



Japan. Women Can Change the World.

**Comprehensive National-level
Reviews for the 25th Anniversary of
the Fourth World Conference on
Women and Adoption of the Beijing
Declaration and Platform for Action**

Government of Japan

Section One: Priorities, achievements, challenges and setbacks

1. What have been the most important achievements, challenges and set-backs in progress towards gender equality and the empowerment of women over the past five years?

As a depopulating country with a falling birth rate and aging population, Japan acknowledges that the realization of a society in which all people, regardless of gender, can make meaningful contributions and freely express themselves regardless of gender while respecting each other's human rights and sharing in both benefits and responsibilities is extremely important in terms of facilitating the diversity and vitality of society and invigorating the economy while securing meaningful equality of opportunity for men and women.

Against this background, the Basic Act for Gender Equal Society (hereinafter referred to as "Basic Act") was established in 1999 in light of movements in and outside Japan, including the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Japan has mainstreamed gender equality and women's empowerment as part of its high-priority challenges as a nation. Comprehensive efforts¹ have been vigorously advanced since the inauguration of the second Abe Cabinet in December 2012, a period that includes the past five years.

(Reference) The Basic Act for Gender Equal Society

Japan established the Basic Act in 1999 in light of movements in and outside of Japan including the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. As basic principles for the realization of a gender-equal society, the Basic Act upholds the following five principles:

- (i) The Formation of Gender Equal Society shall be carried out, aiming at respect for the dignity of men and women as individuals, not treating men and women in a way that discriminates against them based on gender, securing opportunities for men and women as individuals to exercise their abilities and respect for other human rights of men and women.
- (ii) In consideration that social systems or practices can be factors that impede the Formation of Gender Equal Society by reflecting a stereotyped division of roles on the basis of gender, etc., and having a biased effect on men and women's selection of social activities, consideration shall be given so that social systems and practices have as neutral an impact as possible on this selection of social activities.
- (iii) The Formation of Gender Equal Society shall be undertaken with the aim to secure opportunities for men and women to jointly participate as equal members of society in planning and deciding policies of the State or local governments or ones of private organizations.
- (iv) The Formation of Gender Equal Society shall be undertaken with the aim for men and women who are members of families to be able to smoothly perform their roles as household members with regard to taking care of children and other family members and other activities in their home lives, through mutual cooperation and with social support, and for them to also be able to engage in activities other than these.
- (v) In consideration of close relationship between promotion of the formation of Gender Equal Society and efforts in the international community, the formation of Gender Equal Society shall be undertaken based on international cooperation.

Based on the above basic principles, the Basic Act stipulates as follows:

- The government shall receive recommendations from the Council for Gender Equality (as mentioned below) in establishing a Basic Plan for Gender Equality every five years; shall comprehensively

¹ An overview of efforts for gender equality and women's active participation in Japan is given in the following materials (English). http://www.gender.go.jp/english_contents/pr_act/pub/pamphlet/women-and-men19/index.html

formulate and implement policies including positive actions; and shall submit an annual report to the parliament on the policies implemented each year; and

- Local governments shall establish basic plans with regard to relevant areas and shall deploy measures that reflect the special characteristics of the region.

Moreover, the Basic Act stipulates that within the Cabinet Office, led by the Prime Minister, shall be established the Council for Gender Equality, led by the Chief Cabinet Secretary and composed of relevant cabinet members and persons with relevant knowledge. The Council for Gender Equality is authorized to deal with matters related to the Basic Plan for Gender Equality, and to study and deliberate on basic policies and important matters and provide recommendations to the Prime Minister and relevant Ministers if necessary.

(1) Major efforts over the past five years

This paragraph describes the main efforts and achievements in 2014 and after, which is the target period of this report.

(a) Strengthening the national machinery

In forming the reshuffled second Abe Cabinet in September 2014, Prime Minister Abe newly ordered the Minister of State for Gender Equality to serve also as the Minister in charge of Women's Empowerment. Moreover, in October 2014, the Cabinet established the "Headquarters for Creating a Society in which All Women Shine," which is led by the Prime Minister and composed of all cabinet members.

By establishing the Headquarters in addition to the aforementioned Council for Gender Equality, Japan has clarified the framework for vigorously promoting gender equality and women's empowerment and for developing and strengthening measures for addressing a wide range of challenges.

As of 2015, the Headquarters decides on the Intensive Policy to Accelerate the Empowerment of Women in around June of every year so that it can be reflected in the government's budgeting activities. The Council for Gender Equality provides recommendations to the Prime Minister and relevant Ministers as required by the Basic Act, and the Headquarters decides on the intensive policy in light of such recommendations.

Moreover, the Headquarters deals with a wide range of policies for realizing a society in which all women can play active roles of their own volition in their homes, communities, workplaces and other settings, such as developing measures based on the Act on the Promotion of Female Participation and Career Advancement in the Workplace ("the Act on the Promotion of Female Participation and Career Advancement") and checking on their implementation status as well as strengthening measures against sexual harassment.

(b) Establishment and amendment of the Act on Promotion of Female Participation and Career Advancement

The Act on Promotion of Female Participation and Career Advancement was established in August 2015. Recognizing that it is increasingly important that women who choose to or intend to work are successful in the workplace and able to fully demonstrate their qualities and capabilities, the Act upholds the following fundamental principles toward promoting women's participation and advancement in the workplace and realizing an affluent and dynamic society:

- Consider the impacts of business practices such as stereotyped perceptions of gender roles in the workplace and improve them by, for example, actively providing women with opportunities of appointment to higher positions and promotions
- Develop the environment required for women to balance work and family life
- Respect women’s own will in terms of work-life balance

The Act also stipulates that private enterprises and the national and local governments develop action plans concerning women’s participation and advancement in the workplace and disclose information on the status of such, and that the government may recognize outstanding enterprises in this regard. In May 2019, to further promote women’s participation and advancement in the workplace, an amendment stipulating the enlargement of the scope of general employers required to develop action plans and the strengthening of the obligation to disclose information was established. (Details are provided in question 6 of Section 2.)

(c) Cabinet approval of the Fourth Basic Plan for Gender Equality

In a Cabinet meeting in December 2015, the government approved the Fourth Basic Plan for Gender Equality (hereinafter referred to as “Fourth Basic Plan”; covering the period from FY2016 to FY2020) based on the Basic Act.

In developing the Fourth Basic Plan, the government discussed with the Council for Gender Equality established inside the Cabinet Office and various other stakeholders. In October 2014, the Prime Minister requested the Council for Gender Equality to provide recommendations on basic approach for measures related to promoting the realization of a gender-equal society. In response to the request, the Council for Gender Equality conducted 22 deliberations at meetings of the Specialist Committee on the Formulation of the Fourth Basic Plan for Gender Equality, Expert Committee on Violence against Women and Specialist Committee on Monitoring, which are composed of persons with intellectual specialties from all sectors and levels of society. It also held a public comment (with around 3,600 opinions collected) and public hearings (at six places around Japan; with around 900 citizens participating in total) to collect an extensive array of submissions from civil society. The Council for Gender Equality then summarized the basic approach on measures related to promoting the realization of a gender-equal society with the involvement of various stakeholders, and stated its recommendations to the Prime Minister. The government approved the Fourth Basic Plan at a Cabinet meeting in light of the recommendations made.

The Fourth Basic Plan posits as a desirable society one with the four following characteristics:

- (i) A society that is made vibrant and rich in diversity, by men and women demonstrating their individuality and abilities, respecting their own choices;
- (ii) A society in which the human rights of men and women are respected and individuals can live with dignity;
- (iii) A society that is realized work-life balance of both women and men through reformation of “men-oriented working styles”²; and
- (iv) A society that is recognized internationally for gender equality, which should be positioned as the most important issue in Japan

Moreover, to clarify policy purposes and promote the plan effectively, the Fourth Basic Plan established four policy areas (“I. Women’s participation and advancement in all fields of society,” “II. Safety and security of life,” “III. Infrastructure improvement on the realization of a gender-equal society,” and “IV. Implementation of the plan”) and set “objectives on policy regions,” which are to be monitored and evaluated in a focused way. Twelve individual subareas were established under policy

² Labor practices geared toward male workers in which long hours and job transfers are the norm and a seniority system emphasizing length of services is followed

areas I to III, and with respect to these 12 subareas and “Implementation of the Plan,” basic directions, specific measures and targets are set for measures to be implemented before the end of FY2020.

As seen from the above, based on the Fourth Basic Plan, the government has advanced various measures as positive actions in the form of goal and timetable methods.

Specific measures over the past five years that are to be specified in this report are based on the Fourth Basic Plan. The details are stated in the next section and following.

(d) Establishment and amendment of other major laws

In this item, the establishment and amendment of other major laws in addition to the aforementioned the Act on the Promotion of Female Participation and Career Advancement are follows:

- Amendment of the Act on the Welfare of Workers who Take care of Children or Other Family Members including Child Care and Family Care Leave (hereinafter referred to as “Child Care and Family Care Leave Law”) and the Act on Securing, Etc. of Equal Opportunity and Treatment between Men and Women in Employment (hereinafter referred to as “Equal Employment Opportunity Act for Men and Women”) toward establishing an employment environment enabling both male and female workers to continue working around periods of pregnancy, childbirth and childcare and caring for family members (in 2016 and 2017)
- Amendment of the Penal Code, in which punitive provisions were reorganized, for example, by amending elements constituting the crime of rape and its statutory penalty and replacing it with the crime of forcible sexual intercourse, and by newly establishing the crimes of indecency by person having custody of person under 18 and sexual intercourse by person having custody of person under 18, and in which a provision requiring a complaint for the crimes of rape, etc. was deleted, in order to deal with sex crimes in light of current prevailing circumstances and in line with the facts of each case (2017)
- Establishment of the Act on Promotion of Gender Equality in the Political Field, which upholds the fundamental principle of aiming for making the numbers of male and female candidates be as even as possible in the election of the House of Representatives, the House of Councillors and local councils, and stipulates responsibilities of the State and local governments, as well as stipulating that political parties shall endeavor to voluntarily work on, including setting a goal for the number of male and female party candidates selected to run for public office (2018).

(2) Cooperation with civil society and various other stakeholders and contribution to the international community

To realize gender equality and women’s empowerment, Japan gives weight to cooperation with representatives of civil society and various other stakeholders.

The Liaison Conference for the Promotion of Gender Equality brings together more than 100 representatives of the economic, labor and educational communities, the media, women’s organizations, NPOs/NGOs and academia. It thus facilitates the exchange of views and information on gender equality and women’s empowerment among people from all sectors and levels of society and forms a liaison network.

In preparing this report, the Gender Equality Bureau of the Cabinet Office, which led by the Prime Minister, coordinated with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan and other relevant ministries and agencies, and earnest discussions were at the hearing held by the Planning Committee of the Liaison Conference for the Promotion of Gender Equality. (Details are provided in Section 3 below.)

Moreover, to comprehensively and effectively promote the implementation of measures pertaining to the Sustainable Development Goals (“SDGs”) by way of close coordination among administrative organs, in May 2016 the Sustainable Development Goals Promotion Headquarters (hereinafter referred to as “SDGs Promotion Headquarters”), which is led by the Prime Minister and composed of the Chief Cabinet Secretary, the Minister of State for Gender Equality and all other Ministers of State, was established within the Cabinet. For the promotion of national efforts for attaining the SDGs in cooperation with a wide range of related persons, the Sustainable Development Goals Promotion Roundtable Meetings (hereinafter referred to as “SDGs Promotion Roundtable Meetings”), attended by representatives of administrative organs, NGOs, NPOs, the private sector, international organizations and various other organizations along with other persons with relevant knowledge and other related persons, were established under the SDGs Promotion Headquarters and met eight times as of September 2019. In light of discussions had at sessions of the SDGs Promotion Roundtable Meetings, in December 2016 the SDGs Promotion Headquarters decided on the Sustainable Development Goals Implementation Guiding Principles (“SDGs Implementation Guiding Principles”), specifying that respect for human rights, realization of gender equality and mainstreaming of a gender perspective are indispensable in attaining the SDGs and also noting the importance of strengthening gender statistics. Furthermore, as specific measures for attaining Goal 5 (Gender Equality) and other SDGs, Japan advocates the promotion of measures centering on implementation of the Fourth Basic Plan. In addition to this, Japan advocates the implementation of development plans for supporting the attainment of Goal 5 in developing countries and implementation of the Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security.

Additionally, Japan has been advancing efforts for spreading gender equality and women’s empowerment worldwide.

In addresses made at the General Debate of the United Nations General Assembly, Prime Minister Abe in 2013 declared his intention to strengthen cooperation with the international community based on the idea that the creation of a “society in which women shine” will result in a more vitalized world, and in 2014 declared his intention to create a world in the 21st century where the human rights of women are not infringed upon.

With respect to the relationship with UN Women, Japan, as one of its top donors, has strengthened coordination with the organization. Incidentally, Prime Minister Abe was selected as one of the 10 Head-of-State IMPACT champions of UN Women’s “HeForShe” campaign in 2015. In September 2017, Prime Minister Abe visited New York in the United States to attend the 72nd Regular Session of the UN General Assembly and participated in the “HeForShe IMPACT 10×10×10 Parity Report Launch Event” held by UN Women to unveil efforts and achievements pertaining to the promotion of women’s empowerment in Japan and called on participants to make efforts together to realize a “society in which women shine” worldwide.

In April 2014, with the aim of addressing diplomatic challenges related to the promotion of women’s participation and broadly reflecting a gender-equal perspective in diplomatic policies, the Gender Mainstreaming Division was established within the Foreign Policy Bureau of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan.

Since 2014, the government has been holding the World Assembly for Women (“WAW!”), at which leaders in various fields gather from countries and organizations around the world to discuss challenges in and outside of Japan relating to gender equality and women’s empowerment (held five times prior to 2019).

Based on the “Development Strategy for Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment” formulated in May 2016, the government set “promoting women and girls’ rights,” “improving an enabling environment for women and girls to reach their full potentials”, “establishment of infrastructure

enabling women to demonstrate their capabilities” and “improvement advancing women’s leadership in politics, economy and other public fields ” as priority initiatives, and provided aid of over three billion dollars over the three years from 2016 to 2018. Moreover, the government declared its intention—since implemented—to provide opportunities to receive quality education and capacity development for at least four million women and girls over the three years from 2018 to 2020.

At the 2016 G7 Ise-Shima Summit, for which Japan served as the chair, Japan took up the women’s agenda at all of the ministerial meetings (gender mainstreaming) for the first time and adopted the “G7 Guiding Principles for Capacity Building of Women and Girls” and the “Women’s Initiative in Developing STEM Career.” Moreover, at the 2019 G20 Osaka Summit, Japan specified efforts for promoting women’s empowerment in the Leaders’ Declaration and held the Leaders’ Special Event on Women’s Empowerment.

(3) Major achievements and challenges over the past five years

As a result of efforts advanced by the government based on the Fourth Basic Plan and the Act on the Promotion of Female Participation and Career Advancement in cooperation with civil society and various stakeholders, movements for women’s empowerment have grown throughout the entire society and have started to change Japanese society significantly.

For example, there were around 27 million female employee workers in 2012. This number increased for six straight years to reach around 30 million in 2018, despite the decrease in the working-age population. Since the percentage of women who leave their jobs due to the birth of their first child has fallen below 50%, and the continuing employment rate has increased, the employment rate of women, particularly those in their child-raising (25 to 44 years of age), has significantly increased from 67.7% in 2012 to 76.5% in 2018. As seen from these figures, efforts for resolving the issue of the so-called M-curve have been steadily improved. The number of female board members at listed companies was 630 in 2012 but exceeded 2,100 in 2019, which is about 3.4 times increase in seven years. In 2012, women held 7.9% of management positions at private companies (private companies with over 100 full time employees). Although still at a low level, this figure reached 11.2% in 2018 and continues to rise steadily.

As seen from the above, while gender equality and women’s empowerment in Japan have been advanced to a certain degree, we acknowledge that the following challenges remain, and that the country therefore needs to continue to advance efforts for resolving such challenges:

- Continuation of stereotypical assumptions about gender roles and unconscious biases;
- Low promotion of women in private sector managerial positions compared to other countries;
- Difficulty in achieving work-life balance due to long working hours and other bad practices;
- Gender pay gap;
- Large proportion of women in unstable non-regular work;
- Tendency for burdens of domestic work, childcare and nursing care to be imposed solely on women;
- Women’s health problems occurring at different stages of life, such as around pregnancy, childbirth and menopause; and
- Violence against women, which is an unforgivable infringement of human rights.

Since the Fourth Basic Plan covers the period until the end of FY2020, the Council for Gender Equality is currently assessing the Fourth Basic Plan in preparation for the development of the Fifth Basic Plan. As was the case in the Fourth Basic Plan, it intends to invite extensive inputs from civil society.

2. Which of the following have been the top five priorities for accelerating progress for women and girls in your country over the past five years through laws, policies and/or programs? (please check relevant categories)

- Equality and non-discrimination under the law and access to justice
- Quality education, training and life-long learning for women and girls
- Poverty eradication, agricultural productivity and food security
- Eliminating violence against women and girls
- Access to health care, including sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights
- Political participation and representation
- Right to work and rights at work (e.g. gender pay gap, occupational segregation, career progression)
- Women's entrepreneurship and women's enterprises
- Unpaid care and domestic work/work-family conciliation (e.g. paid maternity or parental leave, care services)
- Gender-responsive social protection (e.g. universal health coverage, cash transfers, pensions)
- Basic services and infrastructure (water, sanitation, energy, transport etc.)
- Strengthening women's participation in ensuring environmental sustainability
- Gender-responsive budgeting
- Digital and financial inclusion for women
- Gender-responsive disaster risk reduction and resilience building
- Changing negative social norms and gender stereotypes
- Other

As priorities for the five years to the end of FY2020, the Fourth Basic Plan focuses on the following seven perspectives:

- (i) To reform the men-oriented working styles (working and relocations for granted) since the tendency to take long working hours reconsideration of men's working as well as living styles is indispensable for women's empowerment, and improving measures on various fields including work, local communities, and family;
- (ii) To foster measures to increase the recruitment and promotion of women through implementation of strengthened positive action and to increase the pool of human resources who can become leaders in the future along with consistent enforcement of the Act on the Promotion of Female Participation and Career Advancement, because expanding women's participation in all fields of society is very important from the perspective of Japan's strong economic growth by raising society's diversity and vitality and the perspective of securing substantial equality of opportunities in men and women;
- (iii) To promote diverse working styles characterized by fair treatment in response to issues associated with polarized working styles and to establish an environment in which women can live with peace of mind by giving careful consideration and support to women faced with difficult situations since the number of non-regular women workers, single mothers and other socially vulnerable women is increasing;
- (iv) To response to the diverse situations surrounding violence against women and enhance measures to eliminate all forms of violence against women;
- (v) To utilize disaster risk management and reconstruction measures from the perspective of gender equality and to disseminate the importance of women's participation and leadership in

- disaster prevention and reconstruction both inside and outside the country, in light of the experience of and lessons learned from the Great East Japan Earthquake;
- (vi) To promote proactive compliance with international standards and international contributions based on the perspective of gender equality with recognizing international trends; and
 - (vii) Enhancing systems for the promoting of gender equality in local areas so that efforts will be made independently throughout Japan in accordance with the situations and characteristics in each area.

Based on the above perspectives, the Fourth Basic Plan established the following 12 individual subareas and stipulates specific measures and achievement goals:

- (i) Reformation of “men-oriented working styles” for women’s empowerment;
- (ii) Expansion of women’s participation in policy decision-making processes;
- (iii) Securing equal opportunities and treatment between men and women and work-life balance;
- (iv) Promotion of gender equality in the area of regional, rural and environment;
- (v) Gender equality in science and technology and academic fields;
- (vi) Support for women’s lifelong health;
- (vii) Elimination of all forms of violence against women;
- (viii) Creation of an environment in which people facing poverty, aging, disabilities can lead secure lives;
- (ix) Consolidation of the social systems based on the perspective of gender equality;
- (x) Awareness-raising on gender equality through education and the media;
- (xi) Establishing disaster risk management and reconstruction systems from the perspective of gender equality; and
- (xii) International collaboration and contribution with respect on gender equality.

Moreover, for implementation of the plan, the Fourth Basic Plan advocates strengthening of the national machinery, planning and implementation of policies that include a gender-equal perspective (reflection in budgeting of the intensive policy, which is adopted based on recommendations from the Council for Gender Equality) and strengthening of efforts made by local governments and private groups and other bodies.

Descriptions regarding “eliminating violence against women and girls,” “political participation and representation,” “right to work and rights at work,” “unpaid care and domestic work/work-family conciliation” and “gender-responsive budgeting,” which are checked as priorities, are stated below.

(1) Eliminating violence against women and girls

Violence against women includes acts that constitute criminal offenses and is a serious violation of human rights. The elimination of such violence and the prevention of damage as well as the aiding in women’s recovery from such damage are important challenges to be overcome as an obligation of the State in order to realize a gender-equal society.

Since violence and stalking by spouses and intimate partners continues to be a serious social issue, appropriate countermeasures should be taken. Moreover, with the recent spread of social media and other new online tools of communication, forms of violence by partners, sexual crimes, prostitution, trafficking in persons and other forms of violence become more and more diversified, necessitating prompt and appropriate measures against such new forms of violence.

Furthermore, in cases where the victim is a child, an elderly person, a disabled person or foreign nationals, it is essential in offering support to give due and comprehensive consideration to the

background circumstances as well as the form of violence and attributes of the victim. Above all, in the case of spousal violence, it is necessary to take into account the adverse effects not only on the victim but also on any children.

In light of the above, in order to eliminate violence against women, the government has strengthened efforts for creating structural frameworks for the elimination of violence, such as providing preventive education to stop the cycle of violence and establishing a community standard of zero tolerance toward violence. It also endeavors to raise awareness of and strictly enforce recent amendments to the Act on the Prevention of Spousal Violence and the Protection of Victims and other relevant laws and regulations, while comprehensively promoting a wide range of efforts targeting different forms of violence, including violence perpetrated by spouses or other men close to the victim, sex crimes, stalking and other wrongful acts. (Details are provided in questions 13 to 16 and question 29 of Section 2 below.)

(2) Political participation and representation

The expansion of women's participation in the political field is important. In a democratic society, men and women are both responsible for and must be able to actively participate in political decision-making processes and share responsibilities, and diverse opinions should be reflected in political and social policy-making impartially and fairly, with benefits enjoyed equally. While the establishment of new institutions and radical institutions reforms, it is also important that policies for the promotion of gender equality, including women's interest, be reflected in political priorities.

In May 2018, the Act on Promotion of Gender Equality in the Political Field was established. While securing the freedom of political activity of political parties, etc., the Act upholds as a fundamental principle the aim for making the numbers of male and female candidates be as even as possible in the elections of the House of Representatives, the House of Councillors and local government, and stipulates as follows:

- The State and local governments are endeavor to formulate necessary policies for the promotion of gender equality in the political field and to implement such policies while securing the freedom of political activity of political parties, etc. and the fairness of elections; and
- Political parties, etc. are endeavor to voluntarily work on the promotion of gender equality in the political field, including by setting a goal for the number of male and female candidates fielded for public office.

To encourage political parties to introduce effective positive actions, the government ask them to do so while conducting necessary investigations and research and providing necessary information. (Details are provided in question 19 of Section 2 below.)

(3) Right to work and rights at work, and unpaid care and domestic work/work-family conciliation

With respect to work, male-oriented working styles continue to prevail in many workplaces. Such practices include long working hours and job transfers as the norm as well as adherence to a seniority system that emphasizes length of service. It is these types of practices that prevent both men and women from fulfilling their potential at work while also performing family obligations. With respect to family life, since men have not fully participated in domestic work and caregiving, women have tended to carry heavier burdens in this regard and have thus found it difficult to make meaningful contributions in settings outside the home.

For men and women who want to continue working and to fulfill their potential without having to choose between work and family, the cutting back of working hours, realization of work-life balance through diverse and flexible working styles corresponding to life events, and men's participation in caregiving are important.

Moreover, it is essential to secure equality of opportunities and treatment between men and women, for example, by eliminating discriminatory treatment on the basis of sex, eliminating sexual harassment, eliminating disadvantageous treatment or harassment related to pregnancy, childbirth, maternity leave or nursing care leave, etc. and resolving the gender pay gap.

In light of the above, enterprises, economic organizations, workers, labor unions, the national government, local governments and various other stakeholders collaborate to promote efforts for realizing gender equality in employment and work-life balance. (Details are provided in questions 6 and 7 of Section 2 below.)

(4) Gender-responsive budgeting

With respect to efforts the whole by government for gender equality and women's empowerment, it is necessary to focus on effective policies and review past budgets to enhance the effectiveness of policies while including a gender-equal perspective in processes ranging from drafting to implementation of policies and taking into account the idea of gender budgeting.

To this end, the government is promoting efforts in the budgeting process by utilizing the functions of the Council for Gender Equality. Specifically:

- (i) The Council for Gender Equality follows up the progress of major policies at its meetings in line with shifts in annual budgets and provides recommendations on the strengthening of efforts to the Prime Minister and relevant Ministers; and
- (ii) In light of recommendations made by the Council for Gender Equality, the Headquarters for Creating a Society in which All Women Shine, which is led by the Prime Minister and composed of all cabinet members, decides on the Intensive Policy to Accelerate the Empowerment of Women in around June every year so that the policy can be reflected in budgetary requests by ministries and agencies.

Moreover, since gender equality and women's empowerment are central to the sustainable economic development of Japanese society, which is losing population at a rapid rate, and will also contribute to the resolution of various challenges in society, the above efforts are made in coordination with the economic and fiscal management strategy and the growth strategy.

3. **Over the past five years, have you taken specific measures to prevent discrimination and promote the rights of women and girls who experience multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination? (please check relevant categories)**

- Women living in remote and rural areas
- Indigenous women
- Racial, ethnic or religious minority women
- Women living with disabilities
- Women living with HIV/AIDS
- Women with diverse sexual orientations and gender identities
- Younger women
- Older women
- Migrant women
- Refugee and internally displaced women
- Women in humanitarian settings
- Other

(1) Younger women

Violence against women includes acts that constitute criminal offenses and is a serious violation of human rights. In cases where the victim is a child it is essential in offering support to give due and comprehensive consideration to the form of violence and attributes of the victim. Moreover, in cases of spousal violence, it is necessary to take into account the adverse effects that such violence has not only on the victim but also on any children.

Therefore, in light of the fact that abuse by family members and others close to the victim in particular tends to be hidden and tends to escalate, the government is taking measures to effectively prevent lasting and irreparable damage caused to children by sexual abuse and is making efforts to establish a framework for abused children to receive needed counseling and support. As part of these efforts, the government is endeavoring to understand the damage caused to children by sexual abuse. (Details are provided in questions 13 to 16 and question 29 of Section 2 below.)

(2) Older women

As society ages, efforts should be made in recognition of the different issues facing older men and women due to differences in their lifestyles at earlier stages of life, such as in regard to work and family, and of the fact that such divergences become more pronounced as people age.

Therefore, with respect to older women and poverty, the government is taking measures for people receiving no or low pension benefits and is advancing a variety of efforts to assist older women as well as interventions for at-risk younger women from the gender-equal perspective. Moreover, the government is making efforts to establish social infrastructure to provide security for elderly people living at home and in the community.

In addition, the Guideline of Measures for Ageing Society (approved by the Cabinet in February 2018), which is developed based on the Basic Law on Measures for the Aging Society, states that the government shall promote efforts based on the Basic Plan for Gender Equality.

(3) Women living with disabilities, women with diverse sexual orientations and gender identities and other minority women

In cases where women experience difficulties due to their sexual orientation or gender identity as well as those involving difficulties experienced by foreign women, women living with disabilities, women from *dowa* districts (areas targeted for anti-discrimination measures), Ainu women or other minority women, consideration shall be given in terms of respect for human rights to prevent the infringement of human rights.

Therefore, from a gender-equal perspective, the government is advancing the establishment of an environment that provides security to such people and promoting education and awareness-raising on human rights. (Details are provided in question 18 of Section 2 below.)

Incidentally, with respect to women living with disabilities, the Basic Programme for Persons with Disabilities (approved by the Cabinet in March 2018), which was developed based on the Basic Act for Persons with Disabilities, specifies that: “women with disabilities need various supports in accordance with the types of disabilities. There also are cases that place them in multiple difficulties because of their gender. It is important to work out and implement measures for person with disabilities by taking such issues into account.”

(4) Women living in rural areas

While women engaged in agriculture, forestry and fisheries are playing important roles in encouraging rural communities and promoting “AFFrinnovation,” leadership and participation in public life by rural women is still insufficient. Therefore, the government is endeavoring to develop women leaders in rural communities, making efforts to support the advancement of women to serve on agricultural committees and as executive members of agricultural cooperatives, and promoting the expansion of women’s participation in policy decision-making process.

Moreover, to clarify the position of women in leadership roles and improve their economic status, the government promotes the conclusion of family management agreements stipulating management policies, division of roles in agricultural and domestic work, and working hours; provides opportunities for training; and supports the launch of new businesses. It also conducts activities to promote the establishment of women-friendly working conditions at agricultural corporations and other agricultural organizations and secure safety for women in forestry.

Furthermore, the government has advanced efforts for realizing work-life balance in rural communities and rethinking the stereotypical assumptions about gender roles through promoting the creation of networks of women engaged in agriculture, forestry and fisheries such as the Nougyou-joshi Project and the Ocean Treasure! Suisan-joshi Genki Project, as well as providing information on active women and holding events related to “Rural Women’s Day” (March 10).

(5) Refugee and internally displaced women

In cases where a female applicant for recognition of refugee status files a sexual crime claim or any other claim of a sexual nature, a female Refugee Inquirer is assigned to inquire, in principle. When conducting an interview with an applicant (regardless of the sex of the applicant,) the interviewer is required to conduct the interview in a compassionate manner, giving enough consideration to the applicant’s mental health in view of past persecution suffered by the applicant in his/her home country. The above measures are taken in consideration for human rights.

Moreover, in the case of an application for recognition of refugee status filed by a socially vulnerable woman who has experienced violence or been under intimidation, even if the applicant is not recognized as a refugee, necessary measures are required to be taken depending on the case, such as granting the applicant permission to stay in Japan.

4. Has the increasing number of humanitarian crises—caused by conflict, extreme weather or other events—affected the implementation of the BPfA in your country?

YES / NO

In addition to damage caused by earthquakes and tsunamis during the Great East Japan Earthquake, Japan suffers from frequent disasters, such as heavy rainfalls and snowfalls as well as tornados.

It is said that the extent of damage caused by a disaster depends on two factors: the natural phenomenon itself, as in the earthquakes, tsunamis, winds or floods (natural factor), and how well the society was prepared to respond to the natural phenomenon (social factor). Since impacts on individuals

may differ depending on gender, age, disability and various other attributes of victims, it is important to make efforts to minimize difficulties linked to the social factor.

It has become evident that following a disaster increased burdens of domestic work and caregiving flow only to women, reflecting the stereotypical assumptions about gender roles in ordinary times. In the Great East Japan Earthquake of March 2011, the participation of women in various decision-making processes was not ensured, giving rise to a challenge whereby consideration was not given to differences in the needs of men and women. In response, the Guidelines for Disaster Planning, Response and Reconstruction from a Gender-equal Perspective were developed in 2013.

The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, which was adopted at the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, adopts the basic philosophy of “disaster risk reduction.” It upholds guiding principles stating that a gender perspective should be integrated into all policies and practices and women’s leadership should be promoted, and that decision-making should be conducted based on data disaggregated by sex. Moreover, the framework also states that women and their participation are critical to the planning and implementation of policies, plans and standards, and that adequate capacity-building measures need to be taken for women.

In addition, the Basic Disaster Management Plan developed based on the Disaster Countermeasures Basic Act also states that adequate consideration should be given to the perspectives of both men and women, such as through ensuring women’s participation in a policy decision-making process on disaster prevention and at actual sites of disaster prevention. It says that such perspectives should also be incorporated into the management of designated shelters, with recognition of the different needs of men and women.

In light of the above, the government recognizes that women are playing important roles in all aspects of disaster prevention, response, recovery and reconstruction and has been promoting women’s participation and leadership in policy decision-making process on disaster prevention and reconstruction. Moreover, in consideration for the fact that women and men are affected by disasters in different ways, the government has been promoting the implementation of disaster preparation, management of designated shelters, and support for victims from a gender-equal perspective. After the 2016 Kumamoto earthquakes and the floods of July 2018—and with Typhoon No. 19 bearing down on the Japanese archipelago in 2019—the government renewed requests for affected local governments to conduct management of shelters and other response actions from a gender-equal perspective based on the Guidelines. (Details are provided in question 31 of Section 2 below.)

5. Which of the following does your country consider to be the top five priorities for accelerating progress for women and girls in your country for the coming five years through laws, policies and programs? (please check relevant categories)

- Equality and non-discrimination under the law and access to justice
- Quality education, training and life-long learning for women and girls
- Poverty eradication, agricultural productivity and food security
- Eliminating violence against women and girls
- Access to affordable quality health care, including sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights
- Political participation and representation
- Right to work and rights at work (e.g. gender pay gap, occupational segregation, career progression)
- Women’s entrepreneurship and women’s enterprises

- Unpaid care and domestic work/work-family conciliation (e.g. paid maternity or parental leave, care services)
- Gender-responsive social protection (e.g. universal health coverage, cash transfers, pensions)
- Basic services and infrastructure (water, sanitation, hygiene, energy, transport, communication, etc.)
- Strengthening women's participation in ensuring environmental sustainability
- Gender-responsive budgeting
- Digital and financial inclusion for women
- Gender-responsive disaster risk prevention, reduction and resilience building
- Changing negative social norms and gender stereotypes
- Other

As stated above, the Fourth Basic Plan, which was approved by the Cabinet in December 2015, covers the period until the end of FY2020.

To develop the Fifth Basic Plan for FY2021 to FY2025, in November 2019, the Prime Minister asked the Council for Gender Equality to provide recommendations on basic approach for measures related to promoting the realization of a gender-equal society.

In response to the request, the Council for Gender Equality decided on the establishment of subordinate specialist committees for developing the plan. Moreover, as before, the Council is planning to examine basic approach for the development of a new basic plan while inviting submissions from civil society through public hearings and a town hall-style meeting.

In light of the above, it would be premature for Japan to specify priorities for the coming five years at the time of preparation of this report. However, for the five years from FY2021, Japan sincerely intends to further advance efforts for realizing the society presented in the Basic Act for Gender Equal Society, which was established in light of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, based on the Fifth Basic Plan, which is to be approved by the Cabinet after deliberations of the Council for Gender Equality, which is positioned within the Cabinet Office to deal with important policies, and in cooperation with civil society.

Section Two: Progress across the 12 critical areas of concern

Inclusive development, shared prosperity and decent work

Critical areas of concern:

- A. Women and poverty
- F. Women and the economy
- I. Human rights of women
- L. The girl child

6. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to advance gender equality in relation to women's role in paid work and employment?

- Strengthened / enforced laws and workplace policies and practices that prohibit discrimination in the recruitment, retention and promotion of women in the public and private sectors, and equal pay legislation
- Introduced / strengthened gender-responsible active labor market policies (e.g. education and training, skills, subsidies)
- Taken measures to prevent sexual harassment, including in the workplace
- Strengthened land rights and tenure security
- Improved financial inclusion and access to credit, including for self-employed women
- Improved access to modern technologies (including climate-smart technologies), infrastructure and services (including agricultural extension)
- Supported the transition from informal to formal work, including legal and policy measures that benefit women in informal employment
- Devised mechanisms for women's equal participation in economic decision-making bodies (e.g. in ministries of trade and finance, central banks, national economic commissions)
- Other

(1) Recruitment, promotion and skills development of women

Undertaking activities in many areas including politics, economics and society, women represent half of the Japanese population and over 40% of its workforce. Promoting women's participation in these activities is important for the sustainable development of Japan and appointing women to responsible corporate positions will result in the increased competitiveness of companies. To facilitate women's participation and advancement in the workplace, the Act on the Promotion of Female Participation and Career Advancement was enacted in 2015 and enforced from in April 2016. Under the Act, the national and local governments and private enterprises with 301 or more permanent employees are required to develop and announce an action plan based on their understanding of the situation concerning the status of their female employees and an analysis of problems as well as to publish information concerning the promotion of women.

As of June 30, 2019, all national government authorities, prefectures and municipalities had an action plan in place, while 98.6% of private enterprises with a permanent workforce of 301 or more had prepared an action plan as of September 30, 2019.

Given that almost all the employers required to prepare an action plan had fulfilled this requirement, the Act on Promotion of Female Participation and Career Advancement was revised in 2019 to further accelerate the efforts to facilitate the promotion of women in the workplace. The revised Act has (i) expanded the scope of the employers required to prepare an action plan and publish information (to include private enterprises with 101 or more permanent employees from those with 301 or more permanent employees) and (ii) expanded and strengthened the scope of the employers required to publish information on the promotion of women. (The revised Act will take effect on 1 June, 2020, and the expansion of scope of private enterprises will take effect on 1 April, 2022.) These efforts have resulted in solid results, as demonstrated by factors such as the increase in the number of women employees, the rising employment rate of women in child raising (aged 25 to 44), a progressively diminishing M-curve in the workforce participation ratio of women by age group, the increasing length of employment of women and a larger proportion of women in managerial positions.

Pursuant to Article 20 of the Act on Promotion of Female participation and Career Advancement and the Guidelines for Utilization of Public Procurement and Subsidies Toward the Promotion of Women's Advancement established in March 2016, the central government, independent administrative corporations and others have introduced a new system to their public procurements processes where elements other than pricing are taken into account in selecting a successful tenderer (i.e., tenders based on the overall greatest value evaluation method or tenders based on the competitive proposal evaluation method). Under the new system, additional scores are given to companies certified under the Act on the Promotion of Female Participation and Career Advancement and other companies certified as promoting work-life balance and similar objectives.

The Cabinet Office is tracking the adoption of this system and has found that, the scale of procurement was approximately 940 billion yen by national agencies, 390 billion yen by independent administrative corporations and others in FY2017. Given that some national agencies have not fully introduced the system, the Japanese government will encourage the introduction of the system through the publication of overall results and the results of each national agency to make each agency's efforts visible. The government is also encouraging local governments to introduce similar initiatives. Efforts are also being made to promote initiatives that value work-life balance and so on with respect to procurements related to the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games and procurements in the private sector.

In addition, the Equal Employment Opportunity Law was revised in 2014 to review the scope of actions that could be construed as indirect discrimination and to establish guidelines on the employment management differentiated by career tracking. Furthermore, the amendments to the Order related to Annual Securities Report mandated companies to disclose the ratio and number of female board members in their securities report. Moreover, TSE (Tokyo Stock Exchange)-listed companies with excellent track records in encouraging the empowerment of women in the workplace are selected and announced as "Nadeshiko Brands", which appeals to investors who place importance on the medium- and long-term improvement of corporate value. In FY2018, 42 companies were selected and announced as "Nadeshiko Brands".

(2) Anti-sexual harassment measures

As a precondition for women's advancement in the workforce, it is essential for us to eliminate discrimination on the basis of sex, sexual harassment, and disadvantageous treatment or harassment related to pregnancy, childbirth, parental leave, etc.

In January 2017, the revised Equal Employment Opportunity Act took effect, making it a legal obligation for employers to implement measures to prevent harassment related to pregnancy, childbirth, parental leave, etc. Furthermore, the Employment Environment and Equal Employment subcommittee of Labour Policy Council had discussed and examined challenges concerning measures against workplace bullying and had compiled a report titled “Promotion of Women’s Professional Advancement and Anti-Harassment Measures in the Workplace” in December 2018. Under the Act on the Promotion of Female Participation and Career Advancement, which was partially revised based on the contents of the report and promulgated in June 2019, revisions were made to the Act on the Comprehensive Promotion of Labour Policies, Equal Employment Opportunity Act and Childcare and Family Care Leave Law, among others, and measures were put in place, including the establishment of an obligation on employers to take actions to prevent workplace bullying as part of employment management and the enhancement of measures to prevent sexual and other harassment.

(3) Improvement of the work conditions of non-regular workers and support for their transformation to regular workers

The Japanese government is comprehensively promoting initiatives to address issues concerning non-regular employment under the Conversion to regular employee and Treatment improvement plan established in January 2016.

Specifically, it is pointed out that while non-regular employment such as part-time work can be positive in the sense that it caters to diverse work-style needs, the higher ratio of women employed under non-regular contracts compared to men forms one of the background factors to the greater prevalence of poverty among women, and the differences in the working conditions of regular and non-regular workers are one of the causes of the gap between men and women.

In particular, as an attempt to address the irrational gaps between regular and non-regular workers, the government is promoting initiatives to improve the working conditions of non-regular workers and assist their transformation to regular workers through the promotion of equal and balanced working conditions toward the realization of “equal pay for equal work”. With respect to the prohibition of irrational gap in the treatment of regular and non-regular workers within the same company, amended laws by the Act on the Arrangement of Related Acts to Promote Work Style Reform that was passed in June 2018 have clarified that treatments should be determined on a case-by-case basis taking into account the circumstances that are found to be appropriate, in light of the nature and purpose of the treatment. This will take effect in April 2020 (the Part-time/Fixed-term Employment Act will apply to small- and medium-sized enterprises as from April 2021).

7. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to recognize, reduce and/or redistribute unpaid care and domestic work and promote work-family conciliation?

- Included unpaid care and domestic work in national statistics and accounting (e.g. time-use surveys, valuation exercises, satellite accounts)
- Expanded childcare services or made existing services more affordable
- Expanded support for frail elderly persons and others needing intense forms of care
- Introduced or strengthened maternity/paternity/parental leave or other types of family leave
- Invested in time- and labor-saving infrastructure, such as public transport, electricity, water and sanitation, to reduce the burden of unpaid care and domestic work on women

- Promoted decent work for paid care workers, including migrant workers
- Conducted campaigns or awareness raising activities to encourage the participation of men and boys in unpaid care and domestic work
- Introduced legal changes regarding the division of marital assets or pension entitlements after divorce that acknowledge women’s unpaid contribution to the family during marriage
- Other

(1) Support for balancing work and family responsibilities

Harmonizing work with other aspects of life through diverse and flexible work-styles tailored to life events and men’s participation in parenting and the caring for elderly parents as partners are urgent issues to be addressed to enable women to remain in the workforce if they so wish without being forced to choose between either work or parenting/caregiving responsibilities, and to make meaningful contributions.

Under the seniority-based compensation system that tends to place emphasis on the length of employment, there still remain men-oriented working style that presuppose work-styles mainly tailored to men, who are expected as a matter of course to accept long working hours and job transfers requiring relocations. These are preventing both men and women who wish to continue to work and make a meaningful contribution while fulfilling other responsibilities such as parenting and caring for elderly parents from doing so. Furthermore, the burden women shoulder has grown as men have not traditionally played significant roles in activities such as housework, parenting, caring for elderly parents and so on. Arguably, this has often made it difficult for women to utilize their skills and abilities in settings outside the home. Moreover, there are unresolved issues such as the impossibility of taking a job due to the problem of wait-listed children caused by the lack of childcare facilities and people leaving work to care for their elderly parents.

In June 2018, the Japanese parliament passed the Act on Arrangement of Related Acts to Promote Work Style Reform. The legislation limits overtime work to 45 hours a month or 360 hours a year and requires companies to ensure that their employees take a minimum of five days of annual leave each year. In addition, it promotes the introduction of a work-interval system. With these initiatives, the government is promoting measures to reduce long working hours.

To achieve zero waiting-listed children for places at childcare facilities, the Japanese government announced in June 2017 the Plan for Raising Children in a Peaceful Environment to build childcare facilities to accommodate 320,000 children by the end of FY2020 in order to provide enough capacity, even when the employment rate of Japanese women aged 25 to 44 hits 80%, which is the same level as the U.S. and European countries.

In addition, to reduce parents’ financial costs related to preschool education and care, the Child and Child Care Support Act was revised in May 2019, allowing children aged three to five, and children aged birth to two in households exempt from paying residential tax, to attend kindergarten, childcare facilities, certified childcare facilities (*nintei kodomo-en*) and other similar facilities free of charge.

The Japanese government has also promoted the organization of an employment environment that provides both men and women with the freedom to choose their lifestyles. For instance, the 2017 revision to the Childcare and Family Care Leave Law enabled workers to extend their parental leave until their child turns 24 months old from the previous 18 months old if, for instance, a family is unable to obtain an offer of placement for the child in a childcare facility.

With respect to the issue of people leaving work to care for elderly parents, the Japanese government has promoted the organization of an employment environment that enables people to continue working while providing such care. For instance, the March 2016 revision to the Childcare and Family Care Leave Law has allowed workers to split their long-term caregiver leave entitlements over multiple instances as well as to take short-term caregiver leave by half-day. In addition, it has introduced a system to exempt workers caring for their elderly parents from overtime work.

(2) Establishment of a right of residence for spouses

In July 2018, succession provisions in the Civil Code were revised to create a right of residence for a spouse with respect to property that was owned by the decedent and where the spouse was living at the time succession open, from the viewpoint of supporting the economic security of the bereaved spouse. Furthermore, the revised Civil Code, in principle, has excluded from the calculation of an advancement on inheritance (special benefit) a testamentary bequest or gifting of a building or a site (residential property) as a residence to a spouse of 20 years or more. These revisions have contributed to the protection of the economic security of spouses in their advanced years and serve as an acknowledgment of the many years of contributions they make.

(3) Estimate of monetary value of unpaid work

In December 2018, the Economic and Social Research Institute of the Cabinet Office of Japan estimated and published the monetary value of unpaid work that is performed outside the market using the latest data³.

8. Has your country introduced austerity/fiscal consolidation measures, such as cuts in public expenditure or public sector downsizing, over the past five years?

Yes / No

If YES, have assessments of their impact on women and men, respectively, been conducted?

- Yes, their impact on women/men was estimated before measures were put in place.
- Yes, the impact was assessed after measures were put in place.
- No, the impact on women/men has not been assessed.

³ [Monetary Valuation of Unpaid Work](https://www.esri.cao.go.jp/jp/sna/sonota/satellite/roudou/contents/pdf/190617_kajikatsudoutou.pdf) (Cabinet Office website) (in Japanese)
https://www.esri.cao.go.jp/jp/sna/sonota/satellite/roudou/contents/pdf/190617_kajikatsudoutou.pdf

Poverty eradication, social protection and social services

Critical areas of concern:

- A. Women and poverty
- B. Education and training of women
- C. Women and health
- I. Human rights of women
- L. The girl child

9. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to reduce/eradicate poverty among women and girls?

- Promoted poor women's access to decent work through active labor market policies (e.g. job training, skills, employment subsidies, etc.) and targeted measures
- Broadened access to land, housing, finance, technology and/or agricultural extension services
- Supported women's entrepreneurship and business development activities
- Introduced or strengthened social protection programs for women and girls (e.g. cash transfers for women with children, public works/employment guarantee schemes for women of working-age, pensions for older women)
- Introduced/strengthened low-cost legal services for women living in poverty
- Other

Given the increasing number of socially vulnerable women, such as those in informal employment or single parents, it is important that measures that will function as a safety net are in place to address issues including poverty and to prevent poverty and other problems. In addition, it is also necessary to enable women to engage in work from a long-term perspective. Furthermore, to break the intergenerational transmission of poverty and other problems, uninterrupted support tailored to the various life choices of individuals, such as educational support for children in economically disadvantaged households, is needed. Poverty among elderly single women is often influenced by their lifestyles before they advance in age, including factors related to work and family. It is necessary to implement measures bearing in mind that the differences in the situations of men and women in various areas become more pronounced and fixed over time.

The Japanese government is working on the creation of employment and living environments from the viewpoint of gender equality to enable women to continue working without problems and to earn sufficient wages to provide for their needs.

In light of the actual situation of single-parent households, the Japanese government provides assistance such as one-stop job seeking support and re-training support through agencies such as the Public Employment Security Office (Hello Work) and support centers promoting the employment and independence of single-parent households and other supports. In doing so, single parents who find it difficult to receive upper secondary school education due to reasons such as giving birth at a young age are provided with focused assistance to gain employment. Furthermore, the government is requesting companies to cooperate with the employment of single parents as a priority, supporting their initiatives, and providing information on the cooperating companies through Hello Work and others.

To help ensure the payment of child support, the parliament passed a law to partially revise the Civil Execution Act etc. in May 2019. The amendments included the establishment of new procedures for creditors to acquire from a third party (e.g., registry office, municipality etc. or, financial institution etc.) via a court order information concerning the properties (e.g., land and buildings, salaries or money in deposits/savings etc.) of an obligor who had failed to pay child support despite a final and binding judgement etc. concerning its payment.

To build a society where all children including girls can believe in their own potential regardless of the environment in which they were raised, the General Principles of Policy on Poverty among Children is to be approved by the Cabinet before the end of FY2019 under the Act on Promotion of Policy on Poverty among Children. Furthermore, the government, together with local governments and private enterprises and other groups, in 2015 began building a network to promote public-private collaboration and cooperation projects and to facilitate measures to tackle child poverty as a national campaign based on the broad understanding and cooperation of the Japanese citizenry.

10. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to improve access to social protection for women and girls?

- Introduced or strengthened social protection for unemployed women (e.g. unemployment benefits, public works programs, social assistance)
- Introduced or strengthened conditional cash transfers
- Introduced or strengthened unconditional cash transfers
- Introduced or strengthened non-contributory social pension
- Reformed contributory social protection schemes to strengthen women's access and benefit levels
- Improved access to the above for specific populations (e.g. women in informal employment, including domestic workers; migrant and refugee women; women in humanitarian settings)
- Other

(1) Actions addressing problems of people receiving no or small pensions

To address the issue of senior citizens who are not entitled to receive an aged pension, the government reduced the qualifying contribution period for its national pension from 25 years to 10 years in August 2017.

The government in October 2019 also introduced a subsidy system to support pensioners under which low-income senior citizens and people with a disability whose economic security is dependent on the pension can receive an additional benefit of 60,000 yen a year (base amount in FY2019) on top of the national pension.

(2) Support for single-parent households

The government is currently providing employment support to recipients of the child rearing allowance (single-parent households with children) and so on through a project to promote the employment and independent living of the recipients of public livelihood assistance (*seikatsu-hogo*). In particular, efforts to promote the project are stepped up under the banner of "Hello Work satellite office! Full-scale support

campaign for single parents” in August, when child rearing allowance recipients file reports on their current situation and special counters are established at local council offices.

Furthermore, the government has promoted the project by, for instance, in FY2015 increasing the amount of trial employment subsidy (“Subsidy for General Trial”) and in FY2016 enabling the combined use of the subsidy with a subsidy for employment development of designated job seekers with difficulties) in order to expand the path from trial employment to long-term employment for single parents.

11. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to improve health outcomes for women and girls in your country?

- Promoted women’s access to health services through expansion of universal health coverage or public health services
- Expanded specific health services for women and girls, including sexual and reproductive health services, mental, maternal health and HIV services
- Undertaken gender-specific public awareness/health promotion campaigns
- Provided gender-responsiveness training for health service providers
- Strengthened comprehensive sexuality education in schools or through community programs
- Provided refugee women and girls as well as women and girls in humanitarian settings with access to sexual and reproductive health services
- Other

Women’s health is foundational to the participation and advancement of women. A gender-equal society is developed on the premises that both men and women adequately understand the physical differences between them, respect human rights, and exhibit consideration for the other gender. It is necessary to gain accurate knowledge and information on the body and mind as well as on physical and mental health in taking the initiative to enjoy health. Specifically, women may experience pregnancy, childbirth and female-specific menopausal disorders. It must be noted that men and women face different health issues throughout their lives, and the perspective of reproductive health/rights is particularly important.

(1) Support for pregnancy and childbirth

Pregnancy and giving birth to a child are major events in terms of a woman’s health. Based on the Fourth Basic Plan, the government of Japan has established a seamless support system for pregnancy, childbirth and child-rearing to ensure a safe and secure community environment in which to give birth and raise children.

Since FY2015, municipalities have been working on the establishment of Comprehensive Support Center for Families with Children and the implementation, in accordance with the needs of the community, of pre-birth/post-birth support services, which offer support in addressing feelings of isolation at home and in the community, and after-birth care services, which offer comprehensive support for mothers and babies immediately after their discharge from the hospital, including support for physical and mental health and for child-rearing. The Comprehensive Support Centers for Families with Children have been established as one-stop centers that offer seamless and comprehensive support and advice, in response

to a wide range of needs concerning pregnancy and child-rearing. In FY2018, 761 municipalities offered consultation support by experts, such as public health nurses, to all expectant and nursing mothers, developed support plans as necessary, and worked in liaison with other relevant services. In FY2017, 314 municipalities implemented pre-birth/post-birth support services, and 392 municipalities implemented postpartum care programs.

In addition, the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare is requesting a budget for making relevant information available via social media and offering consultation support, so that pregnant women who may be young and having physical or psychological problems and concerns due to an unexpected pregnancy or other difficult circumstances can receive needed support.

(2) Expansion of women's participation in the healthcare field

In recent years, policies are needed to take into account the increased participation of women in the labor market; changes in norms around marriage, such as the increase in late marriages; and changes in issues concerning women's health due to longer life expectancy and other factors. To support women's lifelong health, initiatives are being pushed forward to ensure the work-life balance of healthcare workers and to support continuous employment and re-entry into the workforce. At the same time, the Japanese government aims to promote diversity in medical institutions and relevant organizations and works on the expansion of women's participation in the policy decision-making process.

From these perspectives, the government is promoting initiatives to offer comprehensive support for the health of men and women throughout their lives as a deeper understanding of health based on gender differences is developed.

In addition, specific discussions on the improvement of the working environments of medical doctors took place in the meetings of the Study Panel for the Reform of Working Conditions of Medical Doctors organized by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare. The report compiled by the panel in March 2019 urges the creation of an ideal working environment for female doctors by involving doctors who are subject to restricted working hours in important tasks as team members. Relevant measures have been implemented on an ongoing basis, including: the Female Doctor Registry Program, which matches female doctors who are looking for a job with medical institutions or retraining opportunities; the establishment of prefectural consultation centers for female doctors who wish to return to work; financial support for returning to work training; and model projects for medical institutions that offer support packages for female doctors, which cover on-site childcare facilities and support for return-to-work and continued employment.

(3) Corporate health and productivity management initiatives

In FY2018, the implementation of initiatives to maintain and promote women's health (e.g., seminars, creating an environment that encourages employees to get gynecological examinations and check-ups) was added to the selection criteria for "Health & Productivity Stocks" jointly chosen by the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry and the Tokyo Stock Exchange, thus clarifying potential corporate initiatives to address health challenges specific to women. A total of 35 enterprises from 26 industries were selected under the 2019 Health & Productivity Stock Selection program. The Japanese government will continue to promote corporate activities to support women's health through this initiative and provide further information on successful practices in regard to corporate health and productivity management.

12. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to improve education outcomes and skills for women and girls?

- Taken measures to increase girls' access to, retention in and completion of education, technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and skills development programs
- Strengthened educational curricula to increase gender-responsiveness and eliminate bias, at all levels of education
- Provided gender equality and human rights training for teachers and other education professionals
- Promoted safe, harassment-free and inclusive educational environments for women and girls
- Increased access to skills and training in new and emerging fields, especially STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) and digital fluency and literacy
- Ensured access to safe water and sanitation services and facilitated menstrual hygiene management especially in schools and other education/training settings
- Strengthened measures to prevent adolescent pregnancies and to enable adolescent girls to continue their education in the case of pregnancy and/or motherhood
- Other

(1) Measures taken in education

Major challenges in realizing a gender-equal society include eliminating stereotypical assumptions about gender roles and gender bias, as well as cultivating gender-equal values on the basis of respect for human rights. Education, public relations and awareness-raising to facilitate public understanding constitute fundamental measures that form the basis of all other initiatives.

For this reason, the government of Japan strives to raise awareness among those who engage in school education or social education to ensure that they understand the idea of gender equality, as well as aiming to provide enriched education that fosters a spirit of independence and compassion in every single man and woman and promote the dignity of the individual and the idea of gender equality. In addition, lifelong learning and capacity development, including career education based on gender-equal perspectives, have been promoted to enable both men and women to consider their lifestyles, abilities, and aptitudes and equip themselves with the ability to make proactive career choices without being constrained by ideas about the gender-based division of roles. In particular, measures to offer learning opportunities throughout people's lives and to promote participation in society have been enhanced to respond to increasingly diversified and sophisticated demands for learning and to contribute to the empowerment of women, based on the recent trends of promoting women's participation and advancement.

(2) Expansion of women's participation in STEM

Science and technology are two of the foundations for the continued development of both Japan and human society as a whole, and international competition for the acquisition of knowledge has been intensifying. To maintain and enhance Japan's international competitiveness and facilitate scientific and academic activities that embrace various perspectives and ideas, it is essential to create an environment where female researchers and engineers can make meaningful contributions and to promote their

participation and advancement. Producing diverse and creative cutting-edge intellectual assets through the promotion of science and technology also contributes to the development of a gender-equal society. The proportion of female researchers in Japan, although rising, is still at a low level compared with other countries. It is thus necessary to accelerate the participation and advancement of women engaging in scientific and academic activities.

To this end, positive action has been promoted at universities, research institutes, academic societies, private companies and other institutions to facilitate the advancement of female researchers and engineers who are leading their field, including decision-makers in managerial positions. Support for finding a balance between engaging in research and childcare or nursing care and maintaining and enhancing research and technical skills is also offered, and a necessary environment has been created so that women working in research and engineering can continue to engage in activities at the front line. In addition, nationwide initiatives have been promoted to increase interest in and understanding of a career in science and technology among female middle and high school students, parents, teachers and others, so that more women will choose careers in research and technology. The development of female knowledge workers in science and technology who will lead the next generation is thus being promoted.

Specifically, the Cabinet Office has brought together support organizations, including companies, universities, academic societies and other institutions, that promote initiatives to develop female scientists and engineers and has organized a support network for female science and technology students that consists of organizations that are proactively taking measures. Information on events hosted by such organizations is provided on a dedicated website. Since FY2017, the Cabinet Office, Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology and the Japan Science and Technology Agency have co-hosted symposiums largely targeted at female middle and high school students to encourage them to consider a career in science and engineering, thereby facilitating an understanding of career paths available in these fields through the introduction of role models. Information posted on the dedicated website has been steadily enriched through more than 200 postings, including those from female researchers, and information on over 150 relevant events hosted in FY2018 by universities and companies that support the initiative (support organizations). In addition, women who are active in science and engineering have been appointed as “STEM Girls Ambassadors.” In FY2019, the Ambassadors delivered lectures in 10 cities across Japan, with cooperation from relevant local governments. As the initiative also aims to support employment in local communities, additional measures have been taken, such as sharing case studies of women’s participation and advancement in local companies.

To increase interest in science among female middle and high school students and make it possible for them to choose a suitable career in the field, the Japan Science and Technology Agency has a support program for female middle and high school students choosing a career in science. The program offers opportunities to interact with women who are active in the field, including researchers, engineers and university students, and supports universities and other institutions that cooperate with communities and businesses to take relevant measures, such as organizing laboratory classes, symposiums and visiting lectures.

The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology implements the Initiative for Realizing Diversity in the Research Environment, in order to support universities and other institutions that comprehensively promote measures to realize diversity by seeking to support female researchers to achieve a balance between research and life events such as childbirth and child-rearing, as well as by developing leaders through the enhancement of female researchers’ research skills. The Japan Society for the Promotion of Science operates the Restart Postdoctoral (RPD) Fellowship program to offer fellowships to researchers who have temporarily discontinued their research due to maternity/childcare responsibilities, thereby supporting their return to research.

Freedom from violence, stigma and stereotypes

Critical areas of concern:

- D. Violence against women
- I. Human rights of women
- J. Women and the media
- L. The girl child

13. In the last five years, which forms of violence against women and girls, and in which specific contexts or settings, have you prioritized for action?

- Intimate partner violence/domestic violence, including sexual violence and marital rape
- Sexual harassment and violence in public places, educational settings and in employment
- Violence against women and girls facilitated by technology (e.g. cyber violence, online stalking)
- Femicide/Feminicide
- Violence against women in politics
- Child, early and forced marriages
- Female genital mutilation
- Other harmful practices
- Trafficking in women and girls
- Other

Violence against women includes acts that constitute criminal offenses and is a serious violation of human rights. Promoting initiatives for prevention as well as for recovery from damage and aiming to eradicate such violence are important challenges to be resolved in developing a gender-equal society and are responsibilities of the central government. The intensive Policy to Accelerate the Empowerment of Women 2018 notes that of the various unresolved challenges that women face, sexual harassment and other types of violence against women constitute inexcusable violations of human rights and thus cannot properly be denoted issues of women's participation and advancement. It goes on to state that actions should be taken immediately to resolve such issues in order to further expand the scope of women's empowerment.

Specifically, domestic violence and stalking behaviors are serious social issues that need to be addressed in an appropriate manner. Moreover, with the recent spread of social media and other new online tools of communication, forms of violence by partners, sexual crimes, prostitution, trafficking in persons and other forms of violence become more and more diversified, necessitating prompt and appropriate measures against such new forms of violence.

When the victim is a child, elderly, disabled or foreign nationals, it is essential in offering support to give due and comprehensive consideration to the background circumstances in accordance with the form of violence and attributes of the victim. In particular, regarding spousal violence, it is necessary to take into account the adverse effects not only on the victim but also on the child.

This being the case, the government of Japan comprehensively promotes a wide range of initiatives based on the Fourth Basic Plan to eradicate violence against women in accordance with the types of violence such as domestic violence, sex crimes and stalking behaviors.

14. What actions has your country prioritized in the last five years to address violence against women and girls?

- Introduced or strengthened violence against women laws, and their enforcement and implementation
- Introduced, updated or expanded national action plans on ending violence against women and girls
- Introduced or strengthened measures to increase women's access to justice (e.g. establishment of specialist courts, training for the judiciary and police, protection orders, redress and reparations, including for femicide cases)
- Introduced or strengthened services for survivors of violence (e.g. shelters, help lines, dedicated health services, legal, justice service, counselling, housing)
- Introduced or strengthened strategies to prevent violence against women and girls (e.g. in the education sector, in the media, community mobilization, work with men and boys)
- Monitoring and evaluation of impact, including evidence generation and data collection, including regarding particular groups of women and girls
- Introduced or strengthened measures for improving the understanding of causes and consequences of violence against women among those responsible for implementing measures on ending violence against women and girls
- Other

(1) Relevant legislation

In the past five years, initiatives related to violence against women took a major step forward, with the enactment and revision of multiple relevant laws and regulations. In light of the reality of sex crimes in recent years, necessary revisions were made to the Penal Code in June 2017 to address such crimes in conformity with the reality of the cases. Specifically, punishment provisions have been enhanced through the revision of elements of crime and the statutory penalty for rape to introduce the crime of forcible sexual intercourse and by the creation of crimes of indecency by person having custody of person under 18 and sexual intercourse by person having custody of person under 18. In addition, it has been made possible to prosecute rape and other relevant crimes without a complaint. To protect children, the Act on Regulation and Punishment of Acts Relating to Child Prostitution and Child Pornography and the Protection of Children ("Act Banning Child Prostitution and Child Pornography") was revised in June 2014 to criminalize the simple possession of child pornography. The Act on the Prevention of Spousal Violence and the Protection of Victims ("Spousal Violence prevention Act") was also revised in June 2019 to enhance measures to prevent child abuse and protect victims of spousal violence, as well as to add Child Guidance Centers to the list of concerned organizations that should cooperate to protect victims. In response to a series of tragic cases involving online violence, the Act on Prevention of Damage Caused by the Provision of Private Sexual Image Records ("Revenge Porn Prevention Act"), which punishes the online distribution of sexual images without the consent of the person appearing in them, was enacted in November 2014. The Anti-Stalking Act was revised in December 2016, and sending messages via social media and writing comments on the victim's personal webpages such as blogs were added to regulated acts such as "shadowing." In addition, the Comprehensive Legal Support Act was revised in May 2016

(fully enforced in January 2018), and the Japan Legal Support Center has started to provide legal consultation for the victims of domestic violence, stalking and child abuse.

(2) Support to victims

Japan has taken major steps forward not only in terms of legislation but also regarding support provided to victims. Specifically, the National Police Agency in August 2017 introduced a nationwide telephone hotline number (#8103) that connects to the consultation support service at each prefectural police force in order to make it easier for victims of sex crimes to ask for assistance. The service was made available 24 hours a day in all prefectures in April 2019 and became toll-free in July the same year. The number represents the word “heart” based on Japanese phonetic sounds, signaling that the service is there to stand by victims. Furthermore, in the Cabinet Office, the Fourth Basic Plan sets out a program for the establishment of one-stop support centers for victims of sexual crimes and sexual violence, which would serve as a specialized consultation service for sex crime victims and provide appropriate support as necessary, such as offering physical and psychological treatment by a doctor and accompanying victims to the police. While the Plan sets the target of establishing at least one the one-stop support center for victims of sexual crimes and sexual violence in every prefecture by 2020, the target was achieved earlier than planned as the centers were established in all prefectures by the end of FY2018. For stable administration and improvement of the quality of the centers, a budget to enhance initiatives that takes into account the state of affairs at each local government by effectively utilizing local social resources and collaborating with relevant institutions and organizations has been requested for FY2020. Such initiatives include offering the service around the clock, establishing hub hospitals and developing and securing human resources with high levels of expertise.

15. What strategies has your country used in the last five years to prevent violence against women and girls?

- Public awareness raising and changing of attitudes and behaviours
- Work in primary and secondary education, including comprehensive sexuality education
- Grassroots and community-level mobilization
- Shifting the representation of women and girls in the media
- Working with men and boys
- Perpetrator programs
- Other

(1) Campaign for Eliminating Violence against Women

Since being launched as an annual campaign to prevent and eliminate violence against women in FY2001, the Campaign for Eliminating Violence against Women has established its status as a national campaign and been continuously conducted to raise public awareness toward creating a social environment where no form of violence against women is tolerated. In addition, the “Purple Light-up,” an awareness-raising event where buildings and other objects are illuminated in purple, is held during the campaign period with cooperation of local governments. The number of event locations around Japan

increased from 50 in FY2015 to 162 in FY2018, indicating the extent to which the event has spread across the nation.

(2) Prevention of child sexual exploitation

To prevent child sexual exploitation/abuse, in consideration of the tendency for sexual exploitation/abuse committed against children, especially by those close to them such as family members, to remain unnoticed from the outside and become more serious, the government of Japan has promoted measures to effectively prevent such victimization based on the Fourth Basic Plan and established a system for providing children with services and support in order to prevent the victimization suffered by children from continuing to affect them throughout their lives. Japan's current state as regards child sexual exploitation is serious, as seen in the recent increase in the number of children victimized in criminal cases involving child pornography, the growing number of children suffering sexual exploitation linked to the use of social media, the emergence of new forms of businesses exploiting child sexuality, including so-called "JK businesses" (in which the word "JK" comes from "*joshi-kosei*," meaning female high school students). In acknowledgment of this, the Basic Plan on Measures against Child Sexual Exploitation was formulated in April 2017. Covering the period up to the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games, this Plan defines the measures the government of Japan should implement to eradicate the child sexual exploitation based on the current law. In line with this Plan, the government promotes multifaceted and comprehensive measures to prevent the child sexual exploitation in cooperation with a wide range of citizens, including creating a zero tolerance environment for all activities that victimize children sexually such as child prostitution and the production of child pornography, strengthening collaboration among related organizations in conducting interviews to victim children with consideration for the psychological stress imposed on children and ensuring the credibility of children's statement(interviews by representative of public prosecutors office, the police and child consultation center), and providing children and parents with education and awareness-raising programs to prevent a child pornography crimes in which children are deceived or threatened to generate their own sexually explicit material and send the material by e-mail or other means).

Furthermore, since sexual violence against young women, including the issue of coercion of young women into appearing in pornographic videos, constitutes a serious infringement of human rights that can cause severe psychological and physical damage to the victims, an inter-ministerial council was established in March 2017 to discuss necessary countermeasures and, in May of the same year, the council formulated a plan titled Subsequent Measures to Address the Issue of So-called forced appearance in pornographic materials, the "JK Business" Issue and Other Issues. The Subsequent Measures defines every April as the "Month for Preventing Crimes Related to Forced Appearance in Pornographic Materials and 'JK Business,'" during which measures are implemented intensively.

(3) Treatment for sex offenders

In addition to support for the victims, as Measures for perpetrators in Japan, penal institutions strengthen the implementation of "Re-offending Prevention Guidance for Sex Offenders", by enhancing the facilities and training for staff who are in charge of the guidance. The number of inmates who were enrolled in the guidance has increased year by year, from 492 in FY2014 to 797 in FY2018. Moreover, probation offices also offer sex offender treatment programs to over 900 probationers/ parolees every year.

16. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls facilitated by technology (online sexual harassment, online stalking, non-consensual sharing of intimate images)?

- Introduced or strengthened legislation and regulatory provisions
- Implemented awareness raising initiatives targeting the general public and young women and men in educational settings
- Worked with technology providers to set and adhere to good business practices
- Other

Regardless of whether conducted online or offline, violence committed against women and girls constitutes a serious violation of human rights and must not be tolerated. Although the Internet is an important tool for Japan’s growth strategies, it can destroy people’s life if used wrongly. The recent spread of new communication tools, including social media, has led to a wider variety of forms of online violence, and such new forms of violence must be addressed promptly and appropriately.

(1) Actions taken by the government of Japan

The government of Japan formulated the Act on the Limitation of Liability for Damages of Specified Telecommunications Service Providers and the Right to Demand Disclosure of Identification Information of the Senders in 2002 in order to facilitate the taking of appropriate measures by ISPs, including deleting contents that constitute sexual violence against women and girls, with consideration given to the balancing of the relief of victims with the freedom of expression—an important pair of rights and interests. In 2014, the Act on Prevention of Damage Caused by the Provision of Private Sexual Image Records including special measures of the Act on the Limitation of Liability for Damages of Specified Telecommunications Service Providers and the Right to Demand Disclosure of Identification Information of the Senders was formulated to prevent violence against women and girls facilitated by technology and its spread.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications of Japan encourages enterprises’ voluntary initiatives by providing support for private enterprise organizations’ efforts to formulate various guidelines so that they can appropriately delete online contents that are required to be deleted, including illegal or harmful contents, and helping those organizations in creating model provisions for contracts between enterprises and users. The National Police Agency operates the Internet Hotline Center, which receives reports from Internet users concerning contents including illegal contents, and notifies the police or requests the deletion of the illegal contents by parties such as providers. When recognizing online contents as constituting criminal acts, the police also arrest the suspects and request providers to delete the contents. The Ministry of Justice offers counseling service on human rights violation information transmitted on the Internet. It gives advice to the consulter and requests telecommunications service providers to delete such information when it is deemed illegal.

In addition, as mentioned at question 14 above, the revised the Anti-stalking Act contains enhanced countermeasures against online violence against women and girls.

(2) Actions taken by the private sector

The private sector in Japan established the “Illegal Harmful Contents Hotline” as a consultation service center concerning illegal and harmful online contents, offering advice on how to respond to such contents and providing related information.

Solutions to online violence against women and girls will be explored from diverse perspectives through comprehensive efforts made in cooperation between the government and private enterprises, including promoting public relations and awareness-raising concerning Internet use. Necessary countermeasures against such violence will be implemented in a reliable and steady manner.

17. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to address the portrayal of women and girls, discrimination and/or gender bias in the media?

- Enacted, strengthened and enforced legal forms to combat discrimination and/or gender bias in the media
- Introduced binding regulation for the media, including for advertising
- Supported the media industry to develop voluntary codes of conduct
- Provided training to media professionals to encourage the creation and use of non-stereotypical, balanced and diverse images of women and girls in the media
- Promoted the participation and leadership of women in the media
- Established or strengthened consumer protection services to receive and review complaints about media content or gender-based discrimination/bias in the media
- Other

Sexual exploitation and violence against women and girls through means of sexually or other objectifying representations of them severely hinders the creation of a gender-equal society and infringes upon the human rights of women and girls. From this perspective, the government of Japan has implemented awareness-raising measures and encouraged the media as content providers to adopt necessary measures, including voluntary regulations.

Specifically, in October 2018, the Liaison Conference for the Promotion of Gender Equality held a Hearing on Women’s Participation in Parliaments and Gender Equality in the Media with the participation of 66 people, including representatives of gender equality promotion organizations, broadcast media representatives, educators, and Diet members, who actively shared information and exchanged views.

Moreover, the government of Japan organizes the World Assembly for Women (“WAW!”). In one of the high-level round tables at WAW! 2017, held in November 2017, panelists from the media in Japan and abroad actively discussed the theme of “Women in Media,” including representations of men and women in the media and the role of the media in improving gender-based stereotypes. At the 5th WAW!, held jointly with W20 in March 2019, a high-level panel discussion focused on the theme “Media and Contents to Nurture Diversity.” With the participation of the executive director of UN Women, Ministers from various countries and media representatives, active discussions explored the desirable state of the media and contents that can help prevent the formation of stereotypes and nurture diversity, women’s participation in decision-making in the media domain, and how to combat sexual or gender-based violence, exploitation and harassment online.

18. Has your country taken any action in the last five years specifically tailored to address violence against specific groups of women facing multiple forms of discrimination?

YES / NO

As mentioned at question 3 in Section 1, a wide variety of measures have been adopted in Japan for women and girls who experience multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination. In addition to these, information-sharing and awareness-raising measures are promoted targeting not only professionals who support victims of violence against women but also professionals who support children, the elderly, persons with disabilities, foreign nationals and others, in order to allow them to deepen their understanding of the elimination of violence against women and girls.

Furthermore, measures to address spousal violence as a form of violence against women are implemented in full consideration of the position of victims, with due consideration for the fact that the victims to whom Spousal Violence Prevention Act and the Protection of Victims applies naturally include foreign nationals (with or without the status of residence), persons with disabilities, the elderly, and other people with different backgrounds, regardless of gender. More specifically, the Immigration Services Agency of Japan engages in appropriate humanitarian treatment of foreign nationals who are victims of spousal violence, with due regard for the victims' own wishes, position and personal circumstances.

Participation, accountability and gender-responsive institutions

Critical areas of concern:

- G. Women in power and decision-making
- H. Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women
- I. Human rights of women
- J. Women and the media
- L. The girl child

19. What actions and measures has your country taken in the last five years to promote women's participation in public life and decision-making?

- Reformed constitution, laws and regulations that promote women's participation in politics, especially at decision-making level, including electoral system reform, adoption of temporary special measures, such as quotas, reserved seats, benchmarks and targets
- Implemented capacity building, skills development and other measures
- Encouraged the participation of minority and young women, including through sensitization and mentorship programs
- Provided opportunities for mentorship, training in leadership, decision-making, public speaking, self-assertion, political campaigning
- Taken measures to prevent, investigate, prosecute and punish violence against women in politics
- Collected and analyzed data on women's political participation, including in appointed and elected positions
- Other

The expansion of women's participation in political fields is important. In a democratic society, men and women are both responsible for and must be able to actively participate in political decision-making processes and share responsibilities, and diverse options should be reflected in political and social policy-making impartially and fairly, with benefits enjoyed equally. While the establishment of new institutions

and radical institutions reforms, it is also important that policies for the promotion of gender equality, including women's interests, are reflected in political priorities.

The Constitution of Japan provides for the principle of the separation of powers, whereby the three independent organizations of the legislature, government and judiciary oversee each other and maintain a balance to prevent the abuse of power and secure the rights and freedom of the people. Therefore, in Japan, there are some limitations on the government's power to make direct decisions concerning the activities of the parliament and political parties.

Against the background, the government of Japan and especially the Minister of State for Gender Equality actively encourage political parties and other bodies to adopt effective positive actions.

Since the Act on Promotion of Gender Equality in the Political Field, which had been proposed by members of the parliament, was adopted in May 2018, multiple political parties in Japan have implemented related initiatives, including setting numerical targets concerning the nomination of female candidates. As a result, in the election of the members of the House of Councillors after the adoption of the Act, the percentage of female candidates was 28.1%, increasing by about 3 percentage points from 24.7% in 2016. Steady progress has been made, bringing the percentage of female members of the House of Councillors closer to international standards.

In addition, the following actions have been taken to research and analyze women's political participation:

- Translating the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) annual report on women's participation in politics in each country into Japanese every year and making the translation available
- Examining factors that obstruct women's political participation, including harassment against female members of local assemblies (in FY2017)
- Conducting research on women's political participation in foreign countries (in FY2018 and FY2019)
- Making a Women in Politics Map, which show the status of women's political participation in local assemblies, and creating a leaflet that outlines the maps and the aforementioned Act as well as explains the status of local assemblies without female members and obstacles to women's political participation and distributing the leaflet to all local assemblies in Japan
- Researching the condition of local governments' efforts to create a favorable environment for assembly members to engage in both family life and political pursuits and disclosing the research results

20. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to increase women's access to expression and participation in decision-making in the media, including through information and communication technologies (ICT)?

- Strengthened the provision of formal and technical vocational education and training (TVET) in media and ICTs, including in areas of management and leadership
- Taken measures to enhance access, affordability and use of ICTs for women and girls (e.g. free wifi hubs, community technology centers)
- Introduced regulations to advance equal pay, retention and career advancement of women within the media and ICT field
- Collaborated with employers in the media and ICT field to improve internal policies and hiring practices on voluntary basis

- Provided support to women's media networks and organizations
- Other

Effectively facilitating public understanding of gender equality and women's empowerment requires that public relations and awareness-raising activities be conducted in a comprehensive manner via all available settings and media, including workplaces, households, local communities, schools and the mass media, throughout the lives of individual citizens and that clear and appealing messages be delivered to a wide range of people at all developmental stages, from children to the elderly.

The Japanese government has striven to expand women's participation in decision-making processes concerning measures and policies in the media domain, while strengthening collaboration with educational institutions, the media, local governments and other parties, in order to carry out public relations and awareness-raising activities for fostering public understanding of gender equality and enhance the system for promoting those activities.

For example, in October 2018, the Liaison Conference for the Promotion of Gender Equality held a Public Hearing on Women's Participation in Parliaments and Gender Equality in the Media with the participation of 66 people, including representatives of gender equality promotion organizations, broadcast media representatives, educators, foreign ambassadors and Diet members, who actively shared information and exchanged views. Also, a Gender Equality Week is designated every year to provide information through various media.

21. Do you track the proportion of the national budget that is invested in the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women (gender-responsible budgeting)?

YES / NO

While the government of Japan does not track the proportion of the national budget that is invested in the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment, it uses an outline of related budgets and data on their actual use as reference materials for annual reports to the parliament based on the Basic Act for Gender Equal Society.

22. As a donor country, does your country track the proportion of official development assistance (ODA) that is invested in the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women (gender-responsible budgeting)?

YES / NO

Not applicable

If YES, please provide further information on the methodology, the scope of tracking, past trends and current proportion of investments.

Japan tracks and reports ODA actually invested in gender equality projects⁴ in conformity with the definitions in the OECD's Development Assistance Committee gender equality policy marker.

23. Does your country have a valid national strategy or action plan for gender equality?

YES / NO

If YES, please list the name of the plan and the period it covers, its priorities, funding and alignment with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including the targets under SDG 5.

As mentioned at question 1 in Section 1, Japan has formulated the Basic Plan for Gender Equality based on the Basic Act for Gender Equal Society.

The current plan is the Fourth Basic Plan for Gender Equality and covers a period of five years, from FY2016 to FY2020.

The SDGs Implementation Guiding Principles define some measures and achievement targets based on the Fourth Basic Plan as measures to achieve Goal 5 and targets concerning the implementation of the measures.

If YES, has the national action plan been costed and have sufficient resources been allocated to its achievement in the current budget?

Necessary funding is assured every year based on the Basic Plan for Gender Equality.

24. Does your country have an action plan and timeline for implementation of the recommendations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (if a State party), or of the recommendations of the Universal Periodic Review or other United Nations human rights mechanisms that address gender inequality/discrimination against women?

YES / NO

If YES, please provide some highlights of the action plans and timeline for implementation.

The Fourth Basic Plan provides that the government of Japan actively provide a wide range of citizens with information and implement other measures to deepen their understanding of gender equality, and develop domestic measures based on global trends toward gender equality including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the Commission on Status of Women, and other conventions deeply related to gender equality; international norms and standards for improving women's status, such as the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action; discussions at international

⁴ For actual investments made in the last five years, see the following web page:
FY2018 collection of reference materials on development cooperation (in Japanese)
https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/gaiko/oda/press/shiryo/page22_001203.html

conferences of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, the UN Commission on the Status of Women and other bodies; and the SDGs.

25. Is there a national human rights institution in your country?

YES / **NO**

Peaceful and inclusive societies

Critical areas of concern:

- E. Women and armed conflict
- I. Human rights of women
- L. The girl child

26. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to build and sustain peace, promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development and implement the women, peace and security agenda?

- Adopted and/or implemented a National Action Plan on women, peace and security
- Integrated women, peace and security commitments into key national and inter-ministerial policy, planning and monitoring frameworks
- Used communication strategies, including social media, to increase awareness of the women, peace and security agenda
- Increased budgetary allocations for the implementation of the women, peace and security agenda
- Taken steps to reduce excessive military expenditures and/or control the availability of armaments
- Re-allocated funds from military spending to social and economic development, including for gender equality and the empowerment of women
- Supported inclusive and gender-sensitive conflict analysis, early warning and prevention mechanisms
- Other

For about 74 years since the end of WWII, Japan has contributed various assistance in conflict prevention, peacebuilding including cooperation in UN peacekeeping operations (PKO), and empowerment of women with the strong desire “to occupy an honoured place in the international society striving for the preservation of peace, and the banishment of tyranny and slavery, oppression and intolerance for all time from the earth.” Based on past lessons, experiences and achievements, Japan aims to continue efforts to achieve peaceful solutions to conflict and world peace, build friendly relations with other countries, and protect the human rights of women, with the hope of ensuring that

the 21st century should be a century without human rights violation of women and sexual violence in conflict.

(1) Implementation of the UNSCR 1325 National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security

The government of Japan formulated a National Action Plan to implement UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (the first Security Council Resolution that clearly expresses the relationship between women and peace and security (WPS)). Prime Minister Abe announced the release of Japan's National Action Plan in his address at the UN General Assembly in New York in September 2015. After three years of implementation of the National Action Plan from 2016, consultations were held with relevant ministries and agencies, NGOs and experts and civil society and public comments were also conducted for the revision of the plan. The revised second National Action Plan has been implemented since March 2019.

In accordance with the National Action Plan, Japan has steadily implemented WPS agenda through bilateral cooperation by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), and also with the UN agencies and other international organizations. Japan also promotes participation of women local NGOs and civil society in recipient countries Japan particularly promotes the participation of women in peacebuilding and reconstruction processes in conflict affected countries by providing not only protection and medical services but also provide support for women's economic empowerment and leadership through international organizations, such as UN Women, UNFPA, UNICEF and UNHCR. In addition, as countermeasures against violent extremism, Japan also implements programs to prevent violent extremism by empowerment of women and enhancement of their roles in communities. It also encourages women's participation in UN PKO by co-funding training courses for female military officers from various countries, which should help participants prepare for future deployment in UN missions. Furthermore, Japan provides pre-deployment training, including lectures on sexual violence as well as sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) in conflicts, in order to enable Japanese personnel sent for UN PKO missions to fully understand the issue of WPS.

The United Nations Peacebuilding Fund (PBF), to which Japan contributes as a major donor, set a target of allocation of 30% of the fund to women-related projects, and has achieved the target.

After formulating its National Action Plan, the government of Japan compiled a monitoring report on its implementation. Based on the report, an annual report has been produced by external experts with evaluation every year. Taking into consideration of experts and civil society, Japan will try to secure budget and continue to promote implementation of National Action Plan and WPS agenda in coordination with the international community.

(2) Sexual violence in conflict

Sexual violence in conflict is a matter that cannot be overlooked. Japan considers ending impunity is the key to prevent sexual violence in conflict. Efforts have been made especially for the last five years not only to provide support for the victims but also ensure holding perpetrator accountable and bring justice of the victims

Specifically, the government of Japan has made steady efforts to prevent crimes and protect the victims by ensuring that an increasing number of criminals are prosecuted in strengthened collaboration with related international organizations. The government also provided financial contribution to the development of training materials which aim at strengthening the capacity of all UN mission personnel to prevent and respond to conflict-related sexual violence, and conducted training

of women’s protection advisers deployed in such missions. Japan has strengthened collaboration with the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, and since 2016, the country has provided financial aid for the Office to help address sexual violence in conflict in Middle Eastern and African countries, including the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Central African Republic. As of 2019, Japan has offered about 11 million U.S. dollars of financial aid to the Office, the second largest amount given by any country in the world. The scope of financial aid specifically includes the enhancement of judicial systems; the capacity development of legal professionals including judges and public prosecutors and law-enforcement officers including police; and the improvement of access by victims of conflict-related sexual violence to legal measures. For example, Japan provided assistance in addressing sexual violence in conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo from 2014 to 2017, forming specialized judicial units on sexual violence and offering training to 66 people. Japan’s assistance efforts, including awareness-raising activities and a mobile court, resulted in 1,726 cases of sexual violence being registered, 643 judgments, and 460 sentencing decisions in 2017.

27. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to increase the leadership, representation and participation of women in conflict prevention, resolution, peacebuilding, humanitarian action and crisis response, at decision-making levels in situations of armed and other conflicts, and in fragile or crisis settings?

- Promoted and supported women’s meaningful participation in peace processes and the implementation of peace agreements
- Promoted equal participation of women in humanitarian and crisis response activities at all levels, particularly at the decision-making level
- Integrated a gender perspective in the prevention and resolution of armed and other conflict
- Integrated a gender perspective in humanitarian action and crisis response
- Protected civil society spaces and women’s human rights defenders
- Other

Japan has taken humanitarian and peacebuilding actions from the perspective of gender mainstreaming, including facilitating women’s participation in decision-making on diplomatic and security policies and actively dispatching female personnel for UN PKO missions, bilateral cooperation and other missions.

(1) Integrating the perspective of gender mainstreaming into decision-making on diplomatic and security policies

As a measure to integrate the perspective of gender mainstreaming into decision-making on diplomatic and security policies, the Joint Staff College (including the Japan Peacekeeping Training & Research Center), the Japan Ground Self-Defense Force (Engineer School, the International Peace Cooperation Activities Training Unit, and the Training Evaluation Research and Development Command) and the National Defense Medical College offered curricula including courses on a gender-equal society, SEA, gender-based violence and other subjects. (A total of 583 personnel received education based on the curricula of Ministry of Defense in 2018.)

(2) Actively dispatching female officials for international peace cooperation missions

As a result of active efforts to dispatch female personnel for international peace cooperation activities, the Ministry of Defense has so far dispatched about 530 female personnel for activities of this kind and is considering the continuation of the practice going forward. (According to data from the Ministry of Defense as of September 2019, the Ministry has so far dispatched 192 female personnel for UN PKO missions, 110 for International Disaster Relief Activities, 146 for activities based on the Special Measures Law for Humanitarian and Reconstruction Assistance in Iraq and 84 for cooperative activities based on the Anti-Terrorism Special Measures Law and replenishment activities based on Replenishment Support Special Measures Law.)

28. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to enhance judicial and non-judicial accountability for violations of international humanitarian law and violations of the human rights of women and girls in situations of armed and other conflicts or humanitarian action and crisis response?

- Implemented legal and policy reform to redress and prevent violations of the rights of women and girls
- Strengthened institutional capacities, including of the justice system and transitional justice mechanisms as applicable, during conflict and crisis response
- Strengthened capacity of security sector institutions on human rights and prevention of sexual and gender-based violence and sexual exploitation and abuse
- Increased access of conflict-affected, refugee or displaced women to violence prevention and protection services
- Taken measures to combat illicit arms trafficking
- Taken measures to combat the production, use of and trafficking in illicit drugs
- Taken measures to combat trafficking in women and children
- Other

(1) Measures to combat trafficking in women and children

Japan recognizes that human trafficking constitutes a serious infringement of human rights and must be addressed promptly and appropriately from a humanitarian perspective.

Based on this recognition, the government of Japan formulated Japan's 2014 Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Persons in 2014 and holds meetings of the Council for the Promotion of Measures to Combat Trafficking in Persons as needed, in order to devote government-wide efforts to promote the following initiatives through close collaboration between related governmental bodies. (The Fourth Basic Plan also clearly provides for active promotion of Japan's 2014 Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Persons.) Moreover, in 2017, Japan joined the State Parties to the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, Supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.

Every year since 2015, the Japanese government has approved and released an annual report titled "Measures to Combat Trafficking in Persons" on the status of damage caused by human trafficking and the current progress in relevant governmental measures to combat human trafficking. In addition, the government builds consensus using the Handbook on Measures against Trafficking in Persons in order to ensure that legal countermeasures against human trafficking are appropriately implemented through

close collaboration between related organizations. The government also discusses and exchanges views on specific cases of trafficking in persons with NGOs every year.

Moreover, as measures to protect the victims of human trafficking, the government of Japan exchanges information and collaborates with embassies in Tokyo of the home countries of human trafficking victims, Women's Consulting Offices and other parties and implements programs for enabling human trafficking victims to return home or be rehabilitated into society. It does this by ensuring collaboration between related governmental bodies in responding to reports from NGOs and the general public on foreign nationals suspected to be the victims of human trafficking and grasping the realities of such cases as well as by offering financial aid to the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to enable human trafficking victims from abroad to readily return home if they so desire. The government has also created posters and leaflets about measures to combat human trafficking in order to provide information about where to report human trafficking and who to consult for people who may be unaware that they are the victims of human trafficking or unable to seek help. Such materials also deliver the message that human trafficking is a crime close to everyday life in Japan too, with the aim of raising public awareness toward eliminating human trafficking and calling for the public's cooperation. Furthermore, Japan strives for capacity building of criminal justice practitioners who are responsible for investigation, prosecution and adjudication of human trafficking office.

The Japanese government also collaborates with JICA and international organizations to strengthen countermeasures against human trafficking and to promote networking of relevant agencies, mainly in the Asian region.

(2) Sexual violence in conflict

The actions Japan has adopted to combat sexual violence in conflict situations are as explained at question 26(2) above.

(3) Measures against sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) undertaken by supporters and dispatched personnel engaged in humanitarian or development assistance, UN PKO missions and peacebuilding operations

In September 2017, Japan signed a Voluntary Compact between the UN Secretary-General and an individual Member State, that demonstrates the political will to prevent SEA, provide meaningful support to the victims, and investigate cases of SEA in the context of UN PKO missions. In addition, Prime Minister Abe joined the Circle of Leadership on the prevention of and response to sexual exploitation and abuse in United Nations operations, which was created based on the initiative of UN Secretary-General Guterres and was made up of global leaders who are committed to strengthen measures to prevent SEA and to respond rapidly and decisively to credible reports of such acts.

29. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to eliminate discrimination against and violation of the rights of the girl child?

- Taken measures to combat negative social norms and practices and increased awareness of the needs and potential of girl children
- Strengthened girls' access to quality education, skill development and training

- Tackled disadvantages in health outcomes due to malnutrition, early childbearing (e.g. anemia) and exposure to HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases
- Implemented policies and programs to reduce and eradicate child, early and forced marriage
- Implemented policies and programs to eliminate violence against girls, including physical and sexual violence and harmful practices
- Implemented policies and programs to eradicate child labor and excessive levels of unpaid care and domestic work undertaken by girl children
- Promoted girls' awareness of and participation in social, economic and political life
- Other

Major challenges that lie ahead in achieving a gender-equal society would include the dissolution of stereotypical assumptions about gender roles, gender bias and raising awareness around gender equality based on respect for human rights. Therefore, education and heightened public awareness could be considered key policy measures.

Japan is aiming to enhance education and learning that promote respect for dignity of individuals and the idea of gender equality—through which both men and women foster a spirit of independence and cultivate compassion and an enlightened consciousness—so that those who are involved in education appreciate the ideal of gender equality in school and social education.

With regard to violence against women, as stated in response to question 15, Japan has carried out the Basic Plan on Measures against Child Sexual Exploitation and addressed problems of sexual violence primarily targeting youth, i.e., the issues of so-called forced appearance in pornographic materials “JK Business”, while conducting a campaign for eliminating violence against women.

Moreover, as mentioned in response to question 13, Japan amended the Penal Code in 2017, newly stipulating the crimes of indecency by person having custody of person under 18 and sexual intercourse by person having custody of person under 18 perpetrated by a guardian against a minor by taking advantage of his or her influential position.

Environmental conservation, protection and rehabilitation

Critical areas of concern:

- I. Human rights of women
- K. Women and the environment
- L. The girl child

30. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to integrate gender perspectives and concerns into environmental policies?

- Supported women's participation and leadership in environmental and natural resource management and governance

- Strengthened evidence and/or raised awareness about gender-specific environmental and health hazards (e.g. consumer products, technologies, industrial pollution)
- Increased women's access to and control over land, water, energy, and other natural resources
- Promoted the education of women and girls in science, engineering, technology and other disciplines relating to the natural environment
- Enhanced women's access to sustainable time- and labor-saving infrastructure (e.g. access to clean water and energy) and climate-smart agricultural technology
- Taken measures to protect and preserve the knowledge and practices of women in indigenous and local communities related to traditional medicines, biodiversity and conservation techniques
- Taken steps to ensure that women benefit equally from decent jobs in green economy
- Monitored and evaluated the impact of environmental policies and sustainable infrastructure projects on women and girls
- Other

(1) Expansion of women's participation in the area of the environment

Aiming to achieve a sustainable society, and from the perspective of widely utilizing the increased concern among women for conservation of the environment as well as their extensive knowledge and practical experience, Japan is training female environmental specialists and expanding their participation in the process of formulating policies in the area of the environment. At the same time, taking the international framework for addressing the global environmental issue of climate change and sustainable development into consideration, we are working to incorporate the perspective of gender equality into our endeavor to come to grips with environmental problems.

Specifically, Japan is seeking to expand women's participation as members in various meetings on environmental policies. From the perspective of gender equality, Japan is also providing opportunities for the general public, business enterprises, NGOs/NPOs and civic groups to share information and exchange opinions with regard to environmental education and conservation activities, and is supporting the promotion of environmental conservation initiatives and the creation of networks by a wide variety of entities including government agencies, universities, business enterprises, NGOs/NPOs, etc. Moreover, with the aim of solving environmental problems, Japan has promoted environmental partnerships by facilitating joint undertakings among numerous entities and posting information on a dedicated home page.

(2) Expansion of women's participation in STEM (science, technology, engineering and math)

With a view to underpinning these undertakings, it is important to secure female researchers and engineers in the area of science and technology. It will also be necessary to increase the number of girl children and female students with an interest in science and technology at the elementary, middle and high school levels. In addition, we will also need to cultivate a deeper understanding among parents and teachers on choosing a career path in the area of science and engineering as in many cases students are likely to be influenced by their parents and teachers when making a career choice.

It was against such a background that the Cabinet Office organized the "Riko-Chare Support Network," which comprises business enterprises, universities and academic institutions that advance the initiative to nurture female scientists and engineers. In addition, the Support Network for Women in Science and

Engineering has been set up by the Cabinet Office in partnership with independent organizations, and information on events that are held by these organizations is posted on the Science and Engineering Challenge website. Furthermore, as of FY2017, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology and the Japan Science and Technology Agency have been jointly holding a series of symposia for female middle and high school students on choosing a career path in the area of science and engineering. At these events, role models are introduced to facilitate participants' understanding about choosing a science and engineering career path. In tandem with these activities, a variety of information, including information on accessing female researchers and other role models, is made available for the students themselves as well as their parents and teachers with the aim of increasing their interest in and understanding of science and engineering.

31. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to integrate gender perspectives into policies and programs for disaster risk reduction, climate resilience and mitigation?

- Supported women's participation and leadership, including those affected by disasters, in disaster reduction, climate resilience and mitigation policies, programs and projects
- Strengthened the evidence base and raised awareness about the disproportionate vulnerability of women and girls to the impact of environmental degradation and disasters
- Promoted access of women in situations of disaster to services such as relief payments, disaster insurance and compensation
- Introduced or strengthened and implemented gender-responsive laws and policies related to disaster risk reduction, climate resilience and mitigation (e.g. disaster laws addressing vulnerability of women in disaster)

Japan is geologically and geographically prone to different types of natural disasters, including earthquakes, tsunamis, windstorms, tornadoes, heavy rains, mudslides, floods, landslides, flood debris, tidal waves, volcanic eruptions and heavy snowfalls. Moreover, the extent of damage caused by these disasters is considered to be determined by both natural phenomena such as earthquakes, tsunamis, winds, floods, etc. (natural factors) and how well society is prepared to respond to these phenomena (social factors). For instance, natural disasters affect people differently depending on their social position, which is affected by factors such as gender, age and disability. It is therefore important to take measures to mitigate the difficulties that arise from social factors at the time of natural disaster.

The Great East Japan Earthquake that occurred in March 2011 gave rise to a number of issues due to a failure to ensure inadequate participation by women at various stages of decision-making processes. For example, the different needs of men and women were not sufficiently taken into consideration. Since social issues become more conspicuous during times of disaster as compared with normal times, actions taken from the perspective of gender equality in normal times form the basis of disaster prevention and the smooth progress of recovery. Bearing in mind that men and women are affected differently at the time of a disaster, it is essential that we should be prepared for natural disasters, operate disaster shelters and aid victims. It was against such backdrop that the government in 2013 established the Guidelines for Disaster Planning, Response and Reconstruction from a Gender-equal Perspective, setting forth the basic actions to be taken by local governments at each stage of disaster response.

In the Fourth Basic Plan, the government decided to set apart those items related to disaster prevention and recovery and address them in a separate policy. Specifically, it is recognized that women are performing important roles in all areas of disaster prevention, emergency measures and reconstruction/recovery. As a result, with a view to adopting policies from the perspective of gender

equality in regard to disaster prevention measures, the government is taking actions to increase women's participation in policy formulation and at the actual site of disaster prevention, aiming to encourage women to take part in the process of decision-making for disaster prevention and recovery and to assume leadership roles. The government has encouraged local governments to increase the percentage of female members in the local disaster management council and reflect a gender-equal perspective in the formulation and revision of a local disaster management plan.

Along with these initiatives, the National government is expediting specific measures taken by local governments. This involves conducting a number of projects designed to support local governments in the effective use of specialists in the development of training programs based on the Guidelines and in the implementation of training sessions and seminars for internal purposes and for citizens.

Consequently, as of April 2018, the number of municipal disaster management councils that include no female members decreased by 35 to 385 as compared to the same month of the previous year. Meanwhile, female members of prefectural disaster management councils accounted for 15.7% (an increase of 0.8% on a year-on-year basis as of April 2018) while female members of municipal disaster management councils rose to 8.4% (an increase of 0.3% on the same basis).

The Basic Disaster Management Plan (revised most recently in May 2019) is drafted and revised by the National Disaster Management Council in accordance with the Disaster Countermeasures Basic Act. The Plan calls for the expansion of women's participation in policy and decision-making processes for disaster prevention as well as at the actual site of disaster prevention and operation of designated disaster shelters. It also includes the establishment of a disaster prevention system incorporating wide-ranging views and encompassing gender equality. In addition, the Plan urges local governments to facilitate women's participation at every site and in every organization of reconstruction and recovery from the standpoint of gender equality, and to give due consideration to gender perspectives such as the different needs of men and women in operating designated shelters.

In furtherance of these steps, we consider infant formula in liquid form to be useful in the event of a disaster. It can eliminate fears of contamination and help mothers feed their babies more easily while they are away from home, during the night or when they are ill. The National Government therefore urged relevant government agencies and manufacturers to promote the establishment of procedural standards for the manufacture and sale in the domestic market. As a result, the sale of infant formula in liquid form started in March 2019 and its use is spreading.

These actions are rated favorably by civil society. Japan will further augment the policy measures for reconstruction and recovery from the perspective of gender equality, taking into account the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 as well as international trends.

Section Three: National institutions and processes

32 . What is your country's current national machinery for gender equality and the empowerment of women? Please name it and describe its location within Government.

The national machinery for gender equality and women's empowerment in Japan is the Cabinet Office, headed by the Prime Minister, which is complemented by the Council for Gender Equality set up within the Cabinet Office as an important policy-making unit.

(1) Cabinet Office

The Act for Establishment of the Cabinet Office stipulates that the Cabinet Office should take charge of the following:

- (i) Affairs related to the designing, planning and overall coordination necessary for integrating the policy measures drawn up by each administrative agency with regard to the items concerning basic policies for facilitating the realization of a gender-equal society.
- (ii) Affairs related to the preparation and promotion of the Basic Plan for Gender Equality and affairs related to the designing, planning and implementation of those related to facilitating the realization of a gender-equal society that are not administered by the other ministries.

Moreover, the Act for Establishment of the Cabinet Office stipulates as follows:

- In cases where it is especially necessary in order to integrate policy measures drawn up by each administrative agency concerning important policies of the Cabinet, the Prime Minister can appoint a Minister of State for Special Missions to assist the Prime Minister.
- When deemed necessary, the Minister of State for Special Missions can advise the head of the relevant administrative agency and provide recommendations to the Prime Minister.

The Minister of State for Gender Equality has been appointed in accordance with these provisions.

(2) Council for Gender Equality

The Act for the Establishment of the Cabinet Office sets forth the establishment of the Council for Gender Equality in the Cabinet Office pursuant to the Basic Act for Gender Equal Society as an important policy-making unit in order to contribute to the designing, planning and overall coordination necessary for integrating each administrative agency with regard to major policies of the Cabinet. Please be noted that, there are only five important policy-making units, including the Council for Gender Equality those concerned with economic and fiscal operations and scientific and technological innovation.

Headed by the Chief Cabinet Secretary and made up of 12 relevant Ministers and 12 academic experts, the Council for Gender Equality is composed of 25 members. Moreover, the Basic Act stipulates that male and female academic experts must each account for no less than 40% of the total number of academic experts.

The Basic Act stipulates that the Council for Gender Equality should perform the following functions:

- Offer recommendations on the Basic Plan for Gender Equality to the Prime Minister

- Conduct surveys and consider basic policies and important matters concerning facilitating the realization of a gender-equal society in response to requests from the Prime Minister or relevant Ministers
- Conduct surveys and consider basic policies and important matters concerning facilitating the realization of a gender-equal society, even in the absence of such an aforementioned request, and offer recommendations to the Prime Minister or relevant Ministers when deemed necessary
- Monitor the implementation of policy measures for advancing the realization of a gender-equal society carried out by the government, assess the effects of the government's policy measures on the realization of a gender-equal society and offer recommendations to the Prime Minister or relevant Ministers when deemed necessary
- Request the heads of the relevant agencies to submit data and other documents required for oversight or assessment, state recommendations, provide explanations or render cooperation when deemed necessary to carry out the assigned tasks.

33. Is the head of the national machinery a member of the institutional process for SDG implementation (e.g. Inter-ministerial coordinating office, commission or committees)?

YES / NO

As stated in response to question 1 in Section 1, the SDGs Promotion Headquarters was established inside the Cabinet in May 2016, aiming to facilitate close mutual coordination among relevant administrative agencies and implement policy measures toward the SDGs in an integrated and effective manner.

The Headquarters is headed by the Prime Minister, who also leads the Cabinet Office, which is tasked with the realization of gender equality and women's empowerment. Its members include the Chief Cabinet Secretary, who chairs the Council for Gender Equality, and the Minister of State for Gender Equality as well as all other Ministers of State.

34. Are there formal mechanisms in place for different stakeholders to participate in the implementation and monitoring of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?

YES / NO

- a)** Which of the following stakeholders participate formally in national coordination mechanisms established to contribute to the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?

Beijing Declaration and PfA

- Civil society organizations
- Women's rights organizations
- Academia and think tanks
- Faith-based organizations
- Parliaments/parliamentary committees

2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

- Civil society organizations
- Women's rights organizations
- Academia and think tanks
- Faith-based organizations
- Parliaments/parliamentary committees

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> ●Private sector
<input type="checkbox"/> ●United Nations system
<input type="checkbox"/> ●Other actors, please specify
Local organizations including the National Governors' Association and Japan Association of City Mayors
Economic organizations including the Keidanren Japan Business Federation and the Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry
Labor associations including JTUC-RENGO Japanese Trade Union Confederation
Educational associations including the Japan Association of National Universities and National Association of Upper Secondary School Principals
• | <input type="checkbox"/> ●Private sector
<input type="checkbox"/> ●United Nations system
<input type="checkbox"/> Other actors, please specify
Keidanren Japan Business Federation and JTUC-RENGO Japanese Trade Union Confederation |
|--|---|

b) Do you have mechanisms in place to ensure that women and girls from marginalized groups can participate and that their concerns are reflected in these processes?

YES / NO

In Japan, it places importance on collaboration with members of civil society and various other stakeholders toward the realization of gender equality and women's empowerment.

The Liaison Conference for the Promotion of Gender Equality brings together representatives of the economic, labor and educational communities, the media, women's organizations, NPOs/NGOs and academia. The roughly 100 members exchange information and views on gender equality and women's empowerment in every area and on every level, forming a cooperative network.

The Planning Committee of the Liaison Conference for the Promotion of Gender Equality frequently holds the hearings in order to solicit views from the public at large.

c) Please describe how stakeholders have contributed to the preparation of the present national report.

The entire government has been involved in the preparation of this report, with the Cabinet Office working with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other relevant ministries and agencies. Animated discussions have been also conducted at meetings of the Planning Committee of the Liaison Conference for the Promotion of Gender Equality.

The Liaison Conference for the Promotion of Gender Equality has conducted the hearings on two occasions to enter into dialogues and exchange views with a broad cross-section of civil society concerning the items to be contained in the report and its draft. A wide variety of views have been offered by the panelists who took part in these hearings as stakeholders representing civil society organizations, women's rights organizations, academia and think tanks, the private sector, the United Nations system, etc. together with those who participated from the general public.

Using its e-mail newsletters, the Gender Equality Bureau of the Cabinet Office solicited opinions from across civil society concerning the rating of efforts made by the government over the last five years, the

areas that need to be addressed and the tasks that should be tackled over the next five years. These opinions are included in this report.

The details of dialogues with civil society are shown in the Appendix3.

35. Is gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls included as a key priority in the national plan/strategy for SDG implementation?

- Yes
- No
- There is no national plan/strategy for SDG implementation

In December 2016, the SDGs Promotion Headquarters (headed by the Prime Minister) formulated the SDGs Implementation Guiding Principles. The following items that are included in these Principles have received a fair assessment from civil society:

- Respect for human rights is a universal value in the international community. The realization of gender equality and the mainstreaming of a gender perspective, along with respect for human rights, are indispensable for achieving the goals of the SDGs as values that cut across all sections of society. We need to consistently uphold these perspectives in all of the efforts Japan makes and reflects them in policy measures.
- The enhancement of gender statistics is extremely important for the realization of gender equality and the mainstreaming of a gender perspective. Thus, Japan is striving to collect gender-specific data to the greatest extent possible in pursuit of the SDGs.

As specific steps to achieve the SDGs, the Implementation Guiding Principles call for the promotion of policy measures with a focus on the Fourth Basic Plan for Gender Equality. In addition, the Principles encompass the implementation of development plans to support developing countries in their efforts to achieve Goal 5 of the SDGs and the National Action Plan for Women, Peace and Security.

Section Four: Data and statistics

36. What are the top three areas in which your country has made most progress over the past five years when it comes to gender statistics at the national level?

- Promulgated laws, regulations, or statistical program/strategy setting out the development of gender statistics
- Established an inter-agency coordination mechanism on gender statistics (e.g., technical working group, inter-agency committee)
- Used more gender-sensitive data in the formulation of policy and implementation of programs and projects
- Re-processed existing data (e.g., censuses and surveys) to produce more disaggregated and/or new gender statistics
- Conducted new surveys to produce national baseline information on specialized topics (e.g., time use, gender-based violence, asset ownership, poverty, disability)
- Improved administrative-based or alternative data sources to address gender data gaps
- Produced knowledge products on gender statistics (e.g., user-friendly reports, policy briefs, research papers)
- Developed a centralized web-based database and/or dashboard on gender statistics
- Engaged in capacity building to strengthen the use of gender statistics (e.g., trainings, statistical appreciation seminars)
- Other

In Japan, Japan recognizes that in order to promote gender equality and women's empowerment, it is important to enhance statistics (gender statistics) to keep track of the circumstances and conditions surrounding men and women in an objective manner.

The "3rd Term Master Plan Concerning the Development of Official Statistics" (Cabinet decision in March, 2018) notes that the UN Statistics Division has indicated the importance of taking in the gender perspective in the process of producing various statistics in its Gender Statistics manual. The Master Plan also notes that the "Fourth Basic Plan for Gender Equality" and the "SDGs Implementation Guiding Principles" call for relevant efforts including comprehension of sex-disaggregated data from the viewpoint of enhancing gender statistics.

Based on the Fourth Basic Plan, when conducting various surveys including the compilation of administrative operations statistics, the Cabinet Office and the ministries do accordingly collect gender-specific data to the greatest extent possible to enable comprehension and analysis of the data by age and prefecture. For example, in FY2017, the Cabinet Office revised, from a gender perspective, the items to be included in the Survey on violence between men and women.

At the same time, the Cabinet Office and the ministries are promoting the secondary use of important statistical information on gender equality in accordance with the Statistics Act and publishing it for general public consumption in an easy-to-understand manner. The Cabinet Office and the relevant ministries are also making efforts to indicate the levels of achievement of the numeric goals set for various plans in a gender-specific way to the greatest extent possible.

Aiming to enhance gender-specific data regarding local government, the Cabinet Office and the relevant ministries collect such data in the form of a variety of statistical information to the greatest extent possible to keep track of the circumstances and conditions surrounding men and women in an objective manner. The data so gathered by the central government is also provided to local governments.

In addition, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications holds lectures on gender statistics each year for central and local government employees.

37. Out of the following which are your country's top three priorities for strengthening national gender statistics over the next five years?

- Design of laws, regulations, or statistical program/strategy promoting the development of gender statistics
- Establishment of an inter-agency coordination mechanism on gender statistics (e.g., technical working group, inter-agency committee)
- Use more gender-sensitive data in the formulation of policy and implementation of programs and projects
- Re-processing of existing data (e.g., censuses and surveys) to produce more disaggregated and/or new gender statistics
- Conduct of new surveys to produce national baseline information on specialized topics (e.g., time use, gender-based violence, asset ownership, poverty, disability)
- Greater utilization and/or improvement of administrative-based or alternative data sources to address gender data gaps
- Production of knowledge products on gender statistics (e.g., user-friendly reports, policy briefs, research papers)
- Development of a centralized web-based database and/or dashboard on gender statistics
- Institutionalization of users-producers' dialogues mechanisms
- Statistical capacity building of users to increase statistical appreciation on and use of gender statistics (e.g., trainings, statistical appreciation seminars)
- Other

Based on the 3rd Term Master Plan of Official Statistics and in reference to the Gender Statistics manual published by the UN Statistics Division, taking into account political needs, the government shall continue to comprehend sex-disaggregated data to the extent possible and promote production and provision of statistics that contribute to comprehension and analysis of data by age and by prefecture as well.

The Cabinet Office is planning to launch practical surveys to keep track of the actual situation of and issues affecting local areas through the development and effective use of gender statistics by local governments.

38. Have you defined a national set of indicators for monitoring progress on the SDGs?

- Yes
- No

39. Has data collection and compilation on SDG 5 indicators and on gender-specific indicators under other SDGs begun?

- Yes
- No

In August 2019, Japan compiled and published⁵ data on 125 global indicators (117 when repeated indicators are excluded) out of a total of 244 global indicators (232 when repeated indicators are excluded) that were adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in July 2017.

With regard to the indicators related to Goal 5 of the SDGs, eight global indicators out of 14 have been set, with no assignment of priority, in a manner consistent with the achievement targets⁶ contained in the Fourth Basic Plan. The government will continue to collect data related to these achievement targets on a regular basis and publish them.

40. Which of the following disaggregations is routinely provided by major surveys in your country?

- Geographic location
- Income
- Sex
- Age
- Education
- Marital status
- Race/ethnicity
- Migratory status
- Disability
- Other characteristics relevant in national contexts

⁵ <https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/gaiko/oda/sdgs/statistics/index.html>

SDG Global Indicators (in Japanese and English); website for Japan SDGs Action Platform

⁶ http://www.gender.go.jp/about/danjo/seika_shihyo/pdf/numerical_targets_2019.pdf

Numerical Targets and Updated Figures of the Fourth Basic Plan for Gender Equity