

**Narrative
Report on the
State of National
Implementation of
SDGs: Focus on SDG 16**



JAPAN

**Japan NGO Center for
International Cooperation
(JANIC)**





Narrative Report on the State of National Implementation of SDGs: Focus on SDG 16 Japan

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List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
ATT	Arms Trade Treaty
CAO	Cabinet Office
CCW	Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council
ESCAP	Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
ESD	Education for Sustainable Development
G7/G20	Group of 7 countries / Group of 20
GPEDC	Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation
HLPF	High-Level Political Forum
HRC	Human Rights Council
HQ	Headquarter
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
METI	Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry
MEXT	Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology
MOE	Ministry of Environment
MOFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
NAP	National Action Plan
NGOs	Non-governmental organisations
NPOs	Non-profit organisations
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PALM	Pacific Islands Leaders Meeting
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
TICAD	Tokyo International Conference on African Development
TPNW	Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons
UN	United Nations
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UPR	Universal Periodic Review
VNR	Voluntary National Review

Executive Summary

This report is to give an overview about the state of national implementation of the SDGs in Japan, especially on Goal 16. Legislation, national mechanisms and instrument for implementation and monitoring for SDGs are described by providing basic data and information from the official websites and documents, as well as actions by multi-stakeholders, including civil society. Basic information on SDGs implementations in Japan are listed in **Chapter 1**.

Chapter 2 discusses the structure of governance in Japan and national mechanisms and, and human rights. Based on the principle of the separation of powers, the people of Japan elect Diet Members as holders of sovereign power, and the government of Japan exercises public administrations, including foreign diplomacy and signing to international conventions.

Implementation of the international norms and commitments on peace and security, such as The Mine Ban Treaty, The Arms Trade Treaty, The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, and Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and others will be discussed in **Chapter 3**.

Core international human rights instruments, most of which the government of Japan ratifies, and concerns and recommendations by Human Rights Treaty Bodies and Universal Periodic Review Working Group are described in **Chapter 4**.

Chapter 5 briefly describes the efforts by the government of Japan in terms of implementation of the whole SDGs. The government of Japan established the SDGs Promotion Headquarters in May 2016, and approved SDGs Implementation Guiding Principles in December 2016, through multi-stakeholder dialogue at SDGs Promotion Round Table, including civil society.

In the Chapter 6, activities with regards to SDG 16 by different stakeholders are also introduced. Among various actions by the government of Japan, how SDGs Implementation Guiding Principles, Voluntary National Review (VNR), SDGs Action Plan deal with SDG 16 is examined. Reports by business sectors, labour unions, academic institutions and civil society on SDGs are also discussed.

The performance of the government through international monitoring reports on issues related to the 12 Targets of the SDG 16, as well as global indicators, are assessed in **Chapter 7** and **8**, referring to Sustainable Development Report by Bertelsmann Stiftung and Sustainable Development Solutions Network, and the government of Japan's own report on the website of JAPAN SDGs Action Forum.

Thematic issues related to targets of SDG 16, such as hate-speech, freedom of speech, decision-making, violence against children, and access to information, are discussed in **Chapter 9**.

Finally, how civil society organisations in Japan implement and engage with SDG16 is described in **Chapter 10**, in the contexts of COVID-19, G20, shrinking civic space, national human rights institutions, youth education and peace building. Based on previous description and analysis, policy recommendations on overall implementations on SDG16 and each target are raised in **Chapter 11**.

1. Introduction

1-1 Purpose of this report

This report is to give an overview about the state of national implementation of the SDGs in Japan especially legislation, national mechanisms and instrument for implementation and monitoring by providing basic data and information from the official websites and documents. This will be used as basis for independent assessment of the national implementation of the SDGs with focus on the SDG 16 and its 12 targets.

1-2 Translation of 2030 Agenda

The United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development including the SDGs had been translated into Japanese by the government right after its adoption in September 2015. The global indicators were also translated into Japanese when it was adopted in 2016.

1-3 Follow-up and Review: Voluntary National Review

The government of Japan presented its VNR report to the United Nations High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) in 2017 which was the second year of the first Voluntary National Review (VNR) cycle.

1-4 National Mechanisms / Institution

On 20 May 2016, the government of Japan established a new Cabinet body called the “**SDGs Promotion Headquarters**”, headed by the Prime Minister and composed of all ministers. The SDGs Promotion Headquarters was established to foster close cooperation among relevant ministries and government agencies, and to lead the comprehensive and effective implementation of SDGs-related measures as a control tower. The headquarters ensure a whole-of-government approach and take a lead in implementing the SDGs both domestically and internationally. The secretariat is run by the Global Issues Cooperation Division, International Cooperation Bureau of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Japan. Under the SDGs Promotion Headquarters, the government has held roundtable meetings on items related to the promotion and implementation of the 2030 Agenda, attended by representatives from a wide range of stakeholders, including non-governmental organisations (NGO), non-profit organisations (NPOs), academia, the private sector and international organisations. So far, roundtable meetings have been held in September and November, 2016, and the government has also conducted public comments. Through these processes, the government has widely sought the opinions of citizens and has held dialogues with a range of stakeholders. Based on these discussions, at the second meeting of the SDGs Promotions Headquarters held in December 2016, the government adopted “**SDGs Implementation Guiding Principles**”, which represent Japan’s national strategy to address the major challenges for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

1-5 Policy Framework

“SDGs Promotion Guiding Principles” was established by SDGs Promotion Headquarters through consultations with SDGs Promotion Roundtable Meeting, where a wide range of stakeholders, such as non-governmental organisations (NGOs), non-profit organisations (NPOs), experts, private sectors, international organisations, various organisations and etc., got together, with national priorities of goals and targets, as well as national indicators. In the Guiding Principles, the government established the following vision: *“Become a leader toward a future where economic, social and environmental improvements are attained in an integrated, sustainable and resilient manner while leaving no one behind.”* Besides the vision, the document includes five implementation principles and an approach to the follow-up and review processes. By restructuring the SDGs in light of Japan’s national context, it has identified eight priority areas among the goals and targets of the SDGs on which Japan should focus. Details will be described in Chapter 5. In the Annex to the Guiding Principles, 140 specific measures to be implemented both at home and abroad are listed together with indicators.

1-6 National SDGs - Targets and Indicators

There is no national SDGs in Japan, however, priority areas by the government are set in the SDGs Implementation Guiding Principles, with national targets and indicators. The national action plan, called “SDGs Action Plan 2018”, was prepared in December 2017. Its latest edition is “SDGs Action Plan 2020”. The Principles was revised for the first time in December 2019, however, national targets and indicators were all deleted.

Table 1: State of the National Implementation of the SDGs

	Checklist	Status
1.	Translation of 2030 Agenda	All (2030 Agenda, SDGs, and global Indicators)
2.	Translation Language(s)	Japanese
3.	National legislation	No legislation
4.	National inter-ministerial coordination mechanism under the Prime Minister	SDGs Promotion Headquarters
5.	Coordinating Ministry	Domestic and International: Ministry of Foreign Affairs
6.	National Goals and Targets	17 Goals and 122 Targets
7.	National Indicators	214 Indicators
8.	National Action Plan (NAP)	Yes, SDGs Action Plan (2018, 2019 and 2020)
9.	Governmental Annual Report	None
10.	Year of VNR at the UN HLPF	July 2017 https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/memberstates/japan
11.	Year of UPR at the UN HRC	November 2017 (28th WG on UPR) https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR/Pages/CyclesUPR.aspx

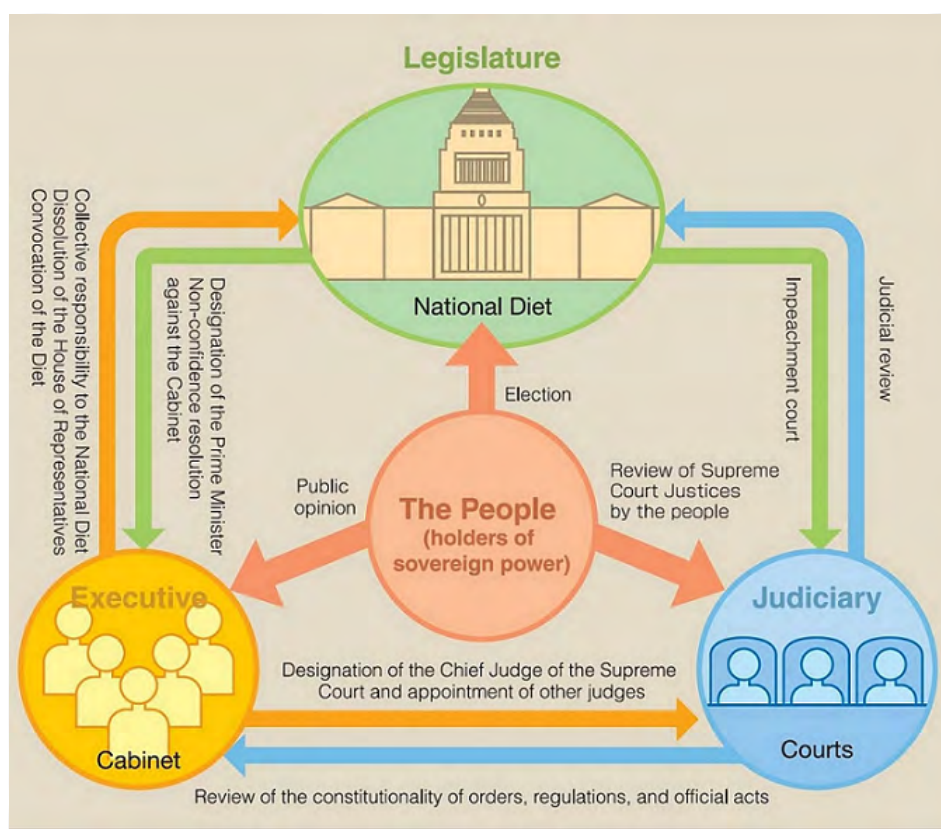
2. Government Structure and Functions

2-1 Constitution

The Constitution of Japan was promulgated on 3 November 1946, and went into effect on 3 May 1947. The first session of the National Diet was convened on 20 May of that year. That session marked the birth of the National Diet, replacing the Imperial Diet which had been created in 1890 under the Meiji Constitution and served for over 56 years.

The Constitution of Japan provides for the principle of the separation of powers. Three independent organs — the Diet, the Cabinet, and the Judiciary — are established, and each limits the power of the others through a system of checks and balances. This prevents the abuse of power and guarantees the rights and freedom of the people.

Figure 1: Separation of Powers¹



2-2 National Diet (National Parliament)

The National Diet, composed of two houses - the House of Representatives and the House of Councilors, is the highest organ of state power and the sole law-making organ of the State.

¹ http://www.shugiin.go.jp/internet/itdb_english.nsf/html/statics/guide/separation.htm

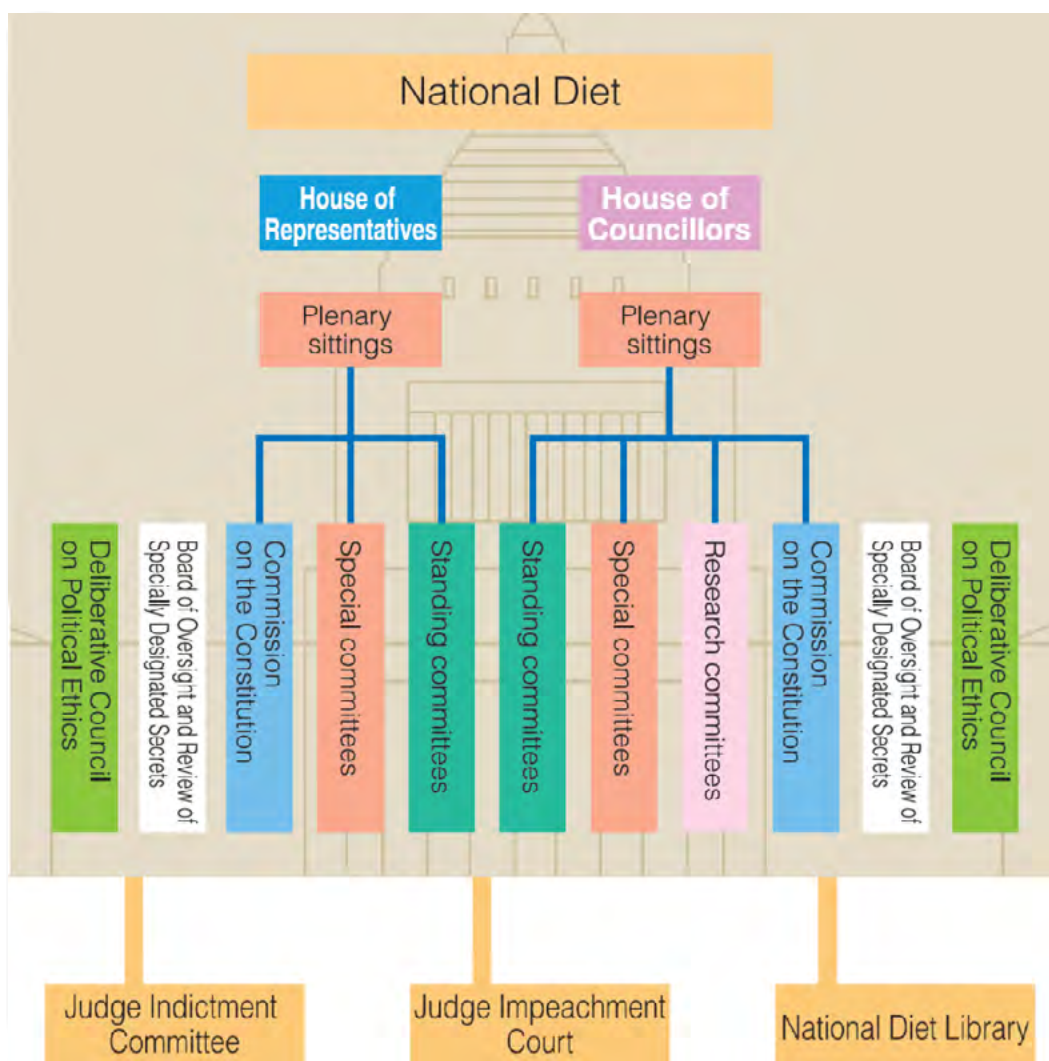
The House of Representatives is composed of 480 members, of whom 300 are elected from the single-seat constituencies and 180 by the proportional representation system in which the nation is divided into 11 electoral blocs which according to size return between 6 and 30 members. Their term of office is 4 years, but shall be terminated, before the full term is up, if the House is dissolved.

The total membership of the House of Councilors is 242, of whom 96 are elected by the proportional representation system from a single nationwide electoral district and 146 from 47 prefectural constituencies, each returning 2 to 8 members. Their term of office is 6 years, and a half of the members being elected every 3 years.

Both Houses have the same power with some exceptional cases in which the decision of the House of Representatives precedes that of the House of Councilors.

The Diet begins its 150 day ordinary session from January each year, which may be extended only once by the Diet. The Cabinet may determine to convoke extraordinary sessions whenever necessary.

Figure 2: Structure of National Diet²



2 http://www.shugiin.go.jp/internet/itdb_english.nsf/html/statics/guide/structure.htm

Table 2: Comparison of the Membership of the Two Houses

House of Representatives	-	House of Councillors
465	Number of members	245
4 years (Membership ends with the dissolution of the House)	Term of office	6 years (with half of the Members elected every third year)
Citizens 18 years of age or older	Right to vote	Citizens 18 years of age or older
Citizens 25 years of age or older	Right to stand for office	Citizens 30 years of age or older
Single-seat constituency: 289 Proportional representation: 176	Constituency	Plural-seat prefectural constituency: 147 Proportional representation: 98
Possible	Dissolution	Not possible

National Diet Members receive a mandate from the people with whom resides sovereign power, and the Diet Members bear the important responsibility of deliberating government matters as representatives of all the people. Certain protection is given to National Diet Members so that they can perform these responsibilities. Except for cases prescribed by law, Diet Members cannot be apprehended when the Diet is in session and they cannot be held responsible outside of the House for speeches, discussions, or votes made in their House.

Convocation of the National Diet is decided by the Cabinet, and an Imperial Rescript is promulgated.

Table 3: Convocation and Term of Session³

Type	Convocation	Term of Session
Ordinary session	Once a year, starting in January	150 days (one extension possible)
Extraordinary session	1. When deemed necessary by the Cabinet 2. When requested by one-quarter or more of the total Members of either House 3. After a general election called due to the expiration of the term of office of the Members of the House of Representatives or after a regular election of the House of Councillors	Determined by agreement of both Houses (two extensions possible)
Special session	After a general election called after the dissolution of the House of Representatives	

2-3 National Government - Executive Branch

Executive power is vested in the Cabinet, which consists of the Prime Minister and not more than 17 Ministers of State (including Ministers without portfolio and the Chief Cabinet Secretary) and is collectively responsible to the Diet⁴. The Cabinet has to resign en masse when the post of Prime Minister becomes vacant or when the first session of the Diet is convoked after a general election of members

³ http://www.shugiin.go.jp/internet/itdb_english.nsf/html/statics/guide/convocation.htm

⁴ http://japan.kantei.go.jp/constitution_and_government_of_japan/fundamental_e.html

of the House of Representatives. If the House of Representatives passes a non-confidence resolution or rejects a confidence resolution the Cabinet shall resign en masse, unless the House of Representatives is dissolved within ten days. Prime Minister, who is designated from among the members of the Diet by a resolution of the Diet and appointed by the Emperor, must be a civilian. Prime Minister appoints the Ministers of States and may dismiss them as he chooses. The Prime Minister, representing the Cabinet, submits bills to the Diet, reports to the Diet on general national affairs and foreign relations, and exercises control and supervision over various administrative branches. This system is called Parliamentary Cabinet System. The Cabinet has the Cabinet Office and 11 Ministries, which are established by the respective Establishment Laws and are enumerated in the National Government Organization Law, as well as the Cabinet Secretariat, Cabinet Legislation Bureau, National Personnel Authority, Security Council of Japan, and other Cabinet organs. There is the Board of Audit which is a constitutionally independent organisation to audit the final accounts of the State and other public corporations and agencies.

The Constitution states that *"aspiring sincerely to an international peace based on justice and order, the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as means of settling international disputes"* and in *"order to accomplish the aim of the preceding paragraph, land, sea, and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained"*, and the *"right of belligerency of the state will not be recognized"* (Article 9).

It also states that *"All 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. Peers and peerage shall not be recognized"* (Article 14).

The Constitution⁵ also states that the *"Cabinet, in addition to other general administrative functions, shall perform the following functions: administer the law faithfully; conduct affairs of state; manage foreign affairs; conclude treaties"*, however, *"it shall obtain prior or, depending on circumstances, subsequent approval of the Diet"* (Article 73).

2-4 The Judiciary

The whole judicial power is vested in the Supreme Court, and in such inferior courts as High Courts, District Courts, Family Courts and Summary Courts. No extraordinary court can be established, nor can any organ of the Executive have final judicial power. The Justices of the Supreme Court, except the Chief Justice who is appointed by the Emperor, are appointed by the Cabinet. The Judges of inferior courts are also appointed by the Cabinet but only from a list of persons nominated by the Supreme Court.

2-5 Independent National Institutions

Besides the Executive, Legislative, and Judiciary Branches of the government, a number of other agencies carry out their respective independent functions⁶.

⁵ https://japan.kantei.go.jp/constitution_and_government_of_japan/constitution_e.html

⁶ <https://www.japan.go.jp/directory/>

1) Supreme Court

The Supreme Court is the highest court in the land⁷. Although the Supreme Court is vested with the power of judicial review, it is not authorized to judge the constitutionality of a particular law separately from a specific, individual case: it is allowed to make a judgment only on a specific dispute as the court of appellate instance. The Supreme Court has jurisdiction to decide on final appeals and on appeals against rulings brought under procedural laws. In addition, the Supreme Court has original and final jurisdiction in any proceedings involving the impeachment of National Personnel Authority Commissioners. The Supreme Court is composed of a Chief Justice and fourteen other Justices. It is divided into three Petty Benches, and most appeal cases are adjudicated by one of these. Three Justices constitute a quorum for handling a case. If an appeal involves material issues of constitutional interpretation, the Grand Bench, composed of the Chief Justice and all fourteen other Justices, adjudicates the matter. Nine Justices constitute a quorum for the Grand Bench to handle a case.

All judges excepting the Chief Judge shall be appointed by the Cabinet⁸. The appointment of the judges of the Supreme Court shall be reviewed by the people at the first general election of members of the House of Representatives following their appointment, and shall be reviewed again at the first general election of members of the House of Representatives after a lapse of ten years, and in the same manner thereafter (Article 79 of the Constitution of Japan).

2) Election Management Board

Central Election Management Board manages the affairs related to proportional representation elections in the House of Representatives and the House of Councillors, as well as the affairs related to the national review of Supreme Court judges. It is also important to advise and make recommendations to the Prefectural or Municipal Board of Elections on these matters. The number of commissioners is five and the term is three years. Commissioners are nominated by the Diet and appointed by the Prime Minister from among the members of the House of Councillors who have the right to vote. The chairperson will be elected from among the committee members. The Central Electoral Commission is an attached agency of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications.

Prefectural Election Management Board manages the affairs related to the election of the House of Representatives primary constituency, the election of the House of Councillors primary constituency, and the election of members and governors of prefectural assemblies, as well as the affairs related to the election of officers and valedictorians of land improvement districts. They also advise and make recommendations to the municipal election management boards. The number of commissioners is four and the term is four years. Commissioners are elected by the members of Parliament from among those who have the right to vote, are of high character and have a fair discernment in politics and elections. The chairperson will be elected from among the committee members.

⁷ https://www.courts.go.jp/english/vc-files/courts-en/file/2020_Courts_in_Japan.pdf

⁸ https://japan.kantei.go.jp/constitution_and_government_of_japan/constitution_e.html

3) National Human Rights Commission

There is no National Human Rights Commission of Japan. Civil society movement towards establishing the Commission is described in Chapter 10.

4) Local Government

According to the Constitution of Japan, “regulations concerning organization and operations of local public entities shall be fixed by law in accordance with the principle of local autonomy” (Article 92). Local governments are divided into prefectural-level (47 Prefectures) and municipality-level. The Local Autonomy Act was enacted in 1947, and at that time there were 10,505 municipalities throughout the country. However, local autonomy was not fully implemented for more than 45 years, as the country started to implement the local autonomous system in 1993. The mergers of municipalities has begun in 1995 and peaked around 2005, following the government provided generous preferential treatment, including special bonds for mergers to ease the repayment burden on local governments, and the number of municipalities nationwide fell from 3,229 in April 1999 to 1,747 in April 2020 (792 cities, 23 special districts, 743 towns and 189 villages). The heads of local governments and councilors are elected through direct election. The term for local government heads is four years, and there is no limit on how many terms a local head or local councilor may serve.

2-6 Membership of International Organisations

Japan has joined the United Nations on 18 December 1956. Among key UN organs, Japan is a member of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), from January 2018 to 31 December 2020.

Japan joined the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), one of World Bank’s organs, in 1951, and graduated from the International Development Association (IDA) as recipient country in 1967, after 7 years when joining as a donor country in 1960.

Japan joined the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in 1964, and the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) that provides the Official Development Assistance (ODA) in 1961, when it was called Development Assistance Group (DAG).

Japan is also a member of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC).

Japan has hosted the various summits - G7/8 Summit in 1979, 1986, 1993, 2000, 2008 and 2016, G20 Summit in 2019, Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Summit in Osaka in 1995, and various UN conferences - Third session of the Conference of Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP 3) in Kyoto in 1997, Tenth Convention on Biological Diversity in Nagoya in 2010, and UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in 1995, 2005 and 2015. Japan also hosted regional conferences such as Pacific Islands Leaders Meeting (PALM) since 1997, and International Conference on Reconstruction Assistance to Afghanistan in 2002.

Table 4: International Membership of Japan

International Organisations		Membership (years)
UN	UN	1956 https://www.un.org/en/member-states/
	Economic and Social Council	2018-2020 https://www.un.org/ecosoc/en/content/members
	Human Rights Council	2020-2022 https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/Pages/Membership.aspx
	Security Council	2016-2017 (non-permanent member) https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/search/member
	Least Developed Countries	No http://unohrrls.org/about-ldcs/
Non-UN	World Bank	Joined in 1951 and graduation from the IDA in 1967 https://www.worldbank.org/en/about/leadership/members
	OECD	1964 https://www.oecd.org/about/members-and-partners/
	OECD DAC	1961 http://www.oecd.org/dac/development-assistance-committee/
	GPEDC	Yes http://effectivecooperation.org/about/partners/
	g7+	No https://www.g7plus.org/
	Others	G7/8 Summit in 1979, 1986, 1993 (Tokyo), 2000 (Okinawa), 2008 (Hokkaido) and 2016 (Ise-Shima)
		G20 Summit in 2019 (Osaka)
		APEC Summit in 1995 (Osaka)

3. National Mechanisms and Implementation of the International Norms and Commitments on Peace and Security

While the inherent connections between peace, security and sustainable development are well recognised, broader disarmament is not included within the SDGs, other than the call in **Target 16.4** for a reduction in illicit arms flows. This chapter will introduce several key mechanisms – both firmly established and currently under development - in relation to peace and security, with a specific focus on disarmament, to highlight Japan's position in this field and consider its roles and responsibilities. As the only country to have experienced nuclear attacks on its cities during wartime, Japan purportedly plays a leading role in the field of disarmament. Further, Japan maintains a “peace constitution,” prohibiting the maintenance of armed forces or the use of war as a means to settle international disputes. Yet in practice the country is consistently among the world's top-10 military spenders,⁹ and in recent years has forcefully legislated controversial security bills in the face of wide public opposition, which effectively lifted restrictions on Japan's participation in overseas exercise of military force. As highlighted in this chapter there is still far to go for Japan to fulfill its true potential contribution to peace and security.

3-1 International Conventions on Peace and Security

Numerous international conventions on peace and security exist, relating to issues such as crime, cybersecurity, disarmament and non-proliferation, maritime affairs, and so on. This chapter will not attempt to provide a comprehensive overview of all such conventions; rather it will give a brief introduction to several key United Nations instruments related to conventional arms and weapons of mass destruction, in chronological order of their adoption at the United Nations, and highlight Japan's role in relation.

The Mine Ban Treaty, officially the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, was adopted in 1997 and entered into force in 1999. The treaty was realised as a result of mobilisation of global civil society through the **International Campaign to Ban Landmines** (ICBL), and is today one of the world's most widely accepted treaties, with 114 States Parties - over 80% of the world's nations.¹⁰ Japan signed the Mine Ban Treaty on 3 December 1997 and ratified it the following year, becoming a State Party in 1999. Japan is party to the Convention on Conventional Weapons and its Amended Protocol II on landmines but not Protocol V on explosive remnants of war. Japan is party to the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

Since becoming a State Party, Japan has since regularly attended meetings of the convention and served on various Committees. It is also one of the largest contributors to mine action funding; according to the 2019 Landmine Monitor, Japan contributed ¥4.1 billion (US\$37.2 million) in funding to 21 countries in

9 Trends in World Military Expenditure 2019, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), April 2020 https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/2020-04/fs_2020_04_milex_0_0.pdf

10 International Campaign to Ban Landmines, <http://www.icbl.org/en-gb/the-treaty/treaty-status.aspx>

2018.¹¹ While this positive role and support is to be commended; at the same time the **Japan Campaign to Ban Landmines** (JCBL) has also pointed out that Japan could play a more proactive role in strengthening the treaty such as through contributions to ongoing debate on the obligations of States Parties, definitions of landmines, and the size of stockpiles for training purposes. Further, JCBL notes that most of Japan's support is directed to demining, with close to none for victim assistance or rehabilitation.¹²

The Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), adopted in 2013 by the UN General Assembly to regulate international trade in conventional arms and to prevent and eradicate illicit trade and diversion of conventional arms, entered into force in 2014 and at the time of writing has 106 State Parties.¹³

Japan was one of the first to sign the treaty on June 3, the date it opened for signatures, and ratified the following year. Japan hosted the Fourth Conference of States Parties (CSP4) to the ATT in Tokyo in August 2018 under the slogan of "Action, Transparency, Trust." At the conclusion of this meeting it was noted that "there is definitely significant "action" taking place and a feeling that the Treaty is starting to come into its own. Fundamental institutions and frameworks are up and running."¹⁴ Yet at the same time, participating civil society groups highlighted Japan's problematic weapons exports to conflict areas. Until 2014, Japan's Three Principles on Arms Exports prohibited the country from exporting arms and related technology; this was replaced under great controversy by the Abe administration with the Three Principles on Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology,¹⁵ allowing sales and leases of such items.

The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) was adopted at the UN on July 7, 2017. This landmark humanitarian disarmament treaty comprehensively and completely prohibits nuclear weapons and provides pathways for their total elimination, as well as providing victim assistance for those affected by the use or testing of nuclear weapons as well as environmental remediation. 122 countries voted in support of the adoption of the treaty; 38 nations have signed and ratified it as of June 2020, and the TPNW will enter into force once this number reaches 50.¹⁶ Japan did not formally participate in the negotiation of the TPNW at the UN, thus did not vote on its adoption, and has neither signed nor ratified the treaty.

Japan supports the retention and potential use of US nuclear weapons on its behalf, as indicated in various policy statements, including the country's national security strategy of 2013, which states that "the extended deterrence of the US, with nuclear deterrence at its core, is indispensable [to Japan]".¹⁷ The Japanese Government's unwillingness to support the treaty has angered many Hibakusha, survivors of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and mayors of both of these cities have called on Japan to join the TPNW. Further, a public opinion poll conducted by Japan's national broadcaster, NHK, in

11 <http://www.the-monitor.org/en-gb/reports/2019/japan/support-for-mine-action.aspx>

12 Japan Campaign to Ban Landmines, <http://www.jcbl-ngo.org/database/landmines/lmjapan/>

13 Control Arms <https://thearmstradetreaty.org/treaty-status.html?templateId=209883>

14 ATT Monitor Vol 11 No 5, 26 August 2018, Reaching Critical Will <https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/att/csp4/att-monitor/ATTMonitor11.5.pdf>

15 The Three Principles on Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, April 1 2014, https://www.mofa.go.jp/press/release/press22e_000010.html

16 International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), https://www.icanw.org/the_treaty

17 National Security Strategy of Japan, 17 December 2013, pp.16.

December 2019 found that 66 per cent of Japanese people believe that their government should join the treaty, with 17 per cent opposed to joining and the remainder undecided.¹⁸

Within this context, international mechanisms in relation to “*lethal autonomous weapons systems*” (LAWS), or killer robots, must also be addressed. LAWS have been a focus of UN disarmament discussions in recent years, and the Japanese government has actively participated in related conferences, supporting the framework of the “Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons” (CCW). It has been noted, however, that the Japanese government has been cautious about creating a legally binding treaty to ban LAWS due to its national interest in the dual use nature of AI technology, and the influence of US military strategy.¹⁹ Civil society has urged that “instead of a back-seat role in the international talks on killer robots, Japan should take the lead and actively help negotiate a treaty.”²⁰ In January 2020 the Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced its intention to host an international conference on AI weapons within the upcoming financial year;²¹ it is hoped that Japan will indeed take a leadership role in discussing international regulations of LAWS, towards an international legally binding framework.

3-2 UN Secretary General’s Agenda for Disarmament (2018)

The United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres announced his Agenda for Disarmament in an address at the University of Geneva on May 24, 2018 - the International Women’s Day for Peace and Disarmament. This agenda outlines a set of practical measures across the entire range of disarmament issues, broadly structured around three priority pillars: disarmament to save humanity (eliminating weapons of mass destruction); disarmament to save lives (advancing conventional arms control); and disarmament for future generations (addressing challenges posed by emerging issues and new technologies); as well as strengthening partnerships for disarmament.

The announcement was accompanied by the publishing of a 73-page document by the **UN Office for Disarmament Affairs** (UNODA) that elaborates this new agenda. This is complemented by a plan for implementation, which concretely details how various entities in and beyond the UN system will carry out each of the 40 actions contained in the new agenda, and an accompanying dynamic website for monitoring and tracking progress.

This new Disarmament Agenda is an attempt to reintegrate disarmament into the overall UN system, and to “bring [it] back to the heart of common efforts for peace and security.” Notable in the agenda is that it clearly draws the links between disarmament and sustainable development. The report highlights that “in recent decades, disarmament has largely slipped off the development agenda, despite the clear connection between disarmament and development in the United Nations Charter,”²² and clearly states that “mobilizing sufficient resources in support of disarmament and arms regulation is critical to

18 NHK Public Opinion Poll, December 2019, <https://www.nhk.or.jp/bunken/research/yoron/political/pdf/y201912.pdf>

19 Clash of Killer Robots? Japan’s Role in Preventing AI Apocalypse, Daisuke Akimoto, The Diplomat, December 10, 2019, <https://thediplomat.com/2019/12/clash-of-killer-robots-japans-role-in-preventing-ai-apocalypse/>

20 Japan under pressure to join campaign against killer robots, Deutsche Welle, September 10, 2019, <https://www.dw.com/en/japan-under-pressure-to-join-campaign-against-killer-robots/a-50370333>

21 Kyodo News, January 4, 2020, <https://www.kanaloco.jp/article/entry-234715.html>

22 Report p37

achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.”²³ While referring explicitly to steps to achieving the disarmament related targets of SDG16, namely **16.1**, **16.4**, **16.6**, **16.8** and **16.a**, the agenda also clearly demonstrates the links between disarmament and arms regulation in the overall 2030 Agenda.

In the two years since its announcement, the Secretary-General’s Disarmament Agenda has gained wide recognition in the international community. Japan has stated that “the Secretary-General’s Agenda for Disarmament is a useful initiative, which paves the way towards disarmament by providing various options. We consider the Agenda as an excellent initiative that can promote dialogue and enhance trust-building. Japan is ready to translate its implementation plan into concrete actions, together with the UN and its member States.”²⁴ Japan is noted as a Champion for several of the actions listed in the implementation plan, and Supporter of others.²⁵ Progress in these actions remains only in early stages of development; it is hoped that the support for the Agenda which Japan has been expressed will be followed up with even more concrete support for relevant initiatives, including financial contributions towards implementation.

3-3 Other mechanisms

Other mechanisms which must be noted in regards to peace and security are the *UN Security Council Resolutions 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (WPS)*, adopted in 2000, and *UNSCR 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security (YPS)*, adopted in 2015. These landmark resolutions are held as significant international norms, recognising the important and positive role played by women and youth respectively in the maintenance and promotion of international peace and security.

UN member states are called to implement the tenets of UNSCR1325 through the development of National Action Plans (NAP); over 80 countries have developed theirs to date. Japan finalised its first NAP in 2015 through a consultative process including civil society and other stakeholders; this was followed by the second NAP in 2019. This process, however, was not free from criticism, and observers note that Japan’s support for the global WPS agenda and initiatives such as funding projects of the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict serve in a way to “attempt to identify itself as a powerful liberal democracy engaged in maintaining the international security order, and to erase the memory of imperial military sexual violence in the past.”²⁶

Particularly in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, Japan has at the United Nations reaffirmed its commitment to supporting the active participation of young people in the peace and security agenda. Japan’s Permanent Representative to the UN stated at the UN Security Council Open Debate on Youth, Peace and Security in April 2020 that youth “are the key players in promoting peaceful and inclusive

23 [Report p8](#)

24 Statement (General Debate) by H.E. Nobushige TAKAMIZAWA, Ambassador of the Delegation of Japan to the Conference on Disarmament at the First Committee of the 74th UN General Assembly, October 14, 2019 <https://www.disarm.emb-japan.go.jp/files/000527891.pdf>

25 Champion: “Bring the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty into force” and “Establish a platform for youth engagement”: Supporter: “Facilitate dialogue for nuclear disarmament” “Readiness to investigate alleged use of biological weapons” “Prevention and peaceful settlement of malicious activity in cyberspace” “Foster accountability and adherence to emerging norms in cyberspace” <https://www.un.org/disarmament/sg-agenda/en/#actions>

26 Formulating Japan’s UNSCR 1325 national action plan and forgetting the “comfort women”, Hisako Motoyama, International Feminist Journalist of Politics, 8 Jan 2018, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/14616742.2017.1413582?journalCode=rfjp20>

societies for sustainable development, Goal 16 of the SDGs,” and followed with examples of Japanese initiatives, including hosting the UN Secretary-General’s Envoy on Youth, Ms. Jayathma Wickramanayake, to Japan in February 2020 to interact with young people in Hiroshima and in other cities and advocate for the #Youth4Peace agenda as well as the broader SDGs agenda. The statement goes on to recognise the need to do more, and it is hoped that Japan will expand concrete support for young people’s role in peace and security, not only in conflict and post-conflict countries but also in Japan.

Finally, in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is important to note the UN Secretary-General’s call for an immediate *Global Ceasefire*. While this may not be a legal mechanism as such, this call has gained the support of leaders and citizens around the world, and in fact conflicting parties in 11 war zones across the world have already started to lay down their weapons to confront COVID-19.²⁷ Japan joined more than 70 UN Member States, regional partners and non-State actors in endorsing the call; it is hoped that this endorsement will also lead to further concrete support for the promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies.

27 Global Ceasefire, <https://www.globalceasefire.org/ceasefires>

4. National Mechanisms and Implementation of the International Norms and Commitments on Human Rights

The judiciary system of Japan places emphasis on measures to national mechanism rather than the international norms such as the United Nations human rights system and the International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention. The number of the ratified International Human Rights Treaties and the ILO Conventions is relatively low compared with other Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries. It has been observed that the government of Japan has not made much effort to improve the human rights situation in Japan in accordance with the concerns and the recommendations made by the Human Rights Treaty Body and the Human Rights Council such as the Universal Periodic Review (UPR).

4-1 Core International Human Rights Instruments

There are nine Core International Human Rights Instruments such as conventions and covenants, and the only treaty that the government of Japan has not ratified is International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (ICMW).

Table 5: Core International Human Rights Instruments

No	Core International Human Rights Instruments	Date of adoption	Date of ratification by Japan
1	International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination	21 Dec 1965	15 Dec 1995
2	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights	16 Dec 1966	21 June 1979
3	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights	16 Dec 1966	21 June 1979
4	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women	18 Dec 1979	25 June 1985
5	Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment	10 Dec 1984	29 June 1999
6	Convention on the Rights of the Child	20 Nov 1989	22 April 1994
7	International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families	18 Dec 1990	Not ratified
8	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities	13 Dec 2006	20 Jan 2014
9	International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance	20 Dec 2006	23 July 2009

Only two out of nine Optional Protocols of those instruments have been ratified by the government of Japan. Most of those non-ratified Protocols are related to "Individual Communication Procedure", in which individuals can submit their complaints of the violations to the treaties body of the UN. Beyond of the Core Human Rights treaties, in total, only 14 out of 32 UN human rights treaties including Protocol have been ratified.

Contracting Parties have an obligation to submit a government report on the implementation of human rights treaties to the Human Rights Treaty Bodies (HRTB), which review countries performance of each core treaty and give recommendations to the Parties in the concluding observations.

Here are some important concerns and recommendations made by the HRTB to improve human rights situation in Japan.

1. Many recommendations made in the past have not been implemented, and most of the latest recommendations are the same as before (common in all treaties).
2. Japan should consider ratifying the Optional Protocols to provide for an individual communication procedure (ICCPR and others).
3. Japan should take prompt action to increase the participation of women in the public sector, including introducing statutory quotas in political parties (few female legislators), promoting the recruitment of women as full-time workers and closing the wage gap between men and women (ICCPR, CEDAW and others).
4. Japan should adopt a comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation that prohibits discrimination on all grounds, including sexual orientation and gender identity, and that provides effective and appropriate remedies to the victims of discrimination (ICCPR, ICERD).
5. Japan should give due consideration to the abolition of death penalty or in the alternative, reduce the number of eligible crimes for capital punishment and should strengthen the legal safeguards against wrongful sentencing to death penalty (ICCPR).
6. Japan should establish a national human rights institution in conformity with the Paris Principle (ICESCR, ICERD and other treaties as well as UPR).
7. Hate Speech Elimination Act in 2016 is welcome, but Japan need to amend the Act that has the proper scope, covers hate speech against any person and provides sufficient remedies for persons belonging to ethnic minorities (ICERD).
8. Japan should adopt a comprehensive law on children's rights and take steps to fully harmonize its existing legislation with the rights of the child (CRC).

4-2 Universal Periodic Review

Japan is currently one of the members of the UN Human Rights Council and should respect concerns and recommendations made by the UPR Working Group. Political leadership and actions are needed to

implement those recommendations. According to the latest report of the Working Group in 2018, the followings are some of the conclusions and recommendations.

1. Ratify the Second Optional Protocol to the ICCPR, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty, and in the meantime, establish a moratorium on execution.
2. Ratify the all Optional Protocols which have not been ratified such as ICCPR, ICESCR, CEDAW, CRCIC, CAT and CPRD.
3. Ratify the ICMW (International Convention for the Protection of the Rights of all Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families) and ILO Domestic Workers Convention (No. 189).
4. Ratify the ILO Convention such as “Indigenous and Tribal People”, Discrimination (Employment and Occupation).
5. Continue its leadership role in supporting the achievement of the SDGs with the sufficient financial contribution.
6. Adopt a broadly applicable anti-discrimination law, including comprehensive definition of discrimination, with a view to ensuring the prohibition of all forms of direct and indirect discrimination, including on the basis of age, gender, region, sexual orientation, ethnicity and nationality.

4-3 Special Procedures

There are 44 thematic and 12 country mandates in the Human Rights Council. Japan has been denying their advices to improve the human rights situation in Japan. The recent controversial case was that Mr. David Kaye, Special Rapporteur on the Right of Freedom of Opinion and Expression, in 2016 made his clear report of human rights problems. He raised concerns on media Independence, Press Club, hate speech, and other problematic laws such as Specially Designated Secrets Act and Public Office Election Law, and he recommended introducing a comprehensive Anti-discrimination law.

The Chief Cabinet Secretary of the government of Japan officially expressed that there was a factual error, his advice is not legally binding, it was not UN official views but his personal views, and that the factual information that the government of Japan provided was not reflected on the report by Kaye.

4-4 Other mechanisms

National Contact Point (NCP) is to promote the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises and the human rights due diligence guidance, and to handle cases, referred to as specific instances as a non-judicial grievance mechanism. Individuals in Japan could appeal their complaints of violations against the OECDE Guidelines to Japanese government thru NCP. However, the NCP in Japan is not functioning at all because NCP mechanism is very weak, and very few cases have been adopted in Japan over many years.

The government of Japan planning to launch the National Action Plan (NAP) in June, which is an international mechanism to implement “UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs)”, and The NCP in Japan is highly expected to play a big role to implement the UNGPs based on the NAP.

5. National Implementation Process (2016 - 2019)

5-1 Government of Japan's National Implementation Structures

1) SDGs Promotion Headquarters (SDGs HQ, hereafter)

Japan's Cabinet meeting officially decided to establish the **SDGs Promotion Headquarters** at the Prime Minister's Office as late as on 20 May 2016, just a few days before the G7 2016 Ise-Shima Summit meeting in Japan.

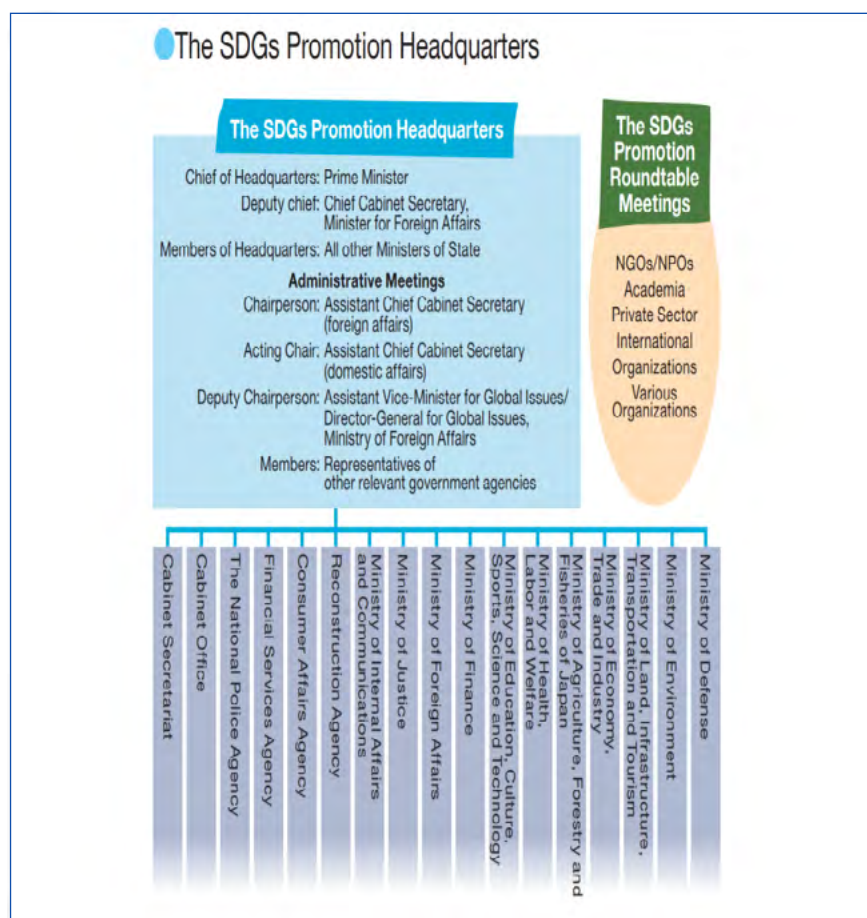
The SDGs HQ holds its top meeting twice in a year presided by the Prime minister, assisted by the Chief Cabinet Secretary and the Minister of Foreign Affairs as vice Chairs, and attended by all Cabinet members. This whole-of-government approach has been emphasized as important to effectively achieve the SDGs.

Under this top meeting, the SDGs HQ often has coordinating meetings attended by senior officers of all concerned ministries and agencies. The chair of the meeting is Assistant Chief Cabinet Secretary and the vice-Chair is the Director General for Global Issues of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA, hereafter). The Cabinet Secretariat takes care of general affairs of the SDGs HQ with supports of MOFA as well as other ministries.

Although the active role of national parliaments through their enactment of legislation and adoption of budgets for SDGs are expected in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (para 45), there have been neither legislative measures nor the substantial budget provision by the Japanese Parliament, except sporadic discussions and limited budget allocations for SDGs that are mostly combined with other projects, such as regional revitalisation. A Parliamentarian League for SDGs Diplomacy has been set up in April 2017 initiated by the leadership of a Diet member of the ruling LDP, and continue its activities for SDGs promotion, discussions with various stakeholders including CSOs. By and large, the SDGs implementation by the government of Japan is mainly led by the Administration.

2) SDGs Promotion Round Table Meeting in the HQ

To materialise the multi-stakeholder partnerships mentioned in SDGs' **Target 17.16** and **17.17** of SDGs, the **SDGs Promotion Round Table Meeting** has been set up in September 2016 within the SDGs HQ. This Meeting has 14 members including 4 academicians, 3 from CSOs, 2 from the business sector, 2 from UN organisations, 1 each from Rengo (trade union), the Network of Consumer Groups and the Government Pension Investment Fund (GPIF). This meeting is supposed to take place twice in a year for 2 hours prior to the HQ's top meeting to provide various ideas to SDGs policies and strategies.

Figure 3: Architecture of the SDGs Promotion HQ²⁸

5-2 Major Policies of the SDGs HQ

1) SDGs Implementation Guiding Principles (2016)

In December 2016, “**SDGs Implementation Guiding Principles**”²⁹ was approved by the 2nd top meeting of SDGs Promotion Headquarter (HQ). This “Principles” pledges that the government of Japan would actively participate the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF, hereafter) on 2030 agenda, do Voluntary National Report (VNR, hereafter) in 2017 and revise the “Principles” every 4 years.

Based on SDGs’ 17 Goals, the government’s “Principles” declares 8 Priority Areas and Policies as follows.

1. **Empowerment of All People** (related SDGs: 1, 4, 5, 8, 10, 12)
2. **Achievement of Good Health and Longevity** (related SDG: 3)
3. **Creating Growth Markets, Revitalization of Rural Areas, and Promoting Science Technology and Innovation** (related SDGs: 2, 8, 9, 11)
4. **Sustainable and Resilient Land Use, Promoting Quality Infrastructure** (related SDGs: 2, 6, 9, 11)

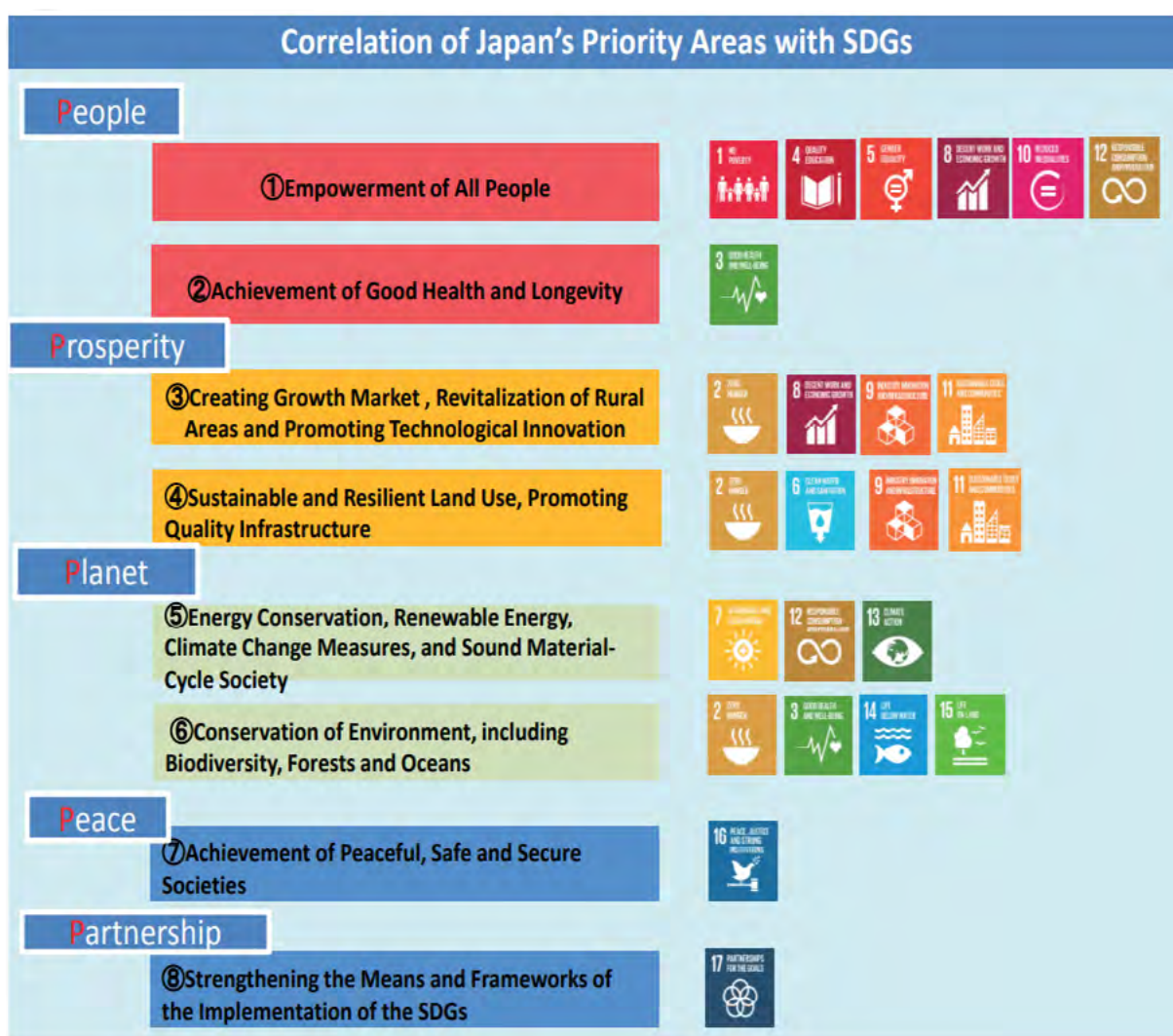
²⁸ <https://www.mofa.go.jp/files/000287390.pdf>

²⁹ <https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/gaiko/oda/sdgs/pdf/000252819.pdf>

5. **Energy Conservation, Renewable Energy, Climate Change Countermeasures, and Sound Material-Cycle Society** (related SDGs: 7, 12, 13)
6. **Conservation of Environment, including Biodiversity, Forests and the Oceans** (related SDGs: 2, 3, 14, 15)
7. **Achieving Peaceful, Safe and Secure Societies** (related SDG: 16)
8. **Strengthening the Means and Frameworks for the Implementation of the SDGs** (related SDG: 17)

The Appendix Table³⁰ of this “Principles” provides us details of each these 8 Areas and Policies, such as measures, related SDGs’ goal and target numbers, indicators and related governmental agency. The total number of measures is as many as 140.

Figure 4: Correlation of Japan’s Priority Areas with SDGs³¹



30 <https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/gaiko/oda/sdgs/pdf/000241490.pdf>

31 <https://www.mofa.go.jp/files/000287390.pdf>

2) Revised SDGs Implementation Guiding Principles (2019)

As planned, at the 8th top meeting of the SDGs Promotion Headquarters held in December 2019, “**SDGs Promotion Guiding Principles**” was revised for the first time since its formulation in 2016.

Prior to the 8th SDGs Promotion Round Table Meeting on 9 September 2019 to discuss about the revision, a stakeholders meeting for SDGs Implementation Guidelines was held on 6 September, called by the majority of Round Table Meeting members, who strongly felt frustration that its 8th meeting had as short as 2 hours. This publicly open meeting was attended by MOFA high officials and hundred plus people.

After the completion of the final draft of the revision, it was open to the public for public comments for 2 weeks in November 2019. 303 comments were submitted. As the result, gender equality and the back-casting approach for indicators were included in the revision, while poverty was not.

The revised SDGs Implementation Guiding Principles was approved by the 8th top meeting of the SDGs Promotion HQ in December 2019. There are no substantial changes except aforesaid points in the main text of the Principles, but the Appendix Table, which provides details of the 8 Priority Areas and Policies and responsible government agencies.

3) Annual Action Plans and its expanded editions

Since HQ’s 4th top meeting in December 2017, an annual Action Plan, which details various ideas of the government’s SDGs implementation in the line with the SDGs Implementation Guiding Principles, has been annually adopted for the following fiscal years. In addition to it, since HQ’s 5th top meeting in June 2018, an annual Expanded Action Plan was adopted in order to reflect the GOJ’s annual budget situation to the Action Plan.

Through a comparative analysis of these 3 annual Action Plans for 2018, 2019 and 2020, followings features can be highlighted.

- a. All Action Plans emphasize to create the “SDGs Model of Japan” based on the 8 Priority Areas and Policies mentioned in the SDGs Implementation, which should be expanded internationally, especially to the South East Asia and Africa, through various opportunities.
- b. To create the SDGs Model, the following 3 pillars are always mentioned but slightly different contents.
 - b-1. Promotion of “Society 5.0” in connection with SDGs,
 - b-2. Regional revitalisation and resilient, environment friendly and attractive community development based on SDGs, and
 - b-3. Empowerment of the next generations and women as SDGs implementers
- c. Consistent and strong emphasis is given to technology innovation calling it as Society 5.0 proposed by Keidanren (Japan Business Federation, largest network of big companies) in the b-1. The volumes of contents of b-1 are steadily increased. It is superfluous to mention that the idea of Society 5.0,

proposed by Keidanren and imbedded in the HQ' thoughts, is often criticized by some critics and CSOs, as previous paradigm shifts were always accompanied new and grave problems.

- d. Similarly, contents of b-3's Empowerment of the next generations and women are consistently increasing. It is regrettable that the gender equity, included in the revised SDGs Implementation Guiding Principles at the end of 2019, is not mentioned in the 2020 Action Plan, although both of them were adopted at the same 8th top HQ meeting in Dec. 2019.
- e. Poverty and gap issues are thoroughly excluded, except domestic child poverty, not only the 3 Action Plans but also 2 SDGs Implementation Guiding Principles.

5-3 Major Promoting Strategies and Actions of the SDGs HQ

1) Voluntary National Review (VNR) in 2017

As planned, the government did the VNR on SDGs implementation at the 2017 HLPF held at UN Headquarter, in New York. A verity of performances at the same occasion was more focused than the contents of the report. **Japan Civil Society Network on SDGs** (SDGs Japan, hereafter) also distributed its counter report³².

2) Japan SDGs Awards

From 2017, the SDGs HQ has begun to confer the **Japan SDGs Awards** to companies, local governments, and NGOs/NPOs that are making outstanding efforts on sustainable development in order to promote a wide range of actions for sustainable development. Each time, 7 to 12 organisations are selected for this award by the SDGs Promotion Round Table Meeting members.

3) Next Generation Platform for SDGs Promotion

In 2018, Prime Minister Abe Shinzo, the chair of the SDGs HQ, announced the establishment of another platform, the **Next Generation Platform for SDGs Promotion**, at the HQ's 5th top meeting. This Platform has a steering committee with 8 youth organisations, such as the **Junior Chamber (JC)**, **G7/G20 Youth Japan** and **Japan Youth Platform for Sustainable Development (JYPS)**. They actively participated in ECOSOC's Youth Forum held and organised a side event on youth and SDGs with youth organisations from other countries in New York, in 2019. However, since then, unlike the other Platform, this one has remained rather dormant.

5-4 Policies and Strategies of Concerned Ministries and National Public Institutions

1) Cabinet Office (CAO)

CAO and the Cabinet Secretariat, in which the SDGs HQ exists, are closely related in many important issues including the regional revitalisation as populations of Japan as a whole as well as of most regional

32 <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0BxbtK2dVB113NkM5cFdpMjNTTEk/view>

areas are declining and aging. The Cabinet Office and the Cabinet Secretariat believe that SDGs are useful to deal with this issue and have following projects.

2) Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA)

MOFA's Director General for Global Issues is the focal person for SDGs implementation and coordination of Japan. Day to day works of the SDGs HQ are largely, if not almost all, carried by the Global Issues Cooperation Division, one of 5 divisions under the Director General.

For most of civil society and members of the SDGs Round Table members, the first and regular contact person of the government relating SDGs is not someone of the SDGs HQ in the Prime Minister office, but the director of this MOFA's division.

MOFA also maintain a web page³³, namely Japan SDGs Action Forum in order to publish a whole-of-society approach to achieve SDGs.

3) Ministry of Environment (MOE)

As Japan's MOE claims that 13 Goals out of 17 SDGs Goals are closely related to environmental issues, this ministry seems secondarily, if not firstly, enthusiastic among the governmental ministries to SDGs implementation. Unlike MOFA where one Director General and one division under the DG concentrate on SDGs, MOE's plural bureaus and several divisions are working on that.

In cooperation with Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES), MOE has organised **Stakeholders' Meeting for SDGs implementation** with 16 members including 7 from the business sector, 4 from the government, 3 academicians, and 1 each from a CSO and a local government. This meeting has held 10 times from August 2016 to November 2019 in front of over a hundred observers mainly from the business sector, followed by social gatherings. MOEJ has issued a digital guidebook on how to apply SDGs for private companies, claiming that adaptation of SDGs would reduce management risks and increase business chances.

In addition, the Global Environment Outreach Centre (GEOC), an information center jointly run by the United Nations and MOEJ, has organised a series of gatherings and introduced a number of books on SDGs, while the Japan Fund for Global Environment, a CSO funding mechanism utilizing the government and MOEJ endowment and donations, has also started to emphasize SDGs in its funding and other events.

4) Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT)

Similar to MOE, MEXT also has very positive attitude to SDGs by promoting Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) as the SDGs' Goal 4. The ESD and UN Decade of ESD 2005-2014 were proposed to UN' World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) by the government of Japan in 2002 and duly accepted. The MEXT and the Japan National Commission for UNESCO have digitally published a simple guidebook for EDS at UNESCO Associated Schools as early as 2008.

33 <https://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/oda/sdgs/index.html>

In March 2018, the operation plan of the Global Action Program for ESD was adopted by the inter-ministerial meeting for ESD, to which secretaries of MEXT and MOEJ served as joint chairs. Based on this plan, a national ESD Resource Center of Japan and 8 block-wise the ESD Resource Centers have been founded in Tokyo to promote ESD and SDGs.

The new government course guidelines applied from FY 2020 for pre-primary, primary as well as middle educations in Japan also mention that learners should be able to creators of sustainable society.

5) Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI)

METI, the most powerful ministry of the government, has also taken some SDGs initiatives for Japan's economy. For instance, the ministry organised 6 Study Meetings on SDGs Management/ESG Investment from November 2018 to May 2019, and has digitally published **the Report of Study Meetings on SDGs Management/ESG Investment**³⁴ in June 2019. A month before the publication, METI has digitally published the **"The Guide for SDG Business Management"**³⁵. Furthermore, the ministry jointly with UNDP held a tie-up event namely "The Guide for SDG Business Management" by METI, and "Innovative Finance and the SDGs" by UNDP, in August 2019. All of above initiatives are done by the Industrial Finance Division of the Economic and Industrial Policy Bureau of METI.

6) Ministry of Justice

The Ministry of Justice also promotes SDG 16. They published **"Commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)"**³⁶ with their own SDGs Logo, which includes policies on prevention of adult and juvenile re-offending (**Target 16.1 and 16.2**), tackling issues of people without family registration (**Target 16.9**), promotion of preventive legal advice service (**Target 16.3**), international training courses and seminars for criminal justice practitioners, and legal technical assistance (**Target 16.a**), promoting the concept of being "Mental Barrier-Free" (**Target 16.7 and 16.b**), tackling children's human rights issues with various communication tools (**Target 16.2**), improving comprehensive legal support (**Target 16.3**), and translation of Japanese laws (**Target 16.3, 16.a and 16.b**).

7) Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)

JICA, a gigantic ODA implementation agency of the government of Japan, has issued a **Position Paper on SDGs**³⁷ on 8 September 2016. According to the paper, JICA has pledged to play central roles for following 10 SDGs Goals; **Goal 2** (Hunger and Nutrition), **Goal 3** (Health), **Goal 4** (Education), **Goal 6** (Water and Sanitation), **Goal 7** (Energy), **Goal 8** (Economic Growth and Employment), **Goal 9** (Infrastructure and Industry), **Goal 11** (City), **Goal 13** (Climate Change) and **Goal 15** (Forests and Bio-Diversity).

Since JICA is a mere implementing organisation of ODA, it must follow the superior policies and guidelines, such as the government's **Development Cooperation Charter** adopted on 10 February 2015,

34 https://www.meti.go.jp/press/2019/06/20190628007/20190628007_01.pdf

35 <https://www.meti.go.jp/press/2019/05/20190531003/20190531003-4.pdf>

36 <http://www.moj.go.jp/content/001282184.pdf>

37 https://www.jica.go.jp/aboutoda/sdgs/ku57pq00002e2b2a-att/JICA_torikumi_e.pdf

the ODA prime policy calling quality growth beside human security, as well as above-mentioned SDGs Implementation Guiding Principles and SDGs Action Plans.

Thus, there is no wonder why this Position Paper does not emphasise most important issues, such as poverty and disparity, and gender equality. However, JICA Paper urges that **Goal 1** (Poverty), **Goal 5** (Gender Equality), **Goal 10** (Inequality) and **Goal 16** (Peace and Governance) are superior goals to be achieved through the mentioned 10 Goals.

8) SDGs Future City and Model Project

Since 2018, the SDGs HQ along with the Cabinet Office annually select about 30 local governments as SDGs Future Cities. Out of them, 10 local governments are subsidised up to 30 million Yen (approx. 270,000\$) for implementing respective SDGs model projects of SDGs.

9) Government-Private Cooperation Platform for Regional Revitalization SDGs

The SDGs Government-Private Coordination Platform for Regional Revitalization was founded in 2018. As of March 2020, this fee-free and government-run (the CAO with a think-tank company) Platform has 1,235 organisational members, 62% of them private organisations, such as companies, NPOs, and educational/research institutes, 36% local governments, and 11 government's ministries.

This Platform has 38 sub-committees each of which has a specific SDGs related topic(s) and one member as the leader. Some of them seem very active, while some are not.

The website³⁸ of this Platform exhibits 14 SDGs related challenges from 12 local governments' seeking partner organisations to deal with those issues.

38 <http://future-city.go.jp/platform/>

Table 6: Chronology of the Major Events since 2015

Timeline	Major Events
September 2015	Prime Minister, Abe Shinzo, attends the SDGs Summit at the UN GA
December 2015	First meeting between MOFA and CSOs after the adoption of SDGs
April 2016	Japan Civil Society Network on SDGs was formed
May 2016	SDGs Promotion Headquarters was established
June 2016	G7 Ise-Shima Summit was held
August 2016	Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) VI was held in Kenya
September 2016	First meeting of SDGs Promotion Roundtable was held
October 2016	Public comment on “SDGs Implementation Guiding Principles”
December 2016	“SDGs Implementation Guiding Principles” was approved
July 2017	The First VNR presented at the HLPF
	Side-event by Korean and Japanese CSOs during the HLPF
October 2017	General Election of the House of Representatives
December 2017	First Japan SDGs Awards
	“Japan SDGs Action Plan 2018” was revealed
May 2018	“Bottom-up Action Plan” was prepared and presented by CSOs
December 2018	“Japan SDGs Action Plan 2019” was revealed
	Second Japan SDGs Awards
April 2019	C20 was held in Tokyo, urging SDGs implementation to G20 leaders
May 2019	G20 Summit was held in Osaka
July 2019	Side-event by Japanese CSOs to highlight SDGs and G20
August 2019	TICAD-VII was held in Yokohama
December 2019	“SDGs Implementation Guiding Principles” was revised
	“Japan SDGs Action Plan 2020” was revealed
	Third Japan SDGs Awards
May 2020	“Bottom-up Action Plan” was revised by CSOs

6. The State of the National Implementation of the SDG 16 (2016–2019)

6-1 National Government's Report on SDG 16

There is no National Government's Report on SDG 16 at the time of writing (October 2020), while the government of Japan publishes several reports on overall SDGs implementation, which include how Japan prioritizes SDG 16.

1) SDGs Implementation Guiding Principles

As described in Chapter 5, the Principles are the first document to show how the government of Japan implement the global goals in and out of the country. The Principles consists of “**Vision**”, five “**Implementation Principles**” (Universality, Inclusiveness, Participatory, Integration, and Transparency & Accountability), “**Follow-up Cycle**” and “**8 Priority Areas and Policies**”. The seventh Priority is “**Achieving Peaceful, Safe and Secure Societies**”, and issues such as Tackling Organized Crime (**Target 16.4 and 16.5**), Human Trafficking and Child Abuse (**Target 16.1 and 16.2**), Peacebuilding and Assistance for Reconstruction (**Target 16.a and 16.b**), Promotion of the Rule of Law (**Target 16.3**) are mentioned. Below is the list of domestic and overseas measures to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, by the Government of Japan. It is very interesting that those measures, published in December 2016, include other SDG Goals' targets, which precedes the concept of SDG 16+. According to the list, all the SDG 16 Targets, except **16.8 (participation to global governance)** and **16.9 (legal identity)**, are mentioned. In the boxes below, “**RGA**” means Related Governmental Agency, which is a leading agency on implementing specific measures.

[Domestic Measures]

(Safe society where people can live with peace of mind)

Outline of the measures	Promotion of traffic safety measures Based on the 10th Fundamental Traffic Safety Program, which was decided by the Central Traffic Safety Measures Council in March 2016, make a concerted whole-government effort to foster various traffic safety measures for the achievement of the world's safest road traffic.
Target	3.6
Indicator	(1) Annual number of people who died within 24 hours after being involved in a traffic accident (2) Annual number of people killed or injured in traffic accidents
RGA	Cabinet Office and others

Outline of the measures	Measures to prevent unexpected dangerous accidents for children (1) Press ahead with the “Project to protect children from dangerous accidents.” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Share warnings and information by sending “Child Safety Mail from the Consumer Affairs Agency (sent every Thursday),” to prevent dangerous accidents based on accident reports gathered at Consumer Affairs Agency. ➤ Share common dangerous accidents, and their prevention and measures on a category basis using booklet and websites (ex. distribution of the booklet such as “Is your child safe?”). (2) Hold Inter-Ministerial Liaison Committees regarding measures to protect children from unreasonable risks of injury or death
Target	3.d
Indicator	(1) Number of registration for Child Safety Mail (2) Number of Child Safty Mail
RGA	Consumer Affairs Agency

Outline of the measures	Promotion of countermeasures for child sexual exploitation Based on the 3rd Comprehensive Measures to Eliminate Child Pornography decided by the Ministerial Meeting Concerning Measures Against Crime in July 2016, foster measures to deal with child sexual exploitation through cooperation between the related governmental agencies.
Target	5.2 and 8.7
Indicator	(1) Situation concerning cooperation between the related governmental agencies, including the joint formulation of a governmental action plan concerning measures against child sexual exploitation (2) Situation concerning cooperation with related foreign organizations through information exchange and other means
RGA	National Police Agency and others

Outline of the measures	Promotion of measures to combat all forms of organized crime Continue to promote countermeasures against Boryokudan*, drugs, firearms, international organized crimes and criminal proceeds, while enhancing cooperation with all of the concerned organizations and improving skills for collecting and analyzing information to further increase the effectiveness of these countermeasures. *Boryokudan is organized crime syndicate in Japan.
Target	16.4
Indicator	(1) Situation concerning cooperation between relevant administrative authorities and relevant industry associations that contributes to ensuring the implementation of filing suspicious transaction reports and other necessary measures by specified business operators. (2) Progress with control that focuses on detecting and confiscating handguns under the control of Boryokudan, which has been made through closer collaboration with the customs authorities, the Japan Coast Guard and other agencies concerned.
RGA	National Police Agency

Outline of the measures	Promotion of countermeasures for human trafficking Based on Japan's 2014 Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Persons decided by the Ministerial Meeting Concerning Measures Against Crime in Dec. 2014, foster a range of measures through cooperation between the related governmental agencies, including crime control and the protection of and support for victims.
Target	5.2, 8.7, and 16.2
Indicator	Progress with the measures described in Japan's 2014 Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Persons.
RGA	Cabinet Secretariat and others

Outline of the measures	Further implementation of measures to prevent child abuse In line with the basic policies on operations related to child abuse prevention measures (decided by the Cabinet in March 2016), enhance a series of measures including prevention through to selfreliance support.
Target	16.2
Indicator	Number of cases of deaths due to child abuse
RGA	Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare and others

Outline of the measures	The 14th United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (to be held in Japan in 2020) and follow-up on the implementation of its political declaration As the host country of the 14th United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice in 2020, which is the largest meeting held by the United Nations in the field of criminal justice, draft a political declaration that contributes to the promotion of the rule of law, engage in spreading the idea across all levels of Japanese society, and raise public awareness of criminal justice, thereby preventing recidivism and contributing to the creation of a safe society where people can live peacefully.
Target	16.3
Indicator	(1) Number of participants in the Congress (2) Records of PR activities for the Congress (3) Records of activities conducted in line with the political statement
RGA	Ministry of Justice and others

*The 14th United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Outline of the measures	Enhancement of comprehensive legal support The Japan Legal Support Center provides Information Services, Civil Legal Aid, Services relating to Court-Appointed Defense Counsel, Services for areas with insufficient legal services and Support for victims of crime, across the country, thereby enhancing comprehensive legal support.
Target	16.3

Indicator	(1) Number of the Center's information provision cases (2) Number of lawyers who have concluded agreements with the Center for the aforementioned services
RGA	Ministry of Justice

[Overseas Measures]

(Peace building, support for recovery, and governance)

Outline of the measures	Promotion of efforts that contribute to international peace and stability (United Nations Peacekeeping Operations and others) Through participation in the United Nations Peacekeeping Operations (UN PKO) and cooperation for the training of PKO personnel and others by the UN, contribute to the peace and stability of international community. Also, in light of the shortage of human resources who can contribute to peace building, steadily implement the human resource development program.
Target	16.1, 16.5, 16.6, and 16.a
Indicator	Global indicator (16.1.2) Conflict-related deaths per 100,000 population, by sex, age and cause
RGA	Cabinet Office, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Ministry of Defense

Outline of the measures	Promotion of efforts that contribute to international peace and stability (Capacity Building Assistance) Based on the National Security Strategy for Japan, support the military and military related organizations of developing countries in terms of human resource development and technologies with a view to stabilizing and improving the international security environment.
Target	16.1, 16.5, 16.6, and 16.a
Indicator	Records of supports given to targeted countries
RGA	Cabinet Office, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Ministry of Defense

Outline of the measures	Support for counterterrorism measures and improvement of public security in developing countries Implement measures in cooperation with foreign governments and international organizations to: (1) improve counter-terrorism capacity; (2) implement measures to counter violent extremism conducive to terrorism; and (3) foster socio-economic development assistance for creating a foundation for a moderate society. Moreover, support public security organizations of developing countries, within the scope of countries and fields where the expertise of the Japanese police can be applied through technical cooperation implemented by JICA, especially by accepting trainees from and sending experts to such developing countries.
Target	16.a

Indicator	Records of support in the field of counter-terrorism and public security improvement fields
RGA	National Police Agency, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and JICA

(Promotion of the rule of law)

Outline of the measures	The 14th United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (to be held in Japan in 2020) and follow-up on the implementation of its political declaration As the host country of the 14th United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice in 2020, which is the largest meeting held by the United Nations in the field of criminal justice, draft a political declaration that contributes to the promotion of the rule of law, and engage in spreading the idea across all levels of society in each country through its follow-up activities.
Target	16.3 and 16.a
Indicator	(1) Number of participants in the Congress (2) Records of PR activities for the Congress (3) Records of activities conducted in line with the political statement
RGA	Ministry of Justice and others

*The 14th United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Outline of the measures	Promoting Translation of Japanese laws and regulations into foreign languages Promote the creation and publication of the foreign language translations of Japanese laws and regulations with a view to making the Japanese laws and regulations appropriately translated into foreign languages more easily available through the Internet and other means
Target	16.3 and 16.10
Indicator	Number of laws and regulations the foreign language translations of which are published
RGA	Ministry of Justice

Outline of the measures	Expansion and promotion of international support by the United Nations Asia and Far East Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders (UNAFEI) through its activities at the criminal justice related international meetings and others as well as through the training courses and seminars held by the Institute in cooperation with the United Nations Expand and foster international cooperation in the criminal justice field through UNAFEI's training courses and seminars held for those engaged in practical criminal justice operations in each country and international meetings.
Target	16.3, 16.4, 16.5, 16.6, 16.a, 16.b, 17.9, and 17.17
Indicator	Number of participants in the training
RGA	Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and JICA

Outline of the measures	Promotion of support for developing countries to establish legal systems Support developing countries in establishing legal systems in line with the Basic Policies on Legal Technical Assistance revised in May 2013. Specifically, help the countries draft bills, establish legislation processes, improve the abilities of organizations to execute, operate, and to apply the laws to solve conflicts, increase people's access to the legal and judicial systems, and develop necessary human resources.
Target	16.3, 16.6, and 16.b
Indicator	(1) Number of participants in training courses held in Japan (2) Number of individuals invited to conduct joint research in Japan
RGA	Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and JICA

Besides the seventh Priority, the sixth Priority **“Conservation of Environment, including Biodiversity, Forests and Oceans”**, which is particularly relevant to SDG 2 (Food), 3 (Health), 14 (Oceans), and 15 (Biodiversity), has one overseas measure that has a SDG 16 indicator.

(Environmental conservation)

Outline of the measures	Promotion of environmental assessment in the Asian region In order to create a society that is environmentally, economically and socially sustainable, as well as to expand Japan's investment abroad, the Japanese government, as a country that has advantages in the environmental field, fosters environmental assessment in the Asian region.
Target	3.9, 6.3, and 16.7
Indicator	Annual number of environmental assessments made in major partner countries
RGA	Ministry of the Environment

There is no document to show how much those measures were implemented and how much indicators increased or decreased. There was no amendment to **“Specific Measures to Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals”**, when the government revised the Principles in December 2019, however, by the time of writing, there is no official report on the status of implementation for these specific measures, which include national targets and indicators. So, there is no data available to literally measure SDGs implementation by the government.

2) Voluntary National Review

The government of Japan published its first **Voluntary National Review** report³⁹ at the UN High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) in July 2017, two years after the adoption of Agenda 2030. The report consists of **“Introduction”**, **“Preparation of the Report”**, **“Policy Measures and Enabling Environment”**, and **“Next step”**. **“Policy Measures and Enabling Environment”** includes (1) Institutional Mechanism, (2) Incorporation of the SDGs into a National Framework, (3) Mainstreaming the principles of the 2030 Agenda, (4) Fostering Ownership, (5) Overviews of progress in priority areas and highlights. It also highlights 8 Priority Areas, which were described in the SDGs Implementation Guiding Principles. On

39 <https://www.mofa.go.jp/files/000287390.pdf>

domestic issues, efforts to prevent unexpected accidents of children, measures against child abuse, and measures against sexual exploitation of children (all of them are relevant to **Target 16.2**) were introduced. On international cooperation, ODA based on the humanitarian-development-peace nexus (**Target 16.a**), promotion of the rule of law (**Target 16.3**), and efforts for international peace and stability (**Target 16.a and 16.b**) are described. However, as is the case with the revision of the SDGs Implementation Guiding Principles, those documents describe what the government do solely, not what they have achieved or the gaps between current and desirable situations. Another critical issue is that fiscal measures appear only on the promotion of rule of law, that the government “provided approximately \$2.7 billion USD in the decade from 2005 to 2014 in the field of governance including legal institutional support”. Besides, due to the spread of COVID-19 in Japan since January 2020, the government decided to postpone **14th United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice**, originally scheduled in April 2020, although the following was declared; “as the host country of the Congress, Japan will contribute to achieving SDG 16 by promoting the rule of law at all levels of society, in particular, by highlighting the approach of fostering a culture of lawfulness at the Congress. Japan will also be committed in promoting the rule of law throughout the preparation as well as the follow-up activities of the Congress.”

3) SDGs Action Plan

The government has published the annual “**SDGs Action Plan**”, in December 2017, and the latest version in December 2019. The first action plan is called “**SDGs Action Plan 2018: in pursuit of addressing ‘Japan’s SDGs Model’ in 2019**”. The plan intends to address key activities both by the government and private sectors, including civil society, and establish ‘Japan’s SDGs Model’ by implementing, concretizing and expanding those activities, though multilateral and economic forums such as UN High-Level Political Forums, G20 Summit and TICAD IV hosted by Japan in 2019, Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2020 (subsequently postponed until 2021), and the World Expo in 2025. Under the 7th Priority “Achieving Peaceful, Safe and Secure Societies”, numerous actions such as protecting children from abuse and accidents (**Target 16.2**), eliminating violence against women (**Target 16.1**), international cooperation for rule of laws (**Target 16.3**), capacity development for peace-building (**Target 16.a**) are addressed.

6-2 Other stakeholders' report on SDG 16

With regards to other stakeholder's reports, there are few publications specific to SDG 16. Rather, there are numerous reports on overall implementation of SDGs in business sector, financial sector, labour unions, academic institutions and civil society. Below are the summary of the reports by other stakeholders with emphasis on SDG 16.

Keidanren⁴⁰ (Japan Business Federation) is a comprehensive economic organisation with a membership comprised of 1,412 representative companies of Japan, 109 nationwide industrial associations and 47 regional economic organisations. They revised "**the Charter of Corporate Behavior**"⁴¹ in 2017, which promote its member corporations to fully recognise that their development is founded on the realisation of a sustainable society, and to exercise their social responsibilities by creating new added value and generating employment that will be beneficial to society at large and by conducting their business in a manner that takes the environment, society, and governance (ESG) into consideration. Among 10 principles, there are two principles which are related to SDG 16 targets. One is "fair disclosure of information and constructive dialogue with stakeholders - Disclose corporate information actively, effectively and fairly and engage in constructive dialogue with a wide range of stakeholders, with a purpose of enhancing corporate value" (**Target 16.3**), and the other is "respect for human rights - Conduct business that respects the human rights of all persons". Keidanren also had a survey⁴² to its member corporations on their activities towards achieving SDGs in 2018, however, most of them take measures on economic or environmental goals, and 128 cases out of 302 corporations were reported on Goal 16 related measures,

Global Compact Network Japan⁴³ has translated⁴⁴ "**Business Reporting on the SDGs: An Analysis of Goals and Targets**"⁴⁵, developed by Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) and UN Global Compact Network in September 2017. This report shows examples of corporate activities to achieve each SDG Goals. On Goal 16, corporations are advised to report "operations and suppliers considered to have significant risk for incidents of: i. Child labor; ii. Young workers exposed to hazardous work in order to abolish child labor (**Target 16.2**), or publicly state it will work against corruption in all its forms, including bribery and extortion (**Target 16.5**).

Consultative Group to Assist the Poor⁴⁶ (CGAP) has published "**Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals**"⁴⁷ in April 2016, and its Japanese edition states that people with access to financial services are better positioned to succeed economically and build a decent life, ultimately making it easier to reduce inequality (SDG 10) and promote peace (SDG 16). However, the report clarifies that promoting peace and stability (SDG 16) is easier when people are economically successful, but it would be difficult to show that financial services can have a strong impact on their own.

40 <https://www.keidanren.or.jp/en/>

41 <https://www.keidanren.or.jp/en/policy/csr/charter2017.html>

42 <https://www.keidanrensdgs-world.com/survey2018>

43 <https://www.unglobalcompact.org/engage-locally/asia/japan>

44 http://www.ungcn.org/sdgs/pdf/elements_file_target.pdf

45 https://www.globalreporting.org/resource/library/GRI_UNGC_Business-Reporting-on-SDGs_Analysis-of-Goals-and-Targets.pdf

46 <https://www.cgap.org/>

47 https://www.cgap.org/sites/default/files/researches/documents/Working-Paper-Achieving-Sustainable-Development-Goals-Apr-2016_0.pdf

Rengo⁴⁸, the largest labour union in Japan, promotes the achievement of SDGs⁴⁹, especially Goal 1 (poverty), Goal 5 (gender equality), Goal 8 (decent work), Goal 10 (reduced inequality), Goal 13 (climate change) and Goal 16 (peace and justice), in line with International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC). Rengo supports NGOs that conduct many campaign activities on international issues such as child labor (**Target 16.2**), education, health and sanitation, HIV/AIDS, Official Development Assistance (ODA), human rights and peace (**Goal 16**), and holds study sessions to inform the general public about the situation in developing countries.

Academic institutions in Japan publish or hold seminars on the implementations and evaluations of achieving SDGs. **Institute for Global Environmental Strategies**⁵⁰ (IGES) has published several reports, especially on environmental goals. “**Scoring the Sustainable Development Goals: Pathways for Asia and the Pacific**”⁵¹, published in March 2018, calls for governments to organise themselves differently, not only to address the negative consequences of the old development model but also to adopt an integrated approach to harness the synergies between ecosystem protection and the other elements of sustainable development. One recommendation from IGES is to “develop responsive institutional arrangements to accommodate the new paradigm” (**Target 16.6**).

JICA Ogata Sadako Research Institute for Peace and Development⁵² (JICA Ogata Research Institute) has published two research papers on related targets of SDG 16. “**The Variety of People in Refugee Settlements, Gender and GBV: The Case of South Sudanese Refugees in Northern Uganda**”⁵³, published in March 2020, describes that gender-based violence, or GBV (**Target 5.2** and **Target 16.1**) is more likely to occur within violent conflict-affected areas due to the heightened vulnerability of the population and the culture of impunity, and GBV not only harms the mind and body of affected individuals but also creates elevated psychological and social barriers to seeking help. This research paper shows part of the actual situation in refugee settlements in Uganda. In particular, the paper focuses on the Kuku, an ethnic group of South Sudan and GBV program in the refugee settlement. “**Contextualizing the Sustaining Peace Approach in Contemporary Armed Conflicts: From High-Level International Mediation to Pragmatic Peacebuilding Initiatives in Syria**”⁵⁴, published in January 2020, argues that due to the complexity and ineffectiveness of high-level international mediation, pragmatic peacebuilding initiatives represent an alternative along Syria’s pathway to sustaining peace. This paper shows the relation between development assistance and sustaining peace, the coordination between the 2030 agenda for sustainable development and the sustaining peace resolutions represents a system-wide framework centered on long-term approaches that address the root causes of fragility and aims at building societal resilience. The authors also introduce SDG 16+ targets on violence, abuse and exploitation that highlight the need for safe and inclusive environments, and offer a more holistic approach to good governance and institutions, and the

48 <http://www.ituc-rengo.org/>

49 <https://www.ituc-rengo.or.jp/activity/kokusai/decentwork/>

50 <https://www.iges.or.jp/en>

51 https://www.iges.or.jp/en/publication_documents/pub/policyreport/en/6182/AP+SDGs+Pathways+report_with++SDGs_APFSD+Release.pdf

52 <https://www.jica.go.jp/jica-ri/>

53 https://www.jica.go.jp/jica-ri/publication/workingpaper/l75nbg000019bp0t-att/JICA-RI_WP_No.205.pdf

54 https://www.jica.go.jp/jica-ri/publication/other/l75nbg000019cvto-att/Muto_Saraiva_paper.pdf

“delivery of SDG 16+ requires a multi-sectoral approach that brings together various actors in different areas, e.g., governance, justice, public health, education, social welfare, livelihood, and protection”.

Minna-no SDGs (Our SDGs)⁵⁵, a multi-stakeholder partnership that was established by academic societies, NGOs and CSOs, and governmental development agencies to increase interest and concern for the SDGs in Japan, holds numerous seminars and conferences on SDGs. Two of them specifically focus on SDG 16. The first one was held in September 2017⁵⁶, following the first VNR report by the government and one NGO speaker presented the interlinkage between SDG 16 and other goals. The second one was held in January 2018⁵⁷, following the North-East Asian Multistakeholder Forum on Sustainable Development Goals, held in Beijing in October 2017 by UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP). One speaker who attended the UNESCAP conference stressed that main topics around SDGs in North East Asia were different from the whole Asia-Pacific region, especially the lack of focusing to SDG 16. Another speaker provided targets and global indicators of SDG 16, and highlighted the changing enable environment in Cambodia and Japan, citing CIVICUS Monitor’s research on civic space.

6-3 National CSOs’ Report on the Implementation of the 12 Targets according to Global and National Indicators

There is no CSO’s report on the implementation of the 12 Targets according to Global and National Indicators. However, there are several CSOs who conduct researches and activities related SDG 16.

Following the government’s “**SDGs Action Plan**”, which was published in December 2016, **Japan Civil Society Network on SDGs** (SDGs Japan) published “**Bottom-up Action Plan**”⁵⁸, a national policy proposal for achieving the SDGs by civil society in May 2018, at the 5th meeting of SDGs Promotion Round Table. This was prepared to show the vision of civil society to comprehensively deliver and reflect civil society’s views on the SDG Action Plan 2019, would be released in December 2018. The bottom-up action plan is not a counter to the government’s one, but rather complement it for achieving SDGs, and work together to create a sustainable society. Since the original **SDGs Implementation Guiding Principles** in 2016 lacks a priority area that deals with gender equality, civil society added one more priority area, and prepared 9 Priority Areas in total with concrete proposals from member of SDGs Japan.

1. **Society free of poverty and inequality, where the human rights of all are respected and no one is left behind**
2. **Gender-equal society**
3. **Good health and well-being for all people of all generations**
4. **Sustainable economy, society, and communities**
5. **Reduce disaster risk and damage, ensure essential life infrastructure**

55 <http://our-sdgs.org/>

56 <http://our-sdgs.org/docs/report1709.pdf>

57 <http://our-sdgs.org/docs/report1801.pdf>

58 https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/bde02c_070e37dd72ec452088e68703d1bf38ce.pdf

6. **Scale up energy conservation, shift to renewable energy, combat climate change and realize circular economy**
7. **Conserve the environment, including biodiversity, forests and oceans**
8. **Peaceful and participatory democracies, transparency and responsibility, and access to legal services**
9. **Partnership among all people and sectors for achievement of the SDGs**

The bottom-up action plan covers several targets of SDG 16. For example, one of the three pillars that supplement the government's action plan is "achieving a society where no one is left behind in Japan and around the world through the elimination of poverty, social inclusion, and human security and empowerment". Social inclusion of younger generations, women, and people in poverty is essential, in addition to empowerment. Ending discrimination based on SOGI (sexual orientation and gender identity) or disability is also an urgent issue (**Target 16.b**). The other pillar is "science and technology and social innovation for human-centered society", which includes ensuring opportunities for social participation (**Target 16.7**), creating and proposing measures to address social exclusion risks, ensure opportunities for social participation (e.g. stimulate local NPO activities). "Ending discrimination and empower gender/sexual minorities and persons with disabilities" (**Target 16.b**) is also addressed. Civil society proposes to end discrimination and empower based on an understanding of intersectional/compound discrimination and inequality, through: efforts to prohibit all forms of discrimination, including gender-based discrimination and violence and differential treatment based on disability; gender equality policies that include a quota system; promoting employment of persons with disabilities; enacting legislation prohibiting SOGI-based discrimination; introducing legal protections for same-sex partnerships.

The latest version of the bottom-up action plan was published in May 2020⁵⁹.

As a target on the ending violence against children was included for the first time as part of the global goal, **Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children (GPeVAC)** was established by the UN Secretary-General in July 2016, and its operation is supported by UNICEF and multiple NGOs, including World Vision, in order to facilitate the movement. In March 2019, **World Vision Japan** published a report "**SDG 16.2: The elimination of violence against children and NGOs - Towards the elimination of all forms of violence**"⁶⁰. This report was an outcome of 1 year project consists of surveys, research and symposia relating to SDG **Target 16.2**, end abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children. World Vision Japan has conducted this project, in cooperation with GPeVAC Japan Forum, in order to explore what Japanese NGOs can do to contribute to the movement toward the elimination of violence against children, which is gaining momentum both domestically and internationally, but has yet to gain much recognition and common understanding.

As a final symposium, they held an open seminar "**Towards the Elimination of Violence against Children: Global multi-stakeholder initiatives and expectations for Japan**"⁶¹. About 50 people, including members

59 <https://drive.google.com/drive/u/0/folders/1gL3zSG1P-p3vXn9F2Z2M0kvXjDQ6B3K>

60 https://www.worldvision.jp/about/item_img/evac_report.pdf

61 <https://www.worldvision.jp/news/advocacy/20190726.html>

of the Parliament, relevant ministries and agencies, businesses, and civil society organisations, attended the seminar, which featured guests from Sweden, Canada, and Indonesia, all of which have been active in the fight against violence against children, as well as policymakers from Japan.

CSO Network Japan⁶², which aims to contribute to achieving a just and sustainable society in which individuals can earn a dignified living and the disempowered can participate meaningfully in decision-making by way of linking up different actors beyond boundaries and sectors, held a seminar “**SDG 16 (peace and justice) and Civil Society**”⁶³ in May 2017, and stressed that civil society sees SDG 16 as a goal that needs to be focused on for the achievement of the SDGs as a whole, as it contains various conditions that are essential for the achievement of other goals, such as transparency of public administration (**Target 16.6**), access to information (**Target 16.10**) and ensuring the fundamental freedoms of citizens (**Target 16.3, 16.a, and 16.b** etc.). CSO Network Japan also introduce voluntary supplemental indicators for SDG 16⁶⁴, prepared by **Community of Democracies**⁶⁵ (CoD), an intergovernmental organisation with 110 member countries and a 30-member Governing Council that includes Japan, since the current 23 indicators are not sufficient to monitor progress on the 12 targets set out in SDG 16.

62 <https://www.csonj.org/index-en>

63 https://www.csonj.org/report_sdg16seminar20170509.html

64 <https://community-democracies.org/?docs=voluntary-supplemental-indicators-for-goal-16-on-inclusive-just-and-peaceful-societies-full-2>

65 <https://community-democracies.org/>

7. Thematic Assessment of the International Monitoring Reports on Issues related to the 12 Targets of the SDG 16

According to “**Sustainable Development Report 2019 - Transformation to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals⁶⁶**”, a thematic assessment of the international monitoring reports by **Bertelsmann Stiftung** and **Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN)**, Japan’s SDG Global rank is 15, out of 162 countries, with index scores 78.9. Current assessment of SDG 16 Dashboard of Japan is characterized as ‘challenges remain’, and the overall trend of SDG 16 of Japan is described as ‘moderately improving’.

The performance by indicator of SDG 16, with regards to Peace, Violence, Human Rights and Democracy, and Anti-corruption is as follows:

7-1 Peace / Violence

- The number of homicides per 100,000 people is 0.3 (up).
- Percentage of population who feel safe walking alone at night in the city or area where they live is 75.7% (up).
- Prison population (per 100,000 people) 43.8 (up).
- Transfers of major conventional weapons (exports) (constant 1990 US\$ million per 100,000 population) is 0.0.

7-2 Human Rights

- The percentage of unsentenced detainees is 0.1 (up).
- Property rights (1-7) are 6.0.
- Birth registration with civil authority, children under 5 years of age is 100.0 %.
- Children 5-14 years old involved in child labor is 0.0%.

Regarding to birth registration, a concern is discussed in **Chapter 8**.

7-3 Democracy and Anti-corruption

- Freedom of press index (best 0 - worst 100) is 28.6 (no change).
- Corruption perception index (1-100) is 73 (up).

There was not indicator available for Civic Space, Human Rights Defenders and Enabling Environment on the report.

66 https://s3.amazonaws.com/sustainabledevelopment.report/2019/2019_sustainable_development_report.pdf

Japan's SDG Global rank (15 out of 162), and index score (78.9) are not too low, however, its score is relatively low compared to other countries of DAC members of OECD. For example, top countries include DAC members such as Denmark, Sweden, Finland, France, Austria and Germany, with scores more than 80. One of the reasons why Japan's rank and scores are low is insufficient implementation for gender equality. "Demand for family planning satisfied by modern methods (% women married or in unions aged 15-49)" is decreasing as 60.1%. "Gender wage gap (total, % male median wage)" is stagnating as 24.5%, and "Seats held by women in national parliaments" is 10%, which means that most women are excluded from key decision-making (**Target 16.7**).

The report also uses **World Press Freedom Index**⁶⁷, published by **Reporters Without Borders**, one of the world's leading NGOs in the defense and promotion of freedom of information. Japan's freedom of press index is stagnating as 28.6. According to the latest World Press Freedom Index 2020, Japan scored 28.8, ranking 66 out of 180 countries, and described "journalists find it hard put to fully play their role as democracy's watchdog because of the influence of tradition and business interests. Journalists have been complaining of a climate of mistrust toward them ever since Shinzo Abe became prime minister again in 2012"⁶⁸.

67 <https://rsf.org/en>


68 <https://rsf.org/en/japan>

8. Assessment of the Implementation of the 12 Targets of the Goal 16

This chapter discusses on the state of Implementation of SDG 16 according to the government of Japan's report, which is available on the website of **JAPAN SDGs Action Forum**⁶⁹, and some supporting information. The website shows how each global indicator of 17 Goals is implemented in Japan.

It is worth noting that for out of 23 indicators for SDG 16, no data is available for ten of them, and for three indicators the only data is available is the for an year in early-2010s. While some indicators are apparently not applicable to Japan, it is still necessary for the Japanese government to improve data-collecting and carry out more surveys on matters and issues related to SDG 16.

Target 16.1 - Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere

TARGET 16.1	Global Indicators	Data
 REDUCE VIOLENCE EVERYWHERE	16.1.1 Number of victims of intentional homicide per 100,000 population, by sex and age	Improved from 0.36 (men: 0.37, women 0.36) in 2010 to 0.26 (men: 0.25, women, 0.28) in 2018.
	16.1.2 Conflict-related deaths per 100,000 population, by sex, age and cause	N.A.
	16.1.3 Proportion of population subjected to (a) physical violence, (b) psychological violence and (c) sexual violence in the previous 12 months	0.6% in 2011 is the only figure available on the MOFA website
	16.1.4 Proportion of population that feel safe walking alone around the area they live	67.4% in 2012


Regarding **16.1.2**, there are no conflicts identified in Japan according to publications such as “Trends in Armed Conflicts”, published by Peace Research Institute Oslo⁷⁰ (PRIO). The government of Japan gives only old figures on 16.1.3 and 16.1.4. According to the Ministry of Justice, there were 53,385 cases of physical violence and 6,647 cases of sexual violence in 2018⁷¹. As psychological violence is not considered as a crime according to the Japan's Criminal Code, no data is available on it. As Japan has a strong clause in the Constitution on criminal statutory principle, it is difficult to make psychological violence criminal as it is not easy to strictly define it.

69 <https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/gaiko/oda/sdgs/statistics/goal16.html> (final access: May 18, 2020)

70 <https://www.prio.org/>

71 http://hokusyo1.moj.go.jp/jp/66/nfm/n66_2_2_1_1_2.html

Target 16.2 - End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children

TARGET 16-2	16.2.1 Proportion of children aged 1-17 years who experienced any physical punishment and/or psychological aggression by caregivers in the past month	The number of cases provided to by child guidance center for consultation on child abuse in the past year (fiscal year) increased from 56,384 in 2010 to 133,778 in 2018
	16.2.2 Number of victims of human trafficking per 100,000 population, by sex, age and form of exploitation	The total number of victims of trafficking in persons detected in Japan was 25 in 2014 (the first year the figure is available) and 27 in 2018.
PROTECT CHILDREN FROM ABUSE, EXPLOITATION, TRAFFICKING AND VIOLENCE	16.2.3 Proportion of young women and men aged 18-29 years who experienced sexual violence by age 18	N.A.

According to **White Paper on Gender Equality 2019**⁷² published by Gender Equality Bureau, Cabinet Office, there were 21,556 cases of consultations on stalker incidents and 870 arrests for violation of the Anti-Stalking Act in 2018; both numbers decreased from the previous year. In 2018, the number of known cases of forced sexual intercourse (1,307) increased year-on-year, while the number of known cases of forcible indecency (5,340) decreased year-on-year. The number of cleared child pornography cases (2,413) was the highest on record in 2018.

According to the 20th edition of **Trafficking In Persons Report** published by the **Department of State of the United States** in June 2020, “the Government of Japan does not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking but is making significant efforts to do so. These efforts included identifying more victims than the previous year; funding a service provider organization to implement an innovative and highly effective online outreach program; and increasing on-site inspections of businesses employing migrant workers. However, these efforts were not serious and sustained compared to those during the previous reporting period⁷³”, then placed Japan in Tier 2, the second from the top out of 4, after the country earned the highest classification for two consecutive years in 2018 and 2019.

The report also notes that “in mid-2018, several hundred Bhutanese participants in a government-approved work-study program in Japan reported indicators of forced labor. The government dismissed the allegations for nearly one year, but after a lawyer representing a group of students filed a criminal complaint against the recruitment agency, the government investigated the case.”, and companies operating under the auspices of the Japanese government’s “**Technical Intern Training Program**” have exploited nationals such as Burmese, Cambodian, Chinese, Indonesian and Vietnamese, in forced labor in food processing, manufacturing, construction, and fishing.

More serious issues are also reported that human traffickers subject Japanese and foreign men and women to forced labor and sex trafficking, and they subject Japanese children to sex trafficking.

⁷² http://www.gender.go.jp/english_contents/about_danjo/whitepaper/pdf/ewp2019.pdf

⁷³ <https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/2020-TIP-Report-Complete-062420-FINAL.pdf>

**Target 16.3 Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels
and ensure equal access to justice for all**



16.3.1 Proportion of victims of violence in the previous 12 months who reported their victimization to competent authorities or other officially recognized conflict resolution mechanisms	24.1 in 2011.
16.3.2 Unsentenced detainees as a proportion of overall prison population	Between 10.9% to 11.3% during the period of 2010 to 2017.

The Ministry of Justice explains that “the maximum period of holding suspects in custody after their arrest until the decision on whether or not to indict them is 23 days in any single crime, regardless of the complexity or seriousness of the crime, or the necessity for extensive investigation. Moreover, suspects may appeal the decision by the judge to detain them or extend the period of detention. Similarly, the detention of an indicted person is granted only if a court (judge) finds a risk of concealing or destroying evidence of crime, or fleeing from justice. Bail may be granted by a court (judge) unless exceptional circumstances apply, such as the existence of a risk of concealing or destroying evidence by the indicted. In short, suspects and defendants will be held in custody only for a necessary and reasonable duration under Japanese criminal proceedings.”⁷⁴

Japan Federation of Bar Associations (JFBA) argues that “when compared to the other countries, the period of detention before indictment in Japan is relatively long, which can extend for up to 23 days after arrest. In theory any unsentenced person shall be detained at a penal institutions (detention center) under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Justice, but in reality many are detained in detention facilities (detention rooms in police stations, *daiyo-kangoku*) operated by the investigating authority. The unsentenced persons are kept in the custody of the police night and day for interrogation. Bail is not easily granted unless one admits to the charges. As the detention period becomes longer, the unsentenced detainee is isolated from his or her daily work and home for the period and suffers incalculable disadvantages. It is not uncommon that the suspects admit charges for which they are not responsible, only to escape from the long detention. As a result, such suspects, after being convicted, must go through great difficulties for a long period of time to clear false charges against them. Such situations are referred to as ‘hostage justice’ in Japan. The JFBA has been demanding the eradication of ‘hostage justice’ and the reform of such pre-sentencing detention system through the abolition of the *daiyo-kangoku* system, introduction of the pre-indictment bail system, and the establishment of measures to secure a suspect’s appearance, and other activities”.⁷⁵

⁷⁴ <http://www.moj.go.jp/EN/hisho/kouhou/20200120enQandA.html#Q6>, accessed 26 June 2020.

⁷⁵ https://www.nichibenren.or.jp/en/about/activities/Criminal_Justice.html, accessed 26 June 2020.

Target 16.4 By 2030, significantly reduce illicit financial and arms flows, strengthen the recovery and return of stolen assets and combat all forms of organized crime



16.4.1 Total value of inward and outward illicit financial flows (in US \$)	Indicator for which internationally agreed definition nor computation method has not been released by United Nations so far.
16.4.2 Proportion of seized, found or surrendered arms, whose illicit origin / context has been traced / established by a competent authority in line with international instruments	N.A.

According to the **National Police Agency's** statistics on crimes, there were five cases of violation of Foreign Exchange Control Act, although it is not clear whether this could automatically considered as illicit financial flows in SDG 16.4.1, and there were 4,580 charges in 2017 for illegal possession of arms.⁷⁶

Target 16.5 Substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms



16.5.1 Proportion of persons who had at least one contact with a public official and who paid a bribe to a public official, or were asked for a bribe by those public officials, during the previous 12 months	N.A.
16.5.2 Proportion of businesses that had at least one contact with a public official and that paid a bribe to a public official, or were asked for a bribe by those public officials during the previous 12 months	N.A.

The government of Japan ratifies the **OECD Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials in International Business Transactions** on 13 October 1998. Following the ratification, the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry published "**Guidelines for the Prevention of Bribery of Foreign Public Officials**"⁷⁷ in 2004, and revised it in 2017. Since 2020, there were 4 monitoring reports⁷⁸ published by **OECD Working Group on Bribery**. The latest report urged the government to "*step up enforcement of its foreign bribery laws and strengthen the capacities of its law enforcement agencies to proactively detect, investigate and prosecute the foreign bribery offence*".⁷⁹

According to **Corruption Perceptions Index 2019**⁸⁰, published by Transparency International, Japan's rank is 20, out of 180 countries, with scores 73 out of 100. This index ranks 180 countries and territories by their perceived levels of public sector corruption, drawing on 13 expert assessments and surveys of business executives. It uses a scale of zero (highly corrupt) to 100 (very clean).

Some local governments publish reports on measures for anti-corruption. For example, in November 2018, **Tokyo Metropolitan Government** reported that a number of public servants working at Tokyo's

⁷⁶ <https://www.npa.go.jp/toukei/soubunkan/h29/h29hanzaitoukei.htm>, accessed 18 May 2020.

⁷⁷ https://www.meti.go.jp/policy/external_economy/zouwai/pdf/rGuidelinesforthePreventionofBriberyofForeignPublicOfficials.pdf

⁷⁸ <http://www.oecd.org/daf/anti-bribery/japan-oecdanti-briberyconvention.htm>

⁷⁹ <http://www.oecd.org/corruption/japan-must-urgently-address-long-standing-concerns-over-foreign-bribery-enforcement.htm>

⁸⁰ <https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi>

water facilities had leaked contract information to entrusted enterprises. The report concludes that the trust from the public is essential to a smooth operation of administration, and it is necessary for all Tokyo officials to do their utmost to eradicate corruption.⁸¹

Target 16.6 Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels



16.6.1 Primary government expenditures as a proportion of original approved budget, by sector (or by budget codes or similar)	Very detailed data is available. Except for “national debt service” the figures have been almost always above 100% throughout the period of 2010-2016
16.6.2 Proportion of population satisfied with their last experience of public services	N.A.

There is no nation-wide official survey on people’s satisfaction of public services, although some local authorities do carry out such surveys. According to a global survey by Accenture in 2008, Japan was ranked 20th among 21 countries (developed and emerging countries/economies) surveyed.

Target 16.7 Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels



16.7.1 Proportions of positions in national and local public institutions, including (a) the legislatures; (b) the public service; and (c) the judiciary, compared to national distributions, by sex, age, persons with disabilities and population groups	N.A.
16.7.2 Proportion of population who believe decision-making is inclusive and responsive, by sex, age, disability and population group	N.A.

According to the survey by Inter-Parliamentary Union⁸², that facilitates parliamentary diplomacy and empowers parliaments and parliamentarians to promote peace, democracy and sustainable development around the world, 9.91% of Member of Parliaments are women (47 out of 465), and 25% are aged under 45. In July 2019, 2 representatives with physical disabilities are elected at the 25th regular election of members of the House of Councillors.

⁸¹ https://www.metro.tokyo.lg.jp/tosei/hodohappyo/press/2019/11/27/documents/05_02a.pdf

⁸² <https://www.ipu.org/parliament/JP>

Target 16.8 Broaden and strengthen the participation of developing countries in the institutions of global governance

TARGET 16-8



STRENGTHEN THE PARTICIPATION IN GLOBAL GOVERNANCE

16.8.1 Proportion of members and voting rights of developing countries in international organizations

This indicator is to be calculated at global level, and monitoring at country level is not required.

The government of Japan has not made any official position on this. However, it is unlikely that it will support changes of the weighted voting system in International Financial Institutions because of the benefit from the system that the government receives.

Target 16.9 By 2030, provide legal identity for all, including birth registration

TARGET 16-9



PROVIDE UNIVERSAL LEGAL IDENTITY

16.9.1 Proportion of children under 5 years of age whose births have been registered with a civil authority, by age

100% throughout the period of 2010 to 2018

Although the data on Indicator **16.9.1** show 100% of children under 5 years of age are registered, there are reportedly about 10,000 people who are not registered. This is because, according to the Japan's Civil Code, a child born within 300 days after dissolution of marriage is presumed to be the former husband's child. Because of this, some mothers who have separated with her partner, refuse to register her child in order to deny the legal paternity of her former husband. Abolishment of such an outdated presumption is required.

Target 16.10 Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements

TARGET 16-10



ENSURE PUBLIC ACCESS TO INFORMATION AND PROTECT FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS

16.10.1 Number of verified cases of killing, kidnapping, enforced disappearance, arbitrary detention and torture of journalists, associated media personnel, trade unionists and human rights advocates in the previous 12 months

N.A.

16.10.2 Number of countries that adopt and implement constitutional, statutory and/or policy guarantees for public access to information

"Law on disclosure of information held by administrative organizations"

As for **16.10.1**, while Japan ranked 66th in the **World Media Freedom Index** in 2020, rapidly exacerbated compared to 11th in 2010, the "abuse score" is zero meaning that killing, kidnapping, enforced disappearance, arbitrary detention and torture of journalists, associated media personnel, trade unionists and human rights advocates did not take place.⁸³

For **16.10.2**, all prefectures and all except for one municipality have enacted local laws on disclosure of information.⁸⁴

⁸³ https://rsf.org/en/ranking_table, accessed May 18, 2020

⁸⁴ https://www.soumu.go.jp/main_content/000542282.pdf, accessed February 29, 2020

Target 16.a Strengthen relevant national institutions, including through international cooperation, for building capacity at all levels, in particular in developing countries, to prevent violence and combat terrorism and crime

TARGET 16.A



**STRENGTHEN
NATIONAL
INSTITUTIONS TO
PREVENT VIOLENCE
AND COMBAT
TERRORISM AND CRIME**

16.a.1 Existence of independent national human rights institutions in compliance with the Paris Principles

Japan does not have independent national human rights institutions in compliance with the Paris Principles

The government of Japan's position is that human rights protection Human Rights Commissioner at the local level and national-level experts committee on children's rights and the rights of people with disability are already existent in the country and there is no need for national human rights institutions.⁸⁵ However, none of these are independent from the administration and are not in compliance with the Paris Principles.

Target 16.b Promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development

TARGET 16.B



**PROMOTE AND
ENFORCE
NON-DISCRIMINATORY
LAWS AND POLICIES**

16.b.1 Proportion of population reporting having personally felt discriminated against or harassed in the previous 12 months on the basis of a ground of discrimination prohibited under international human rights law

N.A.

According to a survey by the **Ministry of Justice** in 2018, 15.9% of the respondents said that they felt being discriminated, while 84.1% have not experienced feeling discriminated. To a question asking about the current situation around discrimination, 14.3% felt things are improving; 50.8% felt no changes; 29.4% said discrimination is increased; and 5.6% did not know.⁸⁶

⁸⁵ Norio Umahashi, "Where Is Japanese Human Rights Going with No Global Standard Governance?, (in Japanese language) Journal of Global and Intercultural Studies, No. 22, 2020."

⁸⁶ <https://survey.gov-online.go.jp/h29/h29-jinken/gairyaku.pdf>

9. Thematic Assessment of Issues related to Targets of SDG 16

9-1 Banning Hate-speech nationwide and in municipalities

Hate Speech Act was enacted on 25 May 2016 by Japan's National Diet. The act was passed in order to comply with **United Nations International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination**, which was based on the principles of the dignity and equality inherent in all human beings and adopted in 1965. **Asia-Pacific Human Rights Information Center**, a non-profit organization that aims to promote human rights in the Asia-Pacific through collection and dissemination of information on, about and for human rights, describes that the words "unfair discriminatory speech and behavior against persons originating from outside Japan" of the new act are considered to be equivalent to what is known as "hate speech" as indicated in the website of Japan's Ministry of Justice⁸⁷. However, the act lacks provisions to ban or punish the use of discriminatory languages. Meanwhile, some municipalities passed ordinances to regulate hate speech.

January 2016 - **Osaka City**, Osaka Prefecture, the ordinance on Dealing with Hate Speech was enacted, 4 months before the national act. The city ordinance was a response to the series of public gatherings attacking Korean residents in Osaka city, however, according to Asia-Pacific Human Rights Information Center, the ordinance does not mention any specific group of people whose rights it aims to protect. The Korean residents in Osaka, who have been the target of hate speech public gatherings, would fit the definition of "citizens or the members of relevant organizations" who have "particular racial or ethnic attributes." Other non-Japanese residents would likewise be covered by this definition.

April 2017 — **Kannonji City**, Kagawa Prefecture, enacted an ordinance on parking areas near public places to ban activities that may promote unjust discrimination against unspecified large numbers of people who share a common attribute, such as race. The city also enacted Parks Ordinance in June the same year. Hate activities are prohibited in public parks with fine up to 50,000 yen (about US\$500).

March 2018 — **Setagaya Ward**, Tokyo, enacted an ordinance that recognises diversity and promotes gender equality and multicultural coexistence. The ordinance prohibits discriminatory treatment based on sex, LGBT, nationality, etc.

October 2018 — **Tokyo Metropolitan Government** enacted an ordinance aiming to realise the principle of respect for human rights enshrined in the Olympic Charter. It prohibits discriminatory treatment of LGBT people and discourages hate speech.

87 <https://www.hurights.or.jp/archives/focus/section3/2016/09/japans-hate-speech-elimination-law.html>

December 2018 — **Kunitachi City**, Tokyo, enacted a basic ordinance for the creation of a peaceful city that respects human rights and recognises diversity. The ordinance also provides a comprehensive ban on discrimination and remedies for victims.

June 2019 — **Kobe City**, Hyogo Prefecture, enacted an ordinance on the elimination of unjust discrimination against foreigners and the realisation of a multicultural society.

October 2019 — **Osaka Prefecture** enacted an ordinance on the promotion of elimination of unjust discriminatory words and actions on the basis of race or ethnicity.

December 2019 — **Kawasaki City**, Kanagawa Prefecture, passed an ordinance banning hate speech, discriminatory languages and actions against foreign people in public spaces within the city. Repeated violators would be fined up to 500 thousand Yen (about US\$4,500). The Ordinance is scheduled to be effective on July 1, 2020. The Ordinance of the Kawasaki City is the first in Japan that includes a provision to punish hate speeches and discriminatory languages.

Despite the passing an ordinance, on 29 January 2020, Kawasaki City announced that a threatening postcard was sent to a city employee. The postcard threatens “to blow up ‘Fureai-kan,’ a multicultural exchange facility in the city, and to harm Koreans living in Japan. A postcard declaring the massacre of Koreans living in Japan was also sent to the facility on 4 January. Norihiko Fukuda, mayor of the city, expressed his condemnation that “this is a threat based on discrimination and will not be tolerated. The city will take all possible measures to ensure the safety of the facility.” The city deployed security guards to ‘Fureai-kan’ and consulted with the police. The city is considering submitting a damage report on the charges. ‘Fureai-kan’ was established by the city in 1988 as a facility where Japanese citizens and foreign citizens, including Koreans living in Japan, can interact and live together without discrimination.

9-2 Arrest and detention of a peace activist in Okinawa

In this section, the arrest and detention of Mr. Hiroji Yamashiro, an activist of the peace movement in Okinawa, is discussed as a case report in Japan regarding SDG 16. However, Mr. Yamashiro’s arrest and detention case is the tip of the iceberg of a series of human rights violations and violation of freedom of civil activities against military base construction in Okinawa, and in the background there is structural discrimination and structural violence against Okinawa by the Japanese and US governments. Through the problem of military base in Okinawa, the unachieved status of SDGs16 in Japan will be clearly shown.

Mr. Yamashiro’s arrest and detention

On 17 October 2016, Mr. Hiroji Yamashiro, chairman of the Okinawa Peace Movement Center, was arrested as a leader of a civil movement against construction of a new US military base in Henoko, Nago City, and construction of a US military helipad in Takae, Higashi-Son Village, both in Okinawa Prefecture. Until he was released on 18 March 2017, he had been detained for five months without being allowed to see his family. At first, he was arrested by a current criminal for property damage due to cutting a barbed wire during protests, and then he was re-arrested on another charge of disturbing public affairs execution and injury, and the detention was repeated.

Amnesty International urged authorities in Japan regarding the long-term detention of Mr. Yamashiro in its “URGENT ACTION” that, “Immediately release Hiroji Yamashiro unless they prove that the presumption of release pending trial should not apply”, “Ensure that, pending his release, Hiroji Yamashiro is provided with adequate medical care and has effective access to his family without delay”, “Comply with their international obligations to respect, protect and fulfil the human rights to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly, as well as the rights of people in detention.” And it criticized in same appeal that “The arrest of Hiroji Yamashiro, a symbolic opposition figure, has had a chilling effect on others who are peacefully exercising their rights to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly. Some activists now hesitate to join the protest for fear of reprisals.” There are same criticisms from Japan and other countries that arrest and long-term detention for peaceful protests are an infringement of citizens’ freedom of expression and have a chilling effect on citizens’ peace movements.

Citizens are often detained on protest activities against US military base construction. In April 2016, Shun Medoruma, a writer and Akutagawa Prize-winner in 1997, was detained by the US military when he entered restricted area of the Oura Bay by a canoe in protest activity and was handed over to the Japan Coast Guard after eight hours detention. There are many other cases of peace activist being arrested just for sitting down action.

Citizen arrests against the construction of a new base in Henoko and the construction of US marine’s helipads in Takae have increased from 2016 to 2017. In the six months from July to December 2016, 19 people were arrested, and in 2017, at least 28 people were arrested. In many cases, because arrests were for slight offenses and not been prosecuted, unlawful arrests are suspected.

Mr. Yamashiro said at the United Nations Human Rights Council on 15 June 2017 that the governments of Japan and the US are trying to build a new military base in Okinawa despite the strong opposition of the people of Okinawa. He claimed that both governments oppressed and violently rooted out peaceful opposition movement of citizens.

In the case of Mr. Yamashiro, the Supreme Court rejected the appeal in April 2019, so the decisions of the district court and the high court “two years in prison and three years in suspension” have been finalised.

Background

74% of US military bases and related facilities are concentrated in Okinawa Prefecture, which is only 0.6% of Japan’s land area. It is 500 times denser than the mainland. The governments of US and Japan are trying to relocate the base to the coast of Oura Bay in Henoko, Nago City as a condition to close the Futenma US Marine Corps base in Ginowan City, which is said to be “the most dangerous in the world” in a densely populated area. However, unlike the government of Japan’s explanation that the Futenma base will be relocated to eliminate danger, the new base construction project at Henoko will be equipped with an ammunition storage and loading facility and a huge military port not found at Futenma base in addition to two runways,. It is clear that it is not a substitute facility for the Futenma base but the construction of a new comprehensive military base.

The construction of a new base is ethically unacceptable for the people of Okinawa, who have consistently suffered from the burden and damage of US military bases after the World War II. The construction site, Oura Bay in Henoko, is home to 5,334 species, 262 of which are endangered species and 36 of which are new species. Also, it is known as the sea where the dugong lives. The US Department of Defense has been defeated by in an interim judgment in “the Dugong Suit” in the United States in January 2008. In addition, the environmental assessment related to base construction is said to be highly illegal and the worst assessment in history. There are many other problems in constructing a new base in Henoko, such as the existence of soft ground in the reclaimed sea area, hiding of data on it, and non-disclosure of a revised budget that far exceeds the initial budget.

In the past 10 years, candidates who oppose the construction of Henoko’s base in the series of political elections including Mayor election of Nago City, prefectural governor’s election, and national elections have won one after another. The people of Okinawa continue to oppose base construction. In prefectural vote in 2018, the people’s intentions in Okinawa showed their opposition to landfill for the construction of the base in Henoko, with 70% of the respondents voting.

In 1996, the agreement on the Special Action Committee on Okinawa (SACO), which announced the construction plan of a new base in Henoko, also announced partial return of the Northern Training Area of the US Marines along with the closure of Futenma Air Base. However, the helipads scattered around the northern training area were relocated to surround the residential area of Takae of Higashi-Son Village, and were strengthened to allow Osprey take-off and landing training. Residents of Takae, who were at risk of noise and crashes from day and night flight training, started a campaign against the construction of Helipad in 2003. In response to the residents’ protests, the Japanese government has made slap lawsuits against 15 residents, including children, and dispatched riot police from other prefectures of main land to repeatedly root out residents’ protest with violence.

In 2013, the governments of Japan and the United States were pushing the deployment of Osprey despite strong opposition from the residents. Osprey has been pointed out to be a danger to safety. Residents were to be exposed to further danger in spite of both governments had agreed on closure of the base to eliminate the danger. Surprisingly, residents and parliamentarians trying to prevent the deployment of Osprey in front of the gate at Futenma Air Base have even been locked up in a steel fence.

Historical discrimination structure

Behind the arrest and unusual long-term detention of Mr. Yamashiro is the history of structural discrimination by the government of Japan against Okinawa Prefecture, which consists of islands in the southwestern part of Japan. 150 years ago, in the process of constructing a modern nation state by the Meiji Restoration, Japan merged the Ryukyu Kingdom, which had been an independent nation until then, with the intimidation of the armed forces. Later, assimilation policies and imperialisation education denied Okinawa’s unique language and culture, and Okinawans suffered from discrimination by Japanese people on the mainland. At the end of the Pacific War, a ground battle was fought only in Okinawa and a quarter of the inhabitants lost their lives. It is said that this ground battle was a rubble stone battle to

protect the mainland of Japan. The US military continued to occupy Okinawa and seize land even after Japan became independent from US, ruled in the 1952 peace treaty.

After returning to the mainland in 1972, the Okinawa people's hope to reduce the base burden "on the same level as the mainland" was betrayed and the US military base continued to exist and concentrated in Okinawa.

In October 2016 some polices dispatched by the Osaka Prefectural Police used offensive languages "Savage!" or "Shut out, China!" to residents who oppose the construction of a new US military helipad in Takae, Higashi-Son Village. People in Okinawa were shocked by the fact that there had still been a sense of discrimination toward Okinawa among the Japanese people.

The following data shows how the people of Okinawa were damaged by the concentration of US military bases in Okinawa at a density of 500 times that of mainland Japan. From 1956 to 2017, there were a total of 709 US military-related aircraft accidents, 602 US military field fires (38,163,866 square meters of vanishing area). The number of crimes committed by US military members and others from the return of Okinawa in 1972 to 2017 was 5,919, of which 576 were violent crimes such as murder, rape, and robbery, accounting for about 10%. Discrimination against Okinawa is also reflected in the actual situation of damages attributed to the US military base.

Problems in light of SDG16

The construction of a new US military base in Okinawa, where US military bases and related facilities are concentrated, and construction against the will of the people, as shown by a series of elections and prefectural vote, are against **Target16.b**, "Promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development" and **Target16. 7**, "Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels".

The environmental assessment conducted at the construction of a new base at Henoko-Oura Bay, which is a sea of biodiversity that is globally valuable, lacks the obligation to hear the opinions of the residents, and some contents of the construction plan subject to the assessment was not included in original assessment. This is also contrary to **Target 16.7**. In addition, concealment and non-disclosure of landfill data and construction budget related to the construction of the new base, arrest for peaceful civil movement, long-term detention, exclusion with violence, slap lawsuits are clearly conflict with **Target 16.10**, "Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements".

9-3 Inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making is at risk: A case of Human Rights Museum in Osaka, Japan

A human rights museum in Osaka shut down after a few years' fighting in court against a local government. The museum had been tackling the wide range of human rights issues for 25 years with strong support from the two local governments, the Osaka City government and the Osaka Prefectural government. However, a turnaround of their policy on the support let to financial difficulty of the museum, which

caused the temporary closure of its operation. This can be considered as one of cases where inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making is at risk.

Osaka Human Rights Museum, known as Liberty Osaka, has a long history as a well-recognised museum of human rights. Since its establishment in 1985, it has been operating as one of the few museums devoted to human rights in Japan. It has played a role of not only exhibiting various issues but also collecting information and documents as a resource center. The collection of documents reaches over 30,000 items, which is one of the biggest collections in the country. Liberty Osaka covers wide range of human rights issues including outcast people of Japan, indigenous people of Japan, Korean with the status of special permanent residents of Japan, and other recent issues such as LGBT, domestic violence and labour issues.

Liberty Osaka had been financially supported by the Osaka city government and the Osaka Prefectural government. The two local governments, however, changed their policy and stopped the subsidies to the museum in 2013 because the exhibition was not in line with the policy. In early 2015, the Osaka City government took additional measures, which required the museum to leave the land where the museum had rented from the City government. Since July 2015 when the both local governments brought the issue into court, both parties have been fighting in court.

The museum claimed that the series of measures were not appropriate considering the historical background of the museum and its land. Liberty Osaka stated in the court that “the measure taken by the (local) government is abandonment of government’s duties in promoting human right” because the museum had been collaboratively working with two Osaka local governments for many years on implementing their policy of human rights.

In addition, the land where the museum has been located has a unique background. It was donated to the Osaka City in 1928 by local residents for the construction of a school. Most residents in the area belonged to an outcast class, and, therefore, they put their hope in the school which could provide better education in eradicating discrimination. The building was handed over to the museum after the school was moved to another location. Since then, Liberty Osaka has played its role as a resource center of human rights issue. In a statement submitted to the court, the museum said that “the series of measures does not consider these historical backgrounds. The measures have political intention to close down the museum, and it is considered as abuse of power by the local governments”.

Following the cut of subsidies from the local governments, Liberty Osaka had struggled to diversify financial resources in order to be financially independent. However, its financial situation did not improved, and the additional measures were taken by the governments. After the several years of discussion in the court, both parties are in a process of reaching a settlement, which leads the museum to leave the land. In early 2020 before the settlement is reached, the museum decided the temporary closure of its exhibition, beginning on 1 June, and reopen at a new location which have yet to be found. The museum opened for a short period of time, from 20 May to 28 May, in order to express gratitude for visitors and supporters.

9-4 End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children

Background of global momentum and GPeVAC Japan Forum:

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), adopted at the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit in September 2015, included a target on the ending violence against children for the first time as part of the global goal (**Target 16.2**). To facilitate this movement, the “Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children (GPeVAC)” was established by the UN Secretary-General in July 2016.

The “Civil Society Forum of the Global Partnership to End Violence against Children (CSO Forum)” to end violence against children is a group of civil society organisations working together to influence and leverage the GPeVAC.

Since January 2017, Japanese CSOs, mostly consist of CSO Forum as well as UNICEF has gathered to advocate the government of Japan to become a pathfinding country of GPeVAC. They established “GPeVAC Japan Forum” for this purpose. As a result of joint advocacy effort, in February 2018, at “2030 Agenda for Children: End Violence Solutions Summit”, the government expressed three commitments on GPeVAC; (1) being a pathfinding country of GPeVAC, (2) financial commitment of USD 600 million for GPeVAC Fund, and (3) Minister of Foreign Affairs becoming a Board member of GPeVAC. After the government’s commitment above, members of GPeVAC Japan Forum are working jointly in order to achieve SDG16.2 in collaboration with the government, GPeVAC, CSO Forum and other partners.

Challenges and way forward

Before the government of Japan committed for GPeVAC, they have laws and measures relating to ending violence against children (eVAC). However, each measures by the government of Japan for eVAC, such as against child abuse, sexual exploitation, human trafficking and etc., are implemented by each leading ministry not through integrated approach, but through silo approach. In addition, domestically, awareness on eVAC in general was very low.

After becoming a pathfinding country, the government set up a multi-stakeholder platform to eVAC, consists of government (relating ministries), CSOs, private companies, international organizations, specialists and etc. This multi-stakeholder platform is now jointly developing National Action Plan to ending violence against children.

9-5 Institutional threats for access to information

Before the adoption of SDGs in September 2015, the government of Japan enacted “Act on the Protection of Specially Designated Secrets” in December 2013. This act allows administrative organs to designate information related to the security and safety of Japan and its citizens, and not to disclose for 30 years. However, the head of an administrative organ may extend the effective period of a designation for more than 30 years in total if the Cabinet approves. The enactment was massively protested by lawyers, writers, unions and member of parliaments for this leads to a threat of people’s rights to information.

Since then, multiple of examples in Japan bring doubts to public access to information (Target 16.10). Official documents on public administration were falsified, deleted and dispelled at governmental agencies.

In July 2017, the Ministry of Defense explained that Ground Self-Defense Force had deleted daily reports describing the activities of the Peace Keeping Operations that were deployed to South Sudan from 2012 to 2017, in a response to questions in the Diet. In early July 2016, a massive fighting in Juba, South Sudan's capital, killed more than 150 people. While foreign media reported hundreds of people were killed in the fighting, the government of Japan reported there were "sporadic shootings" but "there was no armed conflict, so the Japan's Five Principles on PKO participation is secured". When a journalist asked the government to publish all the documents, including electronic information, exchanged between the Central Readiness Group Command and the South Sudanese Deployment Facility Unit during the period of from 6 to 15 July 2016, the government released only one-page report, and the daily reports of Self-Defense Forces were not disclosed. However, it was later discovered that the electronic data had been stored. Although allegations of a deliberate cover-up were pursued in the Diet, no facts were revealed. The then Minister of Defense took responsibility for this and resigned.

In March 2018, the Ministry of Finance was found to have falsified official documents. The bureaucrats of the Ministry told that they would sell off a state-owned land at a discount of JYP 800 million (about USD 7,440,000) to Moritomo Gakuen, a school corporation seeking to establish an elementary school in Osaka. Since the honorary principal of the elementary school was the wife of then Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, the opposition parties pursued the issue in the Diet, claiming that the discount was due to Prime Minister's close relationship with the school corporation. In response to this, then Prime Minister Abe told at the Diet that "if it turns out that my wife or I was involved in this case, I will certainly quit Prime Minister as well as a member of the Parliament". It was suspected that shortly after this, official documents that recorded the circumstances of the sale were falsified by the Ministry of Finance. The bureaucrats at the Ministry of Finance instructed the Kinki Finance Bureau in Osaka, which preserved most of documents, to falsify the documents and delete description to make the involvement of the Prime Minister's wife. A former Finance Ministry official, who claimed he was forced to falsify documents, committed suicide.

The Prime Ministers in Japan had long hosted a "cherry blossom viewing party" every April at Shinjuku Gyoen Park to honor those who have made significant contributions in various sectors. Although this is an official event of the Cabinet Office, allegations that Prime Minister Abe had invited large numbers of his close allies were brought up in November 2019. The list of names, titles and number of people nominated by Prime Minister was not disclosed despite the allegations, and the government of Japan says it was destroyed shortly after the viewing party finished every year. The Public Records Management Act requires administrative documents that have expired the period of retention will be transferred to the National Archives of Japan, or with the prior consent of Prime Minister, it will be deleted. However, the period of retention of administrative documents that describe the process of reaching decisions, including their backgrounds, is set at less than one year. In response to a question by the opposition party in Diet, a senior official of the Ministry of Finance said that the documents, which have not yet expired, were not available for verification since they were already deleted.

“Act on Access to Information Held by Administrative Organs” was enacted in May 1999, and took effect in April 2001. The purpose of the Act is, in accordance with the principle of sovereignty of the people, and by providing for the right to request the disclosure of administrative documents, to endeavor towards greater disclosure of information held by administrative organs thereby ensuring to achieve accountability of the government to the citizens for its various activities, and to contribute to the promotion of a fair and democratic administration that is subject to the citizens’ appropriate understanding and criticism.

“Public Records and Archives Management Act” was enacted in July 2009, and took effect in April 2011. The purpose of this Act is to strive towards proper management of administrative documents and appropriate preservation, use, etc. of historical public records and archives, by providing for the basic particulars concerning management of public records and archives, taking into consideration that public records and archives as records of historical facts and various activities of the government and incorporated administrative agencies, etc. should be available for independent use by the citizens, who have popular sovereignty, as an intellectual resource to be shared by the people in supporting the basis of sound democracy, in accordance with the principle of sovereignty of the people, thereby enabling administration to be managed properly and efficiently, and also ensuring accountability of the State and incorporated administrative agencies, etc. to the public for their various activities in both the present and future.

10. Civil Society Engagement with the SDG 16

A diverse range of organisations from throughout Japanese civil society are engaged in activities and research in relation to SDG16. It could be said that the majority of such activities are in the context of linkages with other Sustainable Development Goals, rather than focusing more specifically on this goal. This is perhaps a reflection of the nature of organisations most deeply engaged in the SDGs in Japan; many of which are from development backgrounds, rather than from a more specific peace background. This is a tendency which can be seen throughout many parts of Northeast Asia, where the main topics around the SDGs are rather different from the focus throughout the broader Asia Pacific region.

Chapter 6 of this volume includes reference to national civil society organisations' reports on the implementation of the 12 targets of SDG16, including the specific cases of World Vision Japan and CSO Network Japan. For this reason, these examples are not included within this article. Nor is this a comprehensive overview of all SDG16 related civil society engagement; there are other notable and important examples particularly in relation to the rights of children (**Target 16.2**), access to justice (**Target 16.3**), and inclusive decision-making (**Target 16.7**), amongst others. Rather, this chapter will highlight two specific initiatives which are explicitly focused on SDG 16 as concrete examples of how civil society in Japan is engaging with the peace agenda of the SDGs.

10-1 Policy recommendation on COVID-19 responses

On 27 March 2020, **Japan Civil Society Network on SDGs** (SDGs Japan) published a statement⁸⁸ on principles to combating COVID-19. Since then, SDGs Japan led the process of dialogues between Japanese civil society and parliamentarians, such as Liberal Democratic Party of Japan and Komeito Party, both are ruling parties, and opposition parties such as Constitutional Democratic Party of Japan, Democratic Party for the People, and Social Democratic Party. Below are the three major recommendations from SDGs Japan's statement.

1. Introduce measures for economic and social inclusion that leave no one behind, including the future generations. Goal 1 (poverty), 3 (health), 4 (education), 5 (gender), 8 (sustainable growth and employment), 10 (inequality), 11 (sustainable human settlement)

The implementation of policies based on the "Social Distancing Strategy" has left 1.37 billion children out of school and many people out of work, causing them to incur economic losses and social isolation. This must be addressed with economic policies that are made in the spirit of the SDGs, in a way that "puts the farthest people first" and "leaves no one behind." It is necessary to limit the economic damage to society as a whole and keep the economy afloat, but more than that, we need to do our utmost to save the lives and livelihoods of those who are in the most severe circumstances. Also, the global spread of COVID-19 has made the various challenges in the world that existed before, even more serious. The segregation and isolation caused by emergency measures has an even more

88 https://918e59d6-07d0-49f8-a75d-62b41ffe7d11.filesusr.com/ugd/d7b557_12e855732880442c8d52749c9bb1435d.pdf

severe and excessive impact on people suffering from poverty, disease, conflict and persecution, and the negative impact of COVID-19 emergency measures on other global challenges and humanitarian assistance must be minimized. Furthermore, we need to improve our ability to respond to the healthcare challenges brought about by COVID-19 on a global basis.

2. Solidarity and inclusion to bridge the physical distance between them. Goal 16 (participation), 17 (partnership)

To reduce new infections as much as possible, temporary interdiction and isolation based on the “social distancing strategy” is necessary. However, these measures should be the minimum necessary, based on scientific evidence. There has never been a time when “the establishment of human rights” has been more urgent than now. In particular, people infected with COVID-19, those suspected of being infected and those subject to self-quarantine should be proactively guaranteed alternative means of connection to society, such as access to the media and the Internet. Furthermore, there is a need to further strengthen and practice mutual aid, symbiosis and solidarity, where people help, acknowledge and respect each other across all boundaries and divides.

3. Ensure transparency and openness, and comply with democracy and legal procedures in policy formulation and response. Goal 16 (Governance)

Measures based on the “social distancing strategy” may restrict the constitutional rights guaranteed to citizens, including freedom of economic and social activities and freedom of movement. The introduction of these measures must be carried out with maximum transparency and openness and in compliance with democracy and the legal process. In addition to the fight against COVID-19, maximum measures must be taken to eliminate discrimination, prejudice, and misinformation related to COVID-19, and to ensure that all rights, including human rights, are guaranteed to the maximum extent possible and that economic losses are compensated to the maximum extent possible.

10-2 Policy recommendations to G20 Leaders

G20 Osaka Summit was held in May 2020, for the first time in Japan, and civil society groups in Japan jointly organised a counter-event, called C20 Summit in April 2020 in Tokyo, together with CSOs in G20 countries and beyond. They prepared “**C20 Policy Pack 2019⁸⁹**” with concrete policy recommendations in 11 different thematic issues, such as ant-corruption, environment, gender equality, global health, infrastructure, business and human rights, civic space, trade and investment, and digital economy. The policy pack was presented to the Chair of G20 Summit, Japan’s Prime Minister, ahead of the C20 Summit.

Throughout the year, the Chair of G20 held related Ministerial meetings, such as agriculture, finance, trade, energy, labour and employment, health, tourism and foreign affairs. On 23 and 24 November 2020, Foreign Ministers’ Meeting was held in Nagoya, as the last Ministerial meetings chaired by Japan. **Nagoya NGO Center**, an umbrella organization working to further develop and improve activities by NGOs in order to create a peaceful and an equal society made up of “global citizens”, based mainly in the Chubu region of Japan (Aichi, Gifu, Mie), held a symposium on closing civic space and democracy on 16 November. They

89 <https://civil-20.org/2020/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/C20-POLICY-PACK-2019-web21.pdf>

also published a recommendation⁹⁰ for the G20 Aichi-Nagoya Foreign Ministers' Meeting, noting that they "are witnessing nowadays civic space, which is the activity sphere citizens can freely speak, express, assemble and associate, has been narrowed all over the world. In the AICHI TRIENNALE 2019, we have just experienced the example of that. A part of the exhibitions was forced to be abandoned by the violent outcry and attack towards the certain art works. Civic space is the essential enabling environment to lead to the resolution of various global issues. Civic space is based on the freedom of speech, expression, assembly and association which are protected by the international treaties of human rights. Narrowed civic space will risk the actions towards achieving SDG". They called for 4 actions below to G20 leaders.

1. Recognize that narrowed civic space will risk the actions towards achieving SDGs.
2. Do more efforts to establish legal system to protect and expand civic space. At the same time, show unrelenting attitude and actions against any form of attacks to civic space.
3. Make the SDG number 16 as a top priority in discussing the agenda of SDGs in the G20 Foreign Ministers' Meeting.
4. In discussing the said recommendation 3, Japanese government, as the chair of the meeting, must recognize that protection and expansion of civic space are inseparable from the achievement of SDG 16, and take the initiative of discussion to make the achievement of peace and justice, rule of law and basic human rights precondition for achieving of all goals of the SDGs.

In 2020, when the G20 Presidency was took over by Saudi Arabia, C20 once again published "**C20 Policy Pack 2020**"⁹¹, highlighting COVID-19 and anti-corruption, COVID-19 and civic space, as well as infrastructure, digital economy and other key issues.

10-3 Preparedness and counter-actions for shrinking civic space

In May 2018, 7 regional networks of NGOs in Japan, from Hokkaido, Tokyo, Yokohama, Nagoya, Hiroshima, Fukuoka to Okinawa, established **NGO Action Network for Civic Space**⁹² (NANCiS) in order to discuss and act on civic space issues in Japan and beyond. With 25 membership organisations, NANCiS is a successor organization of **Japan NGO Action Network on the Secrecy Law** (NANSL), a network of international cooperation NGOs formed on 1 April 2014 to respond to and communicate to society about the impact and problems caused by the Act on the Protection of Specially Designated Secrets, which was enacted on 6 December 2013.

NANCiS has three main purposes.

1) Promotion and advocacy of civilw society space

In order to solve various social, political, and economic challenges both in Japan and abroad, we believe that space for free expression and activities of civil society (civil society space) must be guaranteed and ceaselessly expanded. Towards guaranteeing and expanding civil society space, NANCiS will work to raise

90 http://nangoc.org/information/G20PolicyRecommendationsNagoyaNov2019_Nagoya%20NGO%20Center.pdf

91 <https://civil-20.org/2020/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/2020-C20-Policy-Pack.pdf>

92 http://nancis.org/english_charter/

concerns, increase awareness, disseminate information, and conduct advocacy, among others, to various sectors, including government, NGOs, and other civil society actors. In the context of human rights treaties and international human rights provisions, furthermore, the network will carry out activities, such as monitoring, policy advocacy, and protests, as necessary to put an end to any attempts that would have adverse impacts on civil society space.

2) Learning and information exchange on civil society spaces and supporting NGOs

NANCiS will carry out learning and exchange of information on legal systems, policies, social situation, and challenges related to civil society space, and prepare ourselves so that NGO activities will not be hindered. Furthermore, when the activities of specific NGOs are interfered by laws that could lead to oppression of civil society space (such as Secrecy Law and Conspiracy Bill), etc. we will cooperate in support of the NGOs, and endeavor to eliminate the interference.

3) Coordination between NGOs engaged in international cooperation and CSOs in other fields

In order to effectively carry out the above activities, NANCiS will work to raise awareness of individual NGOs who are members of the network NGOs constituting NANCiS, as well as NGOs that are not part of the network NGOs, among others. We will also work to serve as the hub and the facilitator of collaboration between the NGOs engaged in international cooperation and civil society organizations in other various fields.

As a member of **VUKA! Coalition for Civic Space**⁹³, a global network to help secure crucial short and long terms victories to regain civic space and incubate new forms of resistance and organisation, NANCiS has issued several statements about civic space issues, such as threatening to exhibitions at Aichi Triennale⁹⁴, which is one of largest international contemporary art festivals in Japan, arbitrary suspension of subsidies to the art festival by Agency for Cultural Affairs, which is a special body of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT)⁹⁵, an emergent solidarity appeal to struggles for freedom and civil rights in Hong Kong⁹⁶, concerns about the declaration of a state of emergency during the COVID-19 pandemic in Japan⁹⁷, and the government of China's move to introduce 'national security law' in Hong Kong⁹⁸.

10-4 Engagement with the early establishment of a national human rights institution⁹⁹

In Japan, the **Japan Federation of Bar Associations (JFBA)** has been the most outstanding advocate for the setting up of a national human rights institution (**Target 16.a**), whose roles are to include: i) suggesting comprehensive policies on human rights, and ii) providing relief and prevention of various forms of human rights violations, namely, a) human rights violations at penal institutions or immigration institutions, and

⁹³ <https://www.vukacoalition.org/>

⁹⁴ <http://nancis.org/2019/08/05/001/>

⁹⁵ http://nancis.org/2019/10/08/20191005_aichi/

⁹⁶ <http://nancis.org/2019/12/04/2019120301/>

⁹⁷ http://nancis.org/2020/04/08/corona_01/

⁹⁸ <http://nancis.org/2020/06/02/hongkong-statement-en/>

⁹⁹ 'Statement on the "Draft Bill on the Establishment of a National Human Rights Commission" Approved by the Cabinet', September 19, 2012, Kenji Yamagishi, President, Japan Federation of Bar Associations

b) discrimination on the grounds of gender, disability or ethnicity occurring in various areas, regardless of it being in the public or private spheres. With the fact of there being approximately 100 countries already having national human rights institutions on their own, the United Nations (UN) human rights institutions have been calling for the early establishment of such a national human rights institution in Japan in accordance with the United Nations Paris Principles.

Until now, there were two major chances to establish a national human rights institution in Japan. The first one was when the Human Rights Protection Bill was tabled at the National Diet in 2002. JFBA, however, strongly opposed to the bill on the ground that its scope was too much limited to cover a wide range of human rights violations on the one hand, but had very high risk of jeopardizing freedom of speech on the other hand. As a result, the bill failed to pass during the session and was scrapped. The second chance was when the cabinet (then ruled by Democratic Party) approved “the Draft Bill on the Establishment of a National Human Rights Commission” in 2012. This time, JFBA also supported the bill with necessary modifications such as: i) the setting up of a system in which secretariats (the persons in charge in each region) directly belonging to the NHRC will have direct involvement, and ii) the cooperation of public offices should be made obligatory to ensure the investigations by the NHRC be more effective. Unfortunately, the House of Representatives had to be dissolved for general election before the bill was passed.

Despite the two failures, JFBA still keeps strongly advocating for the early establishment of a national human rights institution together with an individual complaint mechanism. The reason of combining the two systems is that the effectiveness of an individual complaint mechanism (and UN’s recommendations to the Japanese Government as a result of it) cannot be ensured without a national human rights institution that is independent from the government and is responsible to follow up the UN’s recommendations.

10-5 Youth Education and Awareness Raising

Peace Boat is a Japan-based international NGO which promotes peace, human rights, and sustainability. Established in 1983, it holds Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations. Peace Boat carries out its main activities through a passenger ship that travels the world. Working in partnership with **UN SDG Action Campaign**, Peace Boat’s activities onboard and in port empower participants, strengthen local capacity for sustainability, and build people-to-people cooperation beyond borders. The voyages, run on a social business model, blend sustainable tourism, lifelong learning and friendship activities with educational programmes, cooperative projects, and advocacy.

Since 2018, Peace Boat organised an annual intensive study programme, **Global University**¹⁰⁰, specifically on the theme of SDG16 and a human-centred approach to an inclusive and sustainable Asia. Through a combination of experiential learning through field study and lectures and workshops onboard the ship, the programme aims to provide tools for youth from Japan and throughout Asian region to consider their role in building inclusive and sustainable peace and justice in the region. This programme is carried out in cooperation with academic institutions in Japan including the Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, University of Tokyo, Kansai University, Toyo University, as well as others throughout East Asia. The field

100 Peace Boat Global University: <http://peaceboat.org/english/project/global-university>

study components are organised in cooperation with various civil society organisations working on SDG16 related issues, with programmes in the past taking place in Tokyo, Osaka and other parts of Asia.

10-6 SDG16 and the Peacebuilding Approach

Globally, peacebuilding organisations are playing a key role in collaboration for monitoring and implementation of SDG16. An example of Japanese civil society engagement which is being carried out through such international collaboration is through the framework of **Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict** (GPPAC). GPPAC is an international civil-society led network of peacebuilding organisations, and was part of the group of NGOs that collectively lobbied at the UN and with member states to ensure peace became an integral part of the 2030 Agenda.

As the Regional Secretariat for GPPAC in Northeast Asia, Peace Boat has been engaging with both regional and global civil society, believing that implementation of the SDGs is critical to efforts to strengthen conflict prevention, as an integral element of inclusive and sustainable development. In this capacity, Peace Boat has contributed to efforts such as the creation relevant briefing papers¹⁰¹ and an online toolkit¹⁰² for steps towards localisation of **SDG16+**¹⁰³. In addition, this network has been used to facilitate space for discussion on SDG16 within the context of Northeast Asian civil society, particularly with organisations working in the field of peace and security, which are often not part of broader 2030 Agenda related programmes and networks in the region.

101 A Peacebuilding Lens on the Sustainable Development Goals, GPPAC Background Paper, June 2017, <https://www.gppac.net/publications/sustainable-development-goals-peacebuilding-perspective>

102 GPPAC SDG16 Toolkit, <https://www.gppac.net/sdg16-toolkit>

103 SDG16+ Pathfinders <https://www.sdg16.plus/>

11. Policy Recommendations

Overall recommendations on SDG 16

1. The government of Japan should periodically report the progress of each target from SDG 16 at global and regional forums such as UN High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) and UNESCAP Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD), and publish relevant data according to global indicators, especially set clear criteria to evaluate if measures are successful according to those indicators.
2. Following the first report in 2017, the government of Japan should prepare the second Voluntary National Review (VNR) that are focused on SDG 16, and include efforts and implementations by civil society.
3. The government of Japan should hold regular consultations on the implementation of SDG 16, in line with multi-stakeholder dialogues at the SDGs Promotion Roundtable. The minutes for those consultations should be published.
4. In order to promote SDG16+, the government should become a member of The Pathfinders, a group of 36 UN member states, international organizations, global partnerships, civil society and the private sector for peaceful, just and inclusive societies, and translate key documents into Japanese language.
5. As a member of the international community, the government of Japan should take the recommendations by the human rights treaty bodies seriously and ratify remaining treaties that include individual complaints mechanisms.

Target-specific recommendations

➤ **16.1 (Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere)**

The government of Japan should ratify the ILO Convention No. 190 and Recommendation No. 206, concerning the elimination of violence and harassment in the world of work, which was adopted on 21 June 2019.

➤ **16.2 (End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children)**

As a pathfinding country of the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children (GPeVAC) since 2018, the government of Japan should oversee the implementation of a ban on physical abuse against children, punishment and psychological aggression by caregivers, and should strengthen its effort to detect human trafficking.

➤ **16.3 (Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all)**

In order to facilitate access to justice, the government of Japan should reform the justice system and law schools, and increase the legal population as well as the number of civil cases.

➤ **16.4 (By 2030, significantly reduce illicit financial and arms flows, strengthen the recovery and return of stolen assets and combat all forms of organized crime)**

As the sole country whose cities have experienced nuclear bombings, the government of Japan should ratify the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) and Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW). The government should also lead and actively help negotiate a treaty on lethal autonomous weapons systems (LAWS).

➤ **16.5 (Substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms)**

The government of Japan must comply with the recommendations of the OECD Working Group on Bribery in International Business Transactions, especially ensure that the prosecution's role in conducting investigations and prosecutions is exercised independently of the executive, and in particular the Ministry of Justice. Corruption and bribery of politicians, especially at the ministerial level, should be prosecuted and prevented for further cases.

➤ **16.6 (Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels)**

Both national and local governments are urged to reconsider strongly red-taped traditions in order to raise the proportion of people satisfied with public services.

➤ **16.7 (Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels)**

Administrations, legislatures and political parties must strengthen their efforts, including introduction of positive action measures to increase the proportion of women, people with disabilities and ethnic minorities at work places. Key decision-makings should be facilitated through multi-stakeholder dialogues.

➤ **16.8 (Broaden and strengthen the participation of developing countries in the institutions of global governance)**

The government of Japan should help developing countries participate effectively in the institutions of global governance, such as the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, Asia Development Bank, and key UN agencies.

➤ **16.9 (By 2030, provide legal identity for all, including birth registration)**

In order to secure legal identity and gender equality, Japan's Civil Code article, which states that a child born within 300 days after dissolution of marriage is presumed to be the former husband's one, must be amended.

➤ **16.10 (Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements)**

The law on disclosure of information at the national and local levels should be practiced and implemented, in ways that promote the right of citizens to access public information. The government of Japan should investigate and prevent disposal of administrative documents and rewriting of approved documents, and promote accountability in its administration.

➤ **16.a (Strengthen relevant national institutions, including through international cooperation, for building capacity at all levels, in particular in developing countries, to prevent violence and combat terrorism and crime)**

The government of Japan should establish independent national human rights institutions that comply with the Paris Principles, as recommended by UN human rights committees.

➤ **16.b (Promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development)**

The government of Japan should abolish all the discriminatory laws and policies, and pass a comprehensive law on anti-discrimination.

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