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## **National report submitted pursuant to Human Rights Council resolutions 5/1 and 16/21\***

**Japan**

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\* The present document is being issued without formal editing.



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### Annex

Recommendations accepted for follow-up in the third cycle of the UPR in 2017

## **I. Process for the preparation of the national report**

### **A. Introduction**

1. Building on the principle of the Constitution that upholds respect for fundamental human rights, Japan has been consolidating a democratic political system and promoting policies to defend and promote human rights and fundamental freedom as universal values. The Government of Japan (GOJ) welcomes the opportunity to participate in the fourth cycle of the Universal and Periodic Review (UPR) to report the progress made in defending and promoting human rights in our country.

### **B. Methodology**

2. The GOJ prepared this fourth National Report, following the resolutions and decisions adopted by the Human Rights Council (HRC) (A/HRC/RES/16/21 and A/HRC/DEC/17/119) and the Fourth Cycle Guidance Note on the National Report. The report was prepared with a focus on the progress of the human rights situation in Japan, including the implementation of the 145 recommendations, listed in the Annex, that the GOJ agreed to follow-up on during the third cycle in 2017, as well as on Japan's international contribution, including the promotion of women's human rights, and efforts to realize the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The report shows the recommendation numbers as subheadings.

### **C. National follow-up process**

3. Given that the ultimate objective of the UPR is to improve the human rights situation in each country, we consider it important to undertake measures to improve the human rights situation, including voluntary follow-up toward that end. From that perspective, the GOJ has translated the outcome documents of the Third Cycle in 2017 into Japanese and made them available on the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) and also made public the follow-up document as of April 2020.

### **D. Inter-organizational and civil society consultations**

4. MOFA coordinated preparation of this report with the involvement of a number of ministries and agencies including the following: the Cabinet Secretariat; the Cabinet Office; the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (MIC); the Ministry of Justice (MOJ); the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT); the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (MHLW); the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport (MLIT); and the National Police Agency (NPA). Furthermore, the GOJ sought the involvement of civil society in drafting this report, calling for inputs from the general public and also holding an online dialogue on 2 September 2022. The GOJ utilized MOFA's web site as well as social media including MOFA's Facebook and Twitter pages to solicit inputs.

5. The GOJ continues to attach importance to engaging in dialogue with civil society and has utilized various such opportunities as informal meetings and solicitation of public comments on preparation of State Party reports on the implementation of human rights treaties and participation in meetings with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to receive petitions on existing measures. The GOJ intends to continue such engagements with civil society.

## **II. Follow-up actions in line with UPR recommendations from the previous cycle**

6. In accordance with the resolution adopted by the HRC on the UPR (see paragraph 2), Part II reports the status of efforts undertaken by the GOJ and progress of the follow-up

actions especially regarding recommendations from the previous UPR cycle on which the GOJ has agreed to follow-up.

## **A. Fully implemented measures**

### **1. Conclusion of human rights treaties and others**

7. Japan became a State Party to the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, Supplementing the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (Trafficking in Persons Protocol) in July 2017 (Recommendation 16). See II.A.3.(d) for additional information on Japan's efforts to combat trafficking in persons.

### **2. Prevention of any forms of discrimination and elimination of any discriminatory provisions (including human rights education and training) (Recommendations 51–55, 68, 74, 78, 79, 85, 146)**

8. Article 14, paragraph 1, of the Constitution of Japan states that “[a]ll of the people are equal under the law and there shall be no discrimination in political, economic or social relations because of race, creed, sex, social status or family origin,” thus stipulating equality under the law and prohibiting unreasonable discrimination. Based on this principle, in areas that are closely linked to people's lives and highly public in nature such as employment, education, healthcare, and transportation, relevant laws and regulations in respective areas provide for broad prohibition of discrimination. For example, regarding education, Article 26 of the Constitution and Article 4 of the Basic Act on Educations stipulate that all people shall have opportunities that correspond to their abilities to not be subjected to discrimination on account of race, creed, sex, social status, economic position, or family origin. (See II, A.3 and 4).

*Human rights education and awareness-raising (Recommendations 51–52, 68, 78–80, 85, 128)*

9. Japan has been undertaking measures to promote human rights education in all settings including schools, communities, and workplaces. Furthermore, human rights education in schools is promoted in accordance with the “Act on the Promotion of Human Rights Education and Human Rights Awareness-Raising” (enacted in 2000) and the “Basic Plan on Human Rights Education and Human Rights Awareness-Raising” (approved by the Cabinet in 2002 and partially amended in 2011), which was formulated pursuant to the Act.

10. MEXT convenes meetings for persons in charge of human rights education, including those at prefectural boards of education (BOE), and also provides training to develop and improve the qualifications of social education officers, who play a central role in leading social education, with the aim of enhancing human rights education in schools and in society. MEXT is also conducting a human rights education research promotion project to improve teaching methods on human rights education in schools. As part of the project, a method to measure project outcome is being studied. MEXT intends to continue such efforts to raise awareness on and educate about human rights.

11. Furthermore, MEXT is working to eliminate stereotypes of gender roles and unconscious bias and to promote education to prevent children from becoming perpetrators, victims and bystanders of sexual crimes and sexual violence.

12. The human rights bodies of the MOJ have been carrying out various human rights awareness-raising activities, including a “Human Rights Week,” to promote and raise awareness on the idea of respect for human rights among the general public. In addition, these human rights bodies also offer training for persons engaged in formulating policies to raise awareness on human rights and others engaged in work related to human rights.

*Human rights education and training for civil servants*

13. In Japan, the GOJ provides detailed human rights training to civil servants, including on the rights of women and children, so that they acquire a full understanding of the principles of the various international human right treaties.

14. The NPA provides human rights education and education for ensuring proper execution of their respective duties with due regard to human rights in line with the nature of their fields of expertise to police personnel on various occasions, including at the time of hiring and promotion, as well as on-the-job training at police stations and other places.

15. All prospective judges and public prosecutors must undertake legal training before obtaining judicial qualification, and the training incorporates a curriculum that aims to deepen their awareness of human rights issues, including human rights treaties. For judges, various trainings that they take after their appointment are on human rights issues, including human rights treaties. For prosecutors, in addition to the legal training, lectures are offered on human rights treaties, on protection of and support for victims of crimes, and on consideration for women as part of various trainings that they are required to take at the time of their appointment and also in accordance with their years of experience, and these efforts will continue to be made. Various trainings are offered to staff members of correctional institutions, including prison officers, to raise their awareness of human rights and to ensure respect for the human rights of inmates. Lectures on human rights are given to probation officers and rehabilitation coordinators as part of various trainings provided according to their years of experience, etc., in an effort to improve awareness of human rights among staff. For immigration control officers, in addition to the training specializing in human rights, lectures on human rights are given as part of training provided based on their years of service.

16. For public officers in general, for example, the MOJ provides training for national civil servants and prefectural and municipal officials engaged in human rights awareness-raising. The MIC also held human rights educational programs at the Local Autonomy College for prefectural and municipal officials twice during fiscal year (FY) 2021 and plans to conduct the same programs twice in FY2022, with one already having been held.

### **3. Rights of specific persons and groups**

17. The human rights bodies of the MOJ carry out various human rights awareness-raising activities to promote the principle of respect for human rights among the public and to deepen its understanding of human rights.

#### *(a) Persons with disabilities (Recommendations 197, 199–204)*

18. The Basic Act for Persons with Disabilities, which the GOJ amended in line with the principles of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), stipulates that no person “may commit an act of discrimination or any other act which violates interests or rights against a person with a disability on the basis of the disability.” Furthermore, in accordance with each basic principle of the Basic Act, the GOJ is to implement comprehensive and systematic measures to support the independence and social participation of persons with disabilities toward the realization of such principles, and various government-wide initiatives are being undertaken based on the Fourth Basic Plan for Persons with Disabilities, approved by the Cabinet in 2018.

19. Administrative organizations and private businesses in Japan are taking appropriate actions to eliminate discrimination on the basis of disability, including prohibiting unfair discriminatory treatment and providing reasonable accommodation, based on the Act for Eliminating Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities (Disability Discrimination Elimination Act), which came into force in April 2016. The Act was amended in May 2021 to make the provision on reasonable accommodation by businesses obligatory. Currently, the amended Act is in the process of being brought into force.

20. The Cabinet Office has designated 3–9 December of each year as Persons with Disabilities Week under the Basic Act for Persons with Disabilities to broaden public interest in and understanding of disability and people with disabilities and also to promote social participation of persons with disabilities. The Cabinet Office conducts active awareness-

raising and public relations activities by holding a concentrated number of nationwide, public-private collaborative events before, during, and after the Week.

21. The Cabinet Office, in its Fourth Basic Plan for Persons with Disabilities, also states that toward the realization of an inclusive society, efforts will be made to engage in proactive publicity and awareness-raising activities from the perspective of improving accessibility in all aspects of society.

22. Furthermore, the human rights bodies of the MOJ have set “Eliminate Prejudice and Discrimination on the Grounds of Disabilities” as one of the priority targets of their human rights awareness-raising activities and are conducting various human rights awareness-raising activities.

23. The GOJ, in accordance with the Act on Providing Comprehensive Support for the Daily Life and Life in Society of Persons with Disabilities, provides various forms of assistance to promote the social participation of persons with disabilities, such as: provision of mobility assistance; provision of welfare devices, including wheelchairs and prosthetic legs; dispatch of sign language interpreters; and provision of places in which activities can be conducted.

24. In terms of medical care, continuous treatment for mental disorders is positioned as medical care for services and support for persons with disabilities (outpatient mental health care), and part or all of the medical costs are covered by public funds to improve medical and rehabilitation care for persons with mental disorders. The GOJ places importance on ensuring the provision of high quality and appropriate medical care based on the characteristics of the relevant disability and other mental and physical conditions of persons with mental disabilities. For this purpose, MHLW has formulated guidelines that set out the direction to be pursued by all parties involved in health and medical care and welfare for persons with mental disabilities.

25. In education, various measures are being taken based on the principle of the Basic Law for Persons with Disabilities and other relevant laws and regulations. Furthermore, in order to ensure educational access for persons with disabilities and to provide instruction that most appropriately meets the educational needs of each individual, the GOJ is developing a diverse range of continuous learning opportunities, such as regular classes, regular classes with special support services, special needs classes, and special needs schools are being developed. For higher education, the GOJ has held a Study Group on Support for Students with Disabilities in Education, compiled a report on the concept of “unfair discriminatory treatment” and “reasonable accommodation” as stipulated in the Disability Discrimination Elimination Act, and disseminated the report to universities and other institutions. The GOJ also implements necessary measures to improve the environment for accepting students with disabilities and to promote cooperation among related universities/institutions. The GOJ is also undertaking efforts to create an environment where students can continue their studies throughout their lives, even after graduation.

26. Regarding employment, the Act to Facilitate the Employment of Persons with Disabilities stipulates the prohibition of discrimination against persons with disabilities in employment, the obligation to provide reasonable accommodation, and relevant dispute resolution procedures. Specifically, by establishing an obligatory system for the employment of persons with disabilities, Public Employment Security Offices, in cooperation with relevant organizations such as the Employment and Living Support Centre for Persons with Disabilities and the Regional Vocational Centre for Persons with Disabilities, take the lead in providing consistent support for both persons with disabilities and employers. This support is provided throughout the employment process and ranges from employment readiness support to support for retention once in the workplace. As of 1 June 2021, the number of persons with disabilities employed in the private sector was 598,000, the highest for 18 consecutive years.

(b) *Women (Recommendations 15, 74, 75, 125, 146–149, 152–176, 178, 182–185, 212)*

27. As stated in II.1.(2), Article 14 of the Constitution of Japan stipulates that all citizens are equal under the law and are not discriminated against on the basis of gender. The Basic Act for Gender Equal Society stipulates that “the formation of a gender-equal society shall

be carried out [omission] not treating men and women in a way that discriminates against them based on gender [omission].” (Article 3). The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, which defines “discrimination against women” in Article 1, has the same effect as domestic laws.

28. The Act on Securing, Etc. of Equal Opportunity and Treatment between Men and Women in Employment (“Equal Employment Opportunity Act”) prohibits direct and indirect discrimination between men and women in the field of employment, including women foreign workers, and prohibits dismissal and other disadvantageous treatment of women workers on the grounds of pregnancy and childbirth, providing correctional guidance to employers in violation of the Act.

29. In December 2020, the GOJ formulated the Fifth Basic Plan for Gender Equality, a five-year plan, and is working to increase women’s participation in all fields, including politics, the economy, and public administration according to the basic principles set forth under the Basic Act for Gender Equal Society, which include: respect for the dignity of men and women’ as individuals; prohibition of discriminatory treatment based on gender; and securing opportunities for men and women to exercise their abilities as individuals. The GOJ has been making continuous efforts on gender equality including by annually setting policy priorities for women’s empowerment and gender equality.

30. See II. A.2, paragraph 8 on women’s and girls’ education (Recommendations 146–149).

31. Regarding the elimination of discrimination against women (Recommendation 15), the human rights bodies of the MOJ have set “Protect Women’s Human Rights” as one of the priority targets of their human rights awareness-raising activities and are conducting various human rights awareness-raising activities. (See III.C. “Hosting the World Assembly for Women (WAW!)”)

32. With regard, in particular, to raising the minimum marriage age for women (Recommendations 182 and 183), a bill, which included provisions on lowering the age of majority in the Civil Code to 18 years and setting the minimum marriage age to 18 for both men and women, was introduced to the Diet in March 2018. The bill was passed in June 2018 and came into effect on 1 April 2022.

Support for and protection of victims of violence against women (Recommendations 78, 122, 125, 152, 153, 164, 174–176, 178, 179, 181)

33. Violence against women and children (including domestic violence (DV) and child sexual abuse) is subject to criminal punishment, including for homicide, injury, assault, forcible sexual intercourse, and indecency through compulsion, and appropriate dispositions are carried out based on each case.

34. The Cabinet Office has designated the period from 12<sup>th</sup> through 25<sup>th</sup> November (the latter day being the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women established by the United Nations) as the annual “Campaign for Eliminating Violence against Women” period, and is further strengthening efforts to address violence against women, including raising awareness, in coordination and cooperation with the national and local governments, women’s groups, and other relevant organizations. To ensure that foreign nationals who have been subjected to harm have immediate means of redress and protection, the Cabinet Office has prepared and distributed information materials for foreign victims to relevant organizations, and also provides useful information for supporting victims of domestic violence on the Internet, including information in eight languages. The status of consultation at the Spousal Violence Counseling and Support Centers established at local governments are also published, and surveys are conducted, including on the number of consultations. In April 2020, a “Domestic Violence (DV) Hotline Plus” was set up to provide consultations via Social Networking Services (SNS), or online chat, in 10 foreign languages. Furthermore, SNS consultations on sexual violence is available in 10 foreign languages.

35. The Cabinet Office has also developed the “Policy for Strengthening Measures against Sexual Offences and Sexual Violence,” which was decided in June 2020, regarding such issues as forced appearance in pornographic materials, JK Business<sup>1</sup>, date rape drugs, sexual

acts while intoxicated, SNS-facilitated sexual offending, sexual harassment, and molestation, which mainly lead to sexual exploitation of young women. In accordance with the Policy, every April (the month that marks the beginning of a new academic year and is therefore an appropriate time to raise youth awareness on victims of sexual offenses) is designated as the Youth Sexual Violence Prevention Month, and intensive public information and awareness-raising activities are conducted in cooperation with relevant government agencies.

36. As part of its various efforts to support and protect victims of violence against women and children, the MOJ actively provides human rights counseling through dedicated counseling telephones (Women's Rights Hotline and Children's Rights Hotline) and letters with a stamped envelope (Children's Rights SOS Mini-Letters) that are distributed to elementary and junior high school students nationwide by Legal Affairs Bureau staff and Human Rights Volunteers at Legal Affairs Bureaus nationwide<sup>2</sup>.

37. The Japan Legal Support Center provides victims of DV, stalking, and child abuse with necessary legal advice on prevention of harm in accordance with the Comprehensive Legal Support Act. The Center also provides information on the legal system and consultation services related to victim support as well as referral to lawyers with knowledge and experience in supporting crime victims via its Crime Victim Support Line and at its offices.

38. Placing top priority on the safety of victims, the police pursue coordinated responses to stalking, DV cases, and other similar cases, such as prevention of harm by apprehending perpetrators and taking protective measures for victims, by making full use of the Anti-Stalking Act, the Act on the Prevention of Spousal Violence and the Protection of Victims, and other relevant laws and regulations. The GOJ is also promoting measures in cooperation with relevant institutions and organizations based on the Comprehensive Measures against Stalking and the Fifth Basic Plan for Gender Equality. Furthermore, the Anti-Stalking Act was amended in 2021 in order to implement measures such as expanding the range of behaviors that are subject to regulation.

39. The Immigration Services Agency (ISA), when identifying a foreigner who is a victim of DV, ensures physical protection of the victim in cooperation with relevant agencies and also takes humanitarian measures to victims who are in violation of the Immigration Control Act due to DV, by giving sufficient consideration to the circumstances of each case.

Promotion of women's advancement and participation in decision-making processes and measures to address wage gap (Recommendations 154–162, 166–173, 184–185)

40. Japan has formulated the Fifth Basic Plan for Gender Equality and is working to increase the participation of women in all areas, including politics, the economy and public administration.

41. Based on such measures as the expansion of the scope of employers obliged to formulate plans of action under the Act on the Promotion of Female Participation and Career Advancement in the Workplace, the GOJ supports employers' efforts to promote women's advancement, including through consultations, and also publishes information including good practices on the government website, Database of Companies Promoting Women's Advancement.

42. The GOJ also discloses information on the gender wage gap under the Act, and from July 2022 requires companies with more than 300 regularly-employed workers to identify and disclose differences in wages between men and women.

(c) *Children (Recommendations 126–127, 153, 164, 174–176, 178, 186–189, 191–196)*

43. As noted above, the human rights bodies of MOJ continue to actively provide human rights counseling through toll-free, dedicated hotlines set up at legal affairs bureaus nationwide, and letters with a stamped envelope that are distributed to elementary and junior high school students nationwide. Consultation services are also provided at child guidance centers for families and others on issues affecting children, including protective consultations on abuse and delinquency. In addition, necessary support, such as temporary protection, is provided in cases of suspected violence against children by their custodians, including sexual abuse.



44. Based on the Comprehensive Plan to Strengthen the Prevention of Child Abuse and the Fundamental Strengthening of Measures to Prevent Child Abuse decided in December 2018 and March 2019, respectively, the GOJ is working on strengthening measures to prevent child abuse. In September 2022, the GOJ formulated new comprehensive measures, including future strengthening of the capacity of child guidance centers and local municipalities. In addition, based on the amendment to the law prohibiting corporal punishment, including by guardians, which came into force in 2020, the GOJ is conducting public information and awareness-raising activities for the public on child-rearing without corporal punishment. In the field of education, awareness is raised at such meetings as those of student guidance officers that corporal punishment of pupils by teachers and staff is prohibited under Article 11 of the School Education Law. For sports club activities, guidelines were formulated in 2013 and 2018, and efforts to eradicate corporal punishment and harassment are requested every academic year through notifications to BOE and at meetings of those in charge of the boards, and all instructors involved in school physical education activities are to ensure thorough implementation of these guidelines. Guidelines were also formulated regarding cultural club activities in 2018, and by disseminating them through BOE, these guidelines call on principals and cultural club instructors to eradicate corporal punishment and harassment in a thorough manner. Furthermore, in June 2022, the Child Welfare Act was amended to strengthen the system for comprehensive support for families with children.

45. Violence against children (including DV and sexual abuse) is subject to criminal punishment, including for homicide, injury, assault, forcible sexual intercourse, and indecency through compulsion, and appropriate dispositions are carried out based on each case. In addition, the GOJ provides victims of DV, stalking, and child abuse with the necessary legal consultation on prevention of harm.

46. On addressing sexual exploitation of children, based on the Basic Plan on Measures against Child Sexual Exploitation of 2022, which was formulated by the Ministerial Meeting Concerning Measures against Crime in May 2022, relevant ministries and agencies have been comprehensively promoting various measures, including prevention of and crackdowns on distribution and viewing of child pornographic images on the Internet, and protection of victimized children.

47. Regarding support for victimized youth, the police provide ongoing counselling and other services. This support is provided by juvenile guidance personnel and other staff from the Juvenile Support Centers set up at police headquarters and at other places taking part in this initiative. Investigative agencies also take appropriate measures based on the law and evidence when there are cases that need to be dealt with as criminal cases. Furthermore, a crackdown on malicious child sexual exploitation offences, such as child pornography offences, is being intensified. There were 2,969 arrests for child pornography offenses and 627 arrests for child prostitution offenses in 2021.

48. Regarding the Hague Convention, the Amended Act for Implementation of Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction (the Implementation Act) came into force in April 2020 with the aim of making the procedures for the compulsory execution of return of children more effective. In light of the Implementation Act and in close cooperation with relevant agencies in Japan, efforts are being made to implement the Convention.

49. On the social and legal position of children born out of wedlock (Recommendation 188), the 2013 amendment to the Civil Code made the inheritance shares equal between children born in and out of wedlock.

(d) *Measures to combat trafficking in persons (Recommendations 116–124)*

50. Japan has made serious and continuous efforts to ensure proper domestic implementation of the *United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime* (the Palermo Convention) and the *Trafficking in Persons Protocol*. Japan has also criminalized all acts that fall under trafficking in persons, as defined in the TIP Protocol, by an amendment to the Penal Code in 2005, which created and developed penalties (such as the insertion of Article 226), for acts that were not punishable under domestic law at the time.

Furthermore, based on *Japan's 2014 Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Persons*, which was formulated in December 2014, the GOJ, centered around *the Council for the Promotion of Measures to Combat Trafficking in Persons*, comprised of Cabinet Ministers of relevant ministries, and with the coordination and cooperation of relevant ministries and agencies, is implementing various measures, including prevention, crackdowns, acknowledging cases, identifying victims without fail and provision of proper protection and support, eradication, and the approval and publication of an annual report on the status of efforts by relevant ministries and agencies to combat trafficking in persons. Moreover, measures to protect victims are appropriately taken in accordance with the *Methods to Deal with Trafficking in Persons (Measures for the Protection of Victims)*, which was agreed in 2011. Item (i) of Article 63 of the Employment Security Act provides for penalties for persons who have carried out or been engaged in employment placement, recruitment of a worker, or worker supply by means of assault, intimidation, unlawful confinement, or any other means of wrongful restraint to a person's mental or physical freedom.

51. The GOJ also works with relevant foreign government agencies, international organizations, and NGOs to prevent and combat trafficking in persons, to properly identify and protect victims, to support the safe return to their home countries or third countries, as well as to raise awareness among relevant administrative officials and to raise public awareness.

52. For example, as part of efforts by diplomatic authorities, Japan has been actively providing assistance to countries and regions where trafficking in persons is an issue through the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), and has been providing training programs and other activities in collaboration with other Asian countries, toward promoting mutual understanding of efforts to combat trafficking in persons (in particular, prevention, protection of victims, and support for self-reliance) and more effective regional cooperation.

53. Regarding cooperation with international organizations, as a countermeasure against trafficking in children and women in light of the COVID pandemic, Japan contributed a total of USD 650,000 in FYs 2020 and 2021 to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime project that aims to strengthen the response of Southeast Asian countries. Through the International Organization for Migration, Japan also provides protection and assistance to foreign victims of trafficking in persons who were identified in Japan and wish to return to their home countries; support includes safe return of victims to their home countries as well as social reintegration assistance to help victims become economically self-reliant after their repatriation. The project provided repatriation assistance to a cumulative total of 355 individuals from 2005 to May 2022.

54. The *Law Enforcement Task Force against Trafficking in Persons*, consisting of relevant ministries and agencies, has prepared the Handbook on Measures against Trafficking in Persons (revised in February 2022), which summarizes laws and regulations applicable to trafficking cases and specific examples of such applications. This handbook is utilized in investigations and for other purposes.

55. Every FY since 2004, the Cabinet Office has produced awareness-raising flyers and leaflets on measures to combat trafficking in persons and posted them on its website. Since FY 2016, the same flyers have also been displayed at railway stations. Furthermore, since FY2021, in addition to awareness-raising videos for victims and the general public, new awareness-raising videos focusing on the demand for sexual services that results in sexual exploitation have been created and disseminated in advertisements on trains and via SNS.

56. For the purpose of detecting and protecting victims of trafficking in persons, the NPA has prepared and distributed leaflets in 10 languages and posted them on digital signage at international airports and on the National Police Agency website to encourage the victims to report to the police and other authorities. Approximately 290,000 copies were produced and distributed in FY 2021. A private organization commissioned by the NPA also operates the "anonymous reporting program," whereby the organization receives anonymous tips from the public on cases of trafficking in persons, or on crimes that may lead to trafficking in persons and other relevant cases, and pays a reward in proportion to the information's contribution to the arrest. When the police identify a victim of trafficking in persons, they take appropriate protective measures in cooperation with the Women's Consulting Offices

and other relevant institutions. The police also provide appropriate protection and support for victims, which include informing the victims of the protection measures and providing sufficient explanations on legal procedures such as status of residence, as well as taking measures with due consideration for the victim's situation. Furthermore, when the police receive a consultation from a victim of trafficking in persons or others, efforts are made to listen to the victim at a place where the victim does not feel psychologically pressured, such as at a consultation room. Furthermore, when a consultor is female, if requested, the police respond to each consultation with female personnel, while in case of a consultor being a foreign national, personnel who comprehend the native language of the concerned foreigner will undertake the consultation. Every year, the NPA holds the Contact Point Meeting on trafficking in persons to exchange views and information with embassies in Tokyo, relevant administrative agencies, prefectural police, international organizations, NGOs, and others.

57. In March 2018, the Supreme Public Prosecutors Office notified public prosecutors nationwide that when applying the Child Welfare Act to trafficking in persons offences, prosecutors should see to it that strict penalties, consisting mainly of imprisonment, are imposed.

58. The Public Prosecutor's Office hands out a pamphlet illustrating the flow of protection for victims of trafficking in an easy-to-understand manner when interviewing them. Furthermore, the Public Prosecutor's Office informs prosecutors of the need to proactively respond to trafficking offences at various training sessions held based on their years of experience and also at meetings of prosecutors from all over the country.

59. The ISA gives due consideration to the circumstances of victims of trafficking in persons and tries to stabilize the legal status of victims by allowing them to renew their period of stay or change their status of residence, and by granting them special permission to stay if they are in violation of the *Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act* (Immigration Act). In addition to placing leaflets prepared by the NPA at airports and other places, efforts are being made to provide information on the ISA website in eight languages regarding tips and consultation services on trafficking in persons. The GOJ will continue to make concerted efforts to eradicate trafficking in persons.

#### **4. Assistance to Minorities (Recommendations 69–71, 73, 74, 161), Measures against Discrimination against Foreigners (49, 56, 57, 76, 81, 85, 150), Racism, Immigration and Refugees (77, 84, 128, 141, 162–166, 169, 206–208, 211, 212)**

60. As stated in II.A.2, Japan prohibits unreasonable discrimination in Article 14(1) of the Constitution. In highly public areas, discrimination is prohibited by specific laws and regulations.

61. The Constitution of Japan guarantees that all Japanese nationals, including Ainu people, are equal under the law, and all their rights as Japanese nationals are equally guaranteed, and therefore there is no legal discrimination in civil, economic, social and cultural rights. The human rights bodies of the MOJ is making efforts to deepen public understanding of the human rights of various persons, including foreigners and Ainu people, through various human rights awareness-raising activities and other activities, such as Human Rights Week. Human rights counseling is also provided in coordination with other relevant institutions.

62. Regarding discrimination against sexual minorities, when the human rights bodies of the MOJ identify a case of suspected human rights violation through human rights counseling, the bodies promptly investigate the case and take appropriate measures based on the facts and circumstances of the case. The bodies also conduct various human rights awareness-raising activities with the aim of eliminating prejudice and discrimination against sexual minorities.

63. As part of awareness-raising activities concerning fair recruiting and selection processes, MHLW has published on its website an awareness-raising pamphlet for employers, stating that "specific people, including LGBT and other sexual minorities, are not to be excluded" and also provides briefings at training sessions for employers. Regarding measures to prevent sexual harassment in the workplace based on Article 11 of the Equal Employment Opportunity Act, the guidelines clearly state that preventive measures are

applicable regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. With regard to measures to prevent power harassment based on Article 30-2 of the *Act on Comprehensively Advancing Labor Measures, and Stabilizing the Employment of Workers, and Enriching Workers' Vocational Lives*, it is clearly stated that insulting remarks or outings based on sexual orientation or gender identity constitute power harassment, and awareness-raising is conducted through pamphlets and other means.

64. Human rights education in schools is promoted in accordance with the Act on the Promotion of Human Rights Education and Human Rights Awareness-Raising and the Basic Plan on Human Rights Education and Human Rights Awareness-Raising. MEXT is also making efforts to build a support system in schools, to improve understanding and awareness of teachers and staff toward sexual minority students, and to improve the educational consultation system so that sexual minority students do not fall into self-denial due to worries and anxieties. Regarding social education, MEXT is steadily promoting human rights education by holding programs on human rights issues, including sexual orientation and gender identity, at training courses for social education directors, who play a central role as leaders of social education.

65. Under the current law, liability for damages can arise as a tort under the Civil Code in the case of racially discriminatory acts. Criminal liability can also be held for acts that, for example, constitute defamation or insult. Investigative agencies also take appropriate measures based on the law and evidence when there are cases that should be dealt with as criminal cases. In June 2022, the statutory penalty for the offence of insult was increased in order to strengthen deterrence and enable stricter action to be taken, and this came into effect in July 2022. Accordingly, the statute of limitations for prosecution has been extended.

66. Based on the Act on the Promotion of Efforts to Eliminate Unfair Discriminatory Speech and Behavior against Persons with Countries of Origin other than Japan (Hate Speech Elimination Act), the human rights bodies of the MOJ are implementing measures to eliminate hate speech, including awareness-raising activities such as information dissemination via SNS. The Act aims to specify the basic principles, clarify the national government's responsibilities, and set out and promote basic measures relating to efforts to eliminate such discriminatory speech and behavior.

67. The human rights bodies of the MOJ have set "Respect the human rights of foreigners" as one of the priority targets of their human rights awareness-raising activities and are conducting various human rights awareness-raising activities. Furthermore, in order to provide human rights counseling to foreigners, human rights counseling, such as the Foreign-language Human Rights Hotline and the foreign language human rights counseling on the Internet (both available in 10 languages), have been set up. When the bodies identify a case of suspected human rights violations through human rights counseling with foreigners, it is promptly investigated and appropriate measures are taken according to the circumstances of the case.

68. Regarding the treatment of foreign workers, labor standards inspection agencies focus on ensuring proper working conditions, including for foreign workers, and instruct employers to rectify any identified violations of labor standards-related laws and regulations. Investigative agencies also take appropriate measures based on the law and evidence when there are cases that should be dealt with as criminal cases. Furthermore, regarding offences of trafficking in persons through labor exploitation, the police, in cooperation with the Labor Standards Inspection Bureau and the ISA ensure thorough crackdown on such cases by applying labor related laws and regulations and other measures.

69. In addition to the relevant provisions of the Labor Standards Act, Guidelines on Employment Management of Foreigners have been set up as guidance on necessary measures to be taken by employers with regard to improving the employment management of foreign workers, including migrant workers and their families. Awareness-raising and instruction on the guidelines are continuously provided at the time of on-site visits to employers, among other occasions. Efforts undertaken to address the situation of female foreign workers are covered in II.A.3.(b).

70. Regarding the technical intern training program, under the new system based on the Act on Proper Technical Intern Training and Protection of Technical Intern Trainees

(‘Technical Intern Training Act’), which came into force in 2017, a license system for supervising organizations and an accreditation system for technical training plans were introduced. The Act also has provisions on prohibiting infringements on the human rights of trainees, such as retention of their passports and other documents and restrictions on private life, and penalties have been set up for supervising organizations and implementing organizations that infringe on trainee’s human rights.

71. The Organization for Technical Intern Training (OTIT) also regularly conducts on-site inspections of supervising organizations and implementing organizations, and if any problems under the Technical Intern Training Act are identified, the GOJ takes strict actions, including administrative dispositions. In addition to these measures, the OTIT strengthens the protection of trainees, including through the establishment of consultation services in the trainees’ native languages, support for changing training sites, and memorandum of cooperation, and aims to ensure that the technical intern training program is properly operated while also taking a gender perspective into account. All trainees receive the technical intern trainees’ handbook containing information on relevant regulations and support services at the time of their entry to Japan, and such information is also explained during post-entry lectures.

72. Furthermore, in February 2022, Operational Guidelines for the Technical Intern Training Program, which sets out necessary measures to be taken by supervising organizations and implementing organizations, were revised, and new instructions were given to supervising and implementing organizations regarding swift and reliable actions to be taken when acts that infringe human rights are identified as well as prompt reporting to the OTIT.

73. In 2021, 1,882 reports of workplaces suspected of violating labor standards-related laws and regulations were made to the labor standards inspectorates under the jurisdiction of the Labor Bureau from the OTIT (new system) and the Regional Immigration Services Bureau (old system), and in principle, supervisory guidance was issued to all of the workplaces concerned. In 2021, the labor standards inspection offices also conducted inspection and guidance at 9,036 workplaces (training providers), issued corrective recommendations to 6,556 workplaces that have been found to be in breach of labor standards-related laws and regulations, and referred 25 cases to prosecutors where serious and malicious violations of labor standards-related laws and regulations were found.

74. The GOJ carefully checked such requirements as remuneration that is to be equivalent to or more than Japanese nationals would receive for the same work and conducted proper examination for applications of working visas filed by foreign nationals.

75. Regarding the skilled worker program, the GOJ continued to implement the initiatives reported in the interim follow-up. Newly after the interim follow-up, the GOJ started disseminating information on the standards to be met by the accepting organizations of specified skilled workers regarding immigration or labor-related laws and regulations, and on obligations to support specified skilled workers through the portal site of the program in 13 languages.

76. Based on the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), if foreign nationals wish to send the children under their care to public compulsory education schools, the children are accepted free of charge and are guaranteed the same education as Japanese students, including free textbooks and schooling assistance.

## 5. Others

### *Business and human rights (Recommendations 90–94)*

77. Japan supports the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and formulated an action plan in October 2020 to steadily implement the Guiding Principles. In September 2022, we formulated cross-industry guidelines titled “Guidelines on Respecting Human Rights in Responsible Supply Chains,” and, through support to international organizations, are also taking measures such as promoting responsible business conduct by Japanese companies and their suppliers and others in countries where Japanese companies operate.

*Measures to combat overwork and suicide (Recommendation 140)*

78. In FY2021, Labor Standards Inspection Offices nationwide inspected 32,025 workplaces due to suspected violation of labor standards related laws and regulations such as unlawful long working hours. Of those subjected to the inspections, 10,986 workplaces (or 34.3%) were issued guidance on correction of unlawful long working hours. These workplaces that were subjected to priority inspections included those where claims were made of work-related accidents such as death due to overwork.

*Tokyo Electric Power Company's (TEPCO) Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station (Recommendation 214)*

79. Regarding support for affected pupils, efforts have been made to provide continuous support, including the assignment of school counsellors for the purpose of psychological care, and to inform each prefectural BOE and others so that measures are taken in accordance with the Basic Policy for the Prevention of Bullying.

80. Recommendations 34, 36 and 139 (SDGs) and 35 (TICAD) are discussed in Part III.

**B. Partially implemented measures****Business and human rights (Recommendations 90 and 93)**

81. On business and human rights (Recommendations 90 and 93), as noted in the preceding subsection, in September 2022, the GOJ formulated cross-industry guidelines titled "Guidelines on Respecting Human Rights in Responsible Supply Chains," and through support to international organizations, is taking measures such as promoting responsible business conduct by Japanese companies and their suppliers and others in countries where Japanese companies operate.

**Labor and work environment**

82. In accordance with the 13th Occupational Accident Prevention Plan, the items listed in the Plan have been properly implemented since the Plan was formulated, and efforts to protect workers' rights are steadily continuing. The actual results for the fourth year of the Plan against the Plan's targets are as follows: the number of fatalities decreased by 11.3% compared to 2017, the number of casualties (four or more days lost from work) increased by 24.5%, and the percentage of workplaces taking mental health measures was 59.2%. This year marks the fifth year of the Plan, and further health and safety measures are promoted in accordance with the Plan to achieve the targets set out.

**Measures against discrimination against minorities**

83. Concerning promotion of efforts to eliminate discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity in the private sector, in order to promote correct understanding of sexual orientation and gender identity in the workplace, the GOJ prepared and published reports and other information on examples of efforts by companies regarding sexual minority.

84. Regarding the Ainu people, the *Act on Promotion of Measures for Realization of a Society in which the Pride of the Ainu People is Respected* was passed in April 2019 and came into force in May of the same year, stating that the Ainu people are "indigenous people" and establishing basic principles regarding prohibition of discrimination against the Ainu people. Based on the Act, Japan is also promoting comprehensive measures on welfare policy, cultural promotion, regional development, industrial promotion and tourism promotion, as well as endeavoring to deepen public understanding regarding the Ainu through educational activities and publicity activities through the National Ainu Museum and Park (Upopoi), which opened in July 2020.

**Children (Recommendations 126, 127, 186, 187, 190, 191)**

85. Regarding the issue of how children should be cared for after their parents' divorce, including the issue of visitation, research was conducted on foreign legal systems, and the

Subcommittee on Family Law of the Legislative Council of the MOJ was launched in February 2021, with legal experts and others as members. The Subcommittee is proceeding with studies and deliberations, including on the state of affairs of child upbringing following divorce, taking into account the results of various research and discussions.

86. Regarding the prohibition of corporal punishment, what is intended by “corporal punishment” is not always clear. However, concerning the provisions in the Civil Code pertaining to the disciplinary rights of a person with parental authority over a child, in February 2022, the Legislative Council, an advisory body to the MOJ, issued a report that suggested deletion of the provisions pertaining to the disciplinary rights of a person with parental authority, to the obligation to respect the personality of a child in custody and education, and to the prohibition of corporal punishment. In light of the report, the GOJ is now preparing to submit a revised bill to the Diet as soon as possible.

#### **Refugee recognition system (Recommendation 213)**

87. The ISA is working to further optimize the operation of the refugee recognition system based on the three pillars: (i) clarifying normative elements regarding refugee status; (ii) improving the capacity of refugee inquiries; and (iii) enriching the content of country origin information. To accelerate these efforts, the ISA and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) exchanged a memorandum of cooperation in July 2021. Currently, the above item (i) is being considered by referring to practical precedents in Japan and other countries, as well as documents issued by the UNHCR, and there has also been an ongoing exchange of ideas with the UNHCR.

#### **TEPCO Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station (Recommendations 214–217)**

88. In terms of health, access to health services is guaranteed to everyone in Japan through a universal health insurance system. For survivors of the atomic bombings in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, additional assistance is provided under the Atomic Bomb Survivors Relief Law.

89. The GOJ continues to provide necessary support in accordance with the Act on Promotion of Support Measures for the Lives of Disaster Victims to Protect and Support Children and Other Residents Suffering Damage due to Tokyo Electric Power Company's Nuclear Accident, and other relevant laws.

90. In addition, the GOJ provides financial and technical support to Fukushima Prefecture by contributing 78.2 billion yen in grants to the Fukushima Residents Health Management Fund, which was established by Fukushima Prefecture to enable medium- to long-term health management of Fukushima residents. Using this fund, Fukushima Prefecture has conducted the Fukushima Health Management Survey, including the Comprehensive Health Check, to ascertain the external effective dose and health status for Fukushima residents. In particular, it includes the Pregnancy and Birth Survey for pregnant women and children, and the Thyroid Ultrasound Examinations, mainly for those who were 18 years old or under at the time of the accident.

91. Japan has also completed the provisional translation of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, and posted it on the MOFA website. A link to this translation has also been posted on the website of the Reconstruction Agency. The GOJ has also informed the local authorities concerned of this translation so that they can use it as a reference when providing assistance to displaced persons.

#### **Direct prohibition of racism and xenophobia and access to defense measures (Recommendations 56, 57, 68, 76–82, 84, 85, 128)**

92. As already discussed, the human rights bodies of the MOJ, in light of the Hate Speech Elimination Act, are implementing measures to eliminate hate speech, including awareness-raising activities such as dissemination of information via SNS. In the case of racially discriminatory acts, liability for damages can arise as a tort under the Civil Code. Criminal liability can also be held for acts that, for example, constitute defamation or insult. Investigative agencies also take appropriate measures based on the law and evidence when there are cases that should be dealt with as criminal cases.

## C. Other measures

### 1. Rights of certain persons

#### *Establishment of national human rights mechanisms and human rights commissions (Recommendations 37–50)*

93. The state of the human rights remedy system is under constant review, taking into account the discussions that have been held. In Japan, a system has been set up whereby various human rights issues can be addressed through detailed remedial mechanisms based on individual laws. In addition, regarding persons with disabilities, the Commission on Policy for Persons with Disabilities, which was established based on the Basic Act for Persons with Disabilities, functions as an independent monitoring framework as stipulated in Article 33 of the CRPD. The GOJ considers the Commission to be an organization that takes into account the Paris Principles as the Commission is composed of pluralistic representatives, including persons with disabilities themselves, monitors the implementation of the Basic Programme for Persons with Disabilities, and express its opinions to the Prime Minister and others, as needed.

#### *Safety and health care for persons with disabilities (Recommendations 144 and 198)*

94. The GOJ considers that involuntary hospitalization for persons at risk of causing bodily harm to themselves or others and hospitalization for medical care and protection do not violate Article 14 of the CRPD for the following reasons: (i) they are carried out in accordance with the procedures stipulated in the law when the requirements stipulated in the *Act on Mental Health and Welfare for the Mentally Disabled* are met; and (ii) they are not carried out solely because of the presence of mental disorder. On the other hand, the *Act on Mental Health and Welfare for the Mentally Disabled* clearly states the principle of voluntary hospitalization in psychiatric hospitals based on the patient's own consent. In particular, measures to facilitate the transition from hospitalization for medical care and protection to voluntary hospitalization are being considered with a view to amending the law.

95. In order to build a system where a variety of services are comprehensively ensured so that persons with mental disabilities can live their own lives with peace of mind as members of the community, the GOJ has supported the initiatives of local authorities, such as projects related to community life support for persons with mental disabilities in hospital, through financial measures. The GOJ will promote support for community life with a view to amending the law in the future with regard to the expansion of consultation support systems in municipalities, the establishment of visiting consultation support for patients admitted to psychiatric hospitals, and the enhancement of efforts to minimize the need for inpatient hospital care.

### 2. Individual Communications (Recommendation 2)

96. The GOJ considers the individual communications procedure stipulated in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination to be noteworthy in that it effectively guarantees the implementation of the Convention. At the same time, consideration is being given to questions such as whether this procedure poses any problems in relation to Japan's judicial system and legislative policy, and what possible organizational frameworks would need to be established for implementation of the procedure in the case that Japan accepts it. The GOJ continues to engage in discussions on this matter, while taking various opinions into account.

### 3. Conclusion of treaties, Optional Protocols, and others

#### *Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (Recommendations 9, 11, 12, 14 and 15)*

97. The GOJ continues to engage in serious discussions on this matter, while taking various opinions into account.



*Optional Protocols to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (Recommendations 3, 9, 13, and 17–19), the CRPD (Recommendation 9) and the ICESCR (Recommendation 10)*

98. The GOJ continues to engage in discussions on the Optional Protocols to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the CRPD, and ICESCR, while taking various opinions into account.

*Migrant Workers' Rights Convention (Recommendations 13, 20-25)*

99. The GOJ recognizes the principles of the Migrant Workers' Rights Convention, which seeks to protect the rights of migrant workers and their families. Regarding the rights of migrant workers, Japan stipulates in the Labor Standards Act that there shall be no discriminatory treatment with regard to working conditions on the grounds of a worker's nationality or other such reasons, and in the Guidelines on Employment Management of Foreign Nationals. The Technical Intern Training Program and the Specified Skilled Worker Program also provide for the protection of the rights of foreign workers that Japan has received under these frameworks. However, the Convention guarantees more rights to migrant workers than are guaranteed to nationals and foreigners other than migrant workers, and the conclusion of the Convention requires careful consideration of the principle of equality and Japan's domestic systems, among other factors.

*ILO Convention 189 (Recommendation 25)*

100. The number of domestic workers in Japan is small and decreasing. The situation also differs from that in other countries because immigrants, in principle, are not allowed to enter Japan to engage in domestic work. In addition, there are domestic workers who are not subject to the Labor Standards Act (i.e., domestic servants under the Labor Standards Act). The GOJ is of the view that careful consideration is necessary before ratifying the Convention in terms of its consistency with domestic legislation.

*ILO Convention 111 (Recommendation 29)*

101. This Convention prohibits discrimination in employment and occupation on the basis of seven grounds. In Japan, the Constitution stipulates equality under the law, and the Labor Standards Act and other relevant laws and regulations specify measures against discrimination are taken in the fields of employment and occupation. However, the GOJ considers it necessary to carefully examine consistency between domestic legislation and the Convention, including the existence of laws and regulations that could be subject to repeal as required by the Convention.

102. Regarding the Kampala Compromise on the Crime of Aggression (Recommendation 27), it is necessary to continue to monitor relevant developments.

103. Regarding the Convention on the Status of Stateless Persons and the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness (Recommendation 28), we recognize the importance of guaranteeing the status and rights of stateless persons and taking care not to create new stateless persons. The GOJ is taking appropriate measures within the framework of existing legislation, while giving due consideration to the conditions surrounding stateless persons. Regarding the conclusion of the said Convention, as it is an issue that requires consideration of a wide range of policy areas by the GOJ as a whole, it will be carefully considered in light of the social situation in Japan.

### **III. Status of spontaneous commitment initiatives**

#### **A. Cooperation at the United Nations (Recommendations 32 and 33)**

104. International human rights mechanisms, including the HRC, have a significant role to play in effectively responding to serious human rights violations around the world and in promoting the protection and promotion of the rights of all people. Japan has served as a member of the HRC for five terms and will continue to actively contribute to its activities,

including the UPR. In addition, it actively participates in discussions to make various international human rights mechanisms, including the HRC, function more effectively and efficiently.

105. Over the years, Japan has produced several experts for each of the human rights treaty bodies and the Human Rights Council Advisory Committee, and has also developed a cooperative relationship with OHCHR, which supports the work of the HRC. For the treaty body elections, we will continue to select candidates based on the performance of several candidates and the results of interviews. In particular, close consultations were carried out with disabled persons' organizations when fielding candidates for the 2024 Commission on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

106. Furthermore, our country will thoroughly consider the recommendations made by the respective human rights treaty bodies in order to strengthen its cooperation with them and its commitment to the implementation of the human rights treaties. The GOJ will continue to cooperate in achieving meaningful and constructive dialogue with the special procedures.

## **B. Contribution to the international community**

### **Development cooperation (Recommendations 34--36, 139)**

107. In order to realize a society where no one is left behind as the SDGs aim to, based on the principle of human security, Japan took the lead at the G20 Osaka Summit in the areas of quality infrastructure investment, disaster prevention, marine plastic litter control, climate change, gender, health and education as the basis for "quality growth," among other initiatives. Furthermore, building on the outcomes of TICAD 7 and TICAD 8, the GOJ continues to provide assistance in the fields of the economy, society, and peace and stability to help realize the resilient and sustainable Africa that Africa itself aims to achieve.

108. In July 2021, Japan summarized the progress of its efforts toward achieving the SDGs and submitted a Voluntary National Review (VNR) to the UN. In September of the same year, based on Japan's submission of the VNR, the Prime Minister participated in the SDG Moment 2021 held in conjunction with the UN High-Level Week through a video message, and expressed Japan's determination to lead the international community's efforts to achieve the goals by 2030, as a country that emphasizes multilateralism.

109. Japan's assistance to developing countries through Official Development Assistance (ODA) plays an important role in achieving SDG 3 in the international community. Japan will continue its efforts to achieve SDG 3 with a view to the better future that this achievement holds for us, through opportunities such as the G7 Summit and the UHC High-Level Meeting to be held in Japan in 2023.

## **C. Hosting the World Assembly for Women (WAW!)**

110. To promote women's empowerment at home and abroad, the GOJ has held the World Assembly for Women, or WAW!, five times since 2014, inviting leading figures in the political, economic and social fields for comprehensive discussions on various issues and actions to be taken toward achieving gender equality. The next WAW! is scheduled to take place in December 2022.

## **IV. New and emerging issues (SDG initiatives)**

111. Since 2016, the GOJ, under the SDGs Promotion Headquarters headed by the Prime Minister and comprising all ministers, has formulated the SDGs Implementation Guidelines as a medium- to long-term strategy to achieve the SDGs, and has been promoting the SDGs in Japan and abroad based on these guidelines. The guidelines were revised in light of changes in the situation surrounding the SDGs, and an exchange of views with a wide range of stakeholders is currently underway, with a view to a renewed revision in 2023.

112. Four years on from its first VNR in 2017, Japan presented its second VNR on progress toward the SDGs at the UN High-Level Political Forum Ministerial Segment in July 2021. On this occasion, Foreign Minister Motegi shared with the international community and Japan's efforts to achieve the SDGs, including the realization of International Health Coverage and addressing climate change.

113. In September 2021, Prime Minister Suga participated via video message in the SDG Moment 2021 held in conjunction with the UN High Level Week. At that time, he spoke about how valuable Japan had found initiatives such as the process of formulating the VNR, the exchange of views with the private sector members of the sector members of the SDGs Promotion Roundtable and civil society, and the public comments. The Prime Minister noted that as a result of these initiatives, Japan was able to obtain recommendations on the need to develop comprehensive and objective targets, science-based targets, and indicators for the achievement of the SDGs in Japan, and added that he felt collaboration with all stakeholders had been strengthened as a result.

114. The SDGs Promotion Headquarters has been formulating the SDGs Action Plan every year since December 2017. This plan includes priority issues and specific measures to accelerate concrete government initiatives. The SDGs Action Plan 2022, formulated in December 2021, outlines the basic policy for the future achievement of the SDGs, and the initiatives to be taken by government ministries and agencies in 2022. The total amount of expenditure required to carry out the plan is approximately 7.2 trillion yen.

115. Since 2017, the SDGs Promotion Headquarters has been organizing the Japan SDGs Awards to increase the visibility of efforts being made in Japan to achieve the SDGs, and to encourage action by more stakeholders, by recognizing the work of companies and organizations that are making great efforts to achieve the SDGs. The Japan SDG Awards have been held five times and more than 60 organizations have been awarded so far, but for the sixth awards scheduled for the end of 2022, the awards will be implemented with the addition of new categories such as "transformability" and "solidarity and behavior change" in order to increase momentum toward individual behavior change with a view to realizing the SDGs.

116. Following the SDG Implementation Guidelines, Japan will bring all relevant ministries and agencies together in a whole-of-government effort in cooperation with stakeholders in various fields to lead the international community's efforts to achieve the SDGs.

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup> "JK Business" refers to the practice of compensated dating with adolescent girls (JK is an abbreviation for "joshi kōsei," or "high-school girl(s)," in Japanese).

<sup>2</sup> In Japan dialing 110 means placing an emergency call to police. Children's Rights SOS Mini Letters are pre-stamped, addressed sealable postcards on which children can write any concerns they may have. The letters are sent to the nearest Legal Affairs Bureau or District Legal Affairs Bureau, which contacts the sender upon receipt based on the request of the sender.