Iran. Many expressions of gratitude were received from those who were evacuated, such as: "I am truly grateful for the swift and attentive response."

In the event of a serious emergency overseas, MOFA dispatches Emergency Response Team (ERT) personnel to the affected location, thereby reinforcing the capacity of Embassies and Consulates General. MOFA has over 100 ERT personnel who, while normally stationed at MOFA headquarters or diplomatic missions overseas around the world, are registered on a voluntary basis to serve as experts in consular affairs, languages, medicine, and press at short notice during emergencies. Driven by a strong desire to help those in difficulty, these personnel work to protect Japanese nationals on the grueling front lines under severe stress.

MOFA conducts training and exercises for ERT personnel and others together with the Ministry of Defense, the Self-Defense Forces (SDF), and Embassies. It also conducts joint exercises with other countries overseas, thereby enhancing its capacity to respond to emergencies.

Furthermore, since 2024, Japan has been strengthening its cooperative relationships for the protection of Japanese nationals through the conclusion of Memoranda of Cooperation regarding the protection of nationals overseas with the Republic of Korea (ROK) and Australia. These efforts aim to facilitate further cooperation in emergencies by building on Japan-ROK cooperation in the evacuation of nationals from Sudan, Israel, and other locations, as well as the experience of Japanese nationals evacuating aboard Australian aircraft during the May 2024 evacuation from French New Caledonia.

In today's world, where international relations are complexly intertwined, international cooperation in the protection of nationals is becoming ever more important. If countries can cooperate in a spirit of mutual assistance in times of need, it becomes possible to respond more swiftly and effectively to emergencies that arise far from one's own shores. MOFA will continue to adapt to changes in the international situation, further strengthen its cooperative relationships with various countries, and spare no effort to protect Japanese nationals residing and traveling abroad.



Scene of evacuation from Israel (photographed by a staff member of the Embassy of Japan in Jordan)



Foreign Minister Iwaya and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Australia Penny Wong signing the Memorandum of Cooperation (September 5, Tokyo)

MOFA is actively engaged in PR activities in order to promote registration on Tabi-Regi and submission of Overseas Residential Registration. For instance, MOFA carries out activities using social media including the official MOFA YouTube channel, and promotional tools at airports, as well as distributing information materials to passport centers and municipal counters. MOFA provides a Tabi-Regi linkage interface to businesses including overseas travel agencies, allowing them to batch register their passengers traveling abroad, and encourages its use. In September, MOFA set up a booth at Tourism Expo Japan (Nagoya), providing information and raising awareness about the safety of Japanese nationals traveling or residing abroad. As of October 2025, the number of travelers who had registered on Tabi-Regi since its launch in July 2014 exceeded 12.10 million, reflecting initiatives for enhancing the system's convenience and activities that aim at promoting registration.

MOFA strives to enhance the knowledge and capabilities of the Japanese people concerning overseas safety measures and crisis management through seminars and training. In 2025, MOFA held virtual and in-person seminars on safety measures (11 times at diplomatic missions overseas and 7 times within Japan). Furthermore, Consular Affairs Bureau staff delivered lectures at seminars held throughout Japan by domestic organizations, associations, and other groups. In addition, MOFA also provided regular overseas safety information through the voice platform "Voicy."

Furthermore, MOFA held "Public-Private Joint Practical Training for Counter-Terrorism and Anti-Kidnapping Measures," both within Japan and abroad (held in Indonesia for the overseas component), with the participation of Japanese businesses and organizations. These initiatives are useful in preventing harm from regular crimes and terrorism, but also in improving response capabilities in the event of encountering such an incident. Furthermore, the public and private sectors are cooperating to advance safety measures even overseas, and the diplomatic missions in each country host regular meetings of Security Consultation and Liaison Committees. Diplomatic missions overseas are continuing to share information, exchange opinions, and bolster collaboration with local Japanese nationals in preparation for emergencies in their respective countries.

In addition, following the terrorist attack in Dhaka in July 2016, MOFA distributed to companies expanding overseas and passport centers nationwide "Golgo 13's Security Guidelines for Japanese small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) Abroad," which was developed with the aim of raising the awareness of SMEs, etc. who have limited access to information on safety. Moreover, MOFA has continued to use the LINE messaging platform, through "Messages from Duke Togo" by the medium of Golgo 13, to distribute educational messages about security measures.

MOFA has also newly created a leaflet titled "Overseas Travel Safety Measures" for Japanese nationals traveling abroad, compiling precautions to reduce the risk of encountering incidents, safety information provided by MOFA, responses in case of involvement, and emergency contact information. The leaflet was published on the Overseas Safety website and distributed to company representatives and others.

With regard to Japanese students heading abroad to study, in 2025, MOFA held in-person and online seminars on safety measures for educational institutions (twice within Japan). In addition, MOFA officials



Overseas safety measures flyer (front)


Overseas safety measures flyer (back)

have been delivering in-person and online safety measures courses at universities and other institutions. MOFA also conducted PR for Overseas Residential Registration and Tabi-Regi through magazines and events targeted at students studying abroad. MOFA will continue to strive to help raise students' awareness of overseas safety measures and support the building of crisis management structures at educational institutions. MOFA is advancing initiatives to strengthen connections among government agencies, educational institutions, overseas study placement organizations, and students studying abroad, by launching an automatic Tabi-Regi registration system with some overseas study institutions.

With regard to private companies and organizations operating abroad, MOFA held the plenary meeting and steering committee of "The Council for Public-Private Cooperation for Overseas Safety" as well as the plenary meeting of "The Small and Medium Enterprise Overseas Safety Measures Network" with the aim of advancing mutual information and opinion exchanges between the public and private sectors and creating a safer environment for the activities of Japanese nationals overseas. The Government of Japan intends to further strengthen coordination with organizations and relevant ministries and agencies, and will continue to strive to disseminate overseas safety information and implement support measures from the perspective of SMEs.

In addition, ahead of periods of increased overseas travel, MOFA holds a Travel Agency Liaison Meeting three times a year, bringing together travel industry representatives and Consular Affairs Bureau officials. Based on the latest situation in each country, the meetings share matters that should be noted when traveling and cases that have actually occurred, aiming to exchange information and align awareness among the parties concerned. MOFA will continue to work together with the private sector to develop an environment for safe and secure overseas travel, with a view to further ensuring the safety of Japanese nationals traveling abroad.

2 Consular Service and Assistance for Japanese Living Overseas

(1) Improving Consular Service and Promoting Digitalization

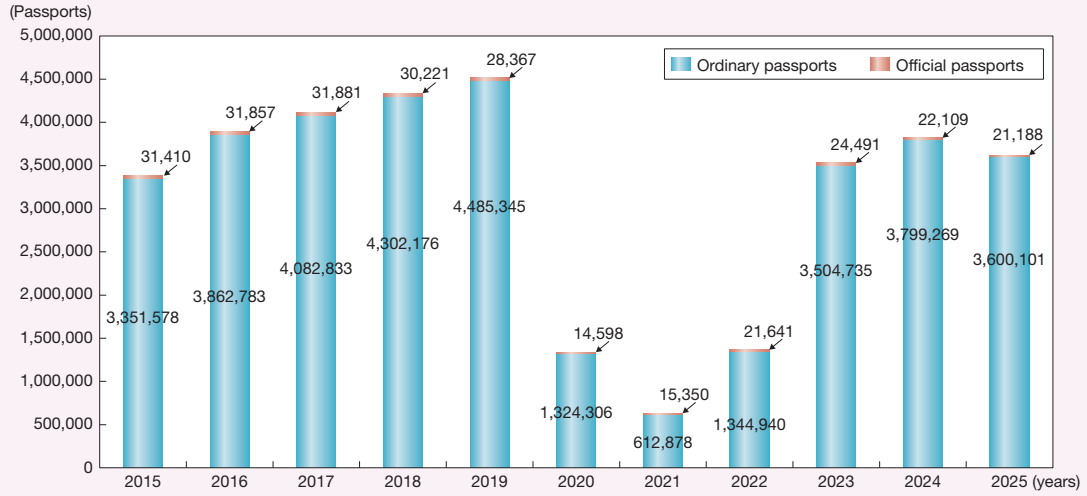
A Improving Consular Service

With the aim of providing quality consular services to Japanese nationals overseas, MOFA conducts a questionnaire survey 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 2025 covered 151 diplomatic missions overseas. MOFA takes such user feedback received via surveys 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.

B Promoting Digitalization

In order to improve user convenience and streamline consular work processes, MOFA has been working to digitalize consular procedures such as expanding online application for consular services and online payment for consular fees. MOFA has been expanding the scope of digitalization, and visible results include a reduced number of counter visits. Building on this, from March 24, 2025, by utilizing the identification code for provision of the family register electronic certificates, applicants are in principle no longer required to attach a copy of their family register — which they previously had to obtain from the local government office of their registered legal domicile — when applying online for a new passport or when applying for certification of personal information at diplomatic missions overseas, both domestically and abroad, thereby further improving convenience. MOFA intends to strengthen the consular policy implementation structure by creating an environment in which consular officers can focus on work in which human response is critical, such as protecting Japanese nationals, by means of digitalizing consular work.

Changes in the number of passports issued



Note: Official passports include diplomatic passports.
Source: Prepared based on 2025 passport statistics (MOFA's Passport Division)

(2) Passports: Maintaining trust, enhancing convenience and making administrative tasks more efficient

The number of passports issued in 2025 was approximately 3.62 million, a decrease of approximately 5% compared to 2024. While the number of passport applications has been on a recovery trend in line with the increase in the number of Japanese nationals traveling overseas following the end of the COVID-19 pandemic, it has not yet reached pre-pandemic levels (in 2019, before the pandemic, around 4.49 million passports were issued).[(2)]

In terms of passport issuance, from March 24, 2025, online application and payment via Mynaportal have been available for both first-time and renewal applications. At the same time, system linkage for family register information was launched, removing the need of submitting a hard copy of the original certified copy of the family register, thereby significantly improving convenience for applicants. Online passport application is also available abroad through the Overseas Residential Registration online application system (ORR net). As a result of this expansion in the scope of online applications, the proportion of online applications relative to the total number of applications from March 24 through the end of that year increased significantly to approximately 44%.

In addition, from March 24, centralized production began at the National Printing Bureau for applications accepted from that date onward. In the "2025 Passport," the face photo page is made of polycarbonate, with photos and text laser-engraved, making the passport significantly more resistant to counterfeiting and alteration.

Unauthorized obtaining of passports by impersonating others continues to occur,[(3)] so MOFA has been working on further upgrading measures to prevent unauthorized obtaining of passports such as confirming a person's identity through in-person delivery or photographic comparison by facial verification technology.

MOFA will continue to engage in maintaining the trust of Japanese passports while enhancing convenience for applicants and making passport administration more efficient, based on international standards set by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO).

(3) Overseas Voting

The overseas voting system allows Japanese voters living overseas to vote in national elections. In order to

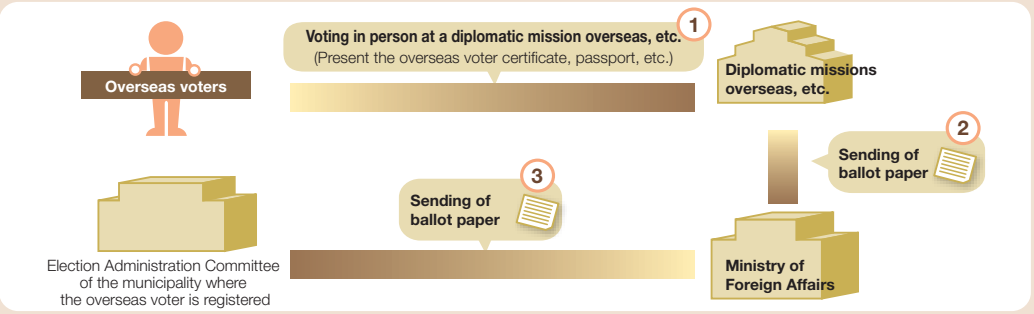
(2) Source: Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO)

(3) Known cases of unauthorized obtaining of passports by impersonation were as follows: three in 2020, three in 2021, three in 2022, five in 2023, two in 2024, and three in 2025.

Voting in elections for overseas voters

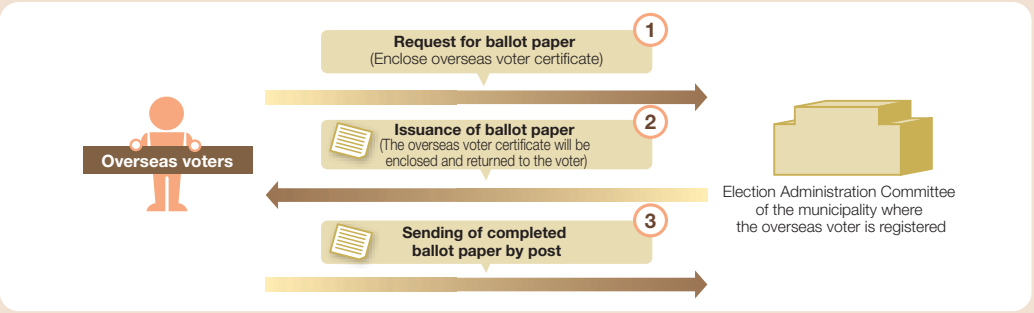
a. Voting at a diplomatic mission overseas

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 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)

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, the procedures were simplified by enabling application for registration on the overseas voter directory at the counter for the election board of the city or town government at the same time as filing a notice of moving overseas. Since July 2024, an initiative has begun to directly transmit application data between Japanese diplomatic missions overseas and election boards of the city or town governments, significantly accelerating the procedures for issuance of overseas voter identification.

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. When elections are held, diplomatic missions overseas also handle overseas voting procedures, including advance PR activities. In July, for the 27th regular election of the Senate voting at diplomatic missions

overseas was conducted for the 18th time involving 232 diplomatic missions and offices. In 2026, MOFA will continue its PR and other activities to increase the number of registered voters and promote voting at diplomatic missions overseas.

(4) Application and Issuance of Individual Number Cards for People Moving Overseas

In order to promote the spread and usage of Individual Number Cards in accordance with the advance of digitalization, from May 27, 2024, the Cards can continue to be used while overseas by carrying out procedures at city or town government offices when moving overseas. In addition, if Japanese nationals move overseas without carrying out the procedures, the Cards can now be received at diplomatic missions overseas by applying by post to the city or town governments or diplomatic missions overseas. MOFA will work in collaboration with related ministries and agencies and continue to consider measures toward further promoting usage of the Cards.

(5) 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. Based on the Act Concerning the Promotion of Education at Overseas Japanese Educational Facilities, which was approved and took effect in 2022, as well as the spirit of the Constitution of Japan, MOFA cooperates with the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT), etc. to provide assistance to Japanese Schools (assistance for school building rental fees, remuneration for locally-hired teachers and instructors, safety measures expenses, etc.) 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 level of 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 overseas Japanese educational facilities are not located.

B Medical and Health Measures

MOFA gathers information on outbreaks of infectious diseases overseas and provides information to a broad audience through the Overseas Safety website, websites of diplomatic missions overseas, consular emails, and other means. In addition, the websites of diplomatic missions overseas provide information about local medical institutions where patients can communicate in Japanese, and information gathered on the ground by medical officers working at diplomatic missions is listed on the MOFA website under "Global Medical Information." Furthermore, in order to provide health advice through consultations to Japanese nationals residing in countries where the medical situation is poor, MOFA dispatches medical teams with the cooperation of domestic medical institutions.

Furthermore, with regard to measures against loneliness and social isolation among Japanese nationals overseas, MOFA continues to liaise with NPOs in Japan to provide attentive assistance for individual cases abroad. In some countries, MOFA has also established a system that enables victims of domestic violence (DV) overseas to consult in Japanese with local DV victim support organizations. In addition, at the second "Meeting with Ambassadors on the issue of Loneliness and Isolation" hosted by the Cabinet Office in June 2025, State Minister for Foreign Affairs MIYAJI Takuma attended online from his business trip destination using an avatar robot "OriHime,"(4) and delivered remarks on the commitment to promoting better understanding both domestically and internationally toward realizing a society that leaves no one struggling with loneliness and social isolation behind.

C 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/

(4) A remotely operated robot developed to enable social participation for people who have difficulty going out. At the meeting, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Miyaji introduced the avatar robot "OriHime" and noted that the advancement of such technologies represents a significant new approach to addressing loneliness and social isolation.

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, MOFA is calling for the simplification of procedures in countries, states or provinces where it is mandatory for Japanese nationals to take a test to obtain a local driver's license.

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 began with the first voyage to Hawaii in 1868. There are approximately five 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 their countries of residence in various fields, including politics, economy, education, and culture, and at the same time, they act as a bridge between Japan and those countries in developing close relations.

Together with the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), MOFA provides cooperation in Central and South America, where approximately 3.1 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. In such ways, MOFA is working to further strengthen connections with Nikkei communities.

In addition, invitation programs to Japan for current Nikkei leaders and young Nikkei who will be future leaders in various fields, and from various countries and regions, have been carried out in North, Central, and South America. Furthermore, efforts are underway to strengthen relations with Nikkei people by actively creating opportunities for the Nikkei communities in each country to maintain and strengthen their connections with Japan, such as arranging opportunities for meetings with local Nikkei persons during visits by Japanese dignitaries.

In September 2025, the 65th Convention of Nikkei and Japanese Abroad was held in person in Japan. Foreign Minister Iwaya hosted the welcome reception, engaging with the Nikkei attendees of many generations. MOFA intends to further strengthen collaboration with Nikkei communities in the future.

4 Implementation Status of the Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction (The Hague Convention)

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 for returning children to their state of habitual residence and establishing opportunities for transboundary parent-child access.

This Convention entered into force for Japan on April 1, 2014. 103 countries, including Japan, are parties to the Convention as of the end of December 2025.

The Convention is implemented through mutual cooperation among the governmental agencies designated as the Central Authority in Contracting States. In Japan, MOFA as the Central Authority avails itself of experts in various fields and provides assistance to both the parent whose child was removed and the parent who removed the child for the resolution of their cases, in communication and cooperation with foreign Central Authorities.

In the eleven years and nine months from the entry into force of the Convention until the end of December 2025, MOFA received a total of 673 applications for assistance: 461 applications seeking the return of a child and 212 applications seeking access to a child. Of the cases seeking the return of a child removed to Japan, children were returned in 85 cases and conclusions were reached not to return the child in 62 cases.

Of the cases seeking the return of a child removed to another country, children were returned in 85 cases and conclusions were reached not to return the child in 49 cases.

In order to build awareness of the Hague Convention among a broad public, MOFA holds seminars targeting Japanese nationals overseas and also runs seminars in Japan for local governments and relevant institutions such as bar associations, putting efforts into PR and awareness-raising activities.

In addition, in October 2025, MOFA held a seminar in London for UK legal professionals, entitled "Japan and the 1980 Hague Convention: The Reality of Implementation and Civil Code Amendments," as part of its efforts to raise awareness among overseas stakeholders that Japan is steadily implementing the Hague Convention.(5)

Number of applications for assistance received by MOFA based on the Implementation Act of the Hague Convention (as of the end of December 2025)

	Application for assistance in child's return	Application for assistance in contact with a child
Application related to a child located in Japan	239	159
Application related to a child located overseas	222	53

(5) See the MOFA website concerning the 1980 Hague Convention and Japan's efforts, to learn the details of assistance provided under the Convention and PR activities both in Japan and overseas: https://www.mofa.go.jp/fp/hr_ha/page22e_000249.html

Column

The Hague Convention: Convention Implementation Centered on the Needs of Parents and Children

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) Hague Convention Division, serving as Japan's "Central Authority" under the Hague Convention, provides support to enable both parents to resolve issues on their own when, due to unavoidable circumstances of various kinds, a parent and child are separated from one another across borders. A key priority in this process is giving foremost consideration to the best interests of the child, who is most directly affected by the relationship between the parents.

From the perspective of the child's welfare, it is important for both parents to discuss issues relating to the removal of a child or access to a child and to seek as amicable a resolution as possible in order to reach a settlement. To this end, the Hague Convention Division acts as an intermediary in communications between the parties, introduces alternative dispute resolution (ADR) institutions that provide mediation services, and covers the associated costs. Mediation services refer to a system in which mediators — impartial and neutral third parties such as attorneys and/or clinical psychologists — listen to both parents, confirm their respective positions, dispel any misunderstandings that may exist, and work toward an amicable settlement.

In addition, in order to facilitate contact between a parent and child who are living apart, the Hague Convention Division introduces private Child Contact Support Organizations and covers the associated costs, provided that both parents agree to use their services. On the day of the contact session, a support organization staff member collects the child from one parent, brings the child to meet the other parent and then accompanies the contact session in person. This helps alleviate the anxiety of both the parent and the child and facilitate smooth contact, even for parents and children who have not seen each other for some time. Furthermore, when a parent living abroad and a child residing in Japan wish to engage in contact online, a service called "Online *Mimamori* Contact (Supervised Online Contact)" is also available, in which a staff member of the support organization is present online during the session. In such cases, the staff member observes the child's expressions and behavior and provides support to ensure that the child can take part with peace of mind.

Among the cases handled by the Hague Convention Division, there are instances in which the support described above was utilized and an agreement was reached for the child to return to the country where the child had previously resided. There are also instances in which contact between a parent living abroad and a child residing in Japan continued over a lengthy period. In one case, the parents first engaged in multiple discussions through an ADR institution, facilitated by mediators using an interpreter. As a result, the parents reached an agreement to "use a Child Contact Support Organization to facilitate contact between the child and the parent living apart." Thereafter, with the cooperation of the support organization, contact was carried out between the parent living abroad and the child residing in Japan. As the parent and child had not seen each other for a long time, communication was difficult due to language barriers, but with the help of the staff, a warm exchange took place, including conversations about shared hobbies. There were also indications that contact would continue into the future, including discussions about plans for the child to travel to the country where the parent lives.



The above is an example of a case in which contact between a parent and child was realized through the support of the Hague Convention Division, including its attentive intermediation services. Family matters are complex, and support does not lead to positive outcomes in every case. However, the Hague Convention Division has on its staff specialists in areas such as child psychology and support for victims of domestic violence (DV), and the Division strives to provide support that is tailored to the needs of the parent and child in each individual case.

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 and its initiatives. Specifically, regular press conferences are conducted by the Foreign Minister and the Press Secretary, while extraordinary press conferences are held as necessary. Press conferences by the Foreign Minister are live-streamed on the official MOFA YouTube channel, with the records and video of them published on MOFA's website. During foreign visits by the Prime Minister or the Foreign Minister, MOFA proactively provides information from visiting countries/regions via multiple means, including social media, so that people can promptly follow and understand the purposes and the outcomes of the visits. MOFA also regularly releases statements by the Foreign Minister 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 and other topics. Additionally, the Foreign Minister and State Ministers for Foreign Affairs explain the Government's foreign policies directly to the public through appearances on various media and interviews.



Press Conference by Foreign Minister Motegi (October 22, Tokyo)

Dissemination of Information through Press Conferences

Minister for Foreign Affairs	97 times
Press Secretary	33 times
Total	130 times

(From January 1 to December 31, 2025)

Dissemination of Information through Documents

Statements by the Minister for Foreign Affairs	26 times
Statements by the Press Secretary	27 times
Press releases by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs	2,197 times
Total	2,250 times

(From January 1 to December 31, 2025)

(3) Information Provision to the Public Through the Internet

MOFA's website (in Japanese and English) promptly provides 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.

In addition, MOFA's Japanese website provides various contents to a wide range of Japanese nationals, such as "MOFA for Kids," the "Anything Report from Around the World," and "Easy Ways to Understand International Situations." In particular, "MOFA for Kids" features videos in which MOFA officials explain MOFA's initiatives in an easy-to-understand way. It also provides Q&A corners explaining terms and international issues often covered in the news and newspapers, national flag quizzes, and other children's content such as greetings from around the world. Through "MOFA for Kids," MOFA aims to provide information that is easy for young people to understand.

In addition to the above, MOFA provides a variety of information through various social media platforms. In 2025, MOFA promptly and actively provided information about topics such as diplomatic events both within Japan and abroad (including TICAD 9), the situation in Ukraine, and the situation in the Gaza Strip.

(4) Dialogue with Japanese Nationals

It is obvious that in order to gain the public's understanding and support for foreign policy, it is important to actively and continuously disseminate information about MOFA's various activities and foreign policy to Japanese nationals of all ages. Therefore, MOFA is promoting "Public Relations through Dialogue with the People," in which MOFA officials engage in direct



MOFA's official website: https://www.mofa.go.jp/index.html



MOFA for Kids



MOFA official X: https://x.com/MofaJapan_en

MOFA's official website

MOFA's official X account

MOFA's official Facebook account

MOFA's official Instagram account

dialogue with the public, with the aim of promoting understanding of foreign policy and international affairs, and is carrying out various projects.

For students, mainly university students, MOFA held "Dialogue with Students" at MOFA headquarters in February, where MOFA officials and students exchanged views. The event included thematic small-group sessions on topics such as Japan-Republic of Korea (ROK) relations, which marked the 60th anniversary of the normalization of diplomatic relations and presentations on the theme of "Public diplomacy strategies to broaden support for Japan amid intensifying geopolitical competition." In addition, MOFA co-hosted "Dialogue with Students" with Nagasaki University in December, on themes including Japan's diplomatic efforts toward a world without nuclear weapons and the role of the next generation, in light of the significance of the 80th anniversary of the end of the war and holding the event in Nagasaki City. Furthermore, under "Diplomatic Talks," MOFA officials were dispatched to universities nationwide throughout the year to give lectures on international affairs and the latest foreign policy on a wide range of themes requested by each university, and strove to



Exchange between Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs Ikuina and children at "Children's Kasumigaseki Tour Day" (August 6, MOFA)



Small-Group Session at "Dialogue with Students" (students in discussion with MOFA officials) (February 13, MOFA)



"Talks for High School" lecture (on initiatives toward a world without nuclear weapons) (June 11, Fukuyama City, Hiroshima Prefecture)



"Visits by Elementary, Junior and Senior High School Students to MOFA" (experiencing African culture in the lead-up to TICAD 9) (May 13, MOFA)



The diplomatic magazine "Gaiko" (Diplomacy)

deepen university students' knowledge and understanding of diplomacy in general.

For younger age groups such as senior high school and junior high school students, with the aim of increasing interest in diplomacy among the generation that will bear the future, various programs are conducted both online and in-person. These include "Talks for High School," under which MOFA officials are dispatched to high schools across Japan, and "Visits by Elementary, Junior, and Senior High School Students to MOFA," in which students visit MOFA and engage in discussions with MOFA officials. Through these activities, MOFA introduces its concrete initiatives and the latest international situation, contributing to the development of human resources who will play active roles in the international community. In addition, at the "Children's Kasumigaseki Tour Day" held in August, MOFA ran a variety of programs, including lectures and an exchange with Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs IKUINA Akiko, to help children and those accompanying them deepen their understanding of MOFA's work and countries around the world.

For the general public, MOFA holds "Lectures on the International Situations," co-hosted with local governments and international exchange organizations across the country, with the aim of providing many citizens with opportunities to engage with foreign policy and increasing their interest in international affairs. Additionally, through the publication of the diplomatic magazine "Gaiko" (Diplomacy), the current status of international affairs surrounding Japan and various opinions and discussions on diplomacy are widely introduced to the public. In 2025, the magazine featured a variety of diplomatic issues that provided an overview of the current international situation, including analysis of the diverse ways in which countries manage their relations with the U.S., the situation surrounding Ukraine and the Gaza Strip, and the escalating tensions between India and Pakistan, with multifaceted considerations of the emerging vision of a new international order accompanying these developments. The magazine featured a large number of articles by prominent domestic and international experts.

Moreover, various pamphlets are created for a wide range of readers in order to gain a deeper understanding of MOFA's organization and Japanese diplomacy.

In addition to the above, MOFA hears comments and opinions from the public through 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 in the declassification of records and in efforts to facilitate greater convenience in the public use of diplomatic documents. Since 1976, MOFA has declassified its postwar diplomatic records over time as a voluntary initiative. The Rules on the Declassification of Diplomatic Records, which were established in 2010, stipulate: (a) the declassification of diplomatic documents created or obtained more than 30 years ago in principle, and (b) 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 that have been transferred to the Diplomatic Archives and made public since then reached approximately 40,000 by the end of 2025. Furthermore, MOFA has disclosed information pursuant to the Act on Access to Information Held by Administrative Organs, while giving consideration to national security, the relationship of mutual trust with other countries, the impact on diplomatic negotiations, and the protection of personal information. In 2025, MOFA received 997 requests for disclosure, and documents totaling 32,680 pages were disclosed.

Holding around 120,000 diplomatic documents including 40,000 from the pre-war period, MOFA's Diplomatic Archives are specified as "the National Archives of Japan, etc." under the Public Records and Archives Management Act (Archives Management Act). The Archives respond to viewing and usage requests, answer inquiries regarding documents in the collection and diplomatic history, and display materials in the collection. In addition, the Archives have compiled

important diplomatic documents since 1868 by theme and published them in succession as the "Documents on Japanese Foreign Policy," and since 1988 has also published an annual report.

Furthermore, the Archives' new Exhibition Room — which relocated to the fifth floor of the Azabudai Hills Mori JP Tower and reopened in April 2024 — makes use of its advantageous location at a new landmark in Tokyo to display diplomatic documents such as major treaties from the final days of the Tokugawa Shogunate to the present day, introducing the history of Japan's diplomacy. In 2025, using materials held by the Diplomatic Archives, the Archives also held the Special Exhibition on "Portrait of YOSHIDA Shigeru: Through Precious Historical Documents" planned to mark the first anniversary of the renewal of the new Exhibition Room, an exhibition commemorating the 60th Anniversary of the Normalization of Diplomatic Relations between Japan and ROK and the Special Exhibition on "Japan's orientation as a peace-loving nation" commemorating the 80th anniversary of the end of World War II and the founding of the United Nations (UN). The Archives are also actively engaged in introducing the history of Japanese diplomacy to younger audiences, particularly elementary, junior, and senior high school students.



Japan's orientation as a peace-loving nation

2 Strengthening the Foreign Policy Implementation Structure

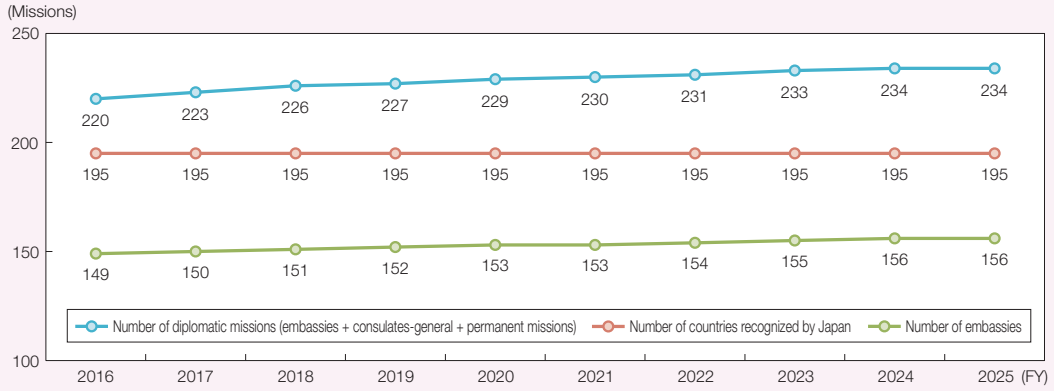
(1) Organization, Personnel, and Budget

While Japan is facing the most severe and complex security environment in the post-war era, it is vital to fundamentally strengthen the foreign policy and consular implementation structure to promote diplomatic power for maintaining and developing a free and open international order based on the rule of law. To that end, MOFA is working on strengthening its diplomatic missions overseas in both the aspects of quantity and quality, as well as advancing efforts to improve the organizational and personnel systems at MOFA itself. In FY2025, in order to address foreign policy in a more agile and strategic manner than ever before amid a rapidly changing international situation, MOFA carried out organizational reforms, including the establishment and consolidation of divisions and offices, at the Minister's Secretariat, the Foreign Policy Bureau, the European Affairs Bureau, the Economic Affairs Bureau, and the Consular Affairs Bureau.

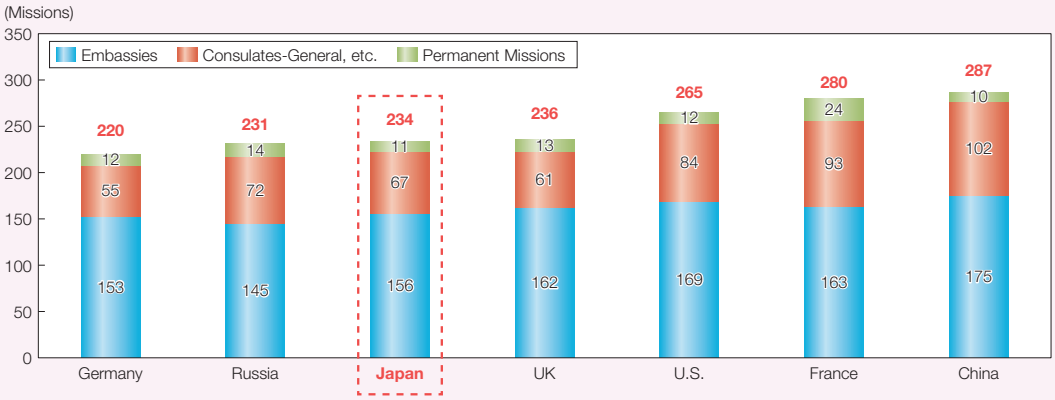
Diplomatic missions overseas, such as embassies and consulates general, not only represent Japan and engage in diplomatic activities, but also play a key role in areas such as information-gathering and strategic external communication at the frontline of diplomacy. At the same time, diplomatic missions 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 addition, it is important to secure and increase the number of staff members to support diplomacy at the MOFA headquarters and diplomatic missions overseas. In the context of the current severe budget and staffing situation for the Government overall, the number of staff members at MOFA was increased in FY2025 by 87 to 6,761 from FY2024 in order to deepen relations with its ally and like-minded countries, strengthen cooperation with countries of the Global South, advance economic diplomacy including support for Japanese companies, strengthen initiatives toward the era of information warfare, and strengthen protection

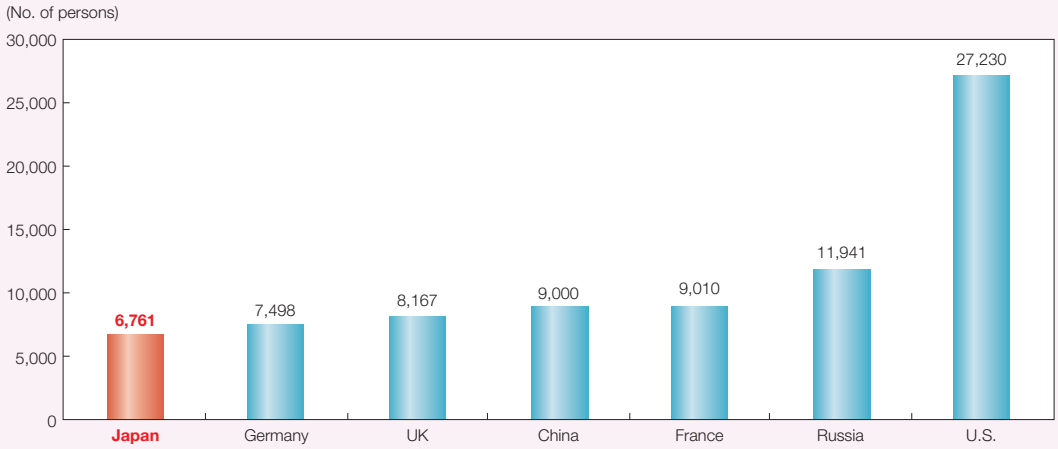
Changes in the Number of Diplomatic Missions



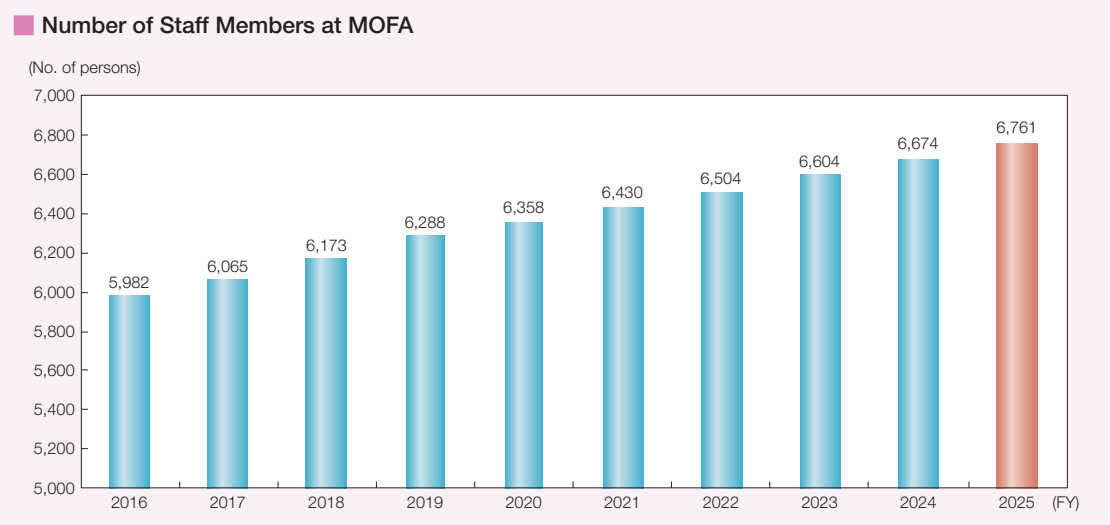
Comparison of the Number of Diplomatic Missions of Japan with Major Countries (P5 + Germany)



Comparison of the Number of Staff Members at Ministries of Foreign Affairs in Major Countries



Note: Based on the FY2025 survey result, etc.



measures for Japanese nationals abroad and the consular structure. 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 diplomatic and consular implementation structure remains essential in FY2026, MOFA will increase its workforce by 91 staff.(1)

In order to maintain and strengthen a free and open international order based on the rule of law, MOFA appropriated 761.7 billion yen in the initial budget for FY2025. Furthermore, MOFA appropriated 184.4 billion yen in the supplementary budget for FY2025. The funding appropriated in the supplementary budget was for measures addressing pressing issues related to Japan and the world, including measures relating to "AI, cyber, and GX," which were designated as "strategic sectors" by the Headquarters for Japan's Growth Strategy established by Prime Minister Takaichi; measures contributing to the overseas expansion of Japanese companies and to economic security; support for Ukraine; and measures relating to cooperation with the Global South and like-minded countries. MOFA's FY2026 government budget proposal appropriated 817.0 billion yen based on the following priorities to be realized: (a) pursuing Japan's security and economic prosperity, (b) developing an international environment that contributes to Japan's national interests, and (c) strengthening the consular implementation structure for the protection of Japanese nationals. This includes budgets for initiatives toward forming an international order desirable for Japan (including realizing a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)"), for strengthening relationships with countries of the Global South, for support for Ukraine and Palestine as well as countries affected by the situation, for Official Security Assistance (OSA), for rule-making that underpins a free and fair international economic order and support for the overseas expansion of Japanese companies, for the fundamental strengthening of cultural diplomacy aimed at boosting trust, favorability, and a sense of closeness toward Japan — including people-to-people and cultural exchanges that expand the circle of people with a great affinity toward or knowledge of Japan — and for strengthening initiatives toward the era of information warfare. In order to pursue Japan's national interests amid a severe international situation, Japan will continue to proceed strategically to develop the diplomatic and consular implementation structure including by executing the budget even more efficiently, while making efforts to streamline operations.

(1) Includes special provision (for one year only) for four additional new recruits in accordance with the increase in the compulsory retirement age.

(2) Information Collection and Analysis contributing to Japan's Diplomacy

Japan is facing the most severe and complex security environment since the end of World War II. In the vicinity of Japan, military buildup, including the development of nuclear weapons and missiles, is rapidly advancing, coupled with mounting attempts to unilaterally change the status quo by force. At the same time, the persistent occurrence of information warfare, through the dissemination of disinformation increasingly blurs boundaries between peacetime and wartime. In an increasingly uncertain international environment, collecting and analyzing information accurately in order to protect Japan's national interests and ensure the security of Japanese people is becoming more essential.

MOFA has consistently strengthened its information collection and analysis capabilities in response to evolving international developments. In the beginning of the 21st century, based on the necessity of making further rapid and flexible responses to the transforming international situation — including the 2001 terrorist attacks in the U.S. and the subsequent situation in Iraq — the Intelligence and Analysis Bureau was reorganized into the Intelligence and Analysis Service (IAS) in 2004. Subsequently, in order to deal with an increasingly severe and complex security environment in 2023, under the Director-General for Intelligence and Analysis Service, IAS regrouped its divisions into the Management Group and the Analysis Group. The former group is responsible for organizational management, and the latter for analysis.

IAS is a specialized department in MOFA that collects and analyzes information on international affairs with a view to providing intelligence contributing to Japan's foreign policy and security. IAS produces objective and evidence-based intelligence products, independently from policy departments formulating foreign policy, while also bearing in mind developments of the international situation and key international events. IAS contributes to the formulation and decision-making of foreign and security policies by directly providing such intelligence in a timely manner to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, policy departments within MOFA, and the Prime Minister's Office as well as the National Security Secretariat.

Utilizing analysts' regional and sector-based expertise, IAS conducts all-source analysis (comprehensive analysis through various information sources) based on information obtained through Japan's overseas missions; open source information collected through the use of emerging technologies such as AI; information obtained from relevant ministries and foreign governments; and imagery information obtained through Information-Gathering Satellites and other sources.

The importance of collecting and analyzing information on international affairs will continue to increase, and MOFA will continue to work to further strengthen its intelligence capabilities in various ways.

Column

Executive Chef for the Ambassador at the Embassy of Japan in India

IKUSHIMA Takuya

My name is IKUSHIMA Takuya, and I have been serving as Executive Chef for the Ambassador at the Embassy of Japan in India since October 2024. India, which has the world's largest population and with which Japan has established a Special Strategic and Global Partnership, is a country where dinners and receptions at the Ambassador's official residence provide important opportunities for deepening favorable relations in all areas, including politics and the economy. I feel nervous every time, but when I have the opportunity to greet guests after a meal, I often receive compliments, which makes this an extremely rewarding job.

Among the guests at these dinners, there was a vegetarian guest who told me that "it was the best meal I have ever had," and at another reception there was a guest who came looking for me to shake my hand after I had served all of the sushi.

What I am most mindful of when serving food is expressing Japan's spirit of hospitality, "*omotenashi*," in a way that is tailored to each guest, while also incorporating Indian ingredients and cooking methods. With each dish I serve, I put my heart into hoping that guests will feel, even just a little, a connection to the Japan-India friendship, and I devote myself to cooking every day.



Appetizer assortment incorporating an arrangement of "*pani puri*," an Indian street food



"*Rasmalai*," an Indian dessert, arranged in a Western style

In India, beef and pork are avoided for religious reasons, and the country has one of the world's largest vegetarian populations, so menu planning is a challenge. However, I constantly devise creative dishes within these constraints to ensure that all guests are pleased. When hosting Indian and international guests, I consult with the Ambassador to serve *kaiseki* cuisine that evokes Japan. When hosting guests visiting India from Japan, I serve a dish based on Indian cuisine as one course of the meal.

Outside of New Delhi, where the Embassy is located, I take advantage of my vacation time to travel to various parts of India, sampling a wide range of regional cuisines to deepen my understanding of Indian food culture. I also make a point of drawing on these ideas in dinners at the official residence, and of adjusting the seasoning to suit Indian tastes. Not only traditional Indian cuisine, but also modern Indian restaurants influenced by Japan and Europe are increasing in number, which I find extremely informative. The opportunities to interact and exchange views with Indian chefs from various parts of the country are something that I feel is unique to the position of executive chef. Indian chefs ask me about Japanese ingredients and cooking utensils, while I, in turn, learn from them about Indian ingredients and cuisine.



Entertaining Indian guests in the Tempura Room of the Ambassador's official residence (the author in the center)

There are always areas for daily improvement, but I feel that the role of executive chef is one that, by working overseas, allows me to encounter cultures that I could never experience in Japan, and that offers opportunities for growth even for someone like me who is over fifty years old. I intend to continue working to contribute to Japan's diplomacy as an executive chef, while also enjoying life in India.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs reviewed the existing Executive Chefs for Ambassadors/Consuls-General of Japan program and launched a new "Program for Official Chefs of Japan's Overseas Diplomatic Missions" in January 2026.

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 X (Japanese only)).

Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/Mofa-JapanChef

X: https://x.com/mofa_japan_chef

Column

Construction of New Overseas Establishment Facilities in Climates, Natural Features, and Environments Different from Japan

Were you aware that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) has a role called "Overseas Buildings and Repairs?" As "the face of Japan," overseas establishments such as Japanese embassies abroad provide the bases and venues for Japan's diplomatic activities, and in emergencies they serve as the last "strongholds" for protecting Japanese nationals. Overseas Buildings and Repairs consists of designing, constructing, and maintaining these facilities. It supports diplomatic activities from the ground up while sharing in the heavy responsibility of safeguarding the lives of Japanese nationals living abroad. Here, we feature MITSUO, a technical official at the Embassy of Japan in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), who is in charge of new construction work on the official residence of the Ambassador. She describes the work that technical officials do.

Construction Right on the Equator: Challenges in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

I am responsible for overseeing the construction of a new official residence for Japanese Ambassador to the DRC in Kinshasa, the capital of the DRC. The area has a tropical monsoon climate: for about nine months of the year the rainy season brings frequent downpours, and during the remaining three months of the dry season dust is constantly stirred up, causing deterioration of exterior walls even on relatively new buildings. In such an environment, the current official residence — a private home built in 1958 (67 years since construction) that was purchased and put to use — had seen significant soiling and deterioration of its exterior walls. In addition, frequent voltage fluctuations and power outages led to repeated failures of electrical and mechanical equipment, and interruption to the water supply, making it impossible to avoid impacts on diplomatic activities. Therefore, I am engaged in the new construction work on the official residence as the supervising officer, with the aim of ensuring stable diplomatic activities and securing and enhancing the functions required to serve as the "last stronghold" for protecting Japanese nationals in emergencies.

Regarding building conditions in the DRC, no earthquakes have been observed over the past several decades, and buildings are seldom exposed to strong winds such as typhoons. As a result, many structures have far more rudimentary construction than those in Japan. Partly for that reason, local workers sometimes proceed with low-precision work on their own judgment, so vigilant supervision is constantly required.

Procuring materials is no less challenging than the construction work itself. Materials confirmed as available at the design stage sometimes become unavailable by the time construction begins, and performance testing of locally manufactured products has on occasion shown them to be unsuitable for use, frequently necessitating consideration of alternative materials. To ensure that the building and its systems perform better and last longer, I evaluate alternative materials with an eye to improving the future maintainability of the facilities — not only by ensuring construction quality, but also by selecting materials that can be easily procured locally.


Site inspection with local engineers (the author, foreground)

Carrying out construction in an environment where the language, climate, culture, and customs all differ from Japan is no easy task. However, through direct and repeated engagement with local counterparts, I have found that we can realize a Japanese design approach adapted to local conditions; and through the development of facilities at the official residence that serves as the stage for diplomatic activities, we can showcase Japan's appeal. That sense of fulfillment and enjoyment is unique to overseas buildings and repairs work. I will continue striving toward the completion of a building that will serve as a symbol of Japan.

MOFA recruits Overseas Buildings and Repairs Officers from candidates who have passed the National Civil Service Examination for General Service (University Graduate Level), Technical Categories (Examination Categories: Architecture, Digital/Electrical/Electronics, Machinery, and "Liberal Arts").

Column

Imagery Intelligence Analyst
— An Intelligence Specialist Viewing the World from Space —

Are you familiar with the term "imagery intelligence (IMINT)"? "IMINT" is one of the intelligence methods for collecting and analyzing information obtained from imagery. The collection and analysis of information on the international situation is indispensable to the effective conduct of diplomacy, and imagery information obtained from satellites and other sources is one important source of such information.

At the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), "Imagery Intelligence Analysts," who are dedicated specialists in the analysis of imagery information, provide daily situational briefings to relevant personnel in the fields of security and the protection of Japanese nationals overseas, making full use of the value of imagery information — timeliness and objectivity — in Japan's diplomatic activities.

Voices of an Imagery Intelligence Analyst

I have been engaged in imagery intelligence analysis work for a long time. Imagery analysis is an extremely painstaking task; however, in recent years, the utility of satellite imagery analysis has been widely recognized, and I feel that the importance of imagery in MOFA's information collection and analysis has been growing as well.

In recent years, social media and other platforms have become widespread, and open-source information is abundant. Such information sometimes conveys the truth, but at times it also contains misinformation. In this regard, information derived from satellite imagery is objective, and it is being used extensively to ascertain what the facts are.

By combining imagery information with a variety of other sources and conducting composite and multi-layered analysis, the accuracy of situational assessments can be enhanced. To this end, I routinely combine imagery information with various sources, including open-source information, exchange views with specialists in diverse fields, and actively incorporate their knowledge and experience into the analytical process.

Japan is facing the increasingly severe security environment. When delivering situational briefings to MOFA senior officials who are directly involved in foreign policy decisions, I am frequently reminded of the gravity that my analysis and assessments carry, and I feel the weight of the great responsibility I bear. At the same time, I derive a strong sense of purpose from knowing that my analysis contributes to some part of Japan's foreign policy.

3 The Roles of Think Tanks and Experts in Diplomacy

The roles of think tanks and experts in diplomacy include promoting public understanding of diplomatic and security issues in a way that is not constrained by official government views, making intellectual contributions that produce ideas for diplomatic and security policies, building global intellectual networks, and communicating Japan's perspectives to other countries. Seminars and news commentaries for the general public by think tanks and experts are essential for deepening public understanding of diplomatic and security issues as well as the government's standpoint, and gaining public understanding can further enhance the effectiveness of the government's diplomatic activities. Moreover, gathering information, conducting analyses, and making policy recommendations by leveraging expertise and viewpoints that are different from the ones of the government also enrich discussions on diplomatic policies within the government. Global intellectual exchanges are also important in the sense that they promote understanding of Japan among various countries and regions, and contribute to shaping public opinions in the international community. With the growing complexity and uncertainty in the international community, the roles of think tanks and experts in diplomacy are becoming increasingly important.

Against this backdrop, MOFA provides subsidies to support Japanese think tanks' research activities in the field of foreign and security policy, in order to strengthen their capabilities to collect, analyze and disseminate information, to make policy proposals, and to further promote Japan's comprehensive diplomacy. In FY2025, the scheme provided support to 13 projects under six organizations, and it is effectively promoting policy proposals to policymakers that are in line with the ever-changing diplomatic and security environment, exchanges of opinions with overseas think tanks and experts, the publication of papers and commentaries activities and communications via the media by experts, and hosting symposiums which lead international debate. Furthermore, MOFA launched a new subsidy scheme in FY2017 that aims at supporting research and information dissemination activities of Japanese think tanks in the areas of territory, sovereignty and history. Under the scheme, the Japan Institute of International Affairs (JIIA) conducts such activities as the collection, analyses, and public release of materials found in Japan and overseas, as well as the convention of open symposiums in cooperation with overseas think tanks and the dissemination of research results both domestically and internationally. Through this scheme, in FY2025 lectures and discussions were held on the territorial issues as part of research and information dissemination activities regarding Japan's territory and history. In addition, young researchers from Asia visited Japan to deepen understanding of issues regarding Japan's territory, sovereignty and history, engaging with Japanese researchers and building research networks. It is expected that the scheme will support Japanese think tanks in accumulating historical records and knowledge pertaining to Japan's territory, sovereignty and history, and enhancing their information dissemination domestically and abroad.

References

The Issue of Comfort Women	378
The Issue of Former Civilian Workers from the Korean Peninsula (CWKs)	380



Announcement by Foreign Ministers of Japan and the Republic of Korea at the Joint Press Occasion (December 28, 2015)

https://warp.ndl.go.jp/web/20240701202858/https://www.mofa.go.jp/a_o/na/kr/page4e_000365.html
(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 onetime 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 GOJs 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 Judgment of the Seoul High Court of the Republic of Korea in the Lawsuit Filed by Former Comfort Women and Others (Statement by Foreign Minister KAMIKAWA Yoko) (November 23, 2023)

https://warp.ndl.go.jp/web/20240802081226/https://www.mofa.go.jp/press/release/press1e_000489.html
(Scan here for publications on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs website)

1. In the lawsuit filed by former comfort women and others against the Government of Japan, on November 23, 2023, the Seoul High 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, as was the case in the judgment of the Seoul Central District Court of the Republic of Korea on January 8, 2021.
2. This judgment, same as the previous judgment on January 8, 2021, is, clearly contrary to international law and agreements between the two countries, and therefore extremely regrettable and absolutely unacceptable.
3. 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://warp.ndl.go.jp/web/20250902094822/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://warp.ndl.go.jp/web/20240302040241/https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/files/100104783.pdf

(Reference 4) 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)
https://warp.ndl.go.jp/web/20211002073800/https://www.mofa.go.jp/press/danwa/press6e_000269.html

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)

Regarding the Decision by the Supreme Court of the Republic of Korea, Confirming the Existing Judgments on the Japanese Company (Statement by Foreign Minister KONO Taro) (October 30, 2018)

https://warp.ndl.go.jp/web/20240701222219/https://www.mofa.go.jp/press/release/press4e_002204.html

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 the 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 problems 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, today on October 30, the Supreme Court of the Republic of Korea decided to confirm the previously existing Korean judgments as final, which ordered Nippon Steel & Sumitomo Metal Corporation, inter alia, to pay compensation to the plaintiffs. This decision is extremely regret table and totally unacceptable. This decision clearly violates Article II of the Agreement and inflicts unjustifiable damages and costs on the said Japanese company. Above all, the decision completely over throws 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 once again conveys to the Republic of Korea its position as elaborated above, and strongly demands that the Republic of Korea take appropriate measures, including immediate actions to remedy such breach of international law.
4. Furthermore, if appropriate measures are not taken immediately, Japan will examine all possible options, including international adjudication, and take resolute actions accordingly from the standpoint of, inter alia, protecting the legitimate business activities by Japanese companies. As part of such effort, in order for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to fully address this matter, today, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has established the Division for Issues Related to Claims between Japan and the Republic of Korea in the Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau.

Foreign Minister HAYASHI Yoshimasa's comment on the Government of the Republic of Korea's announcement regarding the issue of former Civilian Workers from the Korean Peninsula (CWKs) (March 6, 2023)

https://warp.ndl.go.jp/web/20240702114210/https://www.mofa.go.jp/a_o/na/kr/page1e_000579.html

Today, the Government of the Republic of Korea made an announcement regarding the issue of former Civilian Workers from the Korean Peninsula (CWKs).

The Government of Japan is of the view that it is necessary to advance Japan-ROK relations further, based on the platform on which our friendly and cooperative bilateral relations have been built since the normalization of diplomatic relations in 1965, and that the issue of former civilian workers needs to be resolved to that end. Based on this recognition, the Government of Japan has been communicating closely with the ROK government since the inauguration of the YOON Suk Yeol administration. The Government of Japan values the measures announced today by the ROK government, as a move towards restoring Japan-ROK relations, which had been severely strained due to the ROK Supreme Court ruling in 2018, to a sound footing.

Japan and the ROK are important neighbors for one another and we should work together in dealing with various issues of the international community. Ever since the inauguration of the YOON administration, the two governments have been in close contact with each other, including at the leaders' level. In light of the current strategic environment, the Government of Japan will enhance Japan-ROK and Japan-ROK-U.S. coordination, including in the area of security. Japan will also work in cooperation with the ROK in pursuit of a free and open Indo-Pacific.

Taking this opportunity, the Government of Japan confirms that it upholds in its entirety the positions of the previous Cabinets on history, including the "Japan-ROK Joint Statement" issued in October 1998. The Government of Japan will continue to work closely with the ROK to further advance sound Japan-ROK relations, based on the platform on which the friendly and cooperative bilateral relations have been built since the normalization of diplomatic relations in 1965.

After today's announcement, the Government of Japan hopes to see a robust expansion of political, economic and cultural exchanges between our two countries, together with the implementation of the announced measures.

See the Ministry of Foreign Affairs website for other related materials.
https://www.mofa.go.jp/a_o/na/kr/page4e_000947.html